

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

6 JULY 2023

THE INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM AUTISM STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Summary

1. The Panel will receive an update on the Integrated Care System (ICS) All-Age Autism Strategy which is currently under development. The representatives invited for this discussion are:
 - The Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Children and Families, Adult Social Care, and Health and Well Being, Worcestershire County Council
 - The Assistant Director, People and Commissioning and the Lead Commissioner, Learning and Disability, Worcestershire County Council
 - The Director for All Age Disability, Worcestershire Children First (WCF)
 - The Managing Director, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB).
 - The Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust

Background

2. A new National Autism Strategy 2021-2026 was published in July 2021 and incorporates both children and adults into the National Strategy ambitions for the first time. The areas of focus include:
 - Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society.
 - Improving autistic children and young people's access into education and supporting positive transitions into adulthood.
 - Supporting more autistic people into employment.
 - Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people.
 - Building the right support in the community.
 - Improving support in criminal and youth justice systems.
3. Worcestershire's most recent All-age Autism Strategy ran from 2019-22 and it was agreed to update this in line with the National Strategy.
4. There is an active Worcestershire multi-agency Autism Partnership Board, including representation from people with lived experience, carers and parent carers, social care, health, WCF, Public Health, voluntary sector and housing (list not exhaustive) that provides critical oversight and challenge to Worcestershire's Autism work and reports jointly to Health and Wellbeing Board and the ICS Learning Disability and Autism Quality Assurance Programme Board.

5. The ICS Learning Disability and Autism Programme Board already brings together the aspirations of the two counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire into one health related workstream. It brings to life and holds to account the local action plan delivering the national NHS 3-year plan. The ICS Assurance Board proposed the creation of a joint Autism strategy across the footprint. The Autism Partnership Boards for Worcestershire and Herefordshire endorsed the joint approach with local place-based sections within the strategy that enable specific work streams in each County (particularly around Children's Services and Education). This approach was agreed by the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2022.

Legislative context

6. The Autism Act 2009 requires the Government to introduce and keep under review an Adult Autism Strategy. The initial Strategy was published in 2010 and refreshed in 2014. The statutory guidance is aimed at supporting the NHS and local authorities in implementing the strategy in areas such as staff training, identification and diagnosis, transition planning when people move from children to adult services, employment, and criminal justice.
7. The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015), continues to place duties on local authorities, NHS organisations and schools in respect of autistic children and young people. There is also a duty to provide services to disabled children under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.
8. The Health and Social Care Act 2022 requires all Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered providers to undertake Mandatory Autism Training.

Strategy Development Plan

9. Both local Autism Partnership Boards considered the National Strategy in the development of a vision for the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Strategy. It was agreed that the priorities should be broadly the same, with the addition of a priority regarding staying safe.
10. The Strategy has been split into seven workstreams, with a workstream lead for each element. Each work stream lead has a role description co-produced by the Autism Partnership Boards to set out the work to be completed. This includes: co-production at every stage of the development, understanding the data, the story behind the data, engagement, analysis of the engagement activity and co-producing key actions for each priority.
11. The workstream leads, where possible are subject matter experts and are set out in the table over the page:

<u>Priority</u>	<u>*Helping Autistic People to:</u> (taken from The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026 (Easy Read) (publishing.service.gov.uk))	<u>Lead</u>
Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society.	Feel less isolated and lonely Be treated well in their community Feel understood by business and organisations Use reasonably adjusted public spaces Use reasonably adjusted public transport	National Autistic Society
Improving autistic children and young people's access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood.	Get the right help at school/college Have teachers who understand and can help Get support to live in their community Find work Access higher education Get the mental health support that they need	Director for All Age Disability, WCF (there is a separate lead for this priority in Herefordshire)
Supporting more autistic people into employment	Find and stay in work Have help to live well if they can't work	Lead Commissioner Adult Social Care, Worcestershire (until a more appropriate subject matter lead can be found)
Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people	Live healthier and for longer Get help from an earlier age Not have to wait more than 13 weeks for help Get the Mental Health support that they need	Lead for Neurodiverse Children and Young People, ICB
Building the right support in the community	Avoid admission to Mental Health hospital where possible Leave Mental Health hospital as soon as they are well Have access to good quality social care and housing	Lead Commissioner, Worcestershire County Council
Improving support in criminal and youth justice systems	Have reasonable adjustments made within the criminal justice system	West Mercia Police

