

5 March 2020		ITEM: 9
Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Post 18 Autism Support Service		
Ward: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Catherine Wilson, Strategic Lead Commissioning and Procurement Adults Housing and Health and Children's Services		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Education and Skills		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Adult Social Care and Education have undertaken significant work to establish the options available to deliver support to young people aged 18 to 25 with Autism and behaviour that challenges services. With the advent of the Autism Act 2014, our local Autism Action Plan and our Preparing for Adulthood Strategy 2019-2022 it is clear that community and service response require significant development.

Our local specialist school Treetops has implemented a well-respected approach to supporting and educating young people with Autism and challenging behaviour. The approach, Applied Behaviour Analysis and Positive Behaviour Support (ABA), is one that delivers individualised methods of teaching. This approach supports all aspects of learning and everyday life designed to reinforce patterns of behaviour that are positive reducing behaviour that challenges.

To test the requirements a pilot was developed for a local service and based on the positive outcomes of that pilot a service has been designed to offer a local provision.

Adult Social Care and Education are now in a position to tender for a Framework to deliver ABA services within Thurrock.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are aware that the tender is progressing to establish a Framework Agreement for a Post 18 Autism Support Service for Thurrock.**

1.2 That Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the opportunity to comment on the tender.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Adult Social Care and Education has recognised the need for a local Post 18 Autism Support Service for young people aged 18 to 25 who would otherwise be at risk of being placed in expensive out of borough residential care.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability and although some people can live relatively independently, others have highly complex needs requiring a lifetime of specialist care and support.

2.2 Each young person will require a bespoke care package to suit their individual needs, where it suits them best including in the community, family home or in young people's own homes.

2.3 Provision will support young people in learning life skills to prepare and transition into adulthood and will enable them to remain in their local community living semi independently or potentially, independently.

2.4 The population of young people aged 18 to 24 years old in Thurrock identified on the Autistic Spectrum in 2019 is 130 projected to grow to 158 young people by 2030.

This equates to an increase of 22% or about 28 young people therefore demand for provision is likely to continue to grow, reflecting an increasing population of young people in Thurrock diagnosed on the Autism spectrum.

The population may rise further with planning permission for a third specialist school in Thurrock, in addition to Treetops and Beacon Hill Academy as more families may move into the borough.

2.5 It is projected that up to 10 young people a year will require access to the Post 18 Autism Service. The cost of provision to each young person will be divided between Education and Adult Social Care based on the needs of the young person and the type of provision delivered to each individual.

2.6 The transitions panel will monitor and agree the young people eligible for provision each year and inform decisions regarding directorate financial contributions for each young person.

2.7 The pilot project for Post 18 Autism Support in Thurrock has been delivered by a local provider based in the community and they have delivered the existing provision since September 2017.

2.8 The criteria for participation in the pilot included young people with a diagnosis of autism being able to move on and live semi independently, or

independently, with appropriate support. These young people had very high levels of need and also had behaviour considered challenging to services.

- 2.9 The aim of the 2 year pilot was to devise, develop and implement a programme that would:
- Teach skills needed for individuals to be as independent as possible;
 - Teach procedures that are systematically implemented by a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst devising each individuals programme and training staff to implement that programme;
 - Collate data which is monitored weekly to ensure the effectiveness of the programme and that each individual is making progress; and
 - Use errorless teaching increasing functional skills reinforcing positive behaviours and decreasing behaviours that prevent individuals from accessing the community.
- 2.10 The pilot has provided evidence of need and demonstrated the following successful outcomes:
- Increased skills to participate in community and lifestyle activities with reduced support;
 - Increased community activities and participation including work experience and traveling to destinations on public transport;
 - Reduction in challenging behaviours;
 - Successful healthcare visits and medical examinations and procedures;
 - Collaborative working with parents / carers and medical teams; and
 - Successful transitions from the 2-year pilot programme into supported living accommodation.
- 2.11 The approach used by the provider with young people accessing their service is the Applied Behaviour Approach (ABA). This has been the most common based approach used in Thurrock including within specialist education provision however we recognise that there are other approaches e.g. Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) that might be delivered.
- 2.12 Existing Post 18 educational support for young people with a diagnosis on the Autistic Spectrum in Thurrock includes provision of two specialist schools; Treetops and Beacon Hill Academy with planning permission for a further specialist school.
- 2.13 Additionally, Post 18 educational support in Thurrock is provided at Palmer's Campus USP College, South Essex College and Thurrock Adult Community College (TACC).
- 2.14 Further specialist educational support not delivered at school is provided by Olive AP Academy.
- 2.15 The educational element of provision will support learning and development post 18 together with a social aspect to support the development of life skills.

