

Bath & North East Somerset Council	
MEETING:	Health and Wellbeing Board
MEETING DATE:	29 th January 2014
TITLE:	Bath and North East Somerset Autism Strategy and Self Evaluation 2013
WARD:	All
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report:	
Autism Self Evaluation – Bath and North East Somerset 2013	

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This paper provides an update on the Bath and North East Somerset Autism Strategy and the findings of the Autism Self Evaluation, completed in September 2013 and submitted to Public Health England as part of a National return.

1.2 A ministerial letter dated 2nd August 2013 confirmed that the purpose of the self-evaluation was to:

- assist Local Authorities and their partners in assessing progress in implementing the 2010 Adult Autism Strategy;
- see how much progress has been made since the baseline survey, as at February 2012;
- provide evidence of examples of good progress made that can be shared and of remaining challenges.

And that the content of the return should be discussed by the Health and Wellbeing Board before the end of January 2014.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Board is asked to note the content of this paper and the self-evaluation attached as Appendix 1 – and make any recommendations for further development of the local autism strategy and its implementation.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

3.1 None identified

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

4.1 **The Autism Act (2009)** placed a legal duty on statutory agencies (including CCGs, NHS Trusts and Local Authorities) to provide a range of services for adults with autism, and

committed the Government to produce a national strategy setting out how this should be done.

Fulfilling & Rewarding Lives (DH, 2010) outlined the Government's vision for the transformation of mainstream health and social care services to ensure that the needs of adults with autism are met, and made a series of recommendations with regard to how this could be achieved including:

- the development of clear consistent pathways for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment by the local authority
- improving access for adults with autism to mainstream public sector services and the support they need to live independently within the community
- helping adults with autism into work

Implementing Fulfilling & Rewarding Lives (DH, 2010) - following the publication of the national autism strategy, the DH then issued statutory guidance for health and social care bodies.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 Background

Following the publication of the Autism Act in 2009 and the national Adult Autism Strategy *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives (DH 2010)*, Bath and North East Somerset, in line with the requirements of the bill, identified lead commissioning arrangements for adults with autism and established an Autism Partnership Group (APG), comprising representatives from a range of key stakeholders and local partners.

The APG (chaired by a Senior Commissioning Manager) meets on a quarterly basis and has overseen the development and subsequent implementation of a local strategy to deliver the 5 key themes and outcomes of *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives* which are:

- increasing awareness and understanding of autism;
- developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis of autism;
- improving access for adults with autism to services and support;
- helping adults with autism into work; and
- enabling local partners to develop relevant services.

Following consultation, feedback received was that people preferred to see the APG set a small number of achievable targets that could be met within a set timeframe, i.e. one year, rather than a larger and possibly undeliverable plan. The plan for 2013-14 has reflected this.

Of particular note is that in the last twelve months the Adult Care, Health and Housing team has commissioned a BANES Autism Specialist Service (BASS) from Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Trust to provide a local diagnosis and assessment service to make it easier and quicker for people to obtain a diagnosis and initial assessment. In addition this service has also been commissioned to provide a range of local training to develop local awareness, knowledge and skills across both specialist (i.e. autism specific) and mainstream communities, and thirdly to establish an Information and Advice service for adults with autism and those that support them.

It is intended that this service will be of particular benefit to those people with an Autism diagnosis who may not meet local Fair Access to Care criteria and therefore not qualify for social services support.

There has also been additional investment into Sirona to provide a specific Autism social work service to respond to the increasing numbers of adults who are diagnosed with an Autism spectrum condition and meeting eligibility for social care support.

5.2 Bath and North East Somerset Self-Assessment 2013

The completed self-assessment for Bath and North East Somerset is attached as Appendix 1 to this paper. This has been reviewed by the APG and further actions have been agreed in addition to those highlighted in 5.1 above. For example (i) the APG is currently drafting a comprehensive programme to support BASS in delivering training which is intended to address the lack of local training to date as identified in the self-assessment; (ii) options are currently under consideration to strengthen advocacy arrangements for adults with autism.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 There are strong local governance arrangements in place for overseeing the local strategy and implementing actions to deliver the outcomes of Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives.
- 6.2 A number of decisions have been taken which are strengthening local services for adults with autism and addressing many of the findings of the self-assessment.
- 6.3 The APG will continue to meet and monitor the local strategy. This will include reviewing the implementation plan and setting fresh priorities on an annual basis.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Members of the Autism Partnership Group were involved in completing the self-assessment.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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