Keeping Safe	Be treated well in their community Have support for their families and carers to help to keep them safe Not have to experience hate crime, abuse, victimisation, or radicalisation	Senior Commissioner, Herefordshire County Council
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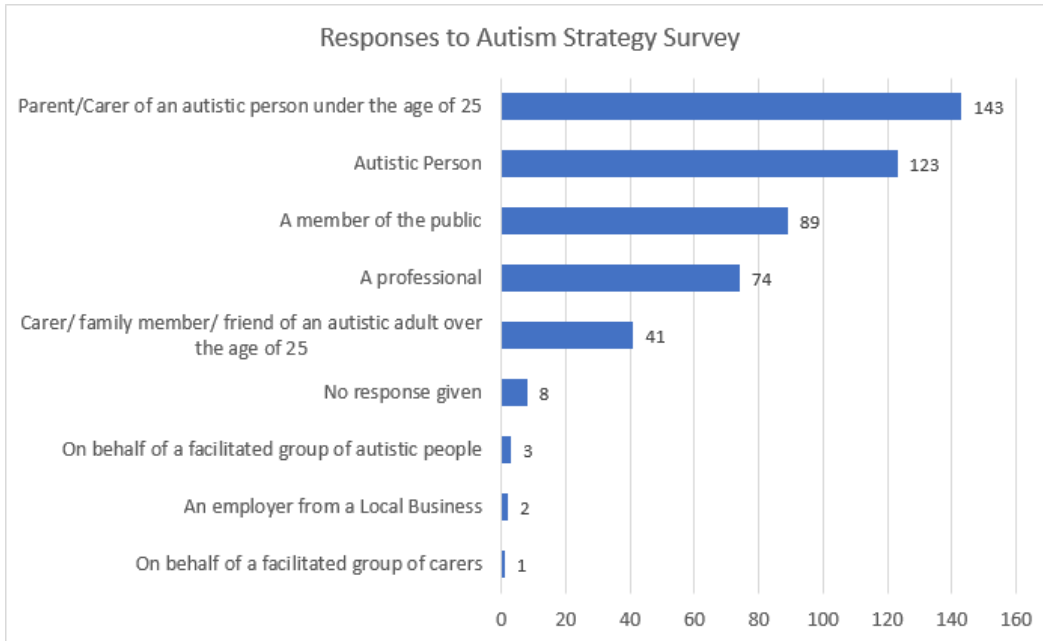
*These are the key outcomes taken from the National Strategy (Easy Read). Our own strategic work and co-production, once completed, is likely to identify more/different outcomes for people.

Strategy development so far

12. The key achievements are set out in the table below

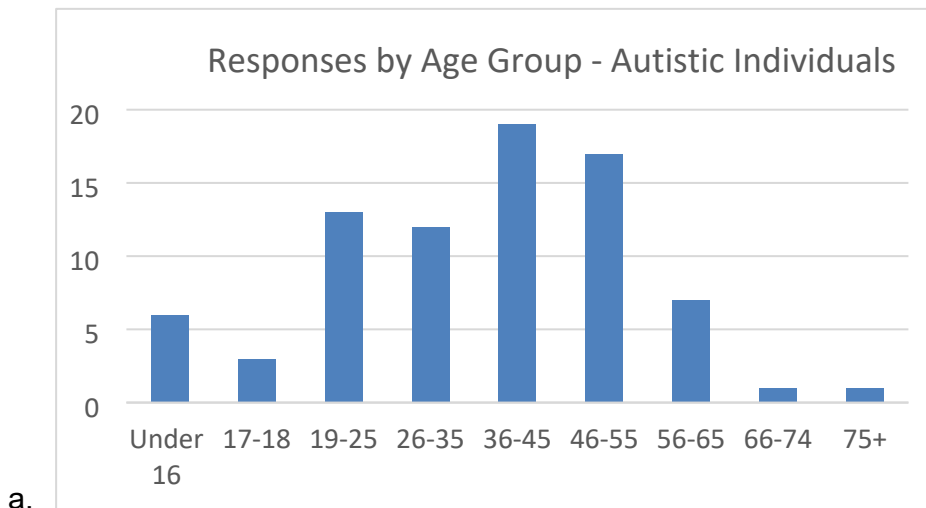
Co-production of key areas to focus on for each priority	Autism Partnership Boards both worked on a document to support the work of the workstream leads setting out what should be included and who should be involved.
Workstream leads established	Each has a role description setting out the tasks to be completed and attends a project group.
Desktop analysis: what do we know	Work completed to identify what we know, what we don't know and who we need to ask for each priority.
Engagement	Building on the desktop analysis an engagement questionnaire was created and circulated to the public. Face to face engagement events conducted to support the engagement phase. So far this has included carers workshops, a housing focus group and an advocacy focus group.

13. The feedback from the questionnaire is still being analysed however, there was an encouraging 442 responses received from a wide range of people.



*Note some of the carers also responded as Autistic people so the numbers do not tally with the overall number of respondents.

- Of the Autistic people responding there were a wide range of ages. However, the questionnaire did not focus on children as it was felt a questionnaire was not the best method of engagement. Children will be engaged through the work on priority 2.



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Next steps

- The work so far has shown that the Worcestershire strategy will largely reflect the National Strategy. The next steps for Herefordshire and Worcestershire are to focus on the key actions to take forward. The table below sets out the work to be completed with timescales.

Task	Completion date
Further face to face online engagement	10 September 2023
Updating of “what we know” documents for each priority	15 September 2023
Co-production of key actions for each priority	1 October 2023
Draw information into a strategy	10 October 2023
Start Strategy sign off process	10 October 2023
First “you said, we did” newsletter to be produced	1 April 2024

Legal, Financial, and HR Implications

16. **Legal** – The All-Age Autism Strategy will need to ensure that the system complies and support compliance with the Statutory Guidance [Adult autism strategy: supporting its use - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/adult-autism-strategy-supporting-its-use.pdf)

Equality and Diversity Implications

17. All re-commissioning exercises are subject to the completion of appropriate Impact Assessments, including Equality Impact Assessments wherever there may be equality and diversity implications.

Purpose of the Meeting

18. The Panel is asked to:

- Consider and comment on the All Age Autism Strategy being developed;
- Agree any comments to highlight to the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Children and Families, Adult Social Care, and Health and Well Being and the NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB); and
- Determine whether any further information or scrutiny is required

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report are:

[The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026 \(Easy Read\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107111/2021-2026-national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-easy-read.pdf)

[Agenda for Health and Wellbeing Board on Tuesday, 27th September, 2022, 2.00 pm - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2022/09/27/wcc-agenda-health-wellbeing-board-27th-september-2022-2-00-pm/)

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)