World Autism Day marked our first official birthday! The Wales Autism Research Centre's website was launched on World Autism Awareness Day, 1st April 2010 and on 23rd September 2010 we celebrated the formal launch of the Centre with an inaugural lecture and reception at the School of Psychology, Cardiff University. The year also marked the arrival of postdoctoral researcher Dr Sarah Carrington, from the University of Oxford, who joined me in the task of implementing the Centre's objectives, and she will take forward a valuable new research direction for the Centre.

Since our launch we have not stopped growing, with new research staff and students arriving during the year, new grants and projects awarded and the setting up of our labs and new office accommodation. We now have a vibrant research group bringing expertise across a number of research areas. Our success this year has been due entirely to the dedication, and creativity of this amazing team of new researchers. The research reputation of the Centre is growing internationally with increasing numbers of high impact publications, externally funded awards, conference presentations and invited international collaborative visits. We are also supported by a strong network of collaborators, both nationally and internationally.

As the Centre develops its research foundations and creates new links with the community, a major priority has been to raise our profile and engage with the users of our research. In addition to the launch of the centre in September, opened by Edwina Hart, Minister for Health and Social Services, we were delighted to welcome Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Social Services and our foundation funders and collaborators, to the Centre in January. During this year, I and the team have personally met with many hundreds of professionals and members of the public in a series of open days, workshops, seminars, public lectures and informal visits that we have held at the university. We have also been out and about in the community giving talks in schools, and supporting government and charity meetings.

As you will see from the Annual Report that follows, 2010-2011 has been a time of exciting new growth and development for the Wales Autism Research Centre. In addition to setting up new research studies to advance scientific knowledge, we have developed new initiatives with colleagues in the NHS and Bangor University, at the Welsh Assembly Government and the charity Autism Cymru. These projects include the development of an NHS database, a report on methods of diagnostic practice, a set of proposals for research on older people and a training module for use in schools. These initiatives have immediate potential to improve policy and practice and make a practical difference to people with autism. Much work lies ahead of us, but we are already on the road to achieving our mission of advancing scientific understanding to create positive change.

Susan Leekam, PhD
Chair in Autism
Director of the Wales Autism Research Centre
Wales Autism Research Centre Membership

2010-2011

Members of the Centre
(foundation funding)

Director:
Professor Sue Leekam

Postdoctoral Research
Associate: Sarah Carrington

PhD Students and Parent
Consultant

Rachel Kent, funded by
ESRC CASE Award (Oct
2009 – Sep 2013)

Linda Iao, Self-funded (2007-
Nov 2010)

Mirko Uljarevic, funded by
WORD studentship (Jan 10-
Dec 2012)

Beverley Winn
Parent Consultant

Research Staff employed during
April 2010 and March 2011
(external grant funding)

Dr. Louise White, Research
Associate, Waterloo
Foundation

Dr. Jane Lidstone, Research
Associate, WAG and Baily
Thomas Charitable Fund

Dr. Anastasia Kourkoulou,
Research Associate, School
of Psychology (now Visiting
Research Associate)

Nadia Somers, Research
Associate, Waterloo
Foundation

Key Research Collaborators

Dr. Dawn Wimpory, Bangor University, (Welsh
Assembly Government)
Dr. David McGonigle, Cardiff University
(Waterloo Foundation)

Advisory Committee

Hugh Morgan (Chief Executive Officer, Autism
Cymru)

Jenny Longmore (Director of Research,
Autistica)

Dylan Jones (Head of School of Psychology,
Cardiff University)

Callum MacInnes, Adult Social Services
Policy, Welsh Assembly Government

External Advisor:

Prof Margot Prior, University of Melbourne,
Senior international scientist and Chair of
Advisory Board for Olga Tennison Research
Centre, Australia
**Wales Autism Research Centre: Annual Report 2010-2011**

The Wales Autism Research Centre is the first national autism research centre in the UK. It was initiated through the unique collaboration of two charities, Autism Cymru and Autistica, working together with the School of Psychology, Cardiff University and the Welsh Assembly Government. This collaborative venture was supported by generous donations from six other charities; Autism Initiatives, Waterloo Foundation, Bally Thomas Charitable Fund, Freemasons Grand Charity, Jane Hodge Foundation and Research Autism. The Centre was officially launched in 2010.

