

All Age Autism Strategy Wirral

2016-2020

DRAFT 6.1

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Foreword

Wirral's Autism Strategy 2015 – 2018 has been developed jointly between Adult Social Services, Clinical Commissioning Group, Children's and Young Peoples Department, people with autism, Carers, providers and other professionals. It shows the objectives we have set out for ourselves and our partners as part of our commitment to improve the lives of people with autism, their Carers and their families.

Autism is sometimes described as a 'hidden disability', not only because it has no physical signs, but also because people with autism are some of the most excluded and least visible people in the UK.

Autism is a developmental disability and can affect a person's ability to communicate and can make forming relationships difficult, but some people with autism go on to have meaningful and happy relationships and marriages. While autism is a lifelong disability the right support at the right time can make an enormous difference to people's lives.

However, in a survey by the National Autistic Society 'Facts and Figures', in 2012, 22% of young people with autism said they had no friends at all, 63% of young people with autism reported having been bullied at school and 27 % of children with autism had been excluded from school. Children and young people with autism attend the full range of settings and schools, depending on their needs. This ranges from nurseries and mainstream schools with support or not, to special schools meeting the needs of children with autism and other additional needs (such as learning disability and or social emotional and mental health needs. 78% of young people with autism think people outside their family don't know enough about the condition.

Many young people with autism find it difficult to imagine life beyond school and what being in a workplace will involve. Parents of young people with autism have described transition to adulthood like falling off a cliff.

Adults with autism are often victims of inadequate healthcare services, social stigma and discrimination.

Too many adults with autism are unemployed, struggling to get by on benefits and have no care and support or are reliant on the care and support of their families, both financially and for practical help. Housing is another key issue to be faced when those with autism strive to develop their independence.

The main focus of the strategy is to ensure that there is better support for people with autism, their families and Carers; it aims to improve access to healthcare and other services that affects their quality of life; it seeks to empower people to shape their own lives and determine the services they wish to receive; it champions the provision of real opportunities for everyone to experience a fulfilling and rewarding life. This strategy looks at a lifelong approach to supporting people in Wirral with autism, therefore, this is an all age strategy.

Wirral's local strategy will ensure that there is training for all staff, to improve the identification, diagnosis and ongoing support of children and adults with autism, and to provide leadership for the development of services, including transition from child to adult services. This will build public and professional awareness, enable a change in attitudes across our society, and reduce the isolation and exclusion that people with autism often face.

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Introduction

Wirral Council have written a 5 year plan that will take the Council forward and will transform Wirral so that it becomes a place where people and businesses thrive. As part of this plan the Council are working with partners to develop the 20 pledges that have been identified to achieve these changes. One of the pledges identified is developing an 'All Age Disability Strategy: People with Disabilities Living Independently'.

This Autism Strategy will identify the areas that Wirral need to develop and work collaboratively with partners to ensure that people in Wirral with Autism live a fulfilling and rewarding life. This strategy will be one of many strategies that will sit underneath the 'All Age Disability Strategy: People with Disabilities Living Independently'.

The local Autism Strategy sets out the priorities for the next four years, 2016-2020 and it includes children, adults and young people moving into adulthood. It has been coproduced with all stakeholders in Wirral who have an interest in improving the lives of people with autism.

The local strategy aims to assess how well local agencies are implementing the Government's Autism Strategy, how we are responding to local needs, expectations and circumstances and how we can best use the resources available to identify key areas.

People with autism are a very important part of our community in Wirral. This local strategy supports the Government's vision for transforming for the better the lives of children, young people and adults with autism and aims to ensure it becomes a reality.

Strategic commissioning is a process which involves assessing needs, taking account of resources and current services and then developing a framework for the future delivery of services and partnership working. The vision is set out in Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives that:

“All people in Wirral with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents.”

