

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	29/01/2015
DIRECTOR	Liz Taylor
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen City Autism Strategy & Action Plan
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/SCW/001
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Aberdeen City Autism Strategy and subsequent Action Plan, which sets the strategic direction for improving outcomes for people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families/carers across their lifespan.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is asked to approve the Aberdeen City Autism Strategy and Action Plan and recommendation that it is governed by the formation of a multi-agency Implementation Group.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. It is expected that the Strategy and associated Action Plan will be taken forward within existing budget arrangements of the Council and its partners in NHS Grampian and third sector organisations.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Aberdeen City Autism Strategy and associated Action Plan are entirely consistent with the strategic objectives expressed within 'Aberdeen – The SMARTER City':

Smarter Governance (Participation)

- We will seek to develop a sense of community in Aberdeen based on principles of openness, fairness, reciprocity and responsibility.

- We will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience.

Smarter Living (Quality of Life)

- We will enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our citizens by offering support and activities which promote independence, resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- We will work with our partners to seek to reduce the levels of inequality in the city.

Smarter People (Social & Human Capital)

- We will provide a high quality education service within our schools and communities which will improve attainment and life chances of our children and young people to achieve their full potential in education, employment or training.
- Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st century.
- Again, working with partners, we will create a city of learning which will empower individuals to fulfil their potential and to contribute to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our communities.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Autism is a lifelong developmental disorder sometimes referred to as autism spectrum disorder or autism spectrum condition. It includes conditions such as classic autism and Aspergers. It affects people differently with some being able to live independently while others will need very specialist support.

Autism costs the UK more than £34 billion a year according to new research from the London School of Economics (LSE). The cost of providing care for each person with complex needs involving ASD and affected by a learning disability through his or her lifespan, is reported to be £1.5 million in the UK.

Prevalence studies of children in Scotland point to an incidence of 90 in 10,000 children. This suggests that there are over 50,000 people in Scotland with autism and of these, an estimated 40% have a diagnosed learning disability. People at the higher functioning end of the autism spectrum meet the criteria for Asperger's Syndrome or High Functioning Autism. It has not been possible to audit accurate data on adults in Scotland but the Scottish Consortium for Learning Difficulties reports that in Aberdeen City there are 96 adults with an autism diagnosis, mostly with learning difficulties. Prevalence figures,

however, estimate there are, in reality, approximately 2000 people in Aberdeen City with autism.

An audit carried out in 2013 (Additional Support for Learning and Young Carers report to Parliament) states that in Aberdeen City there are 2393 (recorded) children and young people in education who have additional support needs. Of those, 291 are recorded as having autism.

Autism has been the subject of a number of initiatives over the past decade including:

The Same as You (2000) document recommended that Scottish Autism, National Autistic Society (NAS), Health Boards and Local Authorities should develop a National Network for people with an ASD.

In 2001, the then Public Health Institute of Scotland (PHIS, now NHS Health Scotland) was commissioned by Scottish Ministers to carry out a needs assessment of services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in Scotland. The report, published in February 2002, identified a patchwork of services and made 32 recommendations that set out what ideal services should look like.

SIGN Guidelines 2007: Assessment, diagnosis and clinical interventions for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) published:

- Autism: the management and support of children and young people on the autism spectrum. NICE clinical guideline 170 (2013).
- Autism: recognition, referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum. NICE clinical guideline 142 (2012).
- Autism: recognition, referral and diagnosis of children and young people on the autism spectrum. NICE clinical guideline 128 (2011).

The Scottish Strategy for Autism: Local Report from the National Mapping Project (2013).

The Keys to Life: Improving quality of life for people with learning disabilities (2013). <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/1123>

The Scottish Government, working in partnership with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), two national autism organisations and a wide range of service users and professionals, spoke to individuals on the Autism Spectrum and their families to find out what their concerns are and what changes are required.

In 2010, a draft autism strategy was consulted on widely and, in 2011 'The Scottish Strategy for Autism' was launched by the Scottish Government: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/11/01120340/0

The Strategy set out a 10 year agenda for change that addresses the entire autism spectrum and the whole lifespan of people living with ASD in Scotland which will give individuals on the autism spectrum a meaningful and satisfying life built on:

- people being given the care and support they need in a way which promotes their independence and emotional well-being and respects their dignity; people being supported to have choice and control over their lives so that they are able to have the same chosen level of privacy as other citizens;
- services being personalised and based on the identified needs and wishes of the individual;
- people being supported to feel safe and secure without being overprotected; people having the opportunity to achieve all they can;
- people having equal access to information assessment and services; agencies should work to redress inequalities and challenge discrimination.