**Mission:**
"Advancing scientific understanding of autism to create positive change"

The mission of the Wales Autism Research Centre is to advance scientific understanding and thereby create positive change and outcomes for individuals and families affected by autism. This mission is to be achieved by (a) facilitating new research in key areas of identification, diagnosis, developmental processes and intervention and (b) integrating scientific evidence with policy and practice. This distinctive double goal is supported by partnerships between scientists, practitioners and government policy makers, making the purpose of this research centre unique in the UK.

**Objectives:**
1. to conduct internationally competitive scientific research projects
2. to facilitate interdisciplinary research and research networks
3. to develop research and training that supports and influences practice and policy
4. to improve public and professional awareness of research

The Wales Autism Research Centre’s five year plan was produced in April 2010. This identified four key objectives and a set of planned activities guiding the work of the Wales Autism Research Centre towards its mission. The Annual Report 2010-2011 outlines the achievements of the Centre against these objectives and planned activities from April 2010 to March 2011.
Objective 1: Conducting internationally competitive scientific research projects

The Centre’s mission relies on the production of innovative, high quality research grant awards, publications in top-quality scientific journals and dissemination of results at international conferences and national meetings.

Priority areas for research projects include:

(a) Identification

(b) Diagnosis

(c) Developmental processes

(d) Intervention.

Details of these projects can be found on our website

www.walesautismresearchcentre.com/

Planned activities

• New grants applied for and success in funding applications
• Publication in high quality scientific journals
• International conference presentations and invited talks
• Databases and measures developed

Since Professor Leekam's arrival, research grant awards by the Wales Autism Research Centre have resulted in over £700,000 in new funding. Our research findings have been reported at many international and national scientific meetings and published in peer reviewed academic journals. Two new databases are in the process of development that will facilitate information storage and research participation.
Grants

New grants awarded:

- **Welsh Assembly Government** Recommendations for Children’s Diagnostic services for ASD. Funding to the value of £199,200 has been allocated for implementation of recommendations in the 2011-2012 period.


- **ESRC** Internship with WAG. PhD student Rachel Kent. £3,300. Start date Oct 2011

New grants starting April 2010-March 2011

- **Welsh Assembly Government and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)**. Development of an Autism Spectrum Disorder database within Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. PI Dr. D. Wimpory, Bangor University Co-app. Prof S. Leekam £73,000 (Dec 2010-May 2011).

- **Baily Thomas Charitable Fund**. Developing targeted intervention for repetitive behaviours and anxiety in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. PI: Leekam; Collaborators; Kanaris and Mullis, Consultant Speech and Language Therapists. Collaborators; Prof Prior, University of Melbourne, Australia and Prof Evans, Buckley College, USA. £115,618 (20 months). Start date: Oct 2010 End date: July 2012. Dr Lidstone RA.


Ongoing external grants and PhD funding April 2010-March 2011:


- **ESRC**. CASE Award Using the Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO) for research. PI; Leekam in partnership with NAS. £64,000. Start date: Oct 09 (4 yrs). End Date: Sept 2013. PhD student Rachel Kent.

- **NIHR Research for Patient Benefit**. Effective therapy for young people with autism spectrum (PI: McConachie, Newcastle University Coapps; Leekam, Le Couteur, Rodgers, Freeston. £228,857. Start date: July 2009 End date: July 2011 (2yrs).

- **Welsh Assembly Government**. Children’s ASD diagnostic services in Wales: Methods of diagnostic practice and clinicians’ views of service effectiveness. PI: Prof Leekam; Co-app Dr D Wimpory; Consultant, Dr C. Ramsden. £24,999 (5 months). Start date: 24th May 2010. End date: 24th May 2010. RA, Dr Jane Lidstone.