Strategic Context:

- Autism Diagnosis in Children and Young People: Recognition, referral and diagnosis of children and young people on the autistic spectrum (NICE Clinical Guideline 128, September 2011).
- Autism: recognition, referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum (NICE Guidance CG142 June 2012)
- Recognising Possible Autism in Children and Young People (NICE Pathway August 2013).
- Referral of Children and Young People with possible Autism (NICE Pathway August 2013).
- The National Service Framework for Children, Young People's and Maternity Services (Department of Health, 2004) articulated the need for specialist services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders to be provided in a seamless fashion as close to the child's locality as possible (Standard 9). It stressed the importance of multidisciplinary and inter-agency working in order to meet the child's needs effectively and without undue delay, and emphasised that universal services have a clear role to play in child mental health, though some children and young people also need ready access to appropriately skilled specialist mental health professionals.
- Children and Families Act 2014
The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years was published in June 2014 jointly by the Department of Health and the Department for Education and provides statutory guidance on duties policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Organisations who are bound by this statutory guidance includes local authorities (education, social care and relevant housing and employment and other services), clinical commissioning groups, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts.
- The Autism Act 2009, was England's first disability specific law, it outlined the Government's commitment to improve the lives of people with autism. The Act made two significant pledges:
 1. To develop a national strategy that will improve the lives of people with autism.

2. To provide statutory guidance for local authorities and local health commissioners on the needs of adults with autism.
- The National Strategy: Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, was the first strategy for adults with autism. It sets out the actions that the Government will take forward to improve services and support for adults with autism. There are five key strands which formed the Core Areas of work:
 1. Increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals.
 2. Developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment.
 3. Improving access to the services and support which adults with autism need to live independently within the community.
 4. Helping adults with autism into work.
 5. Enabling local partners to plan and develop relevant services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities.
 - In 2014, Think Autism: Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with autism in England: an update was published. This update brought renewed emphasis on involvement and awareness in the community and identified fifteen Priority Challenges for Action.
 - Statutory guidance for Local Authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy 2015. There were five new chapters on:
 1. Preventative support and safeguarding
 2. Reasonable adjustments and equality
 3. Supporting people with autism and complex needs
 4. Employment
 5. Criminal justice

What is Autism?

“Autism is defined as a lifelong condition that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how a person makes sense of the world around them.”

Department of Health, 2010

For the purpose of this strategy, we will be using the term Autism, this will encompass Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), Autistic Spectrum Difference and Neuro-diversity, this will include people with Asperger's Syndrome. Some people with autism will also have learning disabilities, but autism itself is not a learning disability.

There are three key areas of difficulty, shared by all people with autism, which form the basis of diagnosis. They are referred to as the 'triad of impairments'.

- **Social Interaction** – for example, problems in recognising and understanding other people's feelings and managing their own.
- **Social Imagination** – for example, problems in understanding and predicting other people's intentions and behaviour, and coping with new or unfamiliar situations and imagining.
- **Social Communication** – for example, problems using and understanding verbal and non-verbal language, such as gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice.

Autism as a Spectrum Condition

Autism is seen as a spectrum condition, which means that, while people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some people with autism are able to live relatively independent lives but others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support.

- People with autism sometimes have difficulties dealing with sensory issues..
- Many people with autism can also have other conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Deficits in Attention and Motor Perception (DAMP), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression and anxiety, Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, epilepsy, dyslexia, dyspraxia and difficulties in understanding the spoken word.
- In 2011, The National Autistic Society estimated that 50% of those people with autism may also have a learning disability.
- Asperger Syndrome is a form of autism. People who have Asperger syndrome, have fewer problems with speaking than others on the autistic spectrum, but they do still have difficulties with understanding and processing

language, and reading non-verbal signals. People with Asperger syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence (an IQ of 70 or above).

- There are a number of signs and symptoms that are related to the stages of child development, these can be recognised from 6 – 18 months old. The areas that can be affected is Language development, playing, social interaction and behaviour

Autism Self-Assessment Framework

Each year the local council, along with health complete the autism self-assessment framework. The purpose of the self-assessment is to enable local strategy groups to review their progress and support future planning with partners including people with autism and their families.

The self-assessment includes the priorities set out in the Think Autism update to the Strategy and the emerging themes that feature in the statutory guidance for Local Authorities and the NHS. This process is also a key means of identifying progress in the implementation of the Strategy in the local area as well as comparing progress across the country.

For some questions there is a Red Amber Green rating system with scoring criteria for that question. If a question is scored Red or Amber, respondents will be asked to state what is stopping progress, and for Green scores there will be the opportunity to state what actions have enabled progress. Examples of local innovative approaches and actions that have made a positive impact on individuals are also being sought.

