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11,000 teachers trained to improve education for children with autism in less than a year

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The School of Education's, **Dr Karen Guldberg (/staff/profiles/education/guldberg-karen.aspx)** and staff from the Autism Centre for Education and Research jointly hosted a highly successful one-day conference entitled **'Transforming autism education'** which was attended by 350 delegates.

Dr Karen Guldberg and staff from the **Autism Centre for Education and Research (ACER) (/research/activity/education/acer/index.aspx)** organised the day in partnership with the Autism Education Trust (AET) to celebrate a national programme that focuses on building skills in the school work force to meet the needs of children and young people with autism. This national programme was commissioned by the AET, and developed by ACER, University of Birmingham, in collaboration with a number of stakeholders.

The programme is delivered by seven hubs across England and consists of:

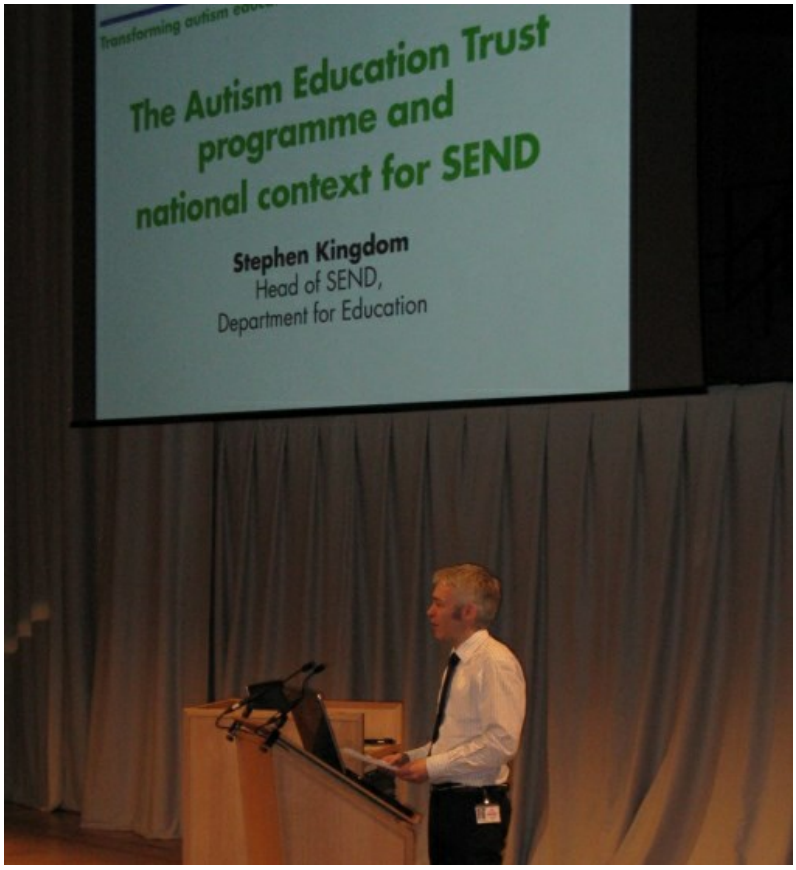
- Three levels of training in autism education for school staff
- A set of National Autism Education Standards for self-evaluation by schools and settings
- A Competency Framework to enable professionals to plan their CPD.

The opening speech of the day was delivered by Stephen Kingdom, head of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), Department of Education. The day also provided an overview of the training programme with a complete Level 1 presentation and an introduction to Levels 2 & 3. It presented briefings on the Standards and Competency Framework and illustrated the use of the training and materials through case studies from a school and a Local Authority.

The day was a great success with highly positive feedback from the delegates, including that the day was 'magical', 'perfect', 'fluid' and 'packed with highly relevant information'.

Steve Huggett, Director of AET stated: "This programme is transforming autism education and is making a real impact because all elements of the programme have been developed and delivered collaboratively; involving University of Birmingham, voluntary organisations, schools, local authorities and, crucially people with autism themselves. This has contributed to the very positive feedback and has led to over 11,000 people being trained in just a year."

Lesley Baker, from Birmingham Local Authority Communication and Autism team stated: "For Birmingham Communication/Autism team, the training programme along with the national autism standards and competencies framework, have provided a structured framework for the development of autism provision and a vehicle for quality assurance across the local authority."



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