Grants applied for (decision awaited):


- **Welsh Assembly Government**. Recommendations for Research on Older People with ASD £450,000 [Prof Leekam, submitted Feb 2011].

- **ESRC**, Understanding anxiety in autism spectrum disorders: can we identify who is most vulnerable? Resubmission. PI
Dr Rodgers (Newcastle). Co-apps, Profs Freeston, McConachie, Le Couteur (Newcastle), Leekam (Cardiff). Decision due July 2011. £425,774.05; £532,217.58 (FEC).

- *Autistica and Prince Salman Centre.*
  Mentor Based Fellowship Awards – Approved to progress to proposal.

Prof Leekam is also a member of the advisory committee for the following successful application: “Using the early support model in a school setting.” M. Bowen, Autism Cymru (funded by Welsh Assembly Government Early Support grant).

**Publications**
Publications in scientific journals from March 2010-April 2011 are shown below.

**New publications in print:**

**New publications in press:**
New publications submitted:


International conference presentations and international invited talks:


- Invited Lectures by Professor Leekam. Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences, Hong Kong University, 7-9 March 2011 (Title 1) Specificity and social cognitive impairment in autism (Title 2) Understanding autism as a spectrum: Research using The Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders (DISCO).


- Invited Keynote Lecture by Prof Leekam: Conference of the Danish Association of Special Schools and Treatments Centres for Children with Autism, Skive, Denmark, November 2010. Title: The Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders.
Wales Autism Research Centre: April 2010 to March 2011


Learning Disability and Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Conference, Cardiff, March 2011. Poster presentations as follows:


Databases and measures developed

- Development of an Autism Spectrum Disorder database within Betsi Caldwaldr University Health Board. Dr Dawn Wimpory, Bangor University (Co-I: Prof Leekam WARC). Database to develop the use of NHS data (Phase 1 development).

- The Wales Autism Research Centre Recruitment Register. Dr. Sarah Carrington, Wales Autism Research Centre. Register for recruitment of potential research participants (Phase 1 development).

Postgraduate degrees awarded (supervised by Professor Leekam)

- David Marshall: PhD, 23rd March 2011
- Linda Iao: PhD, 4th Feb 2011
- Rachel Kent: MSc, 17th Sept 2010
- Anastasia Kourkoulou: PhD, 18th May 2010

Wales Autism Research Centre Lab Group meetings

Organiser: Dr. Linda Iao (pictured).

Fortnightly lab group meetings of all team members enable postdoctoral research associates and postgraduate students to discuss their most recent findings and ongoing work. New publications within the field of autism are discussed.
Objective 2: Facilitating interdisciplinary research and research networks

A key priority of the Wales Autism Research Centre is to promote communication and a strong collaborative research ethos. Autism spectrum disorders are complex, developing conditions and the advancement of knowledge in autism research relies on cooperation and sharing of knowledge across networks of expertise and across disciplines.

Planned activities

- The development of Cardiff Autism Research Group seminars and visits to the Centre by international research visitors
- Joint activities and meetings with Cardiff Neuroscience Centre (CNC) and members of School of Medicine
- Contributing to the development of collaborative research networks in Wales, UK and internationally
- Contribution to planning for international conference (2011) organised by Autism Cymru

During this year, a research networking award from Cardiff University and Waterloo Foundation has enabled us to set up the Cardiff Autism Research Group (CARG). This initiative has brought many speakers, and both sabbatical and international visitors to WARC. In addition, a number of successful workshops, seminars and open days have been held jointly with the CNC and the new Neuroscience and Mental Health Research Institute (NMHRI). Funded collaborative projects have linked colleagues in North Wales and contributions have been made to UK networks such as the British Autism Siblings Study, Mental Health Research Network and UK Brain Bank, and to Autism Cymru’s planned conference.

