



# Health and Wellbeing Together

## 23 January 2019

<b>Report title</b>	Autism Strategy Progress Report	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Paul Sweet Children and Young People Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE Adults	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services	
<b>Originating service</b>	Inclusion Support Service	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Rob Hart Tel Email	Head of Inclusion Support 01902 555256 <a href="mailto:robert.hart@wolverhampton.gov.uk">robert.hart@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Joint Education & Children's Services Leadership Team Adult Services Leadership Team SEND Commissioning & Partnership Board Children & Families Together Board	3 December 2018  12 December 2018 13 December 2018

---

### Recommendations for decision:

The Health and Wellbeing Together Board is recommended to:

1. Approve proposals to refresh the Autism Strategy.
2. Approve proposed governance arrangements for the Autism Strategy.

### Recommendations for noting:

The Health and Wellbeing Together Board is asked to:

1. Note the progress made in delivery of the Autism Strategy.

## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline progress that has been achieved in the delivery of Wolverhampton's Joint Autism Strategy, so that Health and Wellbeing Together can have oversight of this strategy.
- 1.2 It seeks approval for refreshing the Autism Strategy to focus on three key themes: awareness and understanding; service pathways; and promoting independence. It also proposes new governance arrangements for oversight of the Autism Strategy.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition. People with autism experience challenges or differences in three key areas: social communication, social interaction, and imagination or flexible thinking. Autism is a spectrum condition, which means that different people with autism experience it and are impacted in different ways. It is estimated that 1 to 1.5 percent of the population has an autism spectrum condition. Approximately 50 per cent of people with autism also have a learning disability, and 30 per cent of people with autism experience severe mental health difficulties.
- 2.2 The Wolverhampton Joint Autism Strategy 2016-2021 (hereafter the Autism Strategy) was developed by Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and City of Wolverhampton Council, with the involvement of people with autism and their families and carers and other stakeholders. Following a consultation period during the summer of 2016, the Autism Strategy was approved by City of Wolverhampton Council Cabinet in November 2016 and by Wolverhampton CCG Governing Board in April 2017.
- 2.3 The Autism Strategy sets out the following vision:  
  
*“Our vision is a city where people with autism of all ages and, regardless of their equalities profile, have the same opportunities as anyone else, can live the life they choose, receive personalised support when they need it, enjoy meaningful activities and be active citizens and members of our community. It will be a city where people with autism feel safe, understood and supported, and where the word autism means the same to every member of our community: ‘different, not less’.”*
- 2.4 The Autism Strategy identified nine key objectives, with associated priorities:
  - Understanding local needs by collecting accurate data about autism
  - Providing access to high quality information, advice and support
  - Developing a clear and consistent diagnostic pathway, including post-diagnostic support
  - Increasing awareness and understanding of autism
  - Supporting children and young people with autism in preparing for adulthood
  - Enabling access to lifelong learning, increasing skills and inclusive employment
  - To help people with autism to keep healthy
  - Living well and increasing independence for people with autism
  - Access to support for families, parents and carers of people with autism

### 3.0 Progress in delivering the Autism Strategy

3.1 Implementation of the Autism Strategy has been overseen by the Autism Strategy Coordination group, which includes representatives from Wolverhampton CCG, council services (Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Education, Commissioning), schools, University of Wolverhampton, the Royal Wolverhampton Trust, the Black Country Foundation Partnership Trust, parents of children with autism and the voluntary sector. Progress to date in delivering the strategy is summarised below.

<i>Co-production</i>	We have worked with Voice4Parents and are establishing a parents' consultative group who will help to shape implementation of the Strategy and contribute to its delivery.
<i>Diagnostic pathway</i>	<p>From July 2016 the CCG commissioned a new diagnosis, assessment, treatment, review and support care pathway from Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust for adults. This has resulted in increased numbers of assessments, reduced waiting times and improved satisfaction from service users.</p> <p>For children and young people under the age of 18, the CCG have started work to review the diagnostic pathway and are working with key stakeholders, including parents, to develop a new pathway which will be implemented by April 2019</p>
<i>Post-diagnostic support</i>	Through Tettenhall Wood School, the Outreach Service has trained staff in National Autistic Society post-diagnostic support programmes. Delivery of the Early Bird Plus programme (for parents of children aged 4-8) started in April 2017, and delivery of the Teen Life programme (for parents of children aged 10-16) started in February 2018. The Special Needs Early Years' Service provide post-diagnostic training to parents of children aged 4 or under.
<i>Increasing awareness and understanding</i>	<p>During the development of the strategy, it was difficult to obtain an accurate picture of the number of people with autism. In order to understand the need, work has started on establishing a baseline. This has included obtaining data from GP records, autism spectrum condition (ASC) ages 5-18 diagnostic panel and ASC under-fives' panel. Whilst this data is only those of diagnosed autism, it provides a good indication on the level of need.</p> <p>Information is currently available on Wolverhampton Information Network on services available for people with autism. The current information will be reviewed to ensure up to date information is available.</p>

*Preparing for adulthood*

To prepare young people for further education or employment, we will work with young people to produce a passport or a one-page profile to identify them as autistic. This reduces the need for them to ‘tell their story.’

