



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
23 rd June 2014

<u>Item</u>
8
<u>Public</u>

Autism Self-Assessment

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1. Summary

To provide an update to Shropshire Council's Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee regarding further developments against the national strategy for autism ('Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives') and the very recent Department of Health refresh titled "Think Autism - Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with autism in England: an update" published in April 2014.

2. Recommendations

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this paper.
- Consider the issues raised and promote the importance of autism as an issue that, as a whole council, we need to respond to, ensuring all services are accessible to those with autism.

REPORT

3. Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The Government have announced their intention to make funding of £4.5 million available nationally in 2014/15 to support delivery of some of the key priorities listed within the updated Strategy. This includes a new Autism Innovation Fund, which will be available for projects that promote innovative local services and projects. It is expected that further details about the Autism Innovation Fund and how to apply will be published by the end of June 2014.

4. Legal Implications

The Council is required to take account of and follow the statutory guidance, issued under section 2 of the Autism Act 2009. The Government published "Think Autism" in

April 2014, which updates the national strategy. The development and publication of further statutory guidance is expected by December 2014 to support its implementation. The Council will continue to work with our partners to respond to these developments.

5. Background

5.1 Legislation and guidance issued

The Autism Act 2009 committed the Government to publishing an adult autism strategy to transform services and support for adults with autism. 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' was launched in March 2010 and a Delivery Plan followed in April 2010.

These documents set out a number of key actions and recommendations for central government, local authorities and the NHS. The focus was on five key areas:

- Increasing awareness and understanding of autism;
- Developing a clear and consistent pathway for diagnosis;
- Improving access to the services and support they need to live independently in the community;
- Helping adults with autism into work;
- Enabling local partners to plan and develop relevant services to meet identified needs and priorities.

The 2010 guidance contained three key service ambitions:

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

6. Recent development and next steps

The Government published an update to the national autism strategy, entitled "Think Autism", on 2 April 2014. This follows a recent review led by the Department of Health, which has considered what needs to happen next to make sure progress continues.

The clear vision (detailed in the DH refresh) for people with autism is that:

"All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents."

The document reaffirms the importance of five areas for action to improve the lives of adults with autism, which are in line with those identified in the original national autism strategy:

- increasing awareness and understanding of autism;
- developing clear, consistent pathways for the diagnosis of autism;
- improving access for adults with autism to services and support;
- helping adults with autism into work; and
- enabling local partners to develop relevant services.

There are 15 priority challenges for action in “Think Autism” update (see Appendix 1) around 3 key areas:

1. An equal part of my community.
2. The right support at the right time.
3. Developing my skills and independence and working to the best of my ability.

In particular, “Think Autism” has a new focus on:

- building communities that are more aware of and accessible to the needs of people with autism;
- promoting innovative local ideas, services or projects that can help people in their communities; and
- how advice and information on services can be joined up better for people. The Department of Health also intend to publish new statutory guidance to support the updated strategy in December 2014, following a public consultation exercise.

We will continue to work with our partners via the Autism Strategy Group to improve existing arrangements that deliver support to people with autism. The Autism Strategy Group in Shropshire has members from the voluntary sector, Shropshire Council, the CCG, SSSFT and those with experts by experience. Our local action plan is currently being reviewed in light of the recent Department of Health’s refresh of the national strategy. We will also aim to participate in the proposed public consultation exercise on statutory guidance.

7. Local Progress made since March 2012

There has been significant progress since the last report to Scrutiny in relation to autism but this is a continual areas of improvement.

The main areas of development have been:

7.1 Training and awareness of autism

- Staff training around the needs of individuals with autistic spectrum conditions continues and this training programme is on-going. The numbers receiving training are shown below (overleaf):

2013/14

Courses run: Autism Awareness and GP-Autism in Adults Essential Information
Total number of attendees: 67 of which Council staff: 22 others: 45

2012/13

Courses run: Autism Awareness and Autism Advanced Workshop
Total number of attendees: 142 of which Council staff: 55 others: 87

2011/12

Courses run: Autism Awareness and Autism Advanced Workshop
Total number of attendees: 76 of which Council staff: 27 others: 49

7.2 Diagnostic pathway

- This has been fully considered by the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and SSSFT (Shropshire and South Staffordshire Foundation Trust) and a diagnostic pathway agreed and funded by the CCG (see Appendix 2).
- This involves the further development of clinical knowledge within mental health services around autism and a specialist diagnostic pathway.
- This will mean allocating ASC (autism spectrum conditions) champions within each CMHT (Community Mental Health Team) and specific psychiatrist sessions to support. This will incorporate a patch based service and the psychiatrist would lead the development and training of the champions in each area.

