

Social Care, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee

Making the Council more Autism friendly - questionnaire - responses

Appendix A2

Q2	What specific public facing service area(s) do you manage? (e.g. reception areas, contact points, public facilities or venues)
	Reception areas and interview rooms within Link1a (civic centre)
	We deliver music lessons in schools, at Compass Theatre, Manor Farm House and Southlands Arts Centre. We also run a Music School on Saturdays at John Locke Academy. We also operate a instrument store for hires from the Civic Centre.
	Register Office
	Council Tax reception (within the Housing Benefits Reception area) (Closed to the public since March 2020
	Venues
	Young People's Centres
	Leisure Centres - they are managed on behalf of the Council by a company called Better (Corporate name is GLL)
	Queens Walk Resource Centre
	Corporate Reception and Housing Needs Reception
	reception area
	None
	Main Reception and Housing Needs receptions, telephone and email contact through the Contact Centre
Occasional photo calls, media relations, interviews with residents for publications - however we do not have a public facing space per se	
Q3	Do you use a checklist or guide in your service area to ensure that public facing environments are autism-friendly? If so, please provide details.
	Whilst we do not have a check list our Speech and Language Therapist reviewed all public spaces and informed the layout, colours, wall displays etc
	No
	No
	No
	We don't have a specific guide for general visitors but it is something we are keen to develop. Our education team do however engage with schools that visit and following a questionnaire requesting the needs of the school, we will adapt our educational offering to cater for autism and any other additional needs.
	No
	The checklist or guide would be based on DDA guidelines
	No/ however we do try to not over saturate with information
As these areas are managed by the Contact Centre, we employ Customer Service Advisors who are skilled in managing all types of visitors to the Civic Centre.	
no	
N/A	
No	
No	

Q4

If you are responsible for a public facing environment (e.g. reception, library etc...) have you considered whether the colours and patterns are low arousal such as cream and pastel shades rather ...

The colours within Link1 a are neutral and we removed any colour posters or wall coverings.

No

No

No....the colour etc has been chosen by Facilities

We have looked at this and have developed activities taking into consideration colours.

yes, as we work with young people with Autism.

The areas tend to be white or pastel colours

We do have a big reception area and it is pastel /cream

We are not responsible for this aspect of the public reception areas.

yes, the site is painted in colours suitable for people with dementia - muted tones and natural light. This works as low arousal for people with autism.

N/A

No the decoration falls under Corporate Management

NA

Q5

Have you considered the general noise level in a public-facing environment?

This was considered as the "low humming" from the air conditioning unit was a distraction. This was reviewed with facilities and fans turned down where possible.

No

We try to ensure it is a calming environment as we register deaths

We try to maintain a calm environment but a peak times that is difficult

We have considered this and it is a quiet environment generally

yes

Yes but difficult to control at times

WE sometimes play calming music and show underwater scenes/waterfalls and snow falling .

No, however both these reception areas can get busy and noisy.

yes. no music playing, the number of people accessing the space is managed to reduce crowding

N/A

No but we are mindful of the noise level due to conversations and information under GDPR regulations.

NA

Q6

Have you considered if the environment has fluorescent or harsh lighting?

The lighting is extremely harsh but given the set up in was very difficult to change

No

The lighting is soft due to the work we do

Not until now

We try to soften the lighting across the sites whilst still being light enough to be safe.

yes, we are aware, but have not control of what types of lighting is installed

The areas need to be well lit for health and safety reasons

its all very subtle lighting

We are not responsible for this aspect of the public reception areas.

yes. the lighting gives the effect of natural light and curtains are open to allow light through windows

n/A

This is a corporate facility.

NA

Q7

If applicable, do 'offensive' smells drift around the building from room to room and have you considered how you might isolate them?

N/A

Not an issue

no offensive smells in the register office

n/a

N/A

No

n/a its very airy

Yes, both these areas can have 'offensive' smells.

NA

N/A

No but is we do become aware then these are reported to facilities.

NA

Q8 Do you make your environments free of unnecessary obstructions and clutter?

Yes.

Where possible

yes

yes

Yes

yes

Yes they are as clutter free as possible

yes

The areas are free of unnecessary obstructions and clutter.

yes,

N/A

Yes

Office - yes

Q9 Have you considered to what extent public information boards, notices, signage etc... are supported by the use of symbols, pictures, photos or objects?

The Speech and Language Therapist has helped to review all literature and signs within the building and all correspondence templates with service users.

Not enough

sometimes

yes

We could do more with this and would appreciate support and advice

Yes, we create picture boards or story boards for our young people with Autism when attending the youth club session

Noticeboards are not generally used

our service users information is all easy ready timetables and posters

No.

notice boards are kept free of unnecessary signage and picture formats are offered where possible

N/A

No this would sit under Corporate Communications team.

Yes - we try to be as visual as possible, where appropriate, from an accessibility point of view... both on our website and in printed publications, marketing materials we issue. This is also to assist with overcoming language barriers in some circumstances.

Q10 Is there a system in place should a person with autism need to escape/leave an environment?

The Officer seeing the child and family would be aware of the underlying health needs and would discuss with the child with the child how they could leave/take a break should they wish.

Not formally

no

No

All tours in the museum are stewarded so that if anyone needs to leave they are able to

Staff would provide assistance to the person/carer if required

WE have an open building and a garden and we have areas at the moment we can chill out in such as the sensory room

No - although our officers would be aware if our visitors became unsettled.

not a specific system but there is free access to exit points should the person need to leave

N/A

No not to my knowledge

NA

Q11 Have staff in your service area taken up the Council's latest Autism Awareness training?

Some have however all have undertaken training within the service lead by specialist staff

No

no

No not aware there was any

No but we would be keen to

yes via L& D

Not applicable - Better would provide training

Ongoing updates of training at the moment for the staff team

No.

yes

Yes but not sure if it is the most current, a refresher would be useful

No we have not

We have done some training with an external provider about neurodiversity - everyone in the service took part

Q12

Please provide any other comments, examples or ideas you would like to feedback about how you make your service area more accessible to people with autism.

We are due to relocate to the newly designed Mezz in early 2021. Its has been agreed that the Speech and Language Therapist will help to inform the layout, colours etc to make it user friendly.

This is not an area we have considered but this form has given me ideas to put in place.

At the moment the reception area is closed to visitors. We will take on board any recommendations when re-opening

We are currently reaching out to SEND coordinators in schools in order to develop our educational offering. We have activities such as object handling, larger print for worksheets when we're open and virtual sessions that are aimed at schools during periods where they can't visit but would also be useful for schools that aren't local to us. We adapt lessons to be shorter where needed too and are open to ideas on how to improve.

To create one sensory space in each young peoples center where they have a space children and young people can take time to reflect, calm down a quiet space

Making sure that people are not bombarded by information. We communicate changes to Su's in advance maybe with a social story.

As both these reception areas are accessible by all our residents consideration should be given to ensure safety of officers and a balanced professional/friendly area for visitors.

Residents can contact using a variety of methods. So access is available to all services through a route of their choosing and makes the user comfortable . I.e telephone, email etc.

Those with neurodiverse conditions in our team are given chance to suggest reasonable adjustments - for example, allowing team members with autism to wear more comfortable clothing, work flexible hours, receive instructions in a preferred format (e.g. verbally, followed up with a summary email), noise cancelled headphones, extra time to do work, supportive software on computer systems