*Education*

In September 2016 additional funding was allocated to three nursery settings to create enhanced mainstream early years provision for children with autism and/or complex learning needs.

Since September 2017, outreach services provided by Wolverhampton Special Schools have been re-organised to establish a single point of access, and the service has been publicised more widely to schools. The service has developed core autism training for school staff and is working with the Educational Psychology Team to develop a model for autism friendly schools. Since April 2018, a new service level agreement (SLA) for outreach services has been in place to ensure increased capacity in the service to work with mainstream schools to support the inclusion of pupils with autism.

In December 2017, a new specialist centre for autism was officially opened at City of Wolverhampton College, catering for 12 students aged 16-25.

A review of SEND educational provision within Wolverhampton has been completed, and work is beginning to implement the review recommendations to ensure that there is capacity and resources within both mainstream and special schools to meet the needs of all pupils with autism.

*Employment*

The City of Wolverhampton Council currently commission Enable (Employment Support for People with Disabilities) to provide individualised support or people seeking work. This includes help with Curricula Vitae (CV), interview support, job coaching, one to one support in the workplace and help with learning the role. People can self-refer, or referrals can be made via a social worker or SEND Officer.

Programmes including Thrive, Black Country Impact, Workbox and Wolves at Work can all help support people with autism into employment. Through Wolves at Work seven employers have committed to becoming “disability confident employers”. We are working to add information about autism to Workbox.

*Care and Treatment Reviews*

Wolverhampton has seven adult patients with a diagnosis of Autism who are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. As per Care and Treatment Review (CTR) protocols (part of the Department of Health’s Transforming Care Agenda), reviews are held every six months and last a whole day. They are held at the hospital. The patient is seen by the

Independent Experts and involved in giving feedback about their treatment and discharge plans. The panel consists of a Health and Social Care Commissioner, In-Patient Commissioner, Expert by Experience and a professional Independent Expert. Wolverhampton is fully compliant with the CTR Programme and there are no delayed discharges.

Children and Young People are also subject to the Care, Education and Treatment Reviews and currently there are no young people admitted to inpatient facilities who have a diagnosis of autism. These are usually undertaken when there is a request for an assessment for an inpatient bed and the panel involves the Children's Commissioner from the CCG, a social worker, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) clinicians, child and family/carers, education setting, Special Educational Needs Statutory Assessment and Review Team (SENSTART) if appropriate, specialist commissioner (case manager for CAMHS from National Health Service England), expert by experience and professional independent clinician. In fact, anyone who is involved in the child's care. Wolverhampton is actively involved with the process for children and young people.

*Keeping safe*

Work has started to link with the Safe Places Scheme, housing providers and criminal justice system to try to ensure that there is appropriate support for vulnerable people with autism.

*Voluntary sector engagement*

We have started scoping work with the voluntary sector to develop a network of services to support people with autism and their families and identify opportunities for the Voluntary Sector Council to support developments in this area.

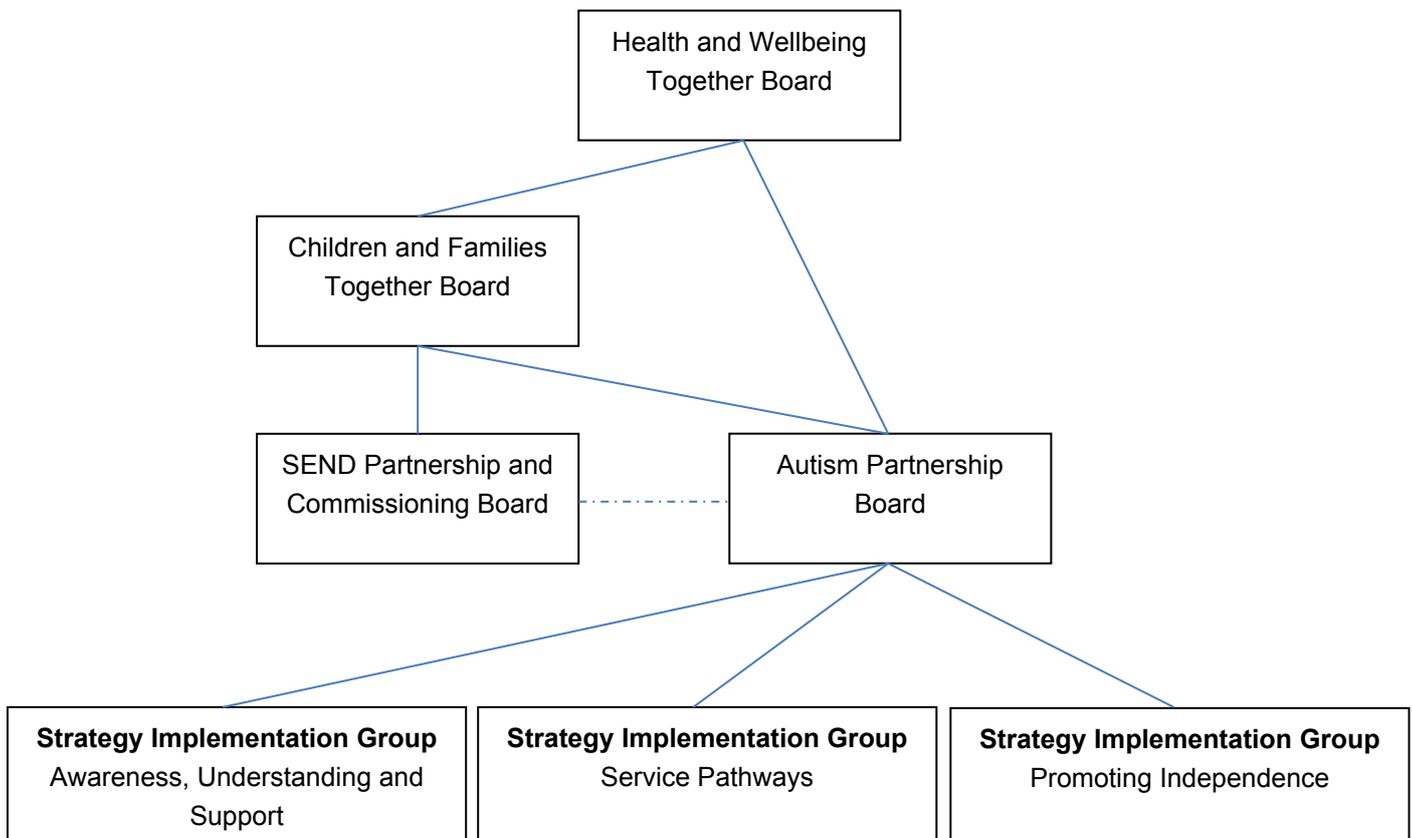
#### **4.0 Future priorities and next steps**

