



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Health & Wellbeing Board
12 April 2013
9.30 am

<u>Item</u>
10
<u>Public</u>

Strategy for Adults with Autism in Shropshire

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1 Summary

- 1.1 In October 2011 Paul Burstow, the Secretary of State for Care Services said: "For too long people with autism have been failed by a system that doesn't treat them as an individual and excludes them because they do not fit in with the way services are structured locally." The Autism Act 2009, the subsequent strategy "Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives" (March 2010) and Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and NHS organisations (December 2010) aims to put an end to this. The Autism Act of 2009 led to the first autism strategy for England, and is the first disability specific piece of legislation. The statutory guidance for local authorities and the NHS aims to help them implement this strategy and develop local services.
- 1.2 In September 2011, Shropshire joined the regional Autism Partnership Board with Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Telford & Wrekin. The Board has, to date, worked together to develop a draft autism strategy (with local variation as required) and share consultation experience and feedback where relevant including through a joint Expert User and Carer Reference Group. Shropshire continues to link with the regional Partnership Board.
- 1.3 A consultation on the draft strategy for Shropshire was carried out from June 2012 – August 2012. A proportionate approach to the consultation was taken given the considerable input into previous autism consultations both locally and nationally. A re-draft of the strategy was considered at the Health & Wellbeing Board Executive in February 2013, and then at the Shropshire CCG Clinical Advisory Panel with subsequent approval by the CCG Board. The re-drafted strategy was also widely circulated amongst stakeholders for final comments during February. Minor revisions have been made to the strategy based on the comments received, with assistance from a representative from STACs and Autonomy. The final version is attached at appendix A.

- 1.4 The Shropshire Adult Autism Strategy reflects the vision of the national strategy and outlines priority areas that require action in order to address inequalities faced by adults with autism and make progress towards key outcomes. The strategy meets the requirements of the Autism Strategy Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and NHS organisations. It aligns with the principles adopted in the Shropshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

2. Recommendations

The Health & Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- A) Note the requirements of the statutory guidance for implementing Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives.
- B) Approve the Shropshire Adult Autism Strategy

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 Equalities Appraisal

The Adult Autism Strategy is compatible with the Equalities Act in that it seeks to address the inequalities experienced by adults with autism and Aspergers in accordance with the Autism Act and Statutory Guidance.

3.2 Human Rights Appraisal

There are no adverse Human Rights issues. The attached strategy seeks to ensure that the human rights of people with autistic spectrum conditions are realised with opportunities that promote their Human Rights as individual citizens in line with the Human Rights Act.

3.3 Risk Management Appraisal

This strategy complies with the Autism Act 2009.

3.4 Environmental Consequences

There are no environmental considerations.

3.5 Community Consultation

This has been done through wide circulation of the first and second drafts of the strategy through networks in Shropshire, and targeted meetings with key stakeholders.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no additional funds available to local organisations to implement the requirements of the Autism Act. Any funds will need to be found from within existing resources or attracted through external funding bids.

5. Background

- 5.1 A Timeline of Activity which describes key points in the progress towards improving the lives of people with autism and which has led to the development of this strategy for Shropshire is contained within Appendix B.
- 5.2 The Shropshire Adult Autism Strategy is for adults with autistic spectrum conditions aged 18 or over and will also support younger people aged 16-18 who are not in full-time education.
- 5.3 The Autism Act 2009 committed the Government to two key duties. The first was to produce a strategy on services for adults with autism. This was published in March 2010. The second was that statutory guidance for local authorities and local health bodies had to be published by the Secretary of State for Health by the end of 2010. The Act stated that the aim of this guidance was to secure implementation of the strategy.
- 5.4 On 17 December 2010 the statutory guidance was published. This guidance sends a clear message that local authorities and the NHS must improve:
- training for their staff;
 - identification and diagnosis of autism in adults;
 - planning of services for people with autism, including the transition from child services to adult services;
 - local leadership.

5.4.1 Training of staff who provide services to adults with autism

The guidance says that:

- general autism awareness training should be available for everyone working in health and social care;
- key staff – such as GPs and those responsible for conducting community care assessments – should have specialist training;
- adults with autism and their parents/carers should, where possible, be included in training programmes at a local level.

5.4.2 Identification and diagnosis of autism in adults, leading to assessment of needs for relevant services

The guidance states:

- Identification and diagnosis of autism in adults, and improved access to support is a key part of the Government's vision for people with autism.
- This section of the guidance emphasises that a community care assessment cannot be denied on the grounds of a person's IQ. It also highlights that the national strategy suggests that a diagnosis of autism should be recognised as a reason for assessment and any family carers should be able to access a carer's assessment.
- The guidance states that each area should put in place a clear pathway for an adult to receive a diagnosis and if they wish to get a community care assessment. Finally, each local authority should appoint a lead professional in autism who is responsible for delivering these improvements.