7.3 Community Hub for those with ASC development

- It has been agreed by the ASC strategy group that a “hub” type model would benefit those with ASC and their carers where specialist advice and information can be available at a regular time and venue.
- This approach would involve the use of peer-to-peer support as well as the development of volunteers to assist those that attend.
- Bromford are already commissioned by Shropshire Council to provide advice and information about benefits, housing and this arrangement can be developed further to provide specific advice and guidance to those with ASC.
- It has been agreed that Louise House will be the venue and that by September 2014 there will be a weekly group developed for those with ASC.
- The group will also benefit from the re-tendering of the current advice and information contract which will contain a specific focus on providing advice and guidance for those with ASC within it.

7.4 Raising the profile of autism and improving Universal Services response

This is an on-going development. Current work includes ensuring that the Advice and Information re-commissioning process produces a services accessible to those with autism.

7.5 Autism Strategy Action Plan

The Action Plan is currently being reviewed via the Autism Strategy Group which includes all key stakeholders.

8 Conclusion

There are a number of key recommendations and practical implications in the national strategy refresh which Shropshire has embraced and commenced implementation. Locally, there are examples of good practice and the foundations are in place to go forward with a focus on improving services for adults with autism.

The work being led by the Lead Officer from Shropshire Council through the Autism Partnership Board and provides assurance on the preparation being undertaken to meet the requirements of the Autism Act.

It is fundamental that we continue to maximise the use of the positive local partnerships with different agencies to ensure that the universal services are accessible and responsive to those with autism. It is important that as a commissioning Council we consider the needs of those with autism in all re-commissioning activity.

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

Think Autism - an update on the strategy for adults with autism in England, Department of Health, April 2014:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299866/Autism_Strategy.pdf

Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, Department of Health, 2010

The Autism Act 2009, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/contents>

Health & Well-being Board 12 April 2013 - Strategy for Adults with Autism in Shropshire

Healthy Communities Scrutiny 12 March 2012 – Services for Adults with Autism in Shropshire

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.

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Lee Chapman

Local Member

This is a county-wide matter

Appendices

Appendix 1 : Extract from Think Autism – 15 Priority Challenges for Action

Appendix 2: Diagnostic Pathway

Priority Challenges for Action

An equal part of my local community

1. I want to be accepted as who I am within my local community. I want people and organisations in my community to have opportunities to raise their awareness and acceptance of autism.
2. I want my views and aspirations to be taken into account when decisions are made in my local area. I want to know whether my local area is doing as well as others.
3. I want to know how to connect with other people. I want to be able to find local autism peer groups, family groups and low level support.
4. I want the everyday services that I come into contact with to know how to make reasonable adjustments to include me and accept me as I am. I want the staff who work in them to be aware and accepting of autism.
5. I want to be safe in my community and free from the risk of discrimination, hate crime and abuse.
6. I want to be seen as me and for my gender, sexual orientation and race to be taken into account.

The right support at the right time during my lifetime

1. I want a timely diagnosis from a trained professional. I want relevant information and support throughout the diagnostic process.
2. I want autism to be included in local strategic needs assessments so that person centred local health, care and support services, based on good information about local needs, is available for people with autism.
3. I want staff in health and social care services to understand that I have autism and how this affects me.
4. I want to know that my family can get help and support when they need it.
5. I want services and commissioners to understand how my autism affects me differently through my life. I want to be supported through big life changes such as transition from school, getting older or when a person close to me dies.
6. I want people to recognise my autism and adapt the support they give me if I have additional needs such as a mental health problem, a learning disability or if I sometimes communicate through behaviours which others may find challenging.
7. If I break the law, I want the criminal justice system to think about autism and to know how to work well with other services.

Developing my skills and independence and working to the best of my ability

1. I want the same opportunities as everyone else to enhance my skills, to be empowered by services and to be as independent as possible.
2. I want support to get a job and support from my employer to help me keep it.