- 4.1 The Autism Strategy has been in place for over two years and it is an appropriate opportunity to take stock, review and refocus work around its implementation. While much progress has been achieved, as outlined above, there have been a number of challenges. In particular, governance arrangements have been unclear and all stakeholders have not been fully engaged. Further, the breadth of the scope of the Strategy has presented challenges in overseeing the implementation through one group.
- 4.2 We propose that going forwards the Autism Strategy is refreshed to focus on three overarching themes:
- Awareness, understanding and support
  - Service pathways
  - Promoting independence

4.3 Details of issues and priorities linked to these themes are shown below:

Theme	What are the issues?	What do we need to focus on?
Awareness, understanding and support	<p>People with autism and their families tell us that it is a challenge to access many environments and activities within the City.</p> <p>People with autism and their families say that there is a need for support groups and other community organisations to provide ongoing support.</p> <p>The Autism Act requires that local authorities and the NHS should provide autism awareness training for all staff.</p>	<p>Working with the National Autistic Society to achieve “autism friendly” organisations, initially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Wolverhampton Council</li> <li>• Royal Wolverhampton Hospital Trust</li> <li>• University of Wolverhampton</li> </ul> <p>Developing a co-ordinated autism awareness training offer</p> <p>Developing a network of “autism champions” who can promote awareness and understanding in organisations across the City.</p> <p>Working with community and voluntary sector to help develop support groups.</p>
Service pathways	<p>The number of children being referred for autism assessments has more than doubled over the last four years.</p> <p>Parents tell us that the autism diagnostic process is not transparent and is too slow.</p> <p>There are gaps in post-diagnostic support for adults who do not have a learning disability.</p> <p>Where appropriate support is not put in place for people with learning disabilities or autism, it may result in residential/ in-patient provision, which could be avoided.</p>	<p>Commissioning and implementing a pathway for children and young people that can respond to demand and meets recognised service standards.</p> <p>Reviewing and improving post-diagnostic support.</p> <p>Implementing the Transforming Care Programme.</p>
Promoting independence	<p>National data indicate that people with autism are much more likely to experience unemployment.</p> <p>Parents/ carers of people with autism report anxiety about transitions and say that planning about the future does not begin early enough.</p>	<p>Working to ensure that people with autism are able to access schemes and interventions that promote employability.</p> <p>Preparation for adulthood and effective transition planning between Children’s and Adult Services</p>

- 4.3 In order to monitor delivery of the implementation of the Autism Strategy, it is proposed that new governance arrangements are implemented. There will be a small, strategic Autism Partnership Board, which will meet on a quarterly basis to provide oversight of the strategy. This will include representatives of Adult Services, Children's Services, the CCG, experts by experience, and the voluntary and community sector.
- 4.4 At an operational level, there will be three strategy implementation groups – one for each theme – reporting into the Partnership Board, chaired by the Director of Adult Services. The diagram below outlines proposed governance arrangements and links with existing structures.



## 5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.
- 5.2 Any costs associated with the autism strategy will be contained within existing budgets across partners.  
[NM/05122018/K]

## 6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 The Autism Act 2009 created a statutory framework for development