From left to right: Assoc. Prof. Cheryl Dissanayake, Prof. Leekam together with Prof. Margot Prior, and Ms. Jenny Reynolds (Children’s Centre Director) at the Margot Prior Wing of the Children’s Centre at La Trobe University, Melbourne;

Prof. Leekam together with Prof. Brendan Weekes (Chair Prof.) and Dr. Carol To Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences, Hong Kong University;

The first joint meeting between the Wales Autism Research Centre and the Brain Bank for Autism, hosted by the Neuroscience and Mental Health Research Institute.
The development of Cardiff Autism Research Group seminars and visits to the Centre by national and international researchers

CARG Activities are aimed at researchers and practitioners and are networked with the neighbouring research group at Bristol University (Bristol Autism Research Group). CARG is coordinated by Dr. Lidstone, Dr. Carrington, and Ms. Kent.

Workshops
- Restricted and Repetitive Behaviours Research Workshop attended by collaborators from throughout the UK. 24th September, 2010, Cardiff University School of Psychology. Organiser: Mrs. Winn.
- Autism, Attention and Eye movements Workshop. 1st July, 2010, Cardiff University, School of Psychology. Organisers Dr. Kourkoulou and Prof. Leekam.

Invited seminars
- Social Cognition in Early Infancy. Invited seminar by Prof Vasu Reddy, Chair in Developmental and Cultural Psychology at Portsmouth University 28th October 2010. (organiser Dr. Lidstone)
- Prospective identification of Autism Spectrum Disorders in infants and toddlers using a developmental surveillance approach: The Social Attention and Communication Study (SACS). Dr. Josephine Barbaro, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. 8th October 2010. (organiser Dr. Lidstone)
- Temporal Processing in Autism Spectrum Disorder. Dr. Christine Falter, The University of Oxford, 12th August 2010 (organiser Dr. Carrington)
- Theory of mind “on line.” Tracking mental state inferences as narratives unfold. Dr Maria Nunez, Glasgow Caledonian University June 2010 (organiser Dr. Iao)
- Pretend Play Deficits in Autism: Mentalistic and Executive Explanations. Prof. Chris Jarrold Bristol University, 29th April 2010 (organiser Dr. Kourkoulou)

Other visitors to CARG
- Mrs. Sue Delport, Occupational Therapy Lecturer at SOHCS, Cardiff University and Director of the Sensory Integration Network (UK and Ireland): 18th February, 2010
- Dr. Christine Ecker, the Institute of Psychiatry: invited CUBRIC seminar entitled “Neurobiology of disease” followed by a meeting with members of the Wales Autism Research Centre, 24th January, 2011.
- Prof. Vasu Reddy, Portsmouth University: one month sabbatical hosted by the School of Psychology and the Wales Autism Research Centre, Oct-Nov, 2010.
- Prof. Margot Prior, University of Melbourne: External Advisor for WARC, Visit 20-25 Sept 2010

Joint activities with Cardiff Neuroscience Centre (CNC) and members of School of Medicine (now Neuroscience and Mental Health Research Institute)
- Brain Awareness Week workshop. Autism Spectrum Disorder and the Brain. Speakers from the Wales Autism Research Centre and the Brain Bank for Autism. 15th March, 2011, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building. Organisers Ms. Catherine Hortop, Dr. Vanessa Davies (NMHRI) Dr. Carrington, Prof. Leekam (WARC). Attended by 35 clinicians, individuals with ASD, and parents of individuals with ASD.
- Autism Research Open Day Conference: Sensory Challenges in Autism. 25th June, 2010, Cardiff University, School of Psychology. Organisers Dr. Kourkoulou, Dr. Carrington, Ms. Hortop and Prof. Leekam. Attended by 127 people
- Prof. Anthony Bailey. The neuroscience of Autism. CNC Seminar. 4th May, 2010

New collaborations
- Dr. Carrington and Prof. Leekam – Research collaboration with Dr. Van Den Bree and Prof. Owen (Department of Psychological Medicine and Genetics), leading to a grant proposal entitled
Investigation of the association between white matter alterations and ASD symptomatology using diffusion MRI in children with velocardiofacial syndrome. PI: Dr. S. Carrington, Co-Is: Dr. M. Van Den Bree, Prof. S. Leekam, Prof. M. Owen, Prof. D. Jones (CUBRIC). To be submitted April 2011.