Wirral's Autism Strategy

Strategic Goals

It is both a national and local priority to:

- Develop a strategic approach to children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, with particular regard to those with autism.
- Improve the ways we identify the needs of adults with autism
- Incorporate those identified needs more effectively into local service planning and commissioning, to ensure that children, young people and adults with autism and their Carers, Parent Carers and siblings are able to make relevant choices about their lives

- Ensure the mental and emotional wellbeing of siblings

Strategic Objectives

The Core Areas of the National Strategy, Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives (2010) form the Strategic Objectives for Wirral's Autism Strategy (2015 – 2018).

1. Increasing awareness and understanding of autism.
2. Children and young people with autism are safe and feel safe.
3. Young people with autism are prepared for adulthood including an effective goal centred transition period using person centred plans to enable independence where reasonably practicable, further studies and vocational support up to the age of 25.
4. Help adults with autism into work.
5. Developing clear, consistent pathways for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment.
6. Improving access to services and support which people with autism need to be a part of, this will enable people to live independently within the community.
7. Enabling local partners to plan and develop relevant services for people with autism to meet identified needs and priorities.

The additional responsibilities for Local Authorities and NHS organisations from the Statutory Guidance 2015 which will be included in the Wirral's Autism Strategy (2015 – 2018) are:

1. Preventative support which will provide support to children and adults so that they do not reach crisis
2. Safeguarding
3. Reasonable adjustments and equality
4. Supporting people with autism and complex needs
5. Employment
6. Criminal justice

Strategic Objective 1

To increase the awareness and understanding of autism among professionals and the community

Outcomes

- Staff who complete needs assessments will be skilled, knowledgeable and competent to complete the assessments
- Improve autism awareness training for all frontline public service staff, in line with the needs of their job, and
- Develop specialist training for staff in health and social care.

Special Considerations

- Ensure that people with autism are involved in development and delivering of training.
- Training must lead not only to improved knowledge and understanding but also to changing the behaviour and attitudes of professionals.
- The Department of Health states that it is essential that autism awareness training is available to:

- Everyone working in health and social care;
- Staff carrying out community care assessments;
- Students undertaking social care core training;
- All staff in the criminal justice sector;
- All Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisors and front line staff within Jobcentre Plus offices

People in Wirral stated that in addition to the above list, they felt that training should also be available to:

- All staff working in the Council
- All staff working in Education including early years settings and nurseries.
- All staff working in public transport
- Staff working in the voluntary sector
- Everyone in the community, and
- That autism awareness should be part of the core training curricula for doctors, nurses and other clinicians, teachers and childcare providers
- Identify Autism Champions to deliver training in each service sector.

How will we make the improvements?

1. Develop a full autism awareness training package for all health and social care professionals, while also developing an e-learning model which will be more widely available to all other professionals, ensuring that this is part of mandatory training.
2. Develop specialist training for professional staff who deal more closely with people with autism, ensuring that this is part of mandatory training.
3. Ensure that the providers who deliver advocacy services commissioned by the Local Authority receive autism training, ensuring that this is part of mandatory training.
4. Ensure that autism training continues to be delivered, promoted and extended within Educational settings and continue to offer support to families and young people experiencing difficulties arising from the impact of their autism.
5. Ensure that autism training continues to be delivered and promoted to staff working in the criminal justice system.
6. Ensure employers and employment staff are autism aware and that they have received appropriate training for the roles that they have.
7. Increase autism awareness within the community by providing an 'Autism Awareness Day'.
8. Ensure that all staff who complete community care assessments are appropriately experienced and have received the appropriate specialist autism training to carry out their role, this must be to a high level.
9. We will encourage people with Autism to speak up so they can help us identify any problems with our Autism training. We will do this by promoting self-advocacy organisations.
10. We will use people with Autism to quality check how good the training is.

Strategic Objective 2

Support people with autism into employment and volunteering opportunities

Outcomes

- Work and volunteering will be a focus within the annual reviews for young people from year 9 onwards.
- People with autism will benefit from wider employment initiatives
- Map and improve existing provision on the Wirral
- Personalise welfare and engage with employers
- Improve existing provision, and
- Develop new approaches that will better support people with autism.

