



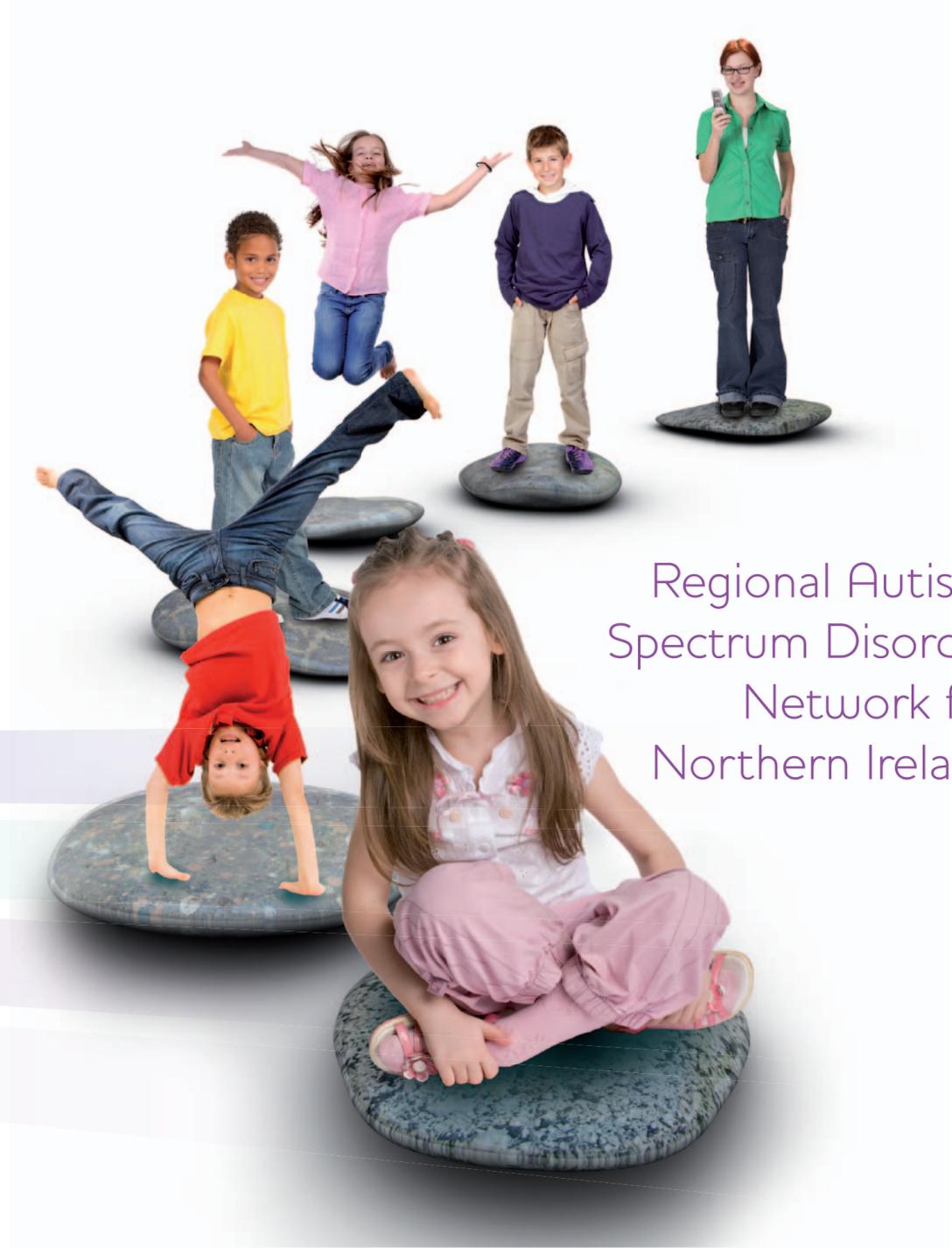
Acknowledgments

The Regional Autism Spectrum Disorder Network would like to thank the many individuals involved in the development of this Guide. In particular, a special word of thanks to the members of the Regional Reference Group, parents, carers and service users, who have shared their lived experience of autism in support of this publication. This has been greatly appreciated.

