



The Autism Project - Admissions Policy and Procedures

Context

The Autism Project (TAP) is an approved provider (SPI – special post 16 institution) on the Secretary of State’s Section 41 List as of 31 August 2016. TAP is owned and run by CareTrade Charitable Trust which provides services and raises awareness and understanding of autism.

CareTrade’s vision is everyone with autism can lead a purposeful life, and our mission is to create innovative opportunities for people with autism and to change perceptions.

The purpose of The Autism Project (TAP) is to offer learner a unique approach to employability study. In the first stage learners have a placement in real work settings within one of our host employers this includes Guy’s & St. Thomas’ or The Whittington Hospitals, GCDA Kitchen and many others around London. It is an immersive employment program for young people on the autistic spectrum, who would like to be employed but need more confidence, support, experience, and skills to take the next step. Learners attend Skill Up sessions (skills for work) and study towards City & Guilds Functional Skills qualifications, if applicable.

Work experience placements and class sessions continue in stage 2. This stage also focuses on greater independence and confidence in the workplace and supports learners to actively seek and apply for employment, further training, or apprenticeships in a weekly ‘job club’.

Learner’s timetables are individually planned with their Education, Health and Care Plan outcomes in mind. Whilst employment is our main focus our curriculum also focuses on all four preparing for Adulthood Pathways – Independence, Employment, Better Health and Community Inclusion.

TAP provides learners with a specialist curriculum which prioritises their individual needs and aspirations. It is delivered by highly skilled and experienced staff. A high percentage of learning is within real workplaces and the local community.

The Autism Project complies with the SEND Code of Practice 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25> and where applicable to the School Admissions Code, December 2014

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389388/School_Admissions_Code_2014_-_19_Dec.pdf

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure The Autism Project (TAP) has planned and robust systems in place to support an efficient and consistent approach to:

- Admissions
- Referrals and application process
- Assessments
- Additional support provision

And sets out how we will approach matters of over subscription, waiting lists and appeals, should they arise.

Admissions Criteria

The Autism Project is for learners with a primary diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) aged between 18 and 25.

The majority of our learners also have a learning difficulty or other disorder presenting with similar language, communication, socialisation, learning and behavioural issues such as A.D.H.D, dyspraxia, Fragile X, and dyslexia. Challenging behaviour, medical conditions such as epilepsy or home location do not preclude a young person from consideration for a placement. **Please note** all learners require special education.

TAP will admit learners where The Autism Project is named on the young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or where the Local Authority have agreed to fund for a minimum of a year whilst they are completing an assessment of a young person for an EHCP and in exceptional circumstances where a young person is funded otherwise (i.e. Social Services or privately).

Each learner will have individual person-centred targets and study programme developed to help them achieve the outcomes within their EHCP. The focus is employability, and it is generally a two-year study programme.

For the academic year starting September 2022 we have 15 places available for new starters (25 places in total).

A young person or their advocate (someone acting on their behalf such as a parent or carer) can request CareTrade is named on their EHCP if this is their preferred choice of provider. (Please read referral and application process section).

Prior to naming TAP on a young person's EHCP, the Local Authority will have consulted with CareTrade in line with their statutory obligations as set out in the SEND Code of Practice and have complied with TAP referral and application process below.

Places are commissioned by the Local Authority in which the young person resides and in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

Places have to be taken up within the first week of the term the place is offered for, or a deferral agreed in advance.

Each application is considered on an individual basis. In each case, our application process evaluates the needs of the individual young person and determines whether The Autism

Project is suitable or not to meet their needs with particular reference to the following factors set out in the SEND Code 2015: -

- TAP is unsuitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs
- The attendance of the young person at TAP would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources.

Additionally, the following factors will be considered: -

- The young person has expressed a preference for The Autism Project
- Autism or an ASC is the young person's primary need (verified in an EHCP or other professional report)
- The young person has an EHCP or is currently being assessed for one
- The young person wants to move towards and into employment
- The majority of learning at TAP is in real work-placements
- The needs of learners will be assessed to take into account the cohort and environment to enable the efficient education of others
- Additional support that might be required for young people (due to sensory, behavioural or mental health issues) that could impact on their safety or that of others. This would not necessarily but may prevent admission. It will be determined by assessment and if a place is offered the cost of the placement will be adjusted accordingly.

