

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HEALTH & WELLBEING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 JANUARY 2012

SUBJECT:	HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	GRAHAM HODKINSON DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR ANNE MCARDLE
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Statutory Guidance on the Autism Act 2009 (which also applies to NHS bodies as if they were Local Authorities) was published in December 2010 and sets out the responsibilities for Local Authorities and NHS Bodies: This Report provides an update on the position on the expectations of the guidance in Wirral as at December 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to
- a) note progress on the development of services in response to the Statutory Guidance arising from the Autism Act 2009
 - b) note the potential resource implications on public sector agencies and the challenge of commissioning services in this area
 - c) receive a further report on progress in a year

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure members of the health and well being health and scrutiny committee are fully appraised of developments in services for adults with autism and to be aware of the challenges facing the Council.
- 3.2 It is recommended that a further progress report is made in a year as this will give opportunity to review and consider clear progress with regard to the areas for development and opportunity to consider the local the implications of nice clinical guidelines.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Autism Act 2009 and the subsequent national Autism Strategy; 'Rewarding and Fulfilling Lives' 2010 set out a vision that 'all adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them.'
- 4.2 The national strategy for meeting the needs of adults in England with autistic spectrum conditions involves improving the provision of relevant services to such adults by local authorities, NHS bodies and NHS foundation trusts.
- 4.3 Within the national strategy, autism is defined as a lifelong condition that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. There are three main areas of difficulty: social communication, social interaction and social imagination. Since the publication of the Autism Act 2009, national work on the prevalence of autism has developed and is indicating that the majority of people who have autism do not have a learning disability.
- 4.4 Some of the issues that people with autism face are:
 - social and economical exclusion
 - services that are not available consistently; different adults with autism in the same area will have very different experiences
 - The manifestation of challenging behaviour arising from their condition or associated with other conditions which require intense levels of managed support in different settings
 - Risk of severe health and mental health problems, homelessness, and descent into crime or addiction for those without support
 - Although many adults with autism make successful and important contributions to their communities, the economy and their families, too many are dependent on benefits
- 4.5 Examples of good practice and service developments include:
 - Making reasonable adjustments for people with autism, for example not having to use waiting rooms
 - Taking account of hypersensitivities and providing quiet or lower-light areas, scheduling appointments at less busy times and allocating extra time
 - Preliminary visits to allow adults with autism to familiarise themselves with settings

- Avoiding ambiguous questions, not pressurising adults with autism in conversation and being aware of sensitivity to touch, ensuring essential documents and forms are available in accessible formats – in particular, easy read and formats that take account of sensory issues in their choice of colours.
- Commissioning some specialist autism services that are tailored to meet the needs of adults with autism by virtue of providing a structured environment which can have a positive calming and therapeutic impact
- Using current specialist autism providers to offer training to social care staff

4.6 The Statutory Guidance published in December 2010 expects

- the local provision of relevant services for the purpose of diagnosing autistic spectrum conditions in adults;
- the identification of adults with such conditions
- the assessment of the needs of adults with such conditions for relevant services;
- planning in relation to the provision of relevant services to persons with autistic spectrum conditions as they move from being children to adults;
- other planning in relation to the provision of relevant services to adults with autistic spectrum conditions;
- the training of staff who provide relevant services to adults with autism.
- local arrangements for leadership in relation to the provision of relevant services to adults with such conditions.

4.7 Progress in Wirral

4.8 Progress in Wirral against the expectations of the Statutory Guidance is set out below.

- Wirral's three NHS Clinical Commissioning Consortia have commissioned a service for the assessment and diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome (a condition on the autistic spectrum) in adults. The contract was awarded to Cheshire & Wirral Partnership (NHS) Foundation Trust. There is recognition in the contract that the service will need to be reviewed to accommodate the NICE clinical guidelines for good practice in diagnosis of autism in adults guidelines when these are published in summer 2012.

- Cheshire & Wirral Partnership (NHS) Foundation Trust has established an Adult Autism Steering Group where Primary Care Trust Staff meet regularly with specialist clinical staff to agree a consistent approach and best practice in specialist health support to people with autism across Wirral, and the majority of Cheshire. This provides a clear consensus to the necessary NHS response to the strategy for Adults with Autism in England “Fulfilling and Rewarding lives”.
- In October 2011, Wirral’s Learning Disability Partnership Board received a progress report on autism in Wirral and agreed that an action plan including terms of reference and resource implications, for an Autism Partnership Group should be forwarded to the Director of Public Health inviting consideration by Wirral’s Shadow Health and Well-Being Board. The purpose of this group would be to take holistic approach to the development of services for people with autism across the Council and public sector bodies.
- In September, Wirral Council cabinet agreed proposals for the future structure of the Department of Adult Social Services. These proposals formalised and strengthen leadership arrangements within the council and with NHS partners with regard to adults with autism. It is intended that autism will form part of the specialist service provision Branch. Additional management capacity will be in place from January 2013 which will provide opportunities for development work to be accelerated.
- Staff from various statutory and voluntary organisations in Wirral attended a regional meeting in Bolton in late September 2011 to support the development of a North West Autism Network. It was agreed that it would be helpful to establish a similar network on a more local (Cheshire and Wirral) basis, mirroring the footprint of the new Primary Care Trust cluster.
- The Network event also provided opportunity to identify and discuss general themes and concerns across the North West with representatives of the Department of Health. The key area of concern was that the likely increase in the diagnosis of autism in adults, consequent upon the development of specialised diagnostic services, would lead to a significant increase of demand on Adult Social Services Departments, however no additional funding had been available centrally to enable councils to respond to the specific support needs of adults with autism.

