

16 April 2013		ITEM 5
Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Thurrock Autism Strategy		
Report of: Jo Hall, Sensory Development worker		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Accountable Head of Service: Roger Harris, Head of Commissioning and Resources		
Accountable Director: Jo Olsson, Director People Services		
This report is public		
<p>Purpose of Report:</p> <p>This paper seeks to advise Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the emerging Thurrock Autism Action Plan 2013-2016. The action plan may be subject to change as a result of comments from the committee and further consultation</p>		

Executive Summary

This paper seeks to advise Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the emerging Thurrock Autism Action Plan 2013-2016. The action plan may be subject to change as a result of comments from the committee and further consultation

1.1 Recommendations

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee take note and make comments on the contents of this report.

2 Introduction and Background

2.1 The Autism Act 2009 required the Government to develop a strategy for meeting the needs of adults in England with autistic spectrum conditions by improving the provision of relevant services for adults by local authorities, NHS bodies and NHS foundation trusts.

That requirement was met in *'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for Adults with Autism in England 2010.'* The guidance sets out the following vision:

'...for all adults with autism to be able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis, and accept support if they need it, and they can depend upon mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals helping them to make the most of their talents'

In particular, the Guidance sets out how health and social care services can:

- Improve the way they identify the needs of adults with autism
- Incorporate those identified needs more effectively into local service planning and commissioning, so that adults with autism and their carers are better able to make relevant choices about their care.

2.2 The emphasis within The Autism Act 2009 and subsequent Guidance 2010 is for statutory organisations to ensure Autism is integral to their service delivery through the implementation of existing policies, there are no additional resources available to deliver this. The main focus is service redesign and workforce training within Thurrock.

The main issues within the guidance are set out as follows:

- Training of staff who provide services to adults with autism
- Identification and diagnosis of autism in adults, leading to assessment of needs for relevant services
- Planning in relation to the provision of services to people with autism as they move from being children to adults
- Local planning and leadership in relation to the provision of services for adults with autism

The main focus of the Autism Act 2009 is to link autism awareness, provision and support to the wider local authority agenda.

In Thurrock we are developing exciting initiatives to support local communities to become more self-sustaining and to support vulnerable people within their localities. The work being undertaken in Adult Social Care, developing the key concepts of Asset Based Community Development and the pilot to establish Local Area Coordination will be key for the development of support for those who have autism. We will ensure that autism is a key part of the agenda within the new South Ockendon Community Hub to explore how people can be supported more locally. The results of this will be included in the implementation of any new service responses.

Asset Based Community Development and Local Area Coordination will enable communities to become more aware of autism and how that community can respond to individuals. It will explore finding solutions locally so that people who have autism experience an equality of opportunity within all aspects of their daily lives. This has clear links to the outcomes from the public consultation detailed

below. The key being that people with autism need to have the same opportunities, with appropriate support, as others within their local communities.

2.3 In July 2012 Thurrock Coalition, in conjunction with Thurrock Council, held a consultation event in Thurrock. Local people gave their views and six priority outcomes were identified as follows:

1. People have access to appropriate health services
2. People are in paid work or undertaking work related opportunities
3. People are living in a range of accommodation and included in a range of activities in the community
4. People have experienced choice and control in the planning and delivery of their individualised social care services
5. People have had appropriately planned and supported transitions
6. People have had supportive education and training opportunities

There were a number of cross cutting outcomes which feature throughout as follows:

- Both the community and professionals are aware of Autism and some have received specific training
- There are a range of networks for support throughout Thurrock Council
- Universal services have access to specialist support
- Information about individuals is communicated and shared appropriately
- There is specific advice, information and advocacy available to people with autism

2.4 **Actions from Thurrock Autism Strategy**

The development of the autism strategy has highlighted the following actions

Training and awareness

- Ensure autism awareness training is available to all staff working in social care.
- Provision of specialist training for those in key roles that have a direct impact on access to services for adults with autism.
- Increase access to information and advice for people with autism and their families
- Improve awareness of autism in the general population and with employers
- Identify other agencies where training would increase access for adults with autism

Pathways

- Staff across health and social care receive autism awareness training so that they are better able to identify potential signs of autism.
- Identify a clear pathway for diagnosis of autism, from initial referral through to assessment of needs
- Ensure that all relevant local organisations understand what the pathway to diagnosis is.

- The NHS body providing healthcare services to the adult informs, with the individuals consent, the relevant local authority adult social care department promptly to ensure that a community care assessment can be carried out within a reasonable time period if the individual wants an assessment
- Improve the way that the local authority carries out eligibility assessments and reviews by ensuring staff are competent in carrying out assessments
- Ensure that carers of people with ASC know they are eligible to have their needs assessed through a carers assessment and access services as appropriate if eligibility criteria is met

Transitions

- Professionals working with young people with autism approaching transition should inform the parent and young person of their right to a community care assessment and inform carers of the right to a carers assessment.
- Statutory duties around transition planning are followed.
- Links with Thurrock Transition plan

Planning

- Allocate responsibility to a named joint commissioner/senior manager to lead commissioning of community care services for adults with autism
- Map local need and identify gaps to be addressed by future commissioning of services. Reduce dependence on out of area services by developing local market
- Improve collection and analysis of information and trends to clarify how many adults in Thurrock have autism.
- Explore the role of community and voluntary groups in delivering services to meet the needs of adults with autism, their families and carers.
- Review of all out of Borough residential placements to ensure that they are meeting peoples needs and we are getting value for money from our providers
- Ensure that adults with autism are able to access personal budgets and benefit from personalisation.
- Providers of mental health and learning disability services are required to ensure reasonable adjustments to service delivery
- Explore establishing a local autism group or method of communication to ensure that the views of people with autism and carers are taken into account when developing and commissioning services for adults with autism.
- Ensure that housing staff have suitable training and awareness on ASC which will assist access to mainstream housing
- Review current supported employment options ensuring relevance to people with ASC.
- Ensure access to advocates who have knowledge of ASC
- In light of the concerns raised in the Winterbourne View Hospital report we need to ensure we have a proportionate but rigorous contract monitoring framework for all external providers

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

- 3.1 From figures currently available there are approximately 1,004 adults in Thurrock with Autism and this is expected to rise to around 1,215 by 2030.

(Pansi - DOH) The prevalence of Autistic Spectrum Conditions was found to be 1.0% of the adult population in England.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Thurrock Coalition, in conjunction with Thurrock Council held a consultation event in July 2012. The purpose was to engage the citizens of Thurrock, people on the autistic spectrum, parents, carers, and families, and Council officers to explore and discuss issues around appropriate service provision and availability. The event was designed to allow citizens to explore what they found most useful in Thurrock currently, what they value and want more of in future and finally what they would be noticing if their best hopes for the consultation were realized.

4.2 A consultation questionnaire was produced and available for members of the public to complete. This was available through Thurrock Coalition and on the Council's website.

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

5.1 Raising awareness on Autism amongst the general public and professionals will have a positive impact on the council's strategic priorities.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652772**
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Some cost may be incurred with regards to training and awareness, but these will be contained within existing resources

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Shahnaz Patel**
 Telephone and email: **0208 227 3562**
Shahnaz.patel@BDTlegal.org.uk

There are no specific legal implications that arise from this report at this stage.

6.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

There will be an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken for the strategy and the implementation plan that will follow.

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

N/A

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 As previously stated the action plan may be subject to change as a result of the consultation process.

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Thurrock Autism Strategy

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