How will we make the improvements?

1. Ensure that we have detailed information on the number of people with autism in Wirral who are in employment.
2. Work with organisations in Wirral to ensure that there are a variety of options available for voluntary work and work experience and vocational support for people with autism.
3. Scope and engage in wider employment initiatives where available ensuring awareness of legal obligations and to link in with Department of Work and Pensions.
4. Ensure that Support Plans are person centred and include employment issues for people with autism.
5. Ensure that EHC plans comply with the expectation that they will be person centred and that they are collaboratively created with young people and their carers.
6. Where identified outcomes for children (as part of the EHC plan) include Independence and Work there should be a clear plan to support this and regular review, particularly at the transition review meeting held in Yr 9 onwards.
7. Ensure the development and maintenance of well supported transitional arrangements to/within further education or work
8. Ensure that people with autism have an opportunity to prepare for work and develop their social skills through programmes of learning and support within their educational settings.

9. Provide autism awareness training and how to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace for employees/colleagues who have autism.
10. To promote the use of 2 tick symbol commitment with employers to facilitate best employment practice.
11. To engage with local employers specifically regarding the employment of people with autism which will include retaining work.
12. Ensure that Supported Employment Services within the jobcentres support people with autism as well as those with learning disabilities into employment, and continue to develop their staff's autism awareness. Identify Autism Employment Officers/Champions.
13. Ensure that appropriate support is provided to obtain and maintain volunteer and employment opportunities within the Wirral, including making use of Disability Employment Advisors, using the Access to Work scheme where appropriate and job coaches.

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Strategic Objective 3

Develop a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis of autism, followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment

Outcomes

- Improve the process for diagnosis and work towards everyone being diagnosed as a child, so there will be no need to diagnose people as adults
- Increase capacity around diagnosis with emphasis on early diagnosis
- A diagnosis is recognised as a reason for a community care assessment or reassessment, and
- Provide relevant information to parents of children as well as adults with autism and their families or Carers at the point of diagnosis to help them understand the condition and access local support, using a keyworker system.

Special Considerations

- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines set out a model of care pathway for local commissioners to develop referral and care pathways
- A lead autism trained professional should be appointed to develop diagnostic and assessment services for adults with autism.

How will we make the improvements?

1. The Autism Sub-group will develop clear post-diagnostic pathways for children, young people and adults with autism, including post-diagnostic support, signposting to appropriate services and providing information and advice.
2. Ensure that Wirral has clear pathways to diagnosis and assessment for all children, young people and adults with autism, including adults with learning disabilities and adults without learning disabilities.
3. Ensure that we have detailed information for people with autism in Children, young people and Adults services and ensure a diagnosis for any children going through transition is accurately recorded.
4. Ensure that all people who have been diagnosed with autism and their families are provided with appropriate information about what autism is, how it affects people and sources for help.

5. Ensure that all adults who request a community care assessment are not refused one and that it is completed by an autism trained member of staff.
6. Ensure that joint post-diagnostic services are commissioned and put in place to provide the appropriate information and support for people diagnosed with autism, i.e. NHS, Local Authority and advice for benefits.
7. We will make sure that support and help will be provided at diagnosis.

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Strategic Objective 4

Improve access to services and support which adults with autism need to live independently within the community

Outcomes

- Schools will work with the guidance available to them from the D of E in the form of non-statutory advice and they will understand how the Equality Act affects them. “The Equality Act 2010 and Schools” May 2014 and the need for reasonable adjustment
- Young people with autism will be as independent as possible by the end of their educational career.
- Children, young people and adults with autism will benefit from personalisation of social care, including access to independent support brokers where requested, and
- Improve transition planning to give people with autism the right start in their adult life.

How will we make the improvements?

Preparation for Independence

1. Children, young people and their families should be at the centre of planning for their future in line with the new SEND legislation
2. The skills needed for the young person with autism to be as independent as possible should be identified, agreed and developed by all those involved with the young person
3. Outcomes around independence should be proactively supported and encouraged by all those involved with the child and young person
4. Work with young people and their families and carers to develop and promote the skills required for independence should continue.
5. Supported by the improvements indicated below.
6. We will offer some guidance on what “reasonable adjustments” might look like.
7. As part of diagnostic process parents of children, young people and adults with autism will be given a pack outlining the Services that are available and, where necessary, be given support to access those Services.
8. Support Services for families will be clearly outlined in the Local Offer and all professionals should have access to this information.