Dr. Carrington – Collaboration together with Prof. Derek Jones (CUBRIC, Cardiff University) and Prof. Margaret Esiri and Mrs. Brenda Nally (Brain Bank for Autism). Post mortem diffusion imaging of brains donated by individuals with an ASD. An initial pilot study will be followed by a larger grant application aiming to establish a longer-term protocol for post mortem neuroimaging studies in ASD.

Contributing to the development of collaborative research networks in Wales, UK and internationally

Prof. Leekam is a member of the Management committee of the Wales CRC Network: Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Network (LDAN). Three collaborative projects are held with LDAN members Dr. David McGonigle and Dr. Dawn Wimpory;

Collaborator
Dr. David McGonigle, PI on ASD and the Neurobiology of Sensory Symptoms (Waterloo Foundation)

Dr. Dawn Wimpory
(i) Evaluation of Children’s ASD Diagnostic Services in Wales and (ii) Development of an Autism Spectrum Disorder database (Welsh Assembly Government)

Collaborator
Dr. Dawn Wimpory

ESRC grant award (to Prof. Leekam and Dr. Carrington). This grant will contribute funding for workshops to be delivered by Prof Sally Rogers

Prof Leekam will chair the second day of the conference

Wales Autism Research Centre volunteers will support the work of the conference
Objective 3: Developing research and training that supports and influences practice and policy

One of the objectives of The Wales Autism Research Centre is to develop research and training to specifically support and influence practice and government policy. We have a unique opportunity to do this, making the Wales Autism Research Centre distinctive in its goals amongst research centres for autism.

Planned activities

- Evidence, reports and advisory support to Welsh Assembly Government
- Meetings and university exchanges with Welsh Assembly Members, government staff and practitioners
- Training: materials for use by non-academics (e.g. in education services) and student training in practice and policy
- Improved measurable outcome/impact of research on policy and practice

Our knowledge exchange activities in the last year include supporting the Welsh Assembly Government on several commissioned projects and sharing advice on research with members of the Welsh Assembly Government and practitioners during meetings and events. We have developed a training module to be used in a schools training programme and have provided student placement and intern opportunities. Our newly awarded ESRC grant will support us to work further with policy-makers and practitioners in promoting the impact of research evidence on policy and practice.

Gwenda Thomas (the Deputy Minister for Social Services) visited the Wales Autism Research Centre for an Open Afternoon. Gwenda Thomas, Carol Povey and Dr. Jenny Longmore visit the MEG scanner at CUBRIC; From left to right: Prof. Leekam and Dr. Carrington show Gwenda Thomas some of our assessment materials; Gwenda Thomas and Prof. Dylan chat before the presentations.
Evidence, reports and advisory support to Welsh Assembly Government

- Report: Children’s diagnostic services in Wales: Methods of diagnostic practice and clinicians views of service effectiveness. Dr J. Lidstone (pictured), Dr D. Wimpory, Dr. C. Ramsden, Mr. H. Morgan, Ms. J. Manikiza, Ms M. Walters, Ms. M. Rendell. Prof S. Leekam. Submitted Dec 2010


- Advisory support: Following invitation from Minister Mrs Edwina Hart: Prof. Leekam – Meeting with parent group in Sketty, Swansea. Accompanied by Dr Richard Roberts, Head Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme, Public Health Wales and Dr Mike Simmons, Director of Health Protection, Public Health Wales, 27th May, 2010.

