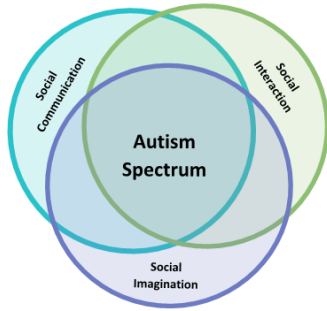


The Communication Outreach Team (COT) is part of East Ayrshire Support Team (EAST). The team offers input to support mainstream establishments who are working with children or young people from 2 to 18 years who are on the Autism Spectrum or who have difficulties with social communication.



The service provided by the team is designed to support establishments that require specific additional input, as part of the staged intervention process. The team operates alongside other existing support networks e.g. Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) with the aim to support relevant staff in educational establishments to develop skills and implement appropriate strategies to meet the needs of identified children/young people.

The Communication Outreach Team is made up of a principal teacher and a pointage of class teachers who work in establishments across East Ayrshire on a peripatetic basis.

Staff within the Communication Outreach Team undertake additional personal study to remain abreast of current best practice regarding learners with social communication difficulties.

## Request for Assistance procedures

A diagnosis of autism is not required to access the service; however there must be sufficient evidence that there are needs that can be usefully met by the service.

In the first instance, the Named Person must have professional dialogue with the establishment's Educational Psychologist to ensure a Request for Assistance (RfA) to the Communication Outreach Team is appropriate. Thereafter, following discussion with Debbie Thomson, EAST PT, either email the completed RfA or upload it to AYRShare with Debbie Thomson as a contact.

Once an initial application has been made, the following process will be followed:

- Cases will be prioritised and support allocated according to need
- Once cases are allocated, the outreach teacher will contact the Head Teacher to arrange an initial observation visit
- During this initial visit the outreach teacher will meet with relevant staff to discuss an appropriate support plan
- Following this initial visit, a Forward Plan will be completed in collaboration with a member of the establishment's SLT
- Ongoing outreach support will be regularly reviewed with key staff to monitor impact

- Once the targeted work comes to an end, the case will be closed
- A Head Teacher can contact the Communication Outreach Team for advice at any point after a case is closed. If further support is required at a later date, the establishment can submit a further Request for Assistance

The Communication Outreach Team contributes to the authority's support policies and procedures to reflect best practice as detailed in the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 through:

- Consultation, liaison, advisory support
- Supporting assessment of need
- Direct teaching
- Curriculum & Staff development

## What the Communication Outreach Team does

The team offers a range of support packages for staff and pupils including:

- Providing advisory support on implementing Autism/SCD specific strategies such as social stories, visual supports, communication passports
- Contributing to Team With the Family meetings and target setting in Child's Plans
- Provide support and guidance, through the use of the CIRCLE Framework, to make learning environments as inclusive as possible and

identify clear and appropriate supports for learners to participate fully in school life

- Provide support and guidance, through the use of SCERTS to determine a child's communication stage and develop appropriate interventions and targets to support social communication, emotional regulation and transactional support
- Supporting transitions e.g. through social stories, pupil passports, supported visits to new establishments, preparing pupils for change
- Provide support and guidance around raising awareness in primary schools about additional support needs, specifically Autism/SCD
- Staff development through training and support e.g. Autism Awareness CLPL sessions, CIRCLE Framework PLC, modelling and coaching
- Implementing national best practice around Autism

#### Useful links

[www.autismtoolbox.co.uk](http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk)

[www.thirdspace.scot/NAIT](http://www.thirdspace.scot/NAIT)

[Inclusive Education– free online modules](#)

(Open Learn Create)

[www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk](http://www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk)

[www.scottishautism.org](http://www.scottishautism.org)

#### For further information please contact:

Debbie Thomson/Kirsty McKnight

Principal Teacher

East Ayrshire Support Team

Crosshouse Campus

Playingfield Road

Crosshouse

KA2 0JJ

Tel: 01563 554974

Email: [eaEAST@eastayrshire.org.uk](mailto:eaEAST@eastayrshire.org.uk)

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East Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

**EAST AYRSHIRE SUPPORT TEAM**

**Service Leaflet**

**Communication  
Outreach  
Team**