9. Information relating to Services will also be available in libraries, doctor`s surgeries and "One stop" shops.

The right support in services.

Children, young people and adults with autism have the right to be able to access the right support and services at the time that they require them. The standard contract for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities requires service specifications, and therefore providers, need to show how reasonable adjustments are made which ensures that their services are accessible for adults with autism.

1. Identify specific needs as early as possible and signpost to appropriate to support services
2. Provide better signposting/pathways for children, young people and adults with autism to access the appropriate support
3. Provide an information pack for children, young people and adults with autism with vital information for help and support in all areas
4. Ensure that appointments are scheduled at less busy times, allocating extra time for appointments

Personalisation of social care

The aim of social care is to deliver personalised services that give children, young people and adults with autism the right support to live a more fulfilling life. We recognise that adults with autism need additional support to make choices about their care, but it is only of value if there are suitable services and support available to choose from in the local area.

1. Complete a personalised social care assessment for children, young people and adults who request one.
2. Continue to promote and encourage adults with autism to take a direct payment or personal budget giving adults more choice and control over their care, including information about brokerage options and provide support to manage their direct payment or personal budget.
3. Ensuring that wherever possible there is continuity of staff in the processing and implementing support plans with good communication and correspondence an all points.

Access to health services

Many children, young people and adults with autism find it difficult to access health services, this leads to delays in diagnosis and treatment of health conditions. It is important that children, young people and adults with autism are able to easily access health services when they need to, and know that the health professional they see has an awareness and understanding of autism.

1. Ensure that children, young people and adults with autism have access to health professionals who have an awareness and understanding of autism by providing autism awareness training to all health professionals.
2. Have a clear pathway from diagnosis to post diagnosis support and ensure that it is communicated with adults with autism, their families, parents of children with autism, health and social care professionals and providers.
3. Ensure that post diagnostic services are autism aware/informed to enable everyone access to appropriate support services, including children and adults who may not require autism specific services.
4. Ensure that hospitals are making reasonable adjustments when people with autism are admitted, such as a quiet room, away from the other patients.
5. Ensure that Health Passports are accessible electronically when people with autism have to attend hospital appointments or are admitted into hospital, especially relating to A&E.
6. Have Autism Champions in GP surgeries, hospitals, dentist surgeries.
7. Ensure that there is information kept on named lead officers in primary and secondary health care. Including use of reasonable adjustment care plan offered by Wirral University Teaching Hospital.

Transport for adults with autism

Children, young people and adults with autism often have difficulty accessing public transport, having good local transport, which is accessible with staff that have an awareness of autism. This is important as it helps the children and family to access local activities and services and to take part in the local community and enables adults to develop their independence.

For some children, young people and adults with autism, there may be a requirement that transport is provided for them by either the services that they access or by Social Services. Staff who provide these services also need to have an understanding and awareness of autism.

1. Ensure that all transport staff, including public transport (buses, taxis, trains etc) and transport services that are provided, have an awareness and

understanding of autism by delivering autism awareness training, this will increase the accessibility of public transport to adults with autism.

2. Work in partnership with local transport providers to look at how to ensure that public transport is accessible for children, young people and adults with autism.

Housing and accommodation

Identifying the appropriate accommodation for an people with autism is important to ensuring that the placement will be a success. Local Authorities are already required under the Equality Act 2010 to take account of the needs of disabled people when considering housing provision, this includes people with autism.

1. The needs of people with autism will be taken into account with local housing planning, design and allocation, in line with local priorities
2. Support will be available for people with autism who want to, or have to, live independently – both on an ongoing basis and during the transition period into a new home
3. Work in partnership with housing providers to ensure that there is a variety of housing and accommodation options available to meet the diverse needs of people with autism.
4. Ensure that shared accommodation placements are matched with similar peers, in the area of the person's choice.
5. We will work with the person to make sure that we work with the person with autism and there family to make sure the housing provided is right for them.

