

## Autism Spectrum Disorder Toolkit

This project was a joint initiative managed by the Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DES), the Irish Society for Autism (ISA), and Parents and Professionals Autism NI (PAPA).

Aurion Learning worked as e-learning specialists for this project in partnership with the Council for Curriculum, Education & Assessment (CCEA).

## Challenge

As part of this project, the client required two interactive learning resources; the first to educate and inform parents about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and a second to provide practical guidance for teachers in mainstream schools who work with pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

Given that autism is particularly challenging to diagnose, we knew we had a big responsibility to individuals diagnosed with autism, parents, teachers and carers to develop learning resources that were actually going to be useful.

## Solution

We worked closely with the project team, subject matter experts and teachers to develop two interactive learning resources. **Autism - An Introduction** is an educational video specifically designed for parents who have recently had a child diagnosed with ASD. It features real-life parents talking about their experience of ASD and includes insights and practical information on how best to manage different situations.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder - A Teacher's Toolkit** is an interactive CD-ROM which provides teachers with practical strategies for teaching children with ASD. It brings together best practice guidance from parents, teachers and education advisers and:

- explains what ASD is;
- describes the main characteristics of ASD children and the difficulties of diagnosis;
- enables teachers to confidently recognise the



signs of ASD;

- informs teachers of the range of ASD specific teaching approaches; and
- equips teachers to confidently put these ASD teaching approaches into practice.

Aurion Learning worked in partnership with the subject matter experts to translate the learning material into an engaging learning programme that includes practical exercise to encourage teachers to think for themselves. The Autism Spectrum Disorder - A Teacher's Toolkit CD-Rom includes a number of real-life audio-visual scenarios illustrating different teaching strategies for pupils with ASDs, and the key messages in relation to learning and teaching.

## Outcomes

Parents of children recently diagnosed with ASD now have a useful resource (**Autism - An Introduction**) to help them gain a better understanding of ASD and get answers to some common questions. Members of the public who work with people with Autism can also refer to this video to get background information on the condition.

**The Autism Spectrum Disorder - A Teacher's Toolkit** CD-Rom was delivered to all schools in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and received very positive feedback.