4.9 Areas for Development

- 4.10 Wirral, like most other areas of England, does not have detailed Information about the numbers of adults who may be expected to have autism. However based on figures from the National Autistic Society there are likely to be approx 2100 adults in Wirral who would be on the autism spectrum. The action plan described in paragraph 4.7 will consider the options for developing local systems to establish more accurate local information about adults in Wirral who have autism.
- 4.11 As part of the annual NHS contracting round, concluding in March 2012, all local NHS providers are being asked during 2012-13 to develop and

implement appropriate training plans for staff providing support to people with autism. Wirral DASS and Cheshire & Wirral Partnership (NHS) Foundation Trust have already begun to explore joint training opportunities. There will be a similar challenge for training initiatives to be developed for staff working in social care.

- 4.12 The potential for the establishment and remit of a Wirral Autism Partnership Group will be discussed in the paper described at section 4.7 above.
- 4.13 Implications for social care provision
- 4.14 The national priority given to developing services for all adults with autism presents both an opportunity and significant challenge to local authorities and Adult Social Care departments. In line with demographic trends and with improved support for diagnosis there will be an increase in demand for local services which may require both the commissioning of new services and a more fundamental service review of how current and existing services can be adapted to meet the needs of adults with autism. There will also be significant implications to ensure that staff working within DASS and through contracted providers have the necessary training and skills to provide good standards of support covering assessment and direct service provision.
- 4.15 In 2011/12 a number of young people with complex autism needs have moved into adult services. A number of these young people are living at home and so the provision of support is a necessity as part of the arrangements to support their families/carers. There will be further challenges as these young people move on to other services through their life span such as supported living.
- 4.16 Because autism is a spectrum condition where individuals present with a range of different needs we can also expect that some adults would not meet the current criteria for FACS eligibility however that would not preclude the need to have a wider discussion about the support which may be required to avoid social exclusion and a deterioration of health as described in paragraph 4.4.
- 4.17 The cost and resource implications to the Council of funding autism services will be significant. There are currently two specialist providers of services for people with autism in Wirral. These are Autism Initiatives, and Wirral Autistic Society. The combined revenue cost within the DASS budget of this provision covering supported living, day care, domiciliary care and day care is £3,060m.

The total number of clients is 83:

- Supported Living 20
- Day Care 37
- Domiciliary Care 01
- Residential Care 25

These figures preclude the wider expenditure on services for adults with autism in other areas such as local day services and supported living.

5.0 RELEVANT TASKS

5.1 None

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 These are set out in paragraph 4.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Developments in autism services in Wirral have been discussed with the Learning Disability Partnership Board. However it is recognised that the development of separate arrangements for regular consultation with people with autism need to be developed.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY FAITH GROUPS

8.1 The implications for Voluntary, Community and Faith Groups will be considered in the Autism Partnership Group proposals described at section 4.7 above

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 The resource implications outlined in this report will require a robust approach to the commissioning of services across the Council and partner agencies to ensure that the significant challenge of providing services in this area can be addressed through a period of expedient growth in demand and expectation at a time of contracting public sector finances. The costs of providing for services for adults with autism may attract a high premium in view of the specialist nature of the work required.

9.2 There have already been resource implications for NHS Wirral with the establishment of the Diagnostic Service for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome which will need to be kept under review as the service develops in line with the NICE clinical guidelines.

9.3 The Statutory Guidance reinforces Equality Act 2010 expectations of 'reasonable adjustments' to services, some of which may have resource implications for provider organisations

9.3 The potential increase in the diagnosis of autism in adults, consequent upon the development of specialised diagnostic services, is predicted as likely to have a demand on Adult Social Services in terms of assessment and support.

9.4 In year growth is already in evidence for services for adults with learning disabilities (where autism is a linked condition and adults with autism) alongside the services

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report confirms Wirral's progress with regard to the requirements of the Statutory Guidance on the Autism Act 2009.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The report addresses progress in Wirral against the expectations of statutory guidance, which is underpinned by the key principles of equality and human rights and points to the range of Government Policy that already should support adults with autism to achieve the same outcomes, have the same opportunities as the population as a whole, with particular reference to health care, employment and education, housing, relationships, being safe and receiving relevant support from Departments of Adult Social Services.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

Any developments of autism services would require an equality impact assessment.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Autism Act 2009
- Implementing "Fulfilling and rewarding lives" Statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the autism strategy (Department of Health 17 December 2010)
- Autism Strategy Briefing and Recommendations – Wirral Learning Disability Partnership Board : 7 October 2011

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date