Strategic Objective 5

Enable local partners to develop relevant services for people with autism to meet identified needs and priorities

Outcomes

- Put the needs of people with autism on the map in every area
- Identify and promote service models that are proven to make a positive difference for people with autism, and
- Enable adults with autism and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live.

How will we make the improvements?

1. Ensure that people with autism, their families and carers are involved in consultations about decisions in their local area by linking into the Council's corporate Engagement Policy and Local Offer.
2. Develop the Autism Sub-group and ensure that there are people with autism, their families and carers represented on this group.
3. Update the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) chapter on autism to ensure that there is better understanding of local prevalence data and need.
4. Ensure that the Council policy covers statutory and other public service and provides evidence of the implementation of reasonable adjustments being made in everyday services to improve access and support to people with autism.
5. Ensure that the needs and views of children and young people with autism and their families and carers are at the centre of planning as stipulated in the SEND 2014 legislation. Ensuring that these are embedded into the contractual arrangements of providers when commissioning services .
6. This will be work with all relevant parties.

Strategic Objective 6

Work with the Criminal Justice System.

Outcomes

- Autism training will continue to be delivered and promoted to staff working within the criminal justice system.
- People with autism have access to the support they need – whether as victims, witnesses or perpetrators of crime.
- Pathways will be developed through the criminal justice system for people with autism.

How will we make the improvements?

1. Continue to deliver autism awareness training, including reasonable adjustments, to all staff who work in the areas of the Criminal Justice System, to ensure that the correct support is offered to people with autism.
2. Work in partnership with the Criminal Justice System ensuring that they are engaged and are represented on the Autism Sub-group.
3. Develop pathways to support people with autism who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System.
4. Ensure that people with autism who have contact with the criminal justice system have an assessment completed if required/requested.
5. Work with partners to ensure continuity of support when people with autism move between settings or into the community.
6. Have a systematic information sharing system with local police with regards to people with autism.

Strategic Objective 7

Planning in relation to the provision of services for people with autism as they move from being children to adults

Outcomes

- How information is shared and collated on children and young people with autism will be improved.
- Data will be collected and shared, between education and health with social care, on young people who do not receive children's services but who may be likely to have care and support needs as an adult.
- Arrangements will be in place for routine support for young people with complex care needs, in making the transition to adult services.
- There will be clear signposting processes to other sources of support and information for those young people who do not fulfil the referral criteria for adults' services.

How will we make the improvements?

1. Ensure that we have detailed information for people with autism in Children's and Adults services and ensure a diagnosis for any child going through transition is accurately recorded. This can be done by forging links with early settings, schools and education services.
2. Ensure that the planning for children moving into adults services starts early, at least by year 9, and involves all partners and to create a robust person centred plan.
3. Reduce the need for families and carers to continuously repeat information by promoting a better system of sharing relevant information between organisations. This will be done by working with 'Information Sharing' policies.
4. To work with children and young people and their families and carers to develop and promote the skills required for independent living.
5. We will use tools like just enough support and person centred reviews and 1 page profiles to help with this.

Strategic Objectives 8

Preventative support and safeguarding in line with the Care Act 2014 from April 2015

Preventative Support (support provided before a child or adult has reach a crisis)

Outcomes

- The Local Authority will consider the range of options available for preventative services, and how those different approaches could support the needs of people with autism and their families and carers.
- Work with user-led and voluntary support groups to support people with autism to build relationships with peers, friends, partners and colleagues and also support independent living and being part of the community.
- There will be easy access to information in the local area where people with autism and their families and carers can get support from peers, charities and other community groups including the local offer.

How will we make the improvements?

1. Identify current support groups that are available in Wirral for people with autism and their families, ensuring that information on the groups are available.
2. Work with the voluntary, community and faith sector to develop low level interpersonal support services
3. Promote and develop the information services that are currently commissioned to ensure that people with autism and their families are provided with appropriate information
4. Ensure autism awareness training is delivered to staff that provide social and leisure activities.
5. Work in partnership with providers to develop social activities and social skills training to enable people with autism to develop friendships and relationships.
6. Promote assistive technology to support adults with autism to become more socially independent.