Alternative Formats

This Guide can also be made available in alternative formats: large print, computer disk, Braille, audio tape or translation for anyone not fluent in English. Contact the Communications Office at the Health and Social Care Board www.hscboard.hscni.net.

Autism: A Guide for Families



Regional Autistic
Spectrum Disorder
Network for
Northern Ireland

We created this Guide to provide written support to you following the diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder* (ASD) for your child or young person.

Our aim is to provide accurate, useful and unbiased information about ASD. We hope that this resource will help you to understand more about these conditions, and guide you through the services you may need to access.

ASD is a spectrum disorder which means that it affects each person differently. Some individuals will need support only at specific times in their life; others may need ongoing support.

Following diagnosis of an ASD, you may feel a sense of relief that you have an explanation for the many things which have concerned you. You may feel overwhelmed and confused. You may also feel worried about the future. We want to reassure you that you are not alone, and that there are many other parents and families here in Northern Ireland who have a child(ren) or a young person(s) with ASD.

In this Guide you will find details of the Health and Social Care Board's 'Six Steps of Autism Care' document. This document shows how services and support will adapt to meet both you and your child or young person's changing needs over the coming years. It will direct you through assessment, diagnosis, treatments/interventions, family support, education and much more.

Your ASD Co-ordinator within your local Health and Social Care Trust can provide you with a list of ASD services, information on local voluntary organisations and other useful resources.

This Guide has been designed to provide you with age-appropriate information, which has been colour-coded in two sections – 'Child' and 'Young Person'. Please do not feel you need to read this Guide all at once, but use it as a signposting resource that you come back to time and again. A Guide for adults with ASD is also being produced.

We hope that this written material will help you to have confidence in your decision-making as a parent/carer. Suggestions are given on how to plan ahead and forge the best future for your child or young person, making it possible for him/her to move towards independence and lead as full a life as possible.

Dr Stephen Bergin
Chair, Regional Autistic Spectrum Disorder Network (RASDN)

October 2011

(*The term ASD refers to all diagnoses on the autism spectrum, including autism and Asperger's Syndrome.)



Regional Autistic Spectrum Disorder Network (RASDN)

This multi-disciplinary and multi-agency collaboration includes service users, parents and carers. It was set up in June 2009 and is managed by the Health and Social Care Board. RASDN aims to improve outcomes for individuals who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and their families.

Log on to www.hscboard.hscni.net for further details about RASDN.

RASDN Members:

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	www.dhsspsni.gov.uk
Health and Social Care Board	www.hscboard.hscni.net
Public Health Agency	www.publichealth.hscni.net
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	www.belfasttrust.hscni.net
Northern Health and Social Care Trust	www.northerntrust.hscni.net
Southern Health and Social Care Trust	www.southerntrust.hscni.net
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	www.setrust.hscni.net
Western Health and Social Care Trust	www.westerntrust.hscni.net
Department of Education	www.deni.gov.uk
Department for Employment and Learning	www.delni.gov.uk
Education and Library Boards	Belfast: www.belb.org.uk North Eastern: www.neelb.org.uk South Eastern: www.seelb.org.uk Southern: www.selb.org/home.htm Western: www.welbni.org
Reference Group: Parents, Carers and Service Users	
Action for Children	www.actionforchildren.org.uk
Autism Initiatives Northern Ireland	www.ai-ni.co.uk
Autism Northern Ireland	www.autismni.org
Autism Network Northern Ireland	www.autismnetworkni.org.uk
Barnardo's	www.barnardos.org.uk
EAGLE	www.belfastcentralmission.org
Mencap	www.mencap.org.uk
Parents' Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT)	www.peatni.org
Special Provision for the Education of Autistic Children (SPEAC)	www.speac-centre.org
The National Autistic Society	www.autism.org.uk