Summary Report

Autism Spectrum Conditions

March 2018

Our Work

Healthwatch Worcestershire has been finding out what people with Autism Spectrum Conditions and their carers think about accessing health services, information, support and diagnosis.

150 people completed our surveys and we spoke to 70 people as part of our engagement.





We have also been looking at levels of awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Conditions within health services across Worcestershire, including GP practices and hospitals.

We asked about the training available for staff and ways in which they support and make adjustments for patients with Autism.

Access to Health Services

People told us about the difficulties they can experience when visiting the doctors and hospitals. They gave us lots of examples of things that would help them when making appointments, waiting to be seen and communicating with Doctors and Nurses.

We have made suggestions for GP practices and hospitals about ways they can make adjustments for patients with Autism, including a flagging system to make sure they know who might need extra support.





Awareness of Autism Spectrum Conditions

Our findings show that there is variation in the awareness and understanding of Autism across health services in Worcestershire.

There is a need to increase awareness by encouraging and promoting training and identifying Autism Champions.

Information



Feedback suggests that there is a need for comprehensive and up to date information about services and support available for people with Autism Spectrum Conditions and their carers. This needs to be available in a central location and promoted in a variety of ways including online and via social media.

People also told us they would like more information to help them understand Autism Spectrum Conditions and strategies for support.



Support

On the whole people did not feel they receive the support they need in relation to their Autism Spectrum Condition or their caring role. A need for more appropriate mental health support was identified.

People valued support they received from support and social groups and feel there is a need to increase access to these across Worcestershire.

Diagnosis

Feedback suggests that in some cases children, young people and adults have experienced long waits for an Autism Spectrum Condition diagnosis. Many felt they did not receive enough information about the process for diagnosis, understanding the diagnosis or support available following diagnosis.





Worcestershire's All Age Autism Strategy

The All Age Autism Strategy was agreed in 2015. It is the plan for Autism support and services in Worcestershire, to make sure they meet national requirements and guidelines.

We have used the feedback we have been given to make recommendations about how services can be improved, in relation to the priorities set out in the All Age Autism Strategy.

We have asked those responsible for running health and care services for a response to our recommendations and how the actions will be implemented.

The full Autism Spectrum Conditions Report is available on our website: www.healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk

We always want to hear your views. You can email us on: info@healthwatchworcestershire.co.uk or ring us on 01386 550264.

