The National Autistic Society

Working together: creating opportunities in adulthood for people with autism

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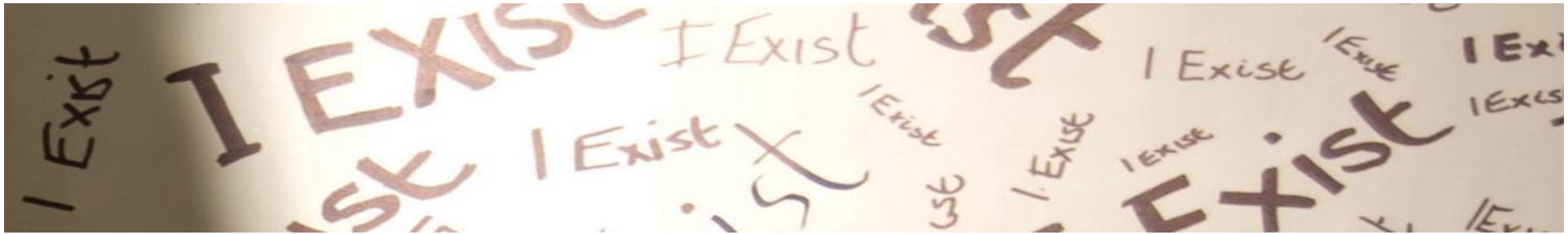
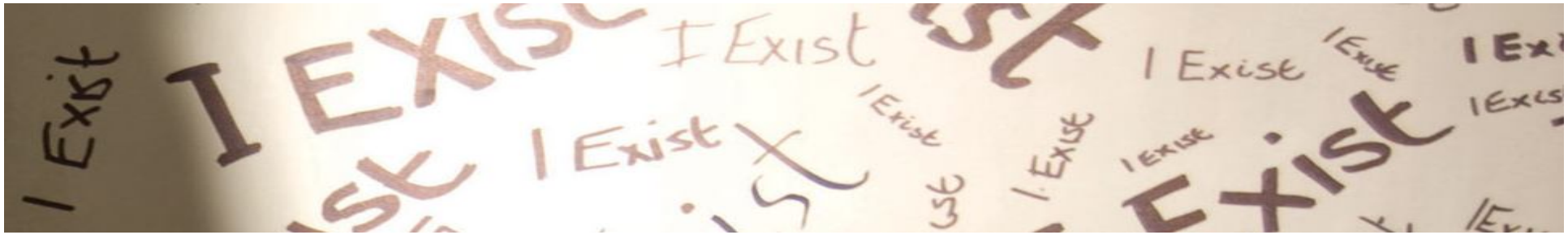
- The present situation
- Lessons from the Autism Strategy
- Examples of working together to provide opportunities



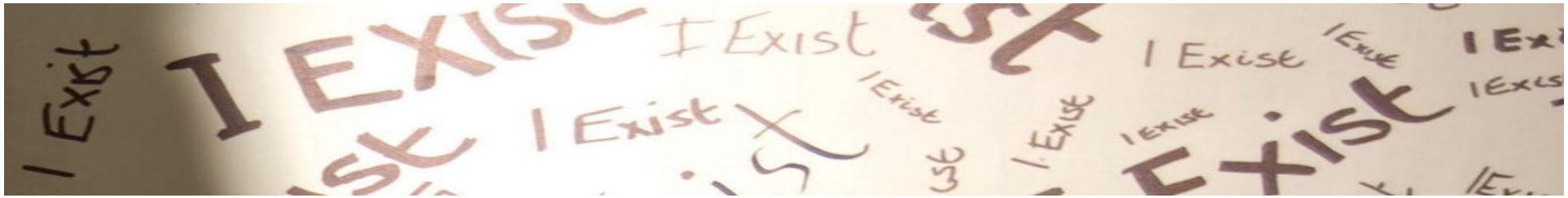
•What opportunities do people with autism want?

- Happy and fulfilling relationships
- work appropriate to level of skill
- Housing
- Support when needed
- Good health



•How can these be achieved?

