

13TH March 2014	ITEM: 9
Thurrock Health and Well-Being Board	
THURROCK ADULT AUTISM STRATEGY	
Report of: Catherine Wilson Service Manager Commissioning and Service Development	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris Director Adults Health and Commissioning	
This report is Public	
Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to inform the Health and Well Being Board about the development of the Thurrock Adult Autism Strategy and the plan to implement the strategy in Thurrock.	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Thurrock Adult Autism Strategy is a response to the statutory duties now placed on Local Authorities and Health.

The strategy explains how in Thurrock we are going to work together to support people who have Autism.

The National Autism Strategy has five key areas that need to change to make things better for people with autism.

- Increasing awareness and understanding of autism among people who provide services
- Developing a clear, consistent pathway for the diagnosis of autism which leads to a personalised assessment of need
- Improving access to the services and support
- Helping adults with autism into work
- Enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism

Thurrock’s strategy is based on these five areas and on the work done during a consultation event held in July 2012.

The people who attended the consultation event were those who have autism their families and friends, professionals like social workers, nurses and teachers and people who work in voluntary organisations. Everybody wanted to see people with autism have better experiences which mean that the outcomes from the strategy will be:

- People have accessed appropriate health services.
- People are in paid work or undertaking work related opportunities.

- People are living in a range of accommodation and included in a range of activities in the community.
- People have experienced choice and control in the planning and delivery of their individualised social care services.
- People have had appropriately planned and supported transitions.
- People have had supportive education and training opportunities.

The strategy provides an analysis of the current provision for people with autism and what that costs, together with predicted future need based on national averages and the young people with autism who will move through transition into adulthood. At the time of writing the strategy there were, 66 children with autism supported in mainstream schools and 125 children within our specialist schools.

The approach within the local and national strategies is to improve diagnostic services and the provision that follows diagnosis and to improve the knowledge of professionals and organisations who would offer support to people with autism and their families.

The action plan attached to the strategy has started to be delivered, to ensure that this continues a further consultation day will be held inviting all those who attended the day in July 2012. This will give the opportunity for everyone to reflect on progress and be clear about what still needs to be achieved. The day is planned for April/May 2014. The autism steering group will be re-established from this day to oversee the strategy and report back to the Disability Partnership Board.

The action plan has delivered the following:

- Autism awareness training has been made available to all social care staff through e learning. The feedback has been very positive and has supported staff in identifying where autism advice and information would support an individual.
- a commissioning lead has been appointed to lead the implementation of the strategy; they will lead a task and finish group to monitor and refresh the implementation plan.
- the mapping of resources has started there is very little available locally but providers are keen to work with us to identify where support for people who have autism can be provided. Work is also being undertaken with housing to identify accommodation where care and support could be purchased to support people with autism to move back to Thurrock from residential accommodation elsewhere.
- autism is a key part of the transition strategy which links to the work with housing to find suitable accommodation locally for young people so they do not have to be placed out of Thurrock.
- The carer's strategy highlights support for carers and parents of people who have autism as being essential and part of the work of the Carers Partnership

Group will be to make positive links to local and national organisations which can support those carers.

- There is still work to be done by Health looking at the diagnostic service and the service available after diagnosis this was highlighted in the Health and Social Care Self Assessment for learning disability.

The strategy will be refreshed after the second consultation day and will be monitored regularly through the steering group.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 That the health and well being board note and approve the autism strategy has been written and is being implemented in Thurrock

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition, sometimes referred to as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). The condition varies in severity in its impact on individuals. The National Autistic Society defines Autism as: **a complex spectrum condition**. People on the autistic spectrum experience three main areas of difficulty:

They are difficulties with:

- Social communication (e.g. problems using and understanding verbal and non-verbal language, such as gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice)
- Social interaction (e.g. problems in recognising and understanding other people's feelings and managing their own)
- Social imagination (e.g. problems in understanding and predicting other people's intentions and behaviour and imagining situations outside their own routine)

The executive summary of the strategy gives detail regarding the background to the development of the strategy it is important to highlight that the Thurrock Strategy is written in the context of the new statutory duties placed on local authorities and NHS bodies through;

- The Autism Act (2009)
- Fulfilling and rewarding lives - the national strategy for autism (2010)
- Statutory guidance for implementing the national strategy (DOH Best Practice Guidance, Gateway 15204, 2010)

The prevalence of autism in Thurrock is unclear however based on national data there will be just under 1000 people in Thurrock with autism, many will never access services and will live very independent lives. Much of the work of the strategy focuses on those people who require higher levels of support

however increasing understanding of the condition will support all those who experience autism.

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

3.1 N/A

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

4.1 To ensure that the Health and Well Being Board are well informed regarding the autism strategy.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Wide consultation has taken place to produce the strategy, a steering group guided its development and a consultation day held in July 2012 provided the framework for the strategy itself

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The failure to deliver high quality services and support would affect Thurrock residents and prevent them from being valued members of their local communities.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Roger Harris**
Telephone and email: **07527973975**
rharris@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no direct financial implications for this report. Improvements to services for people who have autism are required to be delivered within the current available budget as no additional funding has been made available.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Chris Pickering**
Telephone and email: **01375 652925**
Chris.Pickering @BDTLegal.org.uk

As this report is for noting only there are no legal implications resulting from it.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roger Harris**

Telephone and email: **07527973975**
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The implementation of the autism strategy will be key in ensuring that people who have autism have an equality of opportunity within their community. The Diversity Team will continue to monitor closely the delivery of this wider agenda.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Thurrock Autism Strategy (Final Draft)

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