



INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

Date of Meeting	11 December 2018
Report Title	Autism Strategy and Action Plan
Report Number	HSCP.18.085
Lead Officer	Sandra Ross, Chief Officer
Report Author Details	Jenny Rae Strategic Development Officer Jenrae@aberdeencity.gov.uk 01224 523994
Consultation Checklist Completed	Yes
Directions Required	No
Appendices	a. Autism Strategy – Final Draft b. Engagement and Consultation Overview Report

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report seeks approval of the revised Autism strategy and action plan (appendix A) for Aberdeen City.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board:

- a) Approve the Autism Strategy and Action Plan, which will take effect from 1 April 2019; and
- b) Note the Autism Strategy and Action Plan will be presented to Aberdeen City Council Operational Delivery Committee for approval in January 2019; and
- c) Note that progress reports on implementation will be provided to the Integration Joint Board annually.



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3. Summary of Key Information

- 3.1. The decision to revise the current Autism strategy and action plan was taken to ensure its strategic alignment within the context of health and social care and educational developments locally; and to ensure the local strategy was cognisant of national changes.
- 3.2. The process of revision has been directed and led by the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) along with key partners including Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, the Third Sector and autistic people and their families. A Strategic Steering Group has been established comprising representatives of these stakeholders. The group has undertaken a series of engagement and formal consultation activities (appendix b) which have strongly influenced and informed the revised strategy and action plan content.
- 3.3. Autism is neither a Learning Disability or a Mental Health condition which is one of the reasons why there was a lack of progress in the delivery of the previous Autism Strategy. Autism has now been defined as a service area within the ACHSCP structure by the Chief Officer. As it is clearly an area of interest for the ACHSCP given the needs of the autistic population in Aberdeen.
- 3.4. The lack of an integrated assessment and diagnostic pathway for adults in relation to Autism is a source of concern for many people in Aberdeen who feel they would benefit from such an approach being available to them. This issue is not unique to Aberdeen City, with other areas also facing this issue. Work has already commenced, supported by the Autism Policy Team at Scottish Government, to bring together Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and NHS Grampian in the development of a truly integrated assessment and diagnostic approach. Additionally, financial resources are expected from the Scottish Government to support such work to be developed and tested. This partnership approach to delivery of such a core service will result in improved health and wellbeing outcomes.



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4. Implications for IJB

4.1. Equalities:

It is believed that this report will have a neutral impact however the Autism strategy and action plan acknowledges and promotes autistic people as equal partners in our local communities; valued for their strengths and abilities.

4.2. Fairer Scotland Duty:

The content of this report primarily seeks to improve the lives of autistic people in Aberdeen City. Staff of the organisation and its partners will also see the impacts as they deliver supports and services to this client group. This strategy and action plan will seek to align with other strategic documents and their vision, such as the ACHSCP Strategic Plan and the Community Planning Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan, to improve outcomes for autistic people in Aberdeen. Additionally, the vision and strategic outcomes and priorities of the Scottish Strategy for Autism will continue to be applied and have guided the development of local core focus areas (on which the action plan is based). The specific actions identified in the strategy and action plan presented for approval seek to reduce inequalities and strengthen meaningful involvement of people in this process by co-producing solutions and measuring success.

4.3. Financial:

The action plan associated with the Autism strategy identifies where and how resources are to be aligned.

The provision of an assessment and diagnostic service and any associated service requirements or packages following this will be the most relevant resource concern for ACHSCP.

Work has commenced with the Autism Policy Team at the Scottish Government to address the issue of lack of assessment and diagnosis pathway, in conjunction with Aberdeenshire HSCP. Some external financial resource will be provided by Scottish Government for this purpose (exact amount to be confirmed) on a match funding basis. Work to identify funding as part of the matching process has begun and will include existing resource that is being used

Currently as no pathway exists autistic adults are often aligned to either Learning Disability or Mental Health services, however for social care support the current operational eligibility criteria prevents them from being eligible for support because



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they do not have an associated Learning Disability or Mental Health condition. There is evidence of resource being used within these services to prevent a person entering crisis which may include admission to hospital or use of other statutory services such as the Criminal Justice System. It is this type resource that we will seek to align under any match funding requirements.

The costs of Autism to Scotland as a whole have been identified through recently published research (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/microsegmentation-autism-spectrum/>). This research supports the ethos that providing supports at an earlier stage and at a lower cost can reduce ongoing costs and have positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of autistic people.

It is envisaged that to successfully operate an assessment and diagnostic service for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire a staff resource equivalent to 3 x WTE Care Manager at G13 would be required, equates to £142,300 per year. This funding would require to be in place for up to 3 years to develop, test, implement and evaluate the pathway. After such time funding levels would be reviewed and hopefully reduced as demand for assessments reduces.

Full scoping of the staffing requirements for an assessment and diagnostic service will be provided pending the match funding offer from Scottish Government. This will also clarify how existing resources will be used to provide the complement of this match funding. Also looking to examples of good practice to inform any local developments.

4.4. Workforce

There are no direct workforce implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

4.5. Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

4.6. Other

There are reputational implications when considering the Autism strategy and action plan. The lack of implementation progress of the current strategy and action plan have left many autistic people, their families and interested professionals and organisations feeling that expectations were raised but minimal real change was delivered. Through the engagement and consultation processes there have been strong expressions of anger, frustration and disappointment;



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which has impacted on the relationships which must be built to successfully develop and deliver a revised strategy and action plan. Work has taken place to re-build and strengthen relationships, with more positive comments and conversations now being evidenced, and reputation, to some extent, being restored. There is a significant risk that this hard work will be lost and there be a negative reputation once more if real change is not evidenced.

5. Links to ACHSCP Strategic Plan

- 5.1. The recommendations in this report align with the strategic priorities outlined in the ACHSCP Strategic Plan primarily by supporting the development of person-centred approaches to care and support and by enabling supported individuals to strengthen their connection and contribution to their local community. As the Strategic Plan is being refreshed any significant changes in vision or approach will be reflected in this autism strategy and action plan in due course.

6. Management of Risk

6.1. Identified risks(s)

The current strategy and action plan have not been successfully implemented, the revised strategy and action plan seeks to rectify this and ensure implementation is progressed and monitored. Failure to approve the revised strategy and action plan has the potential likelihood to end in complaints and challenge, with a strong risk of reputational damage.

Link to risks on strategic or operational risk register:

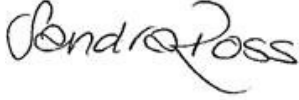

(8) There is a risk of reputational damage to the IJB and its partner organisations resulting from complexity of function, delegation and delivery of services across health and social care.

6.2. How might the content of this report impact or mitigate these risks:

The content of this report seeks to mitigate the known risks by recommending a decision which supports the reputation of the IJB & Partnership, the development of an Autism strategy and action plan promotes person centred approaches to care and support and the strengthening of community connections. The risk rating is viewed as Medium.



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Approvals	
	Sandra Ross (Chief Officer)
	Alex Stephen (Chief Finance Officer)