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015 for place for young people moving from secondary school to a post-16 institution or for young people moving between post-16 institutions, the Local Authority must review and make any amendments to the EHCP by 31 March in the calendar year of the transfer or at least 5 months before the transfer is to take place.

Referrals and Admissions Process

Young people and their advocates are encouraged to attend information sessions and or open days at The Autism Project, prior to making an application. Dates of open days are published on our website. In addition, a visit for a potential learner will be accommodated outside of these days wherever possible.

In addition, initial enquires can be made by telephone or email. Contact details are at the end of this document.

If a young person then wishes to apply to attend The Autism Project they need to contact their Local Authority, and request for The Autism Project to be named on their EHCP. Your Local Authority should then send a consultation to The Autism Project.

Please note we do not take applications direct from young people or their advocates. We can direct young people or their advocates (parents/carers) on how to make a request to

their Local Authority or signpost to other organisations if advice is needed making an application for an assessment for an EHCP (Education Health & Care Plan).

All applicants must: -

- have a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- have an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) or be in the process of being assessed for an EHCP or be able to show they have written to their Local Authority to have requested an assessment for an EHCP

Where the referral is from a Local Authority: -

- they will consult with The Autism Project prior to naming it, in line with their statutory obligations
- they are asked to provide information as stated above for all applicants
- The Autism Project will respond within the statutory 15-day period.

The Autism Project's response will be determined by the documentation received (draft EHCP, latest annual review, LDA, Section 139A, professional assessments, references etc.) and by our assessments (set out below).

All completed Applications (as set out in 'All applicants must' above) will be considered by our Admissions Panel prior to making a response. Potential learners will be invited to complete our assessment process (please see Assessments). TAP Admissions Panel will comply with the statutory 15-day requirement where applicable.

Once agreed that The Autism Project can meet the needs of the learner, a conditional place will be offered to the young person and this will be copied to the Local Authority together with an example study programme and the costs for the place for the potential learner, to be considered and approved at their panel meeting.

When funding has been approved by the Local Authority an individualised study programme is produced and shared with the potential learner (and advocate). Once approved this is provided to the Local Authority.

All learners must start in the first week of the term they have been offered a place or they will have to start the following term (a deferral payment may be incurred if this was delay was due to the young person or their Local Authority).

On entry to TAP, all learners are provided with a 6-week assessment period. If during this period it transpires that the level of resource required to meet the learner's need is higher than that which was determined prior to the learner starting, then CareTrade reserves the right to go back to the respective Local Authority for additional funding to meet these additional needs.

Confidentiality

In general, all learners will have the opportunity to meet with TAP staff prior to starting the programme and will have an induction suited to their individual needs. All learners are required to have an EHCP in place and will be DBS checked. Any additional support needs will be discussed when applying to ensure the correct support is in place prior to starting

All decisions relating to the proposed placement of any individual are confidential. There will be open communication with relatives, carers, and advocates, which acknowledges and respects the needs of each learner.

Over subscription criteria

If The Autism Project is oversubscribed the priority for admissions will be given to those young people who meet our admissions criteria and the criteria below:-

1. Those young people that reside in Southwark or Lambeth with an EHCP in place where the local authority has requested The Autism Project is named of the following academic year for a place that September
2. Those young people with an EHCP and their local authority has agreed in writing to fund a place on The Autism Project
3. Date funding is agreed
4. Date application was made.

Should two applications be equally ranked within an individual category, a tie-break situation will occur. The tie-break priority will be decided on a combination of the individual category 1-3 and category 4 (where the person that submitted a completed and full application form and supporting documents requested first will have priority). In the unlikely event that these factors are also identical, a random allocation will be used as a tie break. This will be independently verified.

Waiting List

A waiting list will be established if, during each academic year, The Autism Project has reached the maximum number of places.

We will maintain a clear, fair and objective waiting list and will be in rank order in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

When a place becomes available, the relevant Local Authority and young person will be notified.

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, if any existing Learner is moving on from The Autism Project to a new destination, the Local Authority will need to name the new destination on the Learners EHCP by 31 March. Therefore after the 31 March, The Autism Project may be able to release additional places to those placed on the waiting list.

Appeal arrangements

Admission appeals will be considered by The Autism Project Appeals Panel, which consists of the Chair of The Education Advisory Panel, the CEO and a Trustee, none of whom will have been involved any earlier interviews or assessments of potential learners or admission decisions of individual applications.

Contact Details

Telephone: 020 3375 6288

Email: admissions@caretradeuk.org