

LEICESTER CITY ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY
DATE 8th March 2016

Subject:	Progress report in response to the National Statutory guidance for Local Authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy
Presented to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee by:	Tracie Rees Strategic Director, Adult Social Care
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

National Context

The Autism Act became law in 2009, and a National Strategy, *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives* was published 2010. This was followed up with *Implementing Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives* (DH 2010), which gave a set of mandatory recommendations regarding what action CCG's and Local authorities should take to develop services for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This was refreshed by a National Strategy published in April 2014 - *Think Autism Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with Autism in England: an update*.

Statutory guidance for Local Authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy was published in March 2015.

The guidance refers to the legal duties imposed upon local authorities and NHS bodies by the Autism Act 2009. It includes the Care Act 2014, and the Children and Families Act 2014.

Local Context

This places a legal requirement on Clinical Commissioning Group's, under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Service Act (1970). If local services are not in line with statutory guidance, service users could request a judicial review.

The guidance not only refers to what "must" be done to comply with legislation but also says what local authorities and NHS bodies "should" do with regard to the way in which they exercise their functions with a view to securing the implementation of the autism strategy.

The last Autism Self-Assessment Framework was completed in 2014. RAG ratings indicate green in seven areas where we exceed the requirements, amber in ten areas where there is work in progress and red in three areas, which are future priorities. The red areas are:

1. Improved working with the Criminal Justice System

2. Understanding the needs of different groups, e.g. BME, Women, Older people
3. Post diagnostic support

Self-advocate stories provided evidence of progress.

Responding to the national recommendations are addressed through a Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Delivery Action plan based on the revised national guidance. (Appendix 1)

Statutory Guidance 2015

The statutory guidance has been published to ensure the implementation of the adult autism strategy. This guidance tells local authorities, NHS bodies and NHS Foundation Trusts what actions should be taken to meet the needs of people with autism living in their area.

The Government published this new statutory guidance in March 2015, which replaced the guidance published in 2010.

It clearly states that local authorities and the NHS:

- should provide autism awareness training for all staff
- must provide specialist autism training for key staff, such as GPs and community care assessors
- cannot refuse a community care assessment for adults with autism based solely on IQ
- must appoint an autism lead in their area
- have to develop a clear pathway to diagnosis and assessment for adults with autism
- need to commission services based on adequate population data.

As the guidance is statutory, local councils and local health bodies have a legal duty to implement it.

The 2015 guidance includes a lot more information than the 2010 version, with five new chapters on:

- Preventative support and safeguarding
- Reasonable adjustments and equality
- Supporting people with autism and complex needs
- Employment
- Criminal justice

In addition, some of the duties have been strengthened to things that local authorities and NHS bodies "must" do. This is because new duties have been brought in by other laws (particularly the Care Act). The new guidance gives more information about how these new duties can lead to improvements for people with autism. This is particularly true of duties around training, which have been improved to give much clearer guidance on which professionals should have what levels of training.

Progress since the Autism Self-Assessment 2014 and the Autism Strategy Guidance 2015

Over arching

- The formation of a multi-agency LLR Autism Board from the previously long running Autism Planning group, to oversee the work undertaken as detailed in the delivery action plan and supported by a number of work streams. The Board is chaired by Yasmin Surti who is also the Autism Lead for the City.

Diagnosis

- A Multi-disciplinary Autism Diagnostic and Support Pathway was one of the first in the country to be developed for Children, Transition and Adults with partners across health and social care in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. This is due for review in March 2016, and will include the enhanced support services.

Training

- A comprehensive training programme is currently available for professionals, VCS providers, users and carers, some of which is mandatory for ASC staff. This is currently being refreshed and will include more specific training for certain professional groups, and the tracking and monitoring of training take up will be more robust.

Accommodation

- A new 'step through' project has been developed jointly with local partners as part of the NHS England Transforming Care programme. A property has been developed into four self-contained flats. The tenancies for these flats will offer individualised supported living accommodation for people leaving hospital, many of whom are on the autistic spectrum both with and without a learning disability.

Employment & Education

- New links have been made with Leicester and Demontfort Universities to provide support for students on the Autistic Spectrum who come into the area for Higher Education. Diagnosis and non-educational support are particular issues, particularly for young people who may not wish to disclose they are struggling.
- Education, Health Care-plans (EHC) should raise the profile of people on the spectrum. The outcomes need monitoring to ensure reasonable adjusts are being made to enable people to access employment.

Planning

- A multi-agency Information Sharing Agreement has been developed and details of this demonstrating good practice are included in the Department of Health Progress Report on *Think Autism: the updated strategy for adults with autism in England*, published in January 2016. The information-sharing agreement has made a tremendous difference in our ability to gather and cross reference data for the most recent self-assessment exercises and therefore provide evidence to support the development of services.
- A number of resources have come to fruition through the commissioning process, including some bespoke supported living accommodation with a focus on young people.
- An Autism Carers support group has developed with the Carers Centre from the last SAF consultation. They meet on a bi-monthly basis with planned topics, and they are able to comment and feedback on issues and practice. A number of carers have said that the support of the group has enabled either them or their offspring to seek diagnosis, which has brought a new perspective to their lives.

Areas for development

- Data collection is still difficult from a range of sources that do not cross reference easily, therefore the quality and quantity affects the ability to analyse it. However the local Information sharing protocol has been refreshed and is assisting in this work.
- Further work is required to enable more timely diagnosis; there are currently long waiting lists. There is also very little post diagnostic support in Adult Mental Health – a business plan has been worked on by LPT and the CCG, as to how this service may be best delivered. There are currently no health services, and limited social care support for those without a learning disability.
- Further work is required to assist students in further and higher education both local and incoming to have the right support to to enable them maintain daily living whilst accessing and completing their education.
- Further work needs to be undertaken to understand how Autism affects different groups in society, women, older people and people from different BME groups.
- Contacts have now been made with the local Criminal Justice System –and there needs to be significant awareness raising across the whole system to recognise Autism, and then to respond appropriately across the courts, prison and probation services.

Links to Documents

Think Autism: -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299866/Autism_Strategy.pdf

Statutory Guidance: -

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

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Scrutiny Commission is requested to:

- Note the progress that has been made against the recommendations from the National Strategy
- Support the recommendations for future work to ensure the Council along with partner agencies are able to meet their legal responsibilities and raise standards.