Services for people with autism should be embedded into this approach by building partnerships and developing a shared understanding of promoting inclusion which also underpins the values and vision of the strategy, which cites:

“Our vision is that individuals on the autism spectrum are respected, accepted and valued by their communities and have confidence in services to treat them fairly so that they are able to have meaningful and satisfying lives”

To help achieve this, the strategy outlines ten indicators for current best practice in the provision of effective Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) services:

- A local Autism Strategy developed in co-operation with people across the autism spectrum, carers and professionals, ensuring that the needs of people with ASD and carers are reflected and incorporated within local policies and plans.
- Access to training and development to inform staff and improve the understanding amongst professionals about ASD.
- A process for ensuring a means of easy access to useful and practical information about ASD, and local action, for stakeholders to improve communication.
- An ASD Training Plan to improve the knowledge and skills of those who work with people who have ASD, to ensure that people with ASD are properly supported by trained staff.
- A process for data collection which improves the reporting of how many people with ASD are receiving services and informs the planning of these services.
- A multi-agency care pathway for assessment, diagnosis and intervention to improve the support for people with ASD and remove barriers.
- A framework and process for seeking stakeholder feedback to inform service improvement and encourage engagement.

- Services that can demonstrate that service delivery is multi-agency in focus and coordinated effectively to target meeting the needs of people with ASD.
- Clear multi-agency procedures and plans which are in place to support individuals through major transitions at each important life-stage.
- A self-evaluation framework to ensure best practice implementation and monitoring.

As part of this on-going work an investment of £35k was allocated to all Scottish Local Authorities to further the development of local autism plans and/or progress elements of an existing plan. However, no new money has been forthcoming to take forward the local action plans, which must be delivered within existing resources.

The Strategy is founded on contributions from service users and their carers, feedback from local professionals, and on national and international research.

The leading role in collating information and coordinating the compilation of the Strategy for Aberdeen City was undertaken by a former Depute Principal Educational Psychologist with a particular interest in autism, and who also led on the Aberdeenshire Strategy and associated Action Plan.

Collaboration amongst Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and third sector partners and wider stakeholders has been central to the development of the Strategy and associated Action Plan.

The ten national Best Practice Indicators have informed the development of the Strategy to achieve the outcome of improved, better coordinated statutory and third sector services for people with autism and their families.

Further work is being undertaken with the National Autism Coordination Project within the Autism Network Scotland, based at Strathclyde University who are supporting Aberdeen City to consider the Strategy and Action Plan against the 4 new mid-term strategy goals. Both the Strategy and Action Plan are organic documents, which require on-going review, and it will be the role of the proposed Implementation Group to take this forward. Consideration of how the Strategy and Action Plan sit within the wider national agenda in terms of Self-directed Support and Integration of Health & Social Care will also be a key task moving forward, as both may be seen to offer real potential to progress the primary aim to ensure that people with autism lead lives that are as fulfilling as possible.

6. IMPACT

The Aberdeen City Autism Strategy and associated Action Plan are entirely consistent with the strategic objectives expressed within the Community Planning Aberdeen Single Outcome Agreement:

Safer Communities

- People feel safe throughout Aberdeen's Communities

Learning & Workforce

- Reduced levels of unemployment
- Effective lifelong learning through vocational and academic education training from secondary school

Children & Young People

- Every child and young person in Aberdeen enjoys being young and at the same time feels safe, nurtured, healthy, active, included, respected and responsible

Priority Families

- Communities demonstrate independence, resilience, confidence, self-esteem and aspiration. Preventative approaches reduce the number of families experiencing multiple and complex negative outcomes

And meet the underlying principles that state we:

- **Target those most in need;**
- **Support the capacity of Aberdeen's citizens and communities to increase self-sufficiency; and that there is**
- **A presumption for community based access to services**

The proposed strategy is designed to improve support to people with autism, thereby improving their outcomes. This will include those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged because of their condition. Through implementation of the associated Action Plan, the Strategy will enhance the opportunity of individuals with and affected by autism to play as full a role in society as they would wish. Additionally, the Strategy provides to ensure that public awareness and understanding of autism is raised in Aberdeen City.

Alongside Self-directed Support and Health & Social Care Integration, the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan offers a further opportunity to promote and deliver greater partnership working with key partners and stakeholders.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The risks associated with not achieving the outcomes in this strategy include:-

- increasing costs to statutory services including Addictions, Criminal Justice, Police Scotland, Children's Services, Health and Social Care, etc;
- poorer outcomes for those with autism and their families including less ability to succeed within education, gain employment, etc;
- reduced ability to meet the Single Outcome Agreement Targets;

- potential negative future inspections due to failure to implement the Scottish Autism Strategy.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Same as You 2000.
- PHIS A needs assessment of services for people with autism spectrum disorders 2001.
- Sign Guidelines 2007.
- NICE Quality Standards QS51 Autism: press release January 2014.
- Autism: the management and support of children and young people on the autism spectrum. NICE clinical guideline 170 (2013).
- Autism: recognition, referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum. NICE clinical guideline 142 (2012).
- Autism: recognition, referral and diagnosis of children and young people on the autism spectrum. NICE clinical guideline 128 (2011).
- The Scottish Strategy for Autism 2011.
- The Scottish Strategy for Autism: Local Report from the National Mapping Project.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 The Scottish Strategy for Autism – Overview
Appendix 2 Aberdeen City Autism Strategy
Appendix 3 Aberdeen City Action Plan

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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