Specialist services for autistic spectrum disorders

Providing comprehensive care pathways with measurable outcomes

- St Andrew’s Northampton
- St Andrew’s Nottinghamshire
- St Andrew’s Birmingham
Delivering person-centred care in specially designed environments

At St Andrew’s we have developed comprehensive care pathways for adults and adolescents with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), including those with Asperger’s. Delivered in specially designed, dedicated environments, we are able to provide person-centred care programmes, in a range of locations, tailored to the needs of the patient.

Our specialist, skilled and experienced multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) deliver services which recognise the highly specialist needs of adults and adolescents with ASD, and will provide:

- full assessments using established diagnostic tools including Autism Diagnostic Interview, Revised (ADI-R), Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS), Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO)
- forensic risk assessment
- routine outcome monitoring
- use of adapted therapeutic interventions and therapies
- anxiety management through multiple complementary interventions including mindfulness and relaxation therapies.
- comprehensive evaluation including cognitive profiling, testing of executive function and sensory profiling
- reduction in incidents of aggression observed within the second six months of stay*
- 90% of young people achieve recognised qualifications whilst in our care
- 50% reduction in incidents of aggression observed within the second six months of stay*
- 82% of all discharges from our men’s low secure services are to non-secure care, community settings or back to prison
- 15 months is the average length of stay in our men’s ASD pathway**
- 90% of all discharges from our men’s low secure services are to non-secure care, community settings or back to prison
- 93% of the data is from low secure care.

*Months 7–12 compared with months 1–6. Data from men’s ASD pathway
**93% of the data is from low secure care.
Our integrated care pathways

Across three hospital sites, we offer a range of comprehensive care pathways for men, women and adolescents with ASD, providing tailored care for each individual wherever they are on their recovery journey.

All units are based in our centrally located site in Northampton unless otherwise stated.

Women with ASD are cared for in our learning disability pathway, with input from our specialist ASD teams.

We are able to accept direct referrals for patients who have already undergone an assessment and need to continue with a treatment programme in a dedicated environment.

We provide spacious facilities with secure outdoor gardens, therapy rooms, therapy kitchens, games rooms, quiet/low stimulus areas and visitor spaces.
Recognising specialist needs

Throughout St Andrew’s we are able to draw on the skills of our established services for developmental disorders, mental health problems and neuropsychological disorders, to support comprehensive treatment programmes and deliver appropriate environments.

Northampton

On our Northampton site, we are able to offer comprehensive care pathways for adults and adolescents.

Our adult medium secure service for men is appropriate for those with associated mental health needs, emotional problems or offending behaviour. Treatment programmes are informed by a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary formulation of risk and rehabilitation needs, which clearly identify the steps individuals will need to take in order to progress through their treatment pathway.

Our new low secure environments are able to accept direct referrals of men with Asperger’s/ASD who have offended and/or have mental health problems. We assess patients who may exhibit acutely disturbed behaviour, yet do not need the security features of medium secure settings. Patients will undergo a range of assessments to clarify their diagnosis, risks and treatment needs.

Following a period of stabilisation, and once the patient is engaging in their treatment programme, we will provide ongoing treatment and rehabilitation that will equip them with the skills to live in a non-secure setting.

Birmingham

We have created a service for men with ASD, specifically those with Asperger’s or higher functioning autism coupled with mental health problems. Within our low secure environments people with a history of challenging behaviour and previous unsuccessful placements can be catered for with confidence.

A needs-led approach, delivered by a well trained MDT, provides individually tailored care pathways. We make sure that the end goal is to provide support and develop adaptive living skills, so that we can identify long-term placements outside of a secure environment and help the individual re-integrate back into the community.

Nottinghamshire

Since our opening in 2010, our medium secure and two low secure units in Nottinghamshire offer a comprehensive ASD service for men. With admissions into medium and low secure care, and provision of dedicated rehabilitation services, we can ensure continuity of care throughout a patient’s journey back to the community.

The service provides person-centred, individually tailored treatment packages for patients with ASD who may have associated mental health needs, emotional problems or challenging behaviour.

Consideration has been given to the layout and design of all of our ASD environments, in recognition of the complex, highly specialist needs of this service user group.
Case study: Adam’s story

Adam had a troubled childhood, with a number of care placements breaking down. Following a diagnosis of Asperger’s syndrome, he was placed in a specialist school for autism. Upon reaching adulthood, he presented with serious challenging behaviour and received a hospital order.

The difficulties continued, particularly with his poor ability to compromise, negotiate and engage in socially acceptable behaviour. Adam did not engage in any therapy for several years and there were numerous incidents of property damage and physical aggression. He was frequently moved between hospitals, which reflected the difficulties in provision and lack of expertise available.

After seven years in various medium secure hospitals, Adam was admitted to St Andrew’s Nottinghamshire.

An examination of offences revealed a pattern of communication difficulties underlying his behaviour.

A personalised treatment plan was developed and the team worked together to provide Adam with reassuring messages, reduce his anxiety, support him to express resentment and to interact with others in socially acceptable ways.