Meetings and exchanges with Welsh Assembly Members, government staff and practitioners

- Open Afternoon for the Deputy Minister for Social Services Gwenda Thomas, and our funders and collaborators. Presentations given by Prof. Sue Leekam (WARC), Dr. Dawn Wimpory (Bangor University), Lynn Plimley (Autism Cymru), Dr. Mirko Ulijarevic (WARC), Nicky Hall (parent), Rachel Kent (WARC), Dr. Jane Lidstone (WARC), Mrs Hilary Kanaris (NHS), Dr. Sarah Carrington (WARC), and Dr. David McGonigle (Cardiff University)

Welsh Assembly Government: events supported

- Official launch of the Welsh Assembly Government’s bilingual autism information booklets. The Pierhead, Cardiff Bay, 3rd February, 2011. Attended by Prof. Sue Leekam, Dr. Sarah Carrington, and Beverley Winn (Parent Consultant)


- Prof Leekam: Oral report (older people with ASD) to the WAG meeting on adults (13th Aug 2010)


- Launch of Deis Cyflne, The Senydd, Cardiff Bay, 10 May, 2010. Supporting speech from Prof Leekam

Meetings with third sector, practitioner, and educational organisations

Charities and other organisations:

- Dr. White and Mrs. Winn attended the Cardiff and Vale National Autistic Society Parent Support Group, David Lloyd Centre, Cardiff, 17th March, 2011

- Prof. Leekam, Dr. Carrington, and Dr. Joanna Jenkinson (Board Secretary of the MRC), 10th January 2011

- National Autistic Society (NAS). An introduction to WARC and CUBRIC for NAS professionals working in housing services, 2nd June, 2010 and 30th July, 2010. Organisers: Dr. Carrington, Dr. Kourkoulou, Dr. McGonigle

- Prof. Leekam – Meeting with Prof Amanda Kirby Director of Discovery Centre and Sarah May, Waterloo Foundation at Discovery 24th June, 2010
● Prof. Leekam and Dr. Carrington attended the Autistica Trusts and Foundations Breakfast Briefing 13th May, 2010

● Prof. Leekam and Mark Lever, National Autistic Society (NAS) Chief Executive, 29th April, 2010

Practitioners:
● Prof. Leekam & Dr. Lidstone- meeting with Dr Alka Ahuja and team conducting NHS-based research into diagnostic services for ASD, at St Cadoc’s Hospital in Caerleon, 5th November 2010

● Prof. Leekam, Dr. Lidstone, Mr. Ceris Price (WAG), and Dr. D Williams (Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatry). Discussion on Diagnostic Services in Wales, 11th August, 2010

● Focus Group meeting. Discussion in relation to the diagnostic services in Wales, 16th July, 2010. Organiser: Dr. Jane Lidstone

● Prof. Leekam and Helen Matthews (Chair of the Welsh Division of Royal College of Psychiatrists), 16th June, 2010

● Prof. Leekam, Dr. Kourkoulou and Dr. Carrington met with The Bristol Asperger Team, May 2010

Schools:
● Dr. White, Dr. Carrington, and Mrs. Winn went to Priory Coleg, Pontypool, met with members of staff to talk about the Wales Autism Research Centre. 30th March 2011

● Prof. Leekam, Dr. Lidstone, & Dr. Uljarevic-meeting with Mr Chris Britten, Head teacher of Ashgrove School, Cardiff, 15th November 2010

● Dr. Carrington and Dr. Kourkoulou meeting with Mr Darren Jackson (Principal) and Elaine (Occupational Therapist) from Beechwood College, and a representative of the Ludlow Healthcare Group, 22nd July, 2010

● Prof. Leekam and Dr. Uljarevic Meeting with teachers at the Hollies School, 12th July, 2010

● Dr. Anastasia Kourkoulou, Dr. Sarah Carrington and Ms. Rachel Kent visited Beechwood College to meet with Mr. Darren Jackson (Principal) and members of the educational and clinical teams. 26th May, 2010

● Lynn Thomas, SENCo, Caldicot School, Monmouthshire, visited WARC 29th April, 2010

