

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD

22 MAY 2018

ALL AGE AUTISM STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE - UPDATE

Board Sponsor

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Author

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Priorities

Mental health & well-being	Yes
Being Active	No
Reducing harm from Alcohol	No
Other (specify below)	

Safeguarding

Impact on Safeguarding Children	Yes
Impact on Safeguarding Adults	Yes

The work of the Autism Strategic Partnership Group is carried out under the auspices of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Board and is in full compliance with the required standards.

Item for Decision, Consideration or Information

Consideration

Recommendation

- 1. The Health and Well-being Board is asked to note progress made on Worcestershire's All-Age Autism Strategy since the last update in July 2017 and that a refresh of the strategy will be completed during 2018.**

Background

2. The All-Age Autism Strategy (Appendix 1) was approved by the Health & Wellbeing Board on 12 May 2015.
3. Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others. Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently from other people. If you are autistic, you are autistic for life; autism is not an illness or disease and cannot be 'cured'. Often people feel being autistic is a fundamental aspect of their identity.
4. Autism is a spectrum condition which includes Asperger's Syndrome. All autistic people share certain difficulties, but being autistic will affect them in different ways.

Some autistic people also have learning disabilities, mental health issues or other conditions which mean people need different levels of support. All people on the autistic spectrum learn and develop. With the right sort of support, all can be helped to achieve positive outcomes.

5. People with Asperger's Syndrome are of average or above average intelligence. They do not usually have learning disabilities. They have fewer problems with speech but may still have difficulties with understanding and processing language.

6. The Worcestershire Strategy, based on the vision within the National Autism Strategy – "Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives", envisages that all children, young people and adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. The Strategy adopts a life-long approach and is based on diagnosis and support.

7. It focuses on the requirement of all partners to develop a pathway of services for people with autism as they move from being children to adults. The Strategy is based on the commitment in Worcestershire's Health and Well Being Strategy to ensure fair access to health services, clear and concise information in order that Worcestershire residents are healthier, live longer and have a better quality of life. The Strategy also takes into account relevant national legislation and guidance, including the statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the national Autism Strategy 2015.

8. The All-Age Autism Strategy for Worcestershire aims to:

- set out objectives and outcomes for autism services and support within the county;
- provide a framework of monitoring and evidence of quality of service;
- outline an action plan of how work will be taken forward in the next three years in key priority areas;
- illustrate a shared understanding of the needs of people with autistic spectrum conditions;
- ensure that all staff and agencies working this sector are aware of Worcestershire's Safeguarding policies and procedures;
- provide strategic direction for education, health and social care organisations;
- ensure compliance with national guidance.

9. People with Autistic Spectrum Conditions are known to be at risk of poor mental health and poorer health outcomes generally. The Strategy works to mitigate health and quality of life inequalities.

10. Since returning to the Health & Wellbeing Board in July 2017, when the Board was updated on progress, further development of the Action Plan has taken place as outlined in Appendix 2.

11. Since that update, the Autism Strategic Partnership Group has continued its focus on widening representation, particularly in relation to children, young people and transition. The Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) was approved at the Health and Wellbeing Board on 5 December 2017 and includes among its priorities a Person-Centred Approach, Early Intervention and Preparation for Adulthood.

12. Employment has also remained a key focus for the Autism Strategic Partnership Group. During the year, an event was held to engage with employers to explore, showcase and inform employers about the benefits of having people with autism working in their organisations, and to consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed to help someone thrive in their employment. The event was well attended and received positive feedback.

13. The Directorate of Adult Services Commissioning Unit is now employing a person on the Autistic Spectrum to administer the Autism Strategic Partnership Group and its sub-groups. This is a paid training placement for a year initially.

14. Funding of services for people with Asperger's is a responsibility of the CCG and significant work has been done to ensure best use of the resources available. From 1 April 2018, the CCG is commissioning the adults service directly to ensure a direct relationship between funding sources and service provision and allow the CCG to allocate resources accordingly. From a children's perspective, the Neuro Developmental (ND) pathway (Umbrella pathway) is the route for assessment which may lead to diagnosis. Following a significant increase in referrals to the Umbrella Pathway in 2017/18 a review was undertaken and measures implemented to ensure that only appropriate referrals are made and accepted to the Pathway. Activity and outcomes continue to be monitored.

15. There is a national requirement to submit a Self-Assessment return which monitors progress against set areas of service development and delivery. This was completed successfully in 2017 and will be updated in autumn 2018.

16. The Worcestershire All-Age Autism Strategy runs from 2015-2018. An update of the strategy will therefore be undertaken during 2018, to commence a new strategy from 2019. This update will take into consideration the Government's recent 'Think Autism' governance refresh.

17. Worcestershire County Council has lead responsibility for the delivery of the Autism Strategy. Elaine Carolan, Strategic Commissioner, is the named lead.

18. The Council is also an active member of the West Midlands Autism Leads Network.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

19. All actions are within existing budgets. All legal implications are based on the Autism Act 2009. There are no additional HR implications.

Privacy Impact Assessment

20. Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity Implications

21. The Strategy was launched in compliance with the Autism Act 2009. Since the launch there are no further implications or need for screening. The refresh of the strategy will include a refresh of equality and diversity implications

Contact Points

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Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Worcestershire All-Age Autism Strategy (on-line)
- Appendix 2 – Action Plan Update