Once a strong therapeutic relationship was established, he began to acknowledge his difficulties. He did not show significant risk behaviour for several months and engaged in a number of therapeutic initiatives, making significant progress.

Within 15 months of admission, he was moved to a less secure setting. Adam learned to recognise his difficulties in expressing himself and in understanding another person’s perspective.

This significantly changed his behaviour patterns, and he continued to work on expressing his emotions in socially acceptable ways.

Adam continued to make good progress, which enabled him to work towards a community placement with support from his family.

The Community Re-integration Team worked with Adam to ensure a smooth transition process and helped him to achieve a positive outcome.

“When you have met an ASD patient, you have met precisely one ASD patient. Individual needs are very varied.”

Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist
Our ASD specialist staff

The MDT working within our ASD services have been selected due to their experience, interest and desire to work with this patient group. Many have joined with established expertise in working within this clinical speciality; others have developed skills through innovative training, clinical professional development and supervision from experts in this field.

Juli is a Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist in neurodevelopmental psychiatry with over 15 years’ experience of working with people with ASD. She serves on many external boards and committees, including the NICE Quality Standards Advisory Committee on Autism, the Scientific Advisory Committee of Research Autism and the Editorial Board of the National Autistic Society (NAS) Annual Professional Conference. She was recently elected as Chair of the Advisory Board to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism, having been a member of the group for over ten years. Previously, she was influential in driving and shaping the National Strategy for Adults with Autism and the NICE Guidelines for Autism in Adults.

To find out more about Dr Juli Crocombe, visit stah.org/JuliCrocombe

Jane worked in learning disability NHS services in Northumberland from 1997–2005 and while there developed a special interest in autistic spectrum disorders including Asperger’s syndrome. She subsequently worked at a specialist independent hospital for adolescents and adults with autistic spectrum disorders before joining St Andrew’s in March 2008 to help establish the Northampton low secure ASD provision.

To find out more about Dr Jane Radley, visit stah.org/JaneRadley

San is a Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist with a special interest in ASD. He has worked at St Andrew’s Nottinghamshire since 2010, where he has helped to successfully establish a medium and low secure service for those with ASD. He works as a Responsible Clinician for a number of in-patients with ASD, particularly those with Asperger’s syndrome. San previously worked in community, in-patient and secure NHS hospitals and in prisons. He is a trainer in risk assessment tools and is experienced in risk formulation of both autism and non-autism patient groups. San has played a significant role in practice development within ASD wards and has held workshops and teaching sessions in various forums. He has researched and published several articles on ASD.

To find out more about Dr Santhana Gunasekaran, visit stah.org/SanthanaGunasekaran

Olufunto is a Consultant in forensic psychiatry. Since 2004, she has worked in secure services in Kent, Milton Keynes and Oxford. In 2008 she took up a special interest post in developmental disorders at St Andrew’s Northampton, followed in 2009 with a post at the Evenlode Clinic, Oxford. Having completed her forensic training with the Oxford Deanery in 2010, she became Consultant for our medium secure unit for men with ASD.

To find out more about Dr Olufunto Orimalade, visit stah.org/OlufuntoOrimalade
Ernest is a Consultant Psychiatrist who has qualified in both learning disability and forensic psychiatry, and has been working with adolescents with neurodevelopmental disabilities including ASD in secure settings at St Andrew’s since 2000. Thanks to the goodwill and hard work of many of his colleagues he was privileged to be the editor of ‘Forensic Issues in Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities’, a multi-disciplinary textbook published by Jessica Kingsley in 2011.

To find out more about Dr Ernest Gralton, visit stah.org/ErnestGralton

“Specially designed facilities enable us to embrace a patient’s social, cultural and recreational needs.”

Consultant Psychiatrist
About St Andrew’s:

- the UK’s leading charity providing specialist NHS care
- sustainable not-for-profit growth, investing all surpluses in improved patient care
- investing in our people and our environments, dedicating £200 million over the last ten years to providing high-quality care settings
- major national secure services for young people, women, men and older adults
- in-depth expertise in trauma, personality disorder, psychosis, autism, learning disability, brain injury and dementia.

Improving understanding by sharing our knowledge
St Andrew’s is the 1st Teaching Hospital outside the NHS. To find out more about our learning environment, go to: stah.org/teaching

Getting in touch
For more information about our autistic spectrum disorder pathways or to make a referral:

- **t:** 0800 434 6690
- **e:** enquiries@standrew.co.uk
- **w:** stah.org/ASD

- **St Andrew’s Northampton**
  Cliftonville
  Northampton
  NN1 5DG
  **t:** 01604 616 000

- **St Andrew’s Birmingham**
  70 Dogpool Lane
  Stetchley, Birmingham
  West Midlands, B30 2XR
  **t:** 0121 432 2100

- **St Andrew’s Nottinghamshire**
  Sherwood Avenue
  Sherwood Oaks Business Park
  Mansfield, NG18 4GW
  **t:** 01623 665 280

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