5.4.3 Planning in relation to the provision services to people with autism in the move from childhood to becoming adults

The guidance states:

- Transition can be a particularly complex time for children with autism and an emotional one for families and their carers. The guidance seeks to make sure that the whole transition process works better for people with autism.
- It also sets out that NHS bodies – including Foundation Trusts – should make sure that there are agreements in place in every local area for the transition of clinical mental health care for children with autism in receipt of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

5.4.4 Improved local planning and leadership

The guidance states:

- This section of guidance focuses on how local authorities can better identify need and make decisions based on adequate population data. The guidance highlights the importance of local autism partnership boards and local autism teams in the improvement of services at a local level.
- Two key actions are identified:
 - (a) Local Authorities to allocate responsibility to a named joint commissioner/senior manager to lead commissioning of community care services for adults with autism in the area.

- (b) Commissioning should be based on accurate population figures and, as such, local authorities must improve the data they collect on autism. One of the best ways to do this is to include autism in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

5.5 In April 2011 the Essential Quality Outcomes Framework & Self-Assessment tool was published to support commissioners in planning services for people with autism and in the monitoring of progress on the implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy. In the Framework the Government identified seven, long-term quality outcomes:

- a) Adults with autism achieve better health outcomes;
- b) Adults with autism are included and economically active;
- c) Adults with autism are living in accommodation that meets their needs;
- d) Adults with autism are benefiting from the personalisation agenda in health and social care, and can access personal budgets;
- e) Adults with autism are no longer managed inappropriately in the criminal justice system;
- f) Adults with autism, their families and carers are satisfied with local services;
- g) Adults with autism are involved in service planning.

and three key service ambitions:

- h) Local Authorities and partners know how many adults with autism live in the area;
- i) A clear and trusted diagnostic pathway is available locally;
- j) Health and Social Care staff ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to meet the needs of adults with autism in Shropshire.

The self-assessment audit was completed for Shropshire in February 2012 (see Appendix C). It highlights those areas where action is required to meet the aims of Fulfilling & Rewarding Lives.

5.6 A local Shropshire Autism Strategy Steering group is being set up which will oversee the implementation of the strategy locally, and further development of the action plan and monitoring of progress. Details of the consultation and requirements of legislation have previously been reported to the Healthy Communities Scrutiny Committee.

5.7 The Shropshire Adult Autism Strategy sits under the Health & Wellbeing Strategy as a disability-specific strategy designed to drive progress for a specific group of people who have for too long been disadvantaged. It aligns with the principles adopted by the Health & Wellbeing Board and the five outcomes anticipated will bring benefits

for people with autism and their families. Additionally, most of the priority areas identified will bring improvements to the lives of people with autism. For example, people with autistic spectrum conditions often have poorer health than other cohorts of the population and are too often socially isolated, as are their family carers. The collaborative approach to commissioning across both Health and Social Care support this strategy and will help to address this.

6. Conclusion

6.1 There are a number of key recommendations and practical implications in the national strategy. Shropshire has embraced these and commenced with the implementation of them, including:

- Mapping local examples of good practice and community resources, and linking in to wider areas of work, for example the broadening out of support offered through Supporting People providers and community hubs. The foundations are in place to go forward with a focus on improving services for adults with autism.
- There is a Diagnostic and Care Pathway working group which has used the Bristol pathway as a good practice example, and the NICE Guidelines published in July 2012, to develop a locally appropriate pathway. Work is underway with colleagues in health and social care to ensure that the pathway is workable and efficient and to take necessary steps to implement required actions.
- A Training and Awareness working group has been meeting regularly and has taken the first step of creating a framework for autism training for Shropshire. This will be shared and further work to ensure uptake of relevant training will be undertaken.
- Involvement of people on the autistic spectrum and their family carers in developing the local strategy. There is a firm commitment to continue with this close working with their involvement in the Shropshire Autism Strategy Steering Group being seen as essential.
- Exploring opportunities and good practice within Health, Social Care and Education, and to use the expertise from the National Autism Society (NAS) and Autism West Midlands and other third party organisations. An example of this is using the experience and knowledge acquired in the pilot befriending scheme for people with autism currently being trialled piloted in Walsall.
- The work being led by the Lead Officer from Shropshire Council through the Autism Partnership Board, and the local Autism Strategy Steering group, provides assurance that the development and implementation of the strategy meets the requirements of the Autism Act 2009.

- An effective commissioning plan based on this Strategy will build the local infrastructure and capacity of local providers. The emphasis will need to be on building community based, sustainable solutions to meet the needs of people with autism that start from a preventative approach and avoiding over-reliance on single, specialist providers.

List of Background Papers

(This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Healthy Communities Scrutiny 23 May 2011 – Adult Autism Strategy – Update on Progress

Healthy Communities Scrutiny 28 November 2011 - presentation on the Autism Statutory Guidance 'Implementing Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives (DH 2010) and the role of local authorities in applying it in practice.

Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: the strategy for adults with autism in England (Department of Health, 3 March 2010)

South West Regional Oversight Group for Adults with Autism Spectrum Conditions - Commissioning Guidance (Department of Health, July 2011)

Supporting people with Autism through Adulthood (National Audit Office, June 2009)

A Better Future - a consultation on a future strategy for adults with autistic spectrum conditions (Department of Health, 2009)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Ann Hartley

Local Member

This is a county-wide matter

Appendices

Appendix A Draft revised Shropshire Autism Strategy

Appendix B Timeline for Implementation

Appendix C Shropshire's Local Self-Assessment framework audit for adults with Autism