

## **The Microsegmentation Study**

The Microsegmentation Study has been funded by the Scottish Government as part of the Scottish Strategy for Autism. It is being delivered by a project team managed by Scottish Autism. The core research team includes:

*At the University of Strathclyde:*  
Professor Tommy MacKay  
Professor Jim Boyle  
Michael Connolly

*At London School of Economics:*  
Professor Martin Knapp  
Valentina Lemmi

This study is an important part of the Scottish Strategy for Autism, and will help in planning future service provision for everyone with ASD in Scotland.

### **About Scottish Autism**

Scottish Autism's stated mission is to support people living with autism throughout their life journey. Personalisation of support is at the heart of this mission. Across our services we are delivering over five hundred unique approaches to enabling support.

We have introduced approaches to organisational and practice improvement to ensure that every aspect of our work reflects our value base.

### **About the project**

The overall objective is that the findings of the study will lead to improved planning and service delivery that supports individuals in keeping with their needs as they change and develop throughout their lifetime.

The project is made up of three connected studies:

1. The Prevalence of Autism in Scotland: By drawing on a range of data sources the study will yield a revised prevalence for Scotland.
2. Establishing a realistic estimate of people with autism who also have an intellectual disability: This is important in order to understand the impact individuals with these additional needs have and to understand what this means for service availability, planning and design.
3. A Survey of people with autism in Scotland: This is needed to bring the prevalence figures to life. This data will give depth and meaning to the prevalence figures and will assist us in mapping out the multiple range of

needs across the autism spectrum. This in turn will assist us in making recommendations and marshalling arguments for a whole range of services.

The project has a focus on economic factors. We cannot avoid the financial climate. Looking at what the potential escapable costs of providing the right support at the right time might deliver is not about thinking about people as a financial burden. It is about gathering evidence so smarter, longer term decisions regarding funding and service planning can be made.

It is well established that our understanding of the actual prevalence of autism is poor. What is also lacking is any reliable information as to the numbers of people who have additional conditions such as a learning disability. This in turn makes it very difficult to argue for resources to be directed in line with need. This however does not mean that we think individuals should be categorised or labelled by a “type” of presentation. Nor does it mean that people should be directed to or offered a “one size fits all” service rather we hope to demonstrate that the right support at the right time is, in the long run, better for individuals and better management of our limited resources. The idea is to establish what is likely to be a complex picture of the range of needs of people with autism across Scotland.

To date, the response to the survey has been overwhelming and we would like to take the opportunity to thank the hundreds of people with autism, their families, professional and family carers who have shown their support for this project by completing the survey and agreeing to further participation.

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