● Darren Jackson, visited WARC Principal of Beechwood College, 15th April, 2010

Training
Materials for use by non-academics (e.g. in education services)
● Understanding anxiety in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD): An awareness-raising training module designed to integrate new research evidence into practice in schools. A training module to integrate new research evidence into practice in schools. Module prepared by WARC for use by Lynn Plimley and Maggie Bowen, Autism Cymru

Student training experience
● ESRC Internship with WAG. Beginning Oct 2011. PhD student Rachel Kent

● Cardiff University Professional Placement student – Hollies School and ASD Strategy. Katy Morris. Year end May 2010

Improved measurable outcome/impact of research on policy and practice
● The Welsh Assembly Government has allocated £200k to implement the recommendations arising from the Welsh Assembly Government funded project “Children’s diagnostic services in Wales: Methods of diagnostic practice and clinicians views of service”: PI: Prof. Leekam; Co-app: Dr. Wimpory; Consultant: Dr. Ramsden; RA: Dr. Lidstone

● A report has been submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government by Prof Leekam, outlining proposals for research and practice for older people with ASD. (Feb 11)

● ESRC Follow-on Grant (starts July 2010) will implement impact by developing a professional forum and training materials on research methodology
Objective 4: Improving public and professional awareness of research.

A priority for the Wales Autism Research Centre is to increase awareness of autism and make the work of WARC visible and accessible to the public. Most important however is to improve public understanding of scientific research in autism by promoting ‘research awareness’ and to share our research findings and methods with others.

Planned activities

● Develop web materials to promote the centre to the public, professional groups and media

● Use the latest bibliographic linking tools and search engine facilities to maximise impact of publications

● Provide events targeting public and professional awareness of autism research and monitor outcomes

● Develop a communications strategy in collaboration with other agencies; e.g. AWARES, Autism Cymru

We are closing the gap between scientific research and people in the community by getting out to meet people, giving talks in schools, and holding parent events. We have a parent consultant in the Centre who is helping to ‘translate’ our research for the public so that it is comprehensible and relevant to individuals with ASD and their families. We also engage public and professional awareness through our website, facebook site and media releases of our research work. Our new ESRC grant will lead to further engagement with parent groups throughout Wales, enabling us to monitor outcomes and impact.
Develop web materials to promote the Wales Autism Research Centre to the public, professional groups and media.
Our website is www.cardiff.ac.uk/psych/home2/warc/

The WARC website not only provides information about our research. There is also a page for parents and for volunteers and regular updates on news and events. Up to date postings and photos are given weekly on our Facebook page which can be accessed by non-facebook members. We have 220 active users per month.

Use the latest bibliographic linking tools and search engine facilities to maximise impact of publications
All WARC members’ publications are linked to search tools Researcher ID and Scopus. This ensures that any search for name, topic, keywords, accesses the full title of all scientific publications and their impact (times cited).

Provide events targeting public and professional awareness of autism research and monitor outcomes
- Wales Autism Research Centre talks presented to Welsh Assembly Government audiences
- Carrington, S.J., Research in the Laboratory: Brain imaging Studies of ASD. Presentation at ASD leads meeting, Llandrindod Wells 11th March, 2011

Dr Iao and Dr Kourkoulou at our Open Day Conference “Sensory Challenges in Autism”

- Open Afternoon for the Deputy Minister, Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister, Social Services, our funders and collaborators. Presentations given by Prof. Sue Leekam (WARC), Dr. Dawn Wimpo (Bangor University), Lynn Plimley (Autism Cymru), Dr. Mirko Ulijarevic (WARC), Nicky Hall (parent), Rachel Kent (WARC), Dr. Jane Lidstone (WARC), Mrs Hilary Kanaris (NHS), Dr. Sarah Carrington (WARC), and Dr. David McGonigle (Cardiff University)

