

**North Yorkshire County Council****Health and Wellbeing Board****16 July 2014****Strategy for meeting the needs of families and adults with autism in  
North Yorkshire 2015-2020 – update report****Report of the Corporate Director – Health and Adult Services****1.0 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 This project brief gives an outline of the work that will be undertaken to develop the strategy for meeting the needs of families and adults with autism in North Yorkshire 2015-2020.

**2.0 Issues**

- 2.1 North Yorkshire's strategy for meeting the needs of children and young people with autism was approved by Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Executive Members on 9th October 2012. The interim strategy for meeting the needs of adults with autism in North Yorkshire (2014-15) was approved by the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board on 1 April 2014 and published on 2 April 2014.
- 2.2 In light of recent legislation; "The Children and Families Act" (2014); and national guidance "Think Autism" (2014) and "NICE guidelines for management and support of children and young people on the autism spectrum" (2013), the development of an all-age strategy is considered best practice.
- 2.3 The overall objective of an all-age strategy for autism is to ensure that services are identified, commissioned and provided to meet current and future needs. We want people with autism to receive the right assessment and diagnosis locally, to be able to access additional support if they need it and to know that they can depend on professionals and agencies to treat them fairly as individuals and provide relevant and appropriate support.
- 2.4 Crucially, a coherent strategy will ensure that there is more effective, tangible support for children, young people and adults with autism and will underline the enormous potential benefits that can result from collaboration.

### **3.0 Current Activity**

- 3.1 The project team is currently developing the draft strategy to be available in Autumn 2014. The strategy will encompass people with autism of any age and their families.
- 3.2 A series of Task & Finish Groups will support the development, consultation and publication of the strategy. Activities are grouped into five main areas:
  - i) Increasing awareness and understanding of autism
  - ii) Developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis of autism
  - iii) Improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need to live independently
  - iv) Helping adults with autism into work
  - v) Enabling local partners to develop relevant services
- 3.3 Research focussed on women and girls with autism, to explore the particular needs of this cohort is underway.
- 3.4 The Partnership Commissioning Unit will lead the promotion of the online awareness tool "Autism in General Practice" to GP practices through this year to December 2014
- 3.5 Consultation will take place between October and December 2014 with the objective of publishing and launching the strategy in April 2015.

### **4.0 Policy Implications**

- 4.1 This strategy will drive the work on autism in North Yorkshire for the forthcoming 5 year period between 2015-2020.
- 4.2 The strategy recognises that there is a range and severity of need. The strategy will be informed by legislation, a number of national priorities and best-practice models.

### **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 No additional resources have been made available by the Government to implement the autism strategy, so any developments will need to be within existing resources. Knowledge and understanding of autism is still evolving; a prevalence rate of 1% has been used, but this is increasingly considered an underestimate. Data would indicate that the number of new diagnoses within Children and Young People's Services will have increased by between 15-30% by 2015. The needs of this group of people will be passed onto HAS as children move into adulthood.

- 5.2 The budget for the project will be met from within NYCC's spend-to-save budgets with contributions from Health. Training plans will be funded (if agreed) from the Training and Learning budget.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The national strategy for adults with autism in England, 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' (2010), gave the NHS, local authorities and other partners statutory duties with regard to improving the lives of those living with autism. The national autism strategy set out a clear directive for change to ensure that those with autism are included in society and supported to lead full and rewarding lives.
- 6.2 The strategy will help to meet statutory duties around autism for North Yorkshire's Health and Wellbeing Board. There would be strong challenges from national and local bodies and individuals should this project not be delivered.

## **7.0 Consultation Undertaken and Responses**

- 7.1 There will be a requirement for public consultation via online methods and face to face meetings between November 2014 and January 2015.
- 7.2 A 'virtual reference group' of people with autism, their families and carers will help to develop the strategy by reviewing and providing feedback on draft documents, including the draft strategy itself. They will comment on plans for the design of the document and give their thoughts on the best ways to conduct meaningful consultation, and to successfully launch the strategy in April 2015. This group will operate primarily by email, but some or all members may meet at key points during the development of the strategy.

## **8.0 Impact on Other Services/Organisations**

- 8.1 The NHS and other public sector organisations are key partners in the implementation of this strategy. It is vital that all partners are committed to the actions assigned to them within the strategy.

## **9.0 Risk Management Implications**

- 9.1 This is a highly political issue with powerful lobbying bodies such as the National Autistic Society (NAS) heavily influencing Parliament. The strategy helps to meet statutory duties around autism for the Health and Wellbeing Board. There would be strong challenges from national and local bodies and individuals should this project not be delivered.
- 9.2 This project will not result in cashable savings, but ensuring appropriate and effective support is provided for children, young people and adults

with autism is likely to reduce the incidence of crises, reduce the breakdown of school placement, necessity for mental health involvement and the need for residential care or supported living.

- 9.3 The strategy should result in improved value for money as a result of increases in joint commissioning and a reduction in the cost of support. Costs will continue to escalate if the actions defined by the strategy are not delivered.

## **10.0 Equalities Implications**

- 10.1 It is acknowledged nationally that women and girls are often under-diagnosed with autism and therefore prevalence rates for women and girls are probably lower than they would otherwise be. Research is underway and the findings will feed into the actions for this strategy.
- 10.2 A comprehensive equalities impact assessment will be carried out for the strategy during 2014.

## **11.0 Recommendation(s)**

- 11.1
- That the Health and Wellbeing Board note this update report on the strategy for meeting the needs of families and adults with autism in North Yorkshire 2015-2020

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