



PRESS RELEASE

State-Of-The-Art Autism Lab To Be Unveiled On Wearside

One of the UK's leading research centres into autism will open the doors of its new high-tech laboratory, at the North East Business and Innovation Centre (BIC), to medical professionals and political figures in February.

ESPA Research, a not-for-profit subsidiary of ESPA (Education & Services for People with Autism), is a new service which brings together leading researchers into autism from various scientific disciplines. The launch event will see the team unveil ambitious plans to further unravel the biological complexities of autism, a life-long condition which is present in an estimated 1% of the population.

Kevin Carr, Director of ESPA Research, said: "Autism primarily affects the way a person communicates and deals with their social environment and people around them. The condition is very poorly understood, and currently diagnosis is derived solely through observation and analysis of developmental history, with no genetic or biological tests to confirm a diagnosis."

ESPA Research brings together Kevin Carr, Prof. Malcolm Hooper, Lynda Todd and Dr Paul Whiteley as management team members, combining over 40 years of research into autism and related conditions.

"Our team members' previous studies on autism, combined with the superior analytical equipment which will be available to ESPA Research at our new lab, will allow us to investigate the biological mechanisms behind autism with greater detail than ever before."

The launch will be attended by senior civic and political figures, alongside healthcare professionals and adults with autism using ESPA services. The launch will include the official naming of the Robert Luff laboratory in memory of the founder of the Robert Luff Foundation, a prominent supporter of ESPA Research. For more information, please contact ESPA Research on 0191 549 9300 or email info@espa-research.org.uk. To find out more about the work of ESPA Research visit www.espa-research.org.uk.

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