

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD
22 MAY 2018****HEALTHWATCH WORCESTERSHIRE AUTISM SPECTRUM
CONDITIONS REPORT**

Board Sponsor

Peter Pinfield, Chairman, Healthwatch Worcestershire

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
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Impact on Safeguarding Adults	Yes
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Item for Decision, Consideration or Information

Consideration

Recommendation

- 1. The Health and Well-being Board is asked to consider Healthwatch Worcestershire's Autism Spectrum Conditions Report – March 2018 and the recommendations made in relation to the priorities within the Worcestershire All Age Autism Strategy.**

Background

2. Autism Spectrum Conditions was identified as a Healthwatch Worcestershire (HWW) Business Priority following feedback received through previous engagement and from local groups and organisations supporting and representing people with Autism and their carers'.
3. Over the last year HWW have been finding out what people with Autism and their carers think about accessing health services, information, support and diagnosis. 150 people completed surveys and 70 spoke to HWW as part of engagement. Levels of awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum

Conditions within health services in Worcestershire was identified by requesting feedback from GP practices, Worcestershire Acute Hospital Trust, Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, West Midlands Ambulance Service and Care UK. Please see Appendix 2 for further information about background and methodology of work undertaken.

4. Healthwatch Worcestershire Autism Spectrum Condition Report was published in March 2018. A summary of the report can be found in Appendix 1 and a link to the full report in Background Papers.

5. The report makes recommendations about further action needed in the implementation of priorities set out in Worcestershire's All Age Autism Strategy. See Appendix 3 – Conclusions and Recommendations. A summary of findings is below in paragraphs 6 to 8.

6. Diagnosis, Information and Support: Findings suggest that in some cases people had experienced long waits for a diagnosis and did not feel they had received sufficient information while waiting and at the point of diagnosis. The majority of people with Autism Spectrum Conditions and carers did not feel that they receive the support they need in relation to their Autism or caring role. In particular a need for appropriate mental health support was identified. People reported that they would like more information about services and support available to them and increased access to local support groups.

7. Understanding and Awareness of Autism Spectrum Conditions: Findings show that there is a variation in awareness of Autism across health services in Worcestershire. There is a need to increase awareness by gaining commitment from partners to the vision within the All Age Autism Strategy, by promoting and encouraging training for staff and identifying Autism Champions.

8. Access to Health Services: Findings showed the difficulties that people with Autism can experience when visiting the Doctors and Hospitals. Examples were given by people with Autism and their carers and also by health services of adjustments that can be made when making appointments, waiting to be seen and communicating with staff. Recommendations also include the importance of staff awareness of Autism and the use of clear language. In addition, introducing a flagging system to ensure appropriate adjustments can be made.

9. The report has been circulated to the Autism Strategic Partnership Board, Worcestershire County Council, Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Worcestershire Acute Hospital Trust, Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England.

10. HWW requested a response to the recommendations set out in the report from Worcestershire County Council, the Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups, Worcestershire Acute Hospital Trust and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust.

11. A response to the recommendations from Worcestershire County Council can be found in Appendix 4.

12. A response on behalf of the Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups can be found in Appendix 5.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

13. Legal implications based on the Autism Act 2009.

Privacy Impact Assessment

14. Not applicable

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. Not applicable

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Summary – HWW Autism Spectrum Conditions Report
- Appendix 2 - Introduction – HWW Autism Spectrum Conditions Report (on-line)
- Appendix 3 – Conclusions and Recommendations – HWW Autism Spectrum Conditions Report (on-Line)
- Appendix 4 – Worcestershire County Council Response to Recommendations (on-line)
- Appendix 5 – Clinical Commissioning Groups Response(On-line)

Background Papers

The following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Appendix 6 – HWW Autism Spectrum Conditions Report – March 2018
Full report (on Healthwatch Worcesteshire website)
- Worcestershire's All Age Autism Strategy 2015 – 2018 (on-line)