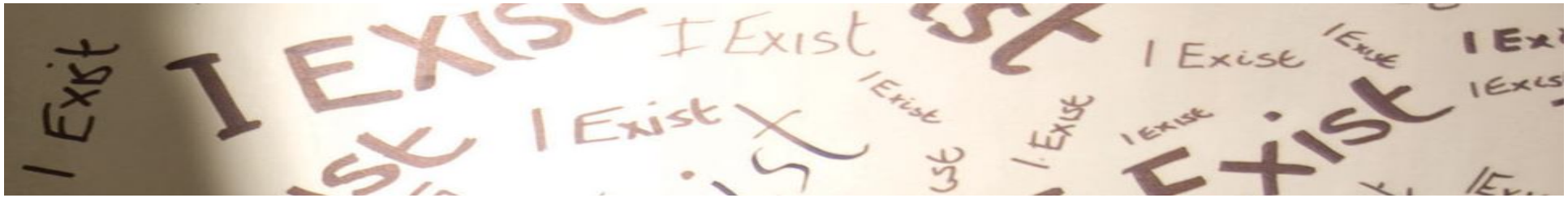
- A society which accepts and understands autism
- Information on which to make informed decisions
- Person centred support when required – most needed at points of transition
- Well informed professionals



The *I Exist* research

- 63% of adults with autism do not have the support to meet their needs
- 60% of parents say that a lack of support has led to higher support needs in the long run
- 33% of adults with autism have experienced a severe mental health problems because of a lack of support
- 15% of adults with autism have a full-time, paid job

- **Institutional problem**
  - Adults with autism are often excluded from local services, as they are not seen as eligible for learning disability services if their IQ is too high, nor are they seen as eligible for mental health services, if they do not have a co-occuring mental health problem



Government response to *I Exist*

- **May 2008 – Following the launch of *I Exist,* DH announce:**

- **October 2008 – Autism advisor in post and an External Reference Group of Stakeholders (ERG) established to help advise on the strategy**
  - includes adults with autism, parents, a range of professionals and autism charities

Key outcomes Act

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- Autism Act passed in November 2009
  - Strategy produced in April 2010
  - Statutory guidance for health and social care bodies published in December 2010

Accept difference. Not indifference.

Autism Act statutory guidance

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- Autism statutory guidance December 2010 means Local Authorities and the NHS:
  - must provide autism awareness training for all staff
  - must provide specialist autism training for key staff, such as GPs and community care assessors
  - cannot refuse a community care assessment for adults with autism based solely on IQ
  - must appoint an autism lead in their area
  - have to develop a clear pathway to diagnosis and assessment for adults with autism
  - need to commission services based on adequate population data

I Exist case study: Learning

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- *I Exist* campaign and Autism Act, backed by evidence
- Importance of participation
- External Reference Group (ERG) has been important in bringing together disparate voices
- Dual role for NAS: working with government and not being afraid to campaign loudly
- The campaign has just begun at a local level to ensure it translates into real change to services and to people's lives

Examples of innovative practice

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- **Goldman Sachs / Prospects strategic partnership**

- Established in 2003
- 47 placements made to date
- 7 people employed in permanent basis

- Plans to roll out to other large corporate employers
- Self sustaining through placement fees

adaptations in universal services

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- Stormont
- Inverness leisure centres
- Unicorn theatre
- Autism friendly cinema showings – picture house,

partnerships with law firms

- 4 law firms around the country
  - Addelshaw Goddard
  - Clifford chance
  - Exchance Chambers
  - Harper MacLeod

- Successful model of supporting families in education rights trough tribunal support service

- Launch of welfare rights support work in Scotland and England based on pro bono model

Better informed and skilled professionals – Network A

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- To enable professional networking
- To promote information sharing, gathering and development
- To raise individual members profiles
- To create a virtual space that professionals will utilise and ultimately take ownership of.
- To create a resource that will be key to supporting professionals in their work and used as a tool for professional development.

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Accept difference. Not indifference.