



## HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

**Subject Heading:**

Autism Update

**Board Lead:**

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**The subject matter of this report deals with the following themes of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

- x Theme 1: Primary prevention to promote and protect the health of the community and reduce health inequalities
- x Theme 2: Working together to identify those at risk and intervene early to improve outcomes and reduce demand on more expensive services later on
- x Theme 3: Provide the right health and social care/advice in the right place at the right time
- x Theme 4: Quality of services and user experience

<b>SUMMARY</b>
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This report provides the Board with an update relating to Autism.

It revisits a report considered by the Board late in 2017 regarding the production of an Autism Strategy, details some of the key issues emerging from the bi-annual Autism Self-Assessment carried out late in 2018 and details progress on and key themes emerging from the development of an all age Autism Strategy.

The report also advises the Board of some key issues regarding autism that are contained within the NHS 10 year plan and other national developments

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board note the contents of this report

## REPORT DETAIL

The Board was informed late in 2017 that work was progressing on the development of an Autism strategy for Havering. The strategy was completed late in 2017 and was based on priorities outlined in national policy and statutory guidelines together with local needs.

The three main areas highlighted in national guidelines were:

- Building communities that are more aware of and accessible to the needs of people with autism.
- Promoting innovative local ideas, services and projects which can help people in their communities. This included a time-limited Autism Innovation Fund which made one-off grant funding available for specific projects.
- A focus on gathering comprehensive data on local numbers and needs to inform planning and joining up advice and information on available services.

The local strategy focused on adults with High Functioning Autism (HFA) who have average or above average intelligence ( i.e. not those people who have both learning disability and autism) including those with Asperger's Syndrome. This is because there are already services in Havering for people who have autism and a learning disability.

National and statutory policy and guidelines (i.e. The Autism Act 2009, National Autism Strategy for Adults, Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, and its update Think Autism 2014) concentrated predominantly on the needs of adults. Whilst the local strategy acknowledges the need for adult services to work in partnership with children's services to learn from the work they have already done and to smooth the path of people in transition from children's to adult's services it was influenced in the main by the National and statutory guidelines emphasis on adult services.

Since completion of the local strategy, there has been recognition that the needs of children and young people with Autism should be prioritised alongside those of adults and work is now underway to develop an all age strategy for Havering.

Havering's position in this respect mirrors that of other areas and also national policy. Late in December 2018, as part of the Government's review of the National



# Havering

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Autism Strategy, plans were announced to introduce an updated national autism strategy, which will cover people of all ages in England. Ministers had acknowledged that far too many children on the autism spectrum are currently held back from achieving their potential. They have accepted that a national approach is needed to improve the support that is offered to children and their families. It is currently expected that the new national strategy will be published in the Autumn 2019

A first draft of the local revised strategy will be considered by key stakeholders for example in the Council and the NHS, as well as the Autism Partnership Board at the end of March 2019; and then it will require wider consultation with families and children and young people and adults with autism over coming months and reference will undoubtedly need to be made to the emerging national picture and issues highlighted within a national all age strategy. Early indications of the Government's review are that it will be looking at the following areas:

- joining up health, care and education services to address autistic children's needs holistically
- developing diagnostic services to diagnose autism earlier, in line with clinical guidance
- improving the transition between children and adult services so that young people with Autism are supported to reach their full potential as young adults, and ending inappropriate reliance on inpatient hospital care
- improving understanding of autism and all its profiles, including recently identified forms such as pathological demand avoidance (PDA)

The NHS has, in recent months, published its 10 year plan. Supporting people on the autism spectrum or with learning disabilities is one of the 4 clinical priority areas identified in the NHS long-term plan. Other specific issues in the 10 year plan relating to autism are:

- Renewed focus on reducing waiting times for diagnostic and specialist services for CYP
- By 2023/2024 a 'digital flag' will exist in the NHS patient record for all people with a known LD or autism
- LD and autism awareness training will be mandatory for all NHS staff

A national consultation is also underway to consider how it can be ensured that staff working in health and social care have the right training to understand the needs of people with a learning disability and/or autism and the skills to provide the most effective care and support. The consultation closes mid-April, Havering will contribute to this, as will the Autism Partnership Board and information regarding the consultation has been sent to providers and other groups.

A self-assessment (SAF) on Havering's progress in respect of the National Autism Strategy was carried out late in 2018; this concentrated mainly on adults and services for them, with some limited reference to carers and young people (mainly transition). This identified some positive areas in Havering:



# Havering

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- Havering's Partnership Board and involvement of adults with autism (but need to appoint a person with autism as co-chair)
- Post diagnostic support for people with learning disabilities (but not for adults more generally)
- Some data is kept and used for planning
- Some good preventative and low level support for people who don't meet eligibility under the Care Act 2014
- Good examples of work done within acute hospitals
- Some positive local innovations
  - Development of shared lives model of support
  - Development of a framework to ensure sufficient Supported Housing for vulnerable young people and adults. Some emerging evidence of cross borough work
  - The Havering Autism Hub
  - Funding for NELFT linked to Transforming Care Programme (TCP) work to avoid admission of people to hospital with autism
  - The education service had dedicated team of advisory teachers and assistants who work with schools advising and supporting children with autism in their education placements
  - The High Needs Review and Strategy (2017) identifies children with autism as a priority area and a new Primary Additional Resourced Provision for ASD is opening in 2019 with a further 2 more in primary and 1 in secondary planned for 2020. There is also a new Special Free school being planned for 2021.

The work in producing preparing the SAF also identified a number of areas which required further attention and improvement:

- A need for more consistent recording of data in Havering
- The need for more consideration in public services to be made regarding reasonable adjustments
- Transition processes and clearer pathways for young people moving into adulthood
- Planning for specific populations in Havering
- Better recording of hate crime
- Lack of an overall Havering wide training plan, uptake of training by certain groups and awareness of autism
- Pathways for diagnosis not widely known and in some cases long waits for diagnosis
- Post diagnostic support for people/signposting for those not meeting eligibility under the Care Act 2014
- Carers needs and accessible information
- Difficulty to engage all stakeholders in Havering – autism still seen as an issue for social care and education and specialist health
- Some employment initiatives evident but at a very early stage
- Inconsistent reference to employment in EHCP plans
- Families feeling excluded from planning



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- Access to housing and housing advice

Whilst not specific areas picked up by the SAF, other issues felt locally by people and families to need further attention are:

- Community Safety, anti-bullying work and teaching people life skills to avoid being intimidated and becoming victims of coercion and control
- Transport issues – partially linked to safety but also linked to life skills and increased independence

There are a number of other considerations in moving forward in developing a new all age autism strategy:

- a) Development and implementation of an all age strategy may be led by social care but will require sign up across the Council and other public sector bodies in order for the strategy to be implemented
- b) Some national initiatives are linking Autism and Learning Disability. Whilst the reasons for this are understandable, people with autism are anxious that the work done in recent years to separate the two may be in danger of being eroded
- c) The work on the TCP programme has led to better links between commissioners across the 3 boroughs and CCG; this potentially could provide a good foundation for developing the autism agenda across the wider footprint

Clearly the areas identified for improvement locally are not at odds with either the issues identified by Government as part of its review and those picked up by the SAF; these are themes that will form part of the revised all age strategy. Once consultation (including equalities impact assessment) is complete, it is intended that the revised all age strategy is signed up to by key statutory partners including the Council's Cabinet, towards the end of Summer 2019.