**Autism and Girls Forum**

The Autism and Girls Forum grew out of a Girls and ASC round table meeting, which was instigated by the nasen (National Association for Special Educational Needs) and held in London on 13th April 2015. This became the Autism and Girls Forum, which, since March 2016 has been hosted on NAHT’s website under the umbrella of the National Forum for Neuroscience and Special Education

**Chair**  Professor Barry Carpenter CBE

**Purpose**
At the first meeting in April 2015, the purposes of the forum were agreed as:

1. Recognising and appreciating the unique identity of girls and women with autism and the positive contribution they make to society.
2. Changing perceptions and attitudes about girls and women with autism.
3. Promoting equal consideration of girls and women who have, or may not yet have, a diagnosis of autism

**Strategic Planning Group**
Prof Barry Carpenter  International lecturer and writer
Julie Collick  NAHT Content Adviser Professional Development
(servicing officer to Forum)
Sarah-Jane Critchley  Autism Education Trust (AET)
Jo Egerton  Educational Researcher
Ruth Fidler,  Independent Consultant
Jane Friswell  Independent Consultant
Caroline Gordon  Incisive Health
Carrie Grant  Parent of children and young people with autism
Prof Francesca Happe  Cognitive Neuroscientist
Sharonne Horlock  SENCO
Kim Johnson  President, NAHT
Dr Liz Pellicano,  Cognitive Scientist
Carol Povey  National Autistic Society (NAS)
Kate Quigley  NAHT, Head of Professional Development
Felicity Sedgewick  PhD student (Autism in girls)
Dr Rona Tutt OBE  NAHT
Sophie Walker  Parent and journalist
Alison Wilcox,  nasen
Sarah Wild  Headteacher (school for girls with ASD)
Sarah Winstone  Incisive Health (Founding Partner)
Background
On 13th April 2015, nasen invited a group of interested parties to a Girls and ASC round table meeting in London, to discuss the need for a focus on girls with autism, because of growing concerns about their possible under-diagnosis and being a group that is overlooked. The group agreed to meet regularly to take forward this agenda and that it would become a Forum.

From its subsequent meeting, 2 major projects arose:

- Producing a booklet to raise awareness and provide information for schools, as well as giving a wider perspective from the family perspective
- Planning a conference which would give an update of the work in this area so far; give the perspective of girls and women who are on the autism spectrum; share effective practice; and result in a ‘Call for Action’.

Outcomes

Although the Autism and Girls Forum has only been in existence for a short time, it has already completed one of its major projects and is well on the way to finalising the 2nd one as well:

Girls and Autism: Flying Under the Radar
The booklet, Girls and Autism: Flying Under the Radar, has been published as part of nasen’s mini-guide series and is available from their SEND Gateway. This has already become very popular, both here and abroad. www.sendgateway.org.uk/.

Girls on the Autism Spectrum; the Big Shout!
The second project was to plan a conference in London for Friday 27th January 2017. Called Girls on the Autism Spectrum; the Big Shout! The aim is to give a further push to this agenda. Places can be booked via http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/naht-events/conferences/. As well as raising awareness, it is hoped that a positive outcome of the conference will be to agree a ‘Call for Action’ to highlight what needs to be done next.