- 2.16 Education, Health and Care Plan's (EHCP) that young people will have will identify education, health and social care needs beyond 18 and will remain in place, if required, until the young person reaches the age of 25.
- 2.17 The provider will work within the parameters of Thurrock's Autism pathway and the Preparing for Adulthood Strategy 2019-2022.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 There is a lack of specialist support in the borough for young people with autism and additional disabilities with behaviours that challenge services. This has resulted in these young people being placed in expensive out of borough residential care away from local support networks and their communities.

It is important to consider that the potential providers are able to deliver varying approaches but must be familiar with the Applied Behaviour Approach (ABA) as young people accessing this service from Thurrock will be most familiar with this approach.

It is imperative that the approach offered to young people and their parents/ carers and families, is person centred and bespoke to each young person. We acknowledge approaches offered by a potential provider may differ from ABA.

It is important in establishing a Framework that a responsive service is delivered allowing a number of expert providers to be sourced to deliver specialist approaches to meet the needs of each young person.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To ensure that Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee are aware that Thurrock Council are commissioning a Post 18 Autism Support Service for young people aged 18 to 25 with a diagnosis of autism and disabilities that challenge service responses.
- 4.2 To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the opportunity to comment on the tender process.

5. Consultation

5.1 Professionals

- 5.1.1 Consultation with key stakeholders has been undertaken, including but not exhaustive of:
- Childrens Social Care colleagues;
 - Adults Social Care colleagues;

- Thurrock Adult Community College (TACC);
- Specialist Schools - Treetops and Beacon Hill Academy;
- Autism Action Group (AAG) and
- Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS).

5.1.2 A joint Thurrock Childrens and Adult's commissioning market engagement event was held in October 2019. This event was advertised via Eventbrite. Additionally, the event was sent to colleagues in Essex County Council and London Borough authorities asking for awareness of the event to be raised via their networks and commissioned providers.

5.1.3 The event was successful with 10 organisations attending and expressing an informal interest in the delivery of community based Post 18 Autism Services in Thurrock.

5.1.4 A number of these providers deliver services similar to the existing pilot provision. They engaged at the event in a dialogue about delivering innovative approaches and bespoke care packages to each young person and their family/carers within the principles of wellbeing and place based commissioning.

5.1.5 Feedback from the event has informed the development of the service specification.

5.2 **Public**

5.2.1 There is an opportunity to ensure that we co-design provision with young people, parents/carers and their families.

5.2.2 Consultation are being carried out in partnership with our operational colleagues in Children's and Adult's Social Care including our Preparing for Adulthood colleagues.

5.2.3 This will be undertaken using a variety of communication methods, including but not exhaustive of:

- Meetings;
- Telephone;
- Email; and
- Questionnaire.

5.2.4 This is to ensure that people with lived experience of autism and their parents/carers and families can contribute to the development of services. Feedback from young people, parents/carers and families will inform further development of the service specification.

5.3 **Tender timeline**

5.3.1 It is estimated that the tender will be published in late March 2020 with the contract award scheduled in late May to early June 2020.

5.3.2 The contract mobilisation period is scheduled to start from the 1st August 2020.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The delivery of the Post 18 Autism Service outlined in this report impact the following Council Priorities:

- **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay; and
- **Prosperity** – a borough, which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

Eligibility for this service will be determined by an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment. EHCP's are funded from a combination of Social Care, Health and the Dedicated Schools Grant depending on the specific requirements of each plan. This service is an increase over current provision but represents increased value for money and the minimisation of external high cost provisions. The increase in budget from 2021/22 will need to be prioritised from existing budgets and demographic growth.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
Strategic Lead / Deputy Head of Legal Services / Deputy Monitoring Officer

The Care Act 2014 provides a legal framework for Adult Social Care and places a legal duty on Council's to promote people's wellbeing. The Council must comply with the provisions of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in the proposed procurement of a post 18 Autism Support Services.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**

Community Development and Equalities Manager

The service outlined within this report will provide support to some of the most vulnerable young people in Thurrock and is intended to prevent these young people from being placed in out of borough, expensive residential care.

- 7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children)

N/A

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

N/A

9. **Appendices to the report**

N/A

Report Author:

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Children's Commissioner

Children's Services