It is our pleasure to welcome you to the final edition of 2017. Before giving a brief overview of this edition’s content, would like to share some of the journal’s recent progress continuing and development. In its first two years, the journal has gone from strength to strength, and as well as appearing in the Emerging Sources Citation Index the journal is now indexed in Scopus, which is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books and conference proceedings. Advances in Autism (AIA) was accepted into Scopus in July of this year. Coverage in this database means that the content of our journal is more visible to our academic communities. Scopus inclusion also serves as a marker of the quality for the journal. For this we have to thank subscribers, contributors and the Editorial Board who have worked hard behind the scenes to promote the journal. Although AIA was accepted in July, our content may not yet be searchable in the Scopus database at the time of publication, as this can take a few months for SCOPUS to set up.

It is also with pleasure we announce the appointment of Steve Hardy as the new Associate Editor. Steve has extensive previous experience and was the Editor of Advances in Mental Health in Intellectual Disabilities from its start up. It is hoped Steve will be able to give the journal a greater presence on social media and will be opening a Twitter account to promote discussion and inform a wider audience of the journal’s activity. We would also like to thank Lisa Underwood, the previous Associate Editor for her contribution since the start up of the journal. Lisa will remain on the Editorial Board and remains committed to the journal.

The journal is an ideal place for those with little experience in publishing to those who have considerable expertise in the field. If you would like to submit an article, we welcome:

- research-based articles;
- evidence-based clinical and support articles; and
- articles on policy and advances in services where these can be internationally applied.

For more information on the scope of the journal can be found at: www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/aia.htm and for those submitting an article go to: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/aia

This edition contains papers on a variety of areas including the criminal justice system, diagnostic services, peer mentorship, training and quality of life of those with intellectual disability and severe autism.

The first article by Galli Carminati and colleagues evaluates the relationship between different living arrangements and the quality of life for residents with severe intellectual disability and low-functioning autism spectrum disorders. Although the "residential profile", were not significantly correlated with quality of life the author’s report a relationship with ABC factors such as F1 (irritability, agitation, crying) and F2 (lethargy, social withdrawal) and VABS scores for living, socialisation, and motor skills.

The second article from Hillier and colleagues examines the experiences of young adults in the USA in managing and understanding their own healthcare. Rather than just highlight difficulties in accessing healthcare the quality and the outcomes of care, the article breaks down the experience of young adults, parents and a comparison group to highlight where problems arise and how independent they are. When compared with the controls the young autistic group were less independent than the comparison group and had a higher perception of their ability when compared to their parents.
The third article by Chaplin and colleagues offers an insight into the lower (magistrates’) court and examines the role of liaison and diversion services at the lower courts with regard to autism, and in particular the role of pre-sentence and psychiatric reports and interviews. It is still the case that there is little specialist liaison and diversion to either identify those appearing with autism or to provide specialist assessment that advocates less restrictive sentencing options where indicated. Whilst advocating community sentencing options where appropriate the paper offers an insight into some of the areas such as behaviour that non-specialists may misinterpret.

The fourth article from Martin and colleagues reports on a two-year pilot study, on the development, trial and evaluation of a mentoring scheme designed with input from autistic people, their families and supporters. Those with autism found the experience positive in helping to progress self-identified goals. The paper also highlights the dangers if the approach is used poorly and some of the adverse consequences that might be likely. This has prompted topics for future inquiry around the factors that may predict successful implementation such as delivery of training courses content, duration, expectations and boundary setting, supervision, flexibility and compatibility of mentees with mentors.

Also on the theme of training, Ashworth et al. report on the development, design and evaluation of a training package designed to increase autism awareness to a Youth Offending Team staff which staff reported helped them not only achieve a greater knowledge and awareness but also gave them more confidence working with autistic individuals and highlights the need for organisations/individuals providing training services relating to autism to demonstrating the benefits of the provision of evidence-based training to improve and share best practice.

The final article is a study by Talari and colleagues examines the association of the ADI-R use and establishing a diagnosis of autism. The paper is set in an autism diagnostic clinic setting and takes referrals from across the population and of these approximately 30 per cent are confirmed as having autism. The research confers with the previous studies in finding high sensitivity of the ADI-R and also adds information around the tools use across gender with no difference in performance between males and females. It is important though when administering tests that aid diagnosis to have a strong clinical knowledge given the overlap of symptoms.

We hope you enjoy this edition and will continue to support the journal in 2018.