

Adult Autism: Statutory Background and Local Arrangements

Committee name	Social Care, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Anisha Teji, Chief Executive's Office
Papers with report	Local Action Plan 2019/2020
Ward	All

HEADLINES

This is the first witness session where information regarding Adult Autism: statutory background and local arrangements will be presented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee considers the information it receives from officers.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Background Information

The Autism Act 2009 commits the Government to having a strategy for meeting the needs of adults in England with autistic spectrum conditions by ensuring that the local authority and NHS services they need are accessible for them.

Following on from the Autism Act, the government published the first national autism strategy for England, 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' (2010), which was then updated with 'Think Autism' (2014).

The strategy for adults with autism in England sets out a vision that:

"All adults with autism will be able to live their lives within a society that understands and accepts 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."

In Dec 2018, the Government announced plans to introduce an updated national autism strategy which will cover people of all ages in England for the first time. Publication of the updated autism strategy is anticipated shortly (Jan 2020).

2) The Government's Current Autism Strategy

'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' 2010 set out the need for better:

- Autism awareness training
- Access to a diagnosis
- Assessments of people with autism
- Service and support
- Local leadership and planning.

'Think autism' 2014 retains these commitments and builds on them, with key aims to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of autism
- Develop clear, consistent pathways for the diagnosis of autism
- Improve access for adults with autism to services and support
- Help adults with autism into work
- Enable local partners to develop relevant services.

3) The 15 Priority Challenges

'Think autism' outlines 15 'priority challenges' established through a consultation with autistic people, families, carers and professionals.

- I want to be accepted as who I am within my local community. I want people and organisations in my community to have opportunities to raise their awareness and acceptance of autism.
- I want my views and aspirations to be taken into account when decisions are made in my local area. I want to know whether my local area is doing as well as others.
- I want to know how to connect with other people. I want to be able to find local autism peer groups, family groups and low-level support.
- I want the everyday services that I come into contact with to know how to make reasonable adjustments to include me and accept me as I am. I want the staff who work in them to be aware and accepting of autism.
- I want to be safe in my community and free from the risk of discrimination, hate crime and abuse.
- I want to be seen as me and for my gender, sexual orientation and race to be taken into account.
- I want a timely diagnosis from a trained professional. I want relevant information and support throughout the diagnostic process.
- I want autism to be included in local strategic needs assessments so that person-centred local health, care and support services, based on good information about local needs, are available for people with autism.
- I want staff in health and social care services to understand that I have autism and how this affects me.
- I want to know that my family can get help and support when they need it.
- I want services and commissioners to understand how my autism affects me differently through my life. I want to be supported through big life changes such as transition from school, getting older or when a person close to me dies.

- I want people to recognise my autism and adapt the support they give me if I have additional needs such as a mental health problem, a learning disability or if I sometimes communicate through behaviours which others may find challenging.
- If I break the law, I want the criminal justice system to think about autism and to know how to work well with other services.
- I want the same opportunities as everyone else to enhance my skills, to be empowered by services and to be as independent as possible.
- I want support to get a job and support from my employer to help me keep it.

4) Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and the NHS 2015

The priority challenges were used to frame the statutory guidance issued in 2015 for practitioners in England and Wales. The guidance clearly states what local authorities and NHS bodies should and/or must do in relation to:

- 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 for 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.
- Preventative support and safeguarding in line with the Care Act 2014 from April 2015.
- Reasonable Adjustments and Equality.
- Supporting people with complex needs, whose behaviour may challenge or who may lack capacity.
- Employment for adults with autism.
- Working with the criminal justice system.
- The guidance allows for local discretion in how the strategy is implemented, however health and wellbeing boards, formed through the Health and Social Care Act 2012, are expected to play a part in planning local services.

Further details regarding the 2015 statutory guidance can be found below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422338/autism-guidance.pdf

5) The Autism Self-Assessment Framework

As part of the process of updating the strategy and guidance, the Autism Act says that the government must take account of progress in meeting the strategy aims.

The Autism Self-Assessment is one of the mechanisms that the government has for identifying what progress has been made. The first baseline self-assessment was done in 2011. Update self-assessments were then completed in 2013; shortly after the publication of 'Think Autism' in 2014; 2016 and the fifth and most recent self-assessment exercise was undertaken in December 2018. The Self-Assessment is a periodic survey of upper tier local authorities, the bodies responsible for co-ordinating local action on the strategy, asking about progress on a wide range of local health, social services and wider issues. Organisations (local authorities; health commissioners;

other statutory partners) and local autistic residents and family carers are asked to review progress on the principal areas covered by the strategy. The exercise comprises around one hundred questions in a variety of formats.

Hillingdon's 2018 self-assessment showed areas of particular strong performance in how the Local Authority and CCG were engaged and planning the implementation of the strategy; the training provided to staff undertaking statutory assessments; assessment and support for adults with learning disabilities and autism; information about support available across the wider partnership; access to carers assessments and the employment focus of transition processes for autistic young people.

Areas for further development included the need to further improve the participation of adults with autism in the delivery of the strategy; updating the JSNA and housing strategy to more fully include/address the needs of autistic people; having clear Council-wide policies in place regarding reasonable adjustments and reducing waiting times for diagnosis (CCG).

Progress against the identified priorities is detailed below:

- The Adult Autism Partnership Board (see below) is now well attended by adults with autism and has a co-chairing arrangement. One co-chair being a person with Autism or a parent/carer of someone with Autism. The other is a representative from a statutory or third sector organisation.
- New sections of the JSNA have been drafted and are under final review. Similarly work is also underway to update the housing strategy.
- An Autism Awareness eLearning module has been developed for wider Council staff, which will include information regarding Reasonable Adjustments;
- The CCG are commissioning additional diagnostic capacity.

Please note, a new Self-Assessment Framework will be released with the January 2020 strategy. Priorities and the work plan will be reviewed in line with the new Self-Assessment Framework as soon this it is published.

6) Hillingdon's Adult Autism Partnership Board

Hillingdon has an established Autism Partnership Board (APB), whose function is to improve outcomes for people with autism and their families.

In 2019, the APB was reviewed and it was agreed by all stakeholders that the format would be change to better support participation of adults with autism. The revised Adult APB was launched in September 2019.

The Adult APB has a Local Action Plan and this was updated to reflect the priority actions identified following the Self-Assessment (see Appendix 1 for the Local Action Plan 2019/20).

7) Who is invited to attend the Adult APB?

Adults with autism; CAAS (Centre for ADHD and Autism Support); the CCG Clinical Lead for LD and Autism; CCG Commissioners (Adults); CNWL Clinical Services; CNWL LD Health Team

Lead; CNWL Lead for LD and Autism; DASH (Disablement Association Hillingdon); HACS (Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support); Healthwatch; Parent Carers Forum; LBH Adult Social Care; LBH Positive Behaviour Support; LBH Principal Educational Psychologist; Police representatives; Probation and the Hillingdon Hospital Learning Disability Liaison Nurse.

8) Governance

Governance arrangements for the new board are under review and the APB is in the process of formalising links with the Hillingdon Learning Disability Partnership Board, disabilities forum, the SEND strategic Board and other reference groups.

Implications on related Council policies

The role of the Policy Overview Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

None at this stage, pending any findings approved by Cabinet.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

See Scoping Report.