Safeguarding

Outcomes

- The Local Authority will work together with partners to help and protect people with care and support needs, who may be at risk of abuse or neglect as a result of those needs
- The local authority will make information and advice available on how to raise concerns about an adult who is at risk of abuse or neglect

How will we make the improvements?

1. Promoting the use of direct payments and multi-agency working to ensure that children and young people feel confident and secure in their community.
2. Work in partnership with Wirral's Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board to ensure that the safety of adults with autism is monitored, and that adults have support from a suitably trained advocate throughout the process if required.
3. Develop a Safe Places scheme and ensure that adults with autism know where and how to access it.
4. Liaise with the Police to look at appropriate police presence in the community to ensure that people with autism feel safe.
5. Identify an autism champion in the police to steer training, troubleshoot for colleagues and to be the key contact for people with autism in the criminal justice system
6. We need to listen to people with Autism and make sure that our safeguarding process is person centred and easy to understand.

Strategic Objective 9

Reasonable adjustments and Equality

Outcome

- Under the Equality Act 2010, all public sector organisations, including employers and providers of services, will be required to make reasonable adjustments to services with the aim of ensuring they are accessible to disabled people, including people with autism.
- Reiterate the Equality Act 2010 and Special Educational Needs (SEND) requirement for educational settings and services to make reasonable adjustments for children, young people and adults with autism.

How will we make improvements?

1. Ensure that educational settings are able to access training with regards to autism to enable them to make reasonable adjustments. The adjustments will need to be outlined in school policies and reflected in practice.
2. Create “autism friendly environments” in schools and colleges eg. respecting hypersensitivities, having flexible timetables and designated “quiet places”.
3. Ensure that the requirement to make reasonable adjustments is included in all contracts that are commissioned by all commissioners.
4. Work with all partners to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to enable children, young people and adults with autism to access buildings and services.
5. Provide autism friendly appointments/waiting rooms/appropriate reasonable adjustments to be made in all healthcare provider settings.

Strategic Objective 10

Supporting people with complex needs, whose behaviour may challenge or who may lack capacity

Outcomes

- Support those children and young people with autism who require extra help at the earliest opportunity.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to those caring or working with children and young people with autism.
- Support will be provided to families and carers in order to maintain the child or young person's placement at home, except in exceptional circumstances
- Adults with autism will be assessed, treated and cared for in their community wherever possible, and when they need to go into inpatient care it will be for the minimum time necessary and in a facility close to their home.
- Adults will live in their own homes with support to live independently if that is the right model of care for them.
- Discharge planning for adults with autism will begin when the person is admitted and involve local authorities, NHS bodies and Foundation Trusts working together in the best interests of an individual to ensure appropriate community-based support is in place before discharge.

How will we make improvements?

1. To ensure that services work in a joined up way, sharing information with permission from families and carers, ensuring the best possible service.
2. Continue to commission the Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy service.
3. Work with support services/providers to ensure that the care and support that is being delivered to people with autism and their families and carers, is the right level of support at the right time.
4. Ensure that the review of the EHC plan takes place as frequently as is needed and draws information from all agencies actively involved.
5. Review care and support annually to ensure that the assessment of needs are up to date and the service commissioned is the right support.
6. Implement the requirements of the Challenging Behaviour and Care Crisis Concordat.
7. Consider the environment as this may be causing the problem.

Monitoring the Strategy

Wirral's Disability Partnership Board and Autism Sub-group

Wirral has a Disability Partnership Board, reporting directly to this board is the Autism Sub-group. An implementation plan will be developed in order to support the strategy; it will state how the objectives in the strategy will be achieved.

It will be the responsibility of the Autism Sub-group to manage and review this strategy. The Autism Sub-group is made up with representatives from key statutory agencies, people with autism, carers, representative of people with autism and service providers.

Annual Review and Report

Wirral's Autism Sub-group will review the Strategy every twelve months. The Sub-group will also provide an evaluation report which will be circulated stating the improvements and achievements that have been made.

The strategy is a working document and therefore, it will be updated from time to time, in order to accommodate other plans, guidance, strategies and statutory duties as required. These updates will be done by including the information that is provided in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Wirral's Market Position Statement for Adults of Working Age.

We will ensure that children, young people and adults with autism are involved in this process.