- Launch of the Wales Autism Research Centre and Inaugural Lecture Believing is seeing: A vision for autism. Prof Leekam, 23rd Sept 2010. Introduction by Edwina Hart, Minister of Health and Social Services. Presentations by Lord Dafydd Wigley, Mr. Hugh Morgan, Mrs Hilary Gilfoy (Autistica), Professor Bill Fraser (Autism Cymru)

Wales Autism Research Centre talks presented to charity and funding audiences

Wales Autism Research Centre talks presented to schools, colleges, and parent audiences

Wales Autism Research Centre talks for both academic and non-academic audiences

Drawing by a 12 year old child with asperger syndrome
Develop a communications strategy in collaboration with other agencies; e.g. AWARES, Autism Cymru

- Our new ESRC Follow-on grant provides for partnership working with three charities (Autism Cymru, Waterloo Foundation, National Autistic Society)
  
  Organisation of Wales parent group network will formalise and facilitate communication channels with parents
  
  Development of AWARES online forum structure will formalise and facilitate communication with professionals
  
  Plans for consolidating event management

Press releases

  


- Research by Dr. David McGonigle and the launch of the Wales Autism Research Centre. New autism initiatives outlined in article October, 2010. http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/c5e59f6a#/c5e59f6a/1


The Centre's Parent Consultant
Consultancy and Professional Engagements

- On the award panel for the BPS Neil O’Connor Prize (June 2010)
- External Examiner Sussex University: MSc Programme in Experimental Psychology
- External Examiner, PhD Victoria Hallett, University of London, Nov 2010
- Chair of a PhD viva (18th May and 26th July, 2010)
- Reviewer for MRC: grant proposal April 2010
- Member of Editorial Board for National Autistic Society’s Professionals Conference 2010.
- Member of Cardiff University, School of Psychology Ethics Committee
- Member of ESRC Peer Review College
- Member of Stakeholder Group, Strategic Action Plan for Wales
- Member of Management Committee, Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Network (LDAN).
- Supervision of Cardiff University Professional Placement student
- Member of the National Autistic Society
- Appointed to Board of Trustees, Autism Cymru

Other consultancy and professional engagements (Research Associates and postgraduates)

- Dr. Carrington: ad hoc reviewer for: Autism Research and Brain
- Dr. Lidstone: ad hoc reviewer for: Cognitive Development and Early Childhood Research Quarterly
- Dr. Iao: ad hoc reviewer for: The Journal of Child Language and Cognition

Dr. Mirko Uljarevic presenting his research to our funders and collaborators
Continuing Professional Development

- Your First Academic Jobs (Careers in the Social and Economic Sciences) – Dr. Iao, 16th February 2011
- Managing Research Projects – Dr. Lidstone, 10th Feb 2011
- Child protection Training for Researchers - Raising Awareness of Safeguarding Children – Dr. Lidstone and Dr. Carrington, 9th December
- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) training course – attended by Dr. Carrington to facilitate planning of a course to be conducted in Cardiff. 6th-8th December, 2010
- CUBRIC probationary approved user training completed – Dr. Carrington, December 2010
- CUBRIC fully approved user training ongoing – Dr. Carrington
- Managing research data - Key Aspects of Legal Compliance and Records Management- Dr. Lidstone and Dr. Carrington, 18th November 2010
- Using the Bristol Online Survey Tool – Dr. Lidstone, 15th November 2010
- Managing people – Dr. Lidstone, 4th November 2010
- Lone worker training – attended by Dr. Kourkouloou and Ms. Kent, 27th May 2010
- Equality and diversity training session for all WARC staff and students run by Isabella Santamaria, 15th July, 2010. Organiser: Dr. Carrington
- Autism, Ethics and Society – attended by Dr. Kourkouloou and Dr. Carrington. UCL. 28th June, 2010
- Getting grant funding workshop – attended by Dr. Lidstone and Dr. Carrington, 15th June, 2010Getting published academic writing workshop – attended by Dr. Kourkouloou and Dr. Carrington, 8th June, 2010
- Leadership and Management course – attended by Prof. Leekam, March, 2010

The WARC Team, May 2011