

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Autism Education Training (AET) Package – Professional Development and Licence
Date of decision:	7 th November 2025
Decision maker:	Service Director for Education, Skills and Learning (Children and Young People's Directorate)
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>The Children and Families Scheme of Delegation, paragraph 48, states that all children must 'get a suitable education' and delegates decisions to the Director for Education, Skills and Learning.</p> <p>The Service Director is authorised to approve revenue payments between £250,001 and £500,000 as per Herefordshire's Financial Procedure Rules (Section 7).</p>
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	None
Decision made:	Award a contract to Autism Education Trust (through the National Autistic Society) for the provision of Professional Development and licence agreement for a period of three academic years from 1 st September 2025 to 31 August 2028 , with an aggregate contract value of £32,825 (incl VAT).
Reasons for decision:	<p>To purchase the Autism Education Trust (AET) licence and training package for delivering training to a minimum of 330 educational staff each year (Early Years x 60 delegates, Primary and Secondary Schools x 210 delegates, Post 16 education x 60 delegates).</p> <p>AET is the only organisation that can provide a complete package of materials and training for autism support in education settings.</p> <p>The AET frameworks and standards alongside the training programmes add value to supporting schools. The local authority will become a partner in delivering and developing a licenced, quality assured, national programme to early years and schools in Herefordshire developed by specialists in the field of autism education. Stakeholders have confidence in the product's well established, quality assurance and evidence-based structure, its effectiveness and Continual Professional Development (CPD) certified training.</p> <p>The package offers frequently updated, interactive training materials, videos, case studies, problem-solving scenarios and strategies.</p> <p>The programme, using its evidence base, also offers a framework for schools to include in their SEN Information Report.</p> <p>AET training is supported by the Department for Education (DfE).</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>This is a brand-new service provision that will be fully funded by the Department for Education (DfE) Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme.</p> <p>This service will provide educational staff with specialist training and</p>

	<p>signposting to resources to use in class to support pupils with Autism. Without it, pupil engagement in learning and educational outcomes could be negatively impacted.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>Market Testing and Best Value</p> <p>The market was explored for comparable products and none have been found that can match the package provided by AET.</p> <p>The Licence and training is provided by the national charity who are leaders in this area of work.</p> <p>Other providers cannot offer a complete package of resources.</p> <p>Best value will be achieved by purchasing the full package rather than a fragmented approach using different suppliers thereby causing confusion between different training materials and resources. The use of multi-supplier components would also cost more in staff time in planning an alternative bespoke training package without the platform, staff resourcing and cost.</p> <p>The licence and training will provide a consistent approach where all participating staff are trained using the same brand materials and access to the platform benefitting both pupils in settings and schools, across key stages and if staff move between schools.</p> <p>AET package also helps education settings improve their autism provision on every level, from leadership strategy to staff knowledge and learning environment.</p> <p>Appropriate SEND provision is becoming increasingly important for regulators, such as Ofsted.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>N/A</p>