

Presentation: 25th March 2021

Autism Resource Officer – Marie McCool

Our Mission

- Autism NI exists to support autistic individuals and their families and campaigns to raise awareness of autism within the wider society.
- We innovate in response to changing times of increased diagnosis, forging links between, and advising service providers. Where there is innovation for autism in Northern Ireland, behind the scenes you will always find Autism NI.

‘Our vision is an equal society in Northern Ireland where barriers to those living with autism are removed and equality of access to rights and opportunities protected and enforced’.



THE ASD JOURNEY

1990 to 2010

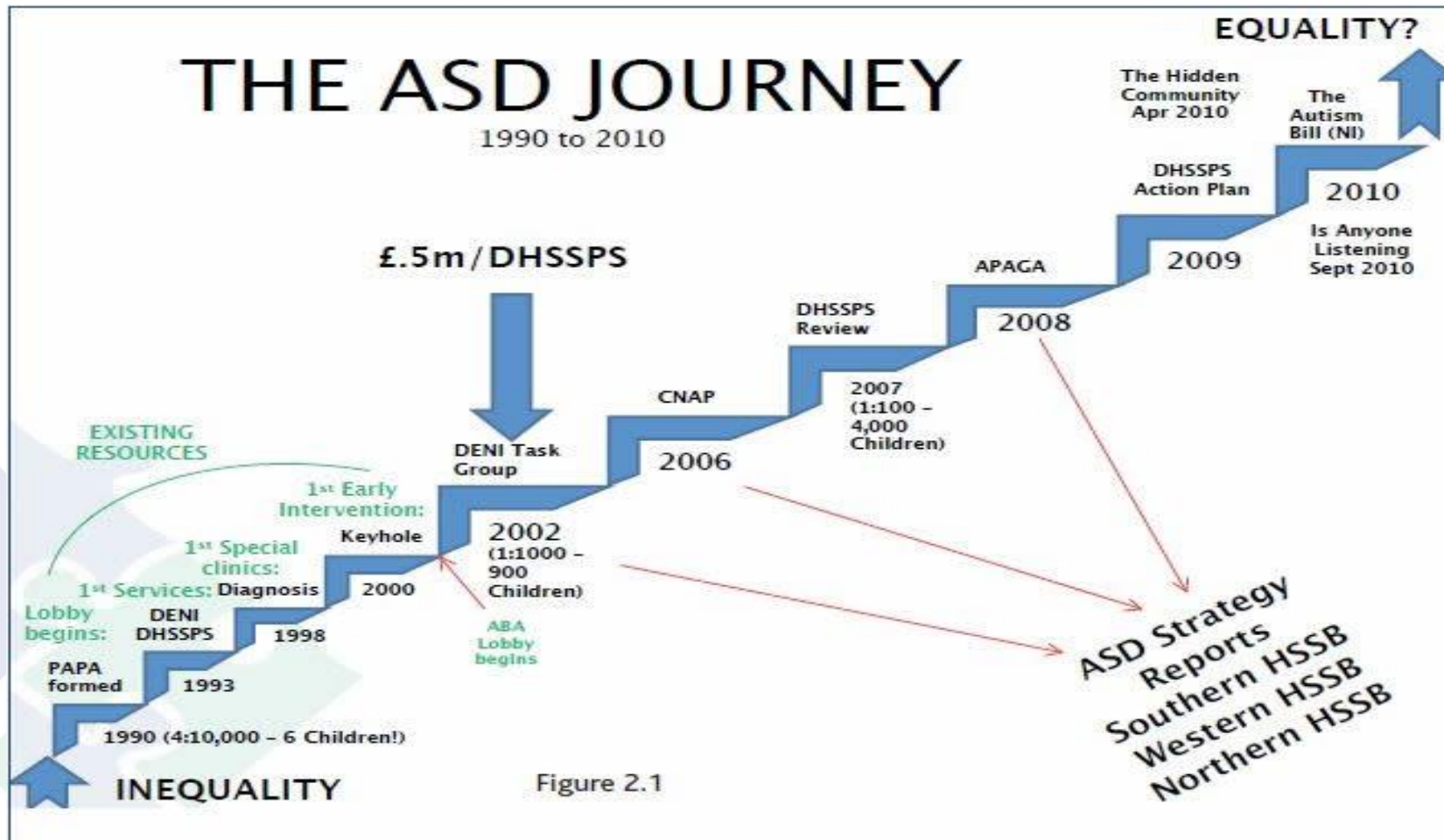


Figure 2.1



- **ARO** – Autism Resource Officers
- **Helpline Service** – available Monday - Friday 9am – 5pm (**02890 401729 option 1**). It is a vital and much in demand service, during the pandemic April 20 – October 20 we received over 2, 700 calls. In the previous year 19/20 we had over 5, 100 calls.
- **Support Groups** – over 20 throughout NI these are facilitated by parents/carers for parents/carers, the peer support is invaluable and often experienced as a 'lifeline'.
- **Training** – Bespoke talks/courses for families and professionals.
- **Website** – Fact sheets/Research and Facebook which is increasingly informing families and professionals.

“Disability discrimination is not victimless. It is not simply a failure of paperwork or procedure. It has real consequences on peoples lives. It can affect the child’s circumstances, their self concept, self esteem, mental health and reduce opportunities in life. This leads to trauma that affects the whole family and has significant costs relating to time and money. Since the appeal result, I have been working to help my child recover from the trauma this has involved and the impact on her life”.(Parent)

“ Can I please ask you to pass on my thanks to all involved in making the support groups work. I greatly appreciate everything people have done. I have learnt so much from others and appreciate the space to talk about life with those around understanding”. (Parent/Carer)



“Thanks so much for your call this morning, not only did it brighten my time in rush hour traffic, it was also very informative and much appreciated”. **(Dad)**

“I attended the family activity. At first I was apprehensive due to my previous experiences in which they were large crowds and overwhelming sounds. However, after I was told that it would be a quiet and autism friendly activity I considered it thoroughly for a week. The day arrived and as typical I was anxious. Being led into a reception area which had barely any people in it, helped calm this anxiety and the jokes of staff helped relieve my stress. When we began watching the players train in the empty arena which was calming and allowed me to feel comfortable enough to take some photos which is a special interest of mine. I do not usually take photos in public due to the anxiety of being judged however the secluded arena gave me the confidence to do so. Not only was the arena perfect for my sensory issues, but a member of staff accompanied us and provided interesting facts about the hockey players such as one of the Giants paid £800 for a hockey stick for it to break 2 weeks later! The member of staff encouraged us to talk to the players, and gave us some background on the team. The players handed out signed hockey stick which was an amazing way for me to remember how breaking your routine and facing my anxiety actually paid off, and perhaps I will feel more inclined to do so from now on! Thank you, for providing this opportunity and the fantastic staff!” **(Young Person, Family Fun Day)**

Professional “The Helpline is invaluable as I feel schools often see the autistic child as the problem, nothing done on a whole class approach of helping other children/parents with inclusion. When young people transfer to high school the drama really unfolds and there is a need for more supports socially as well as whole family”.

“Thank you very much for passing on these useful resources, very much appreciated”. (EWO)

“This service is a brilliant idea and can really help parents like me who are trying to find their feet, post diagnosis. I knew nothing about visuals and barely anything about autism but now I feel I have learnt so much, also my child and I will keep learning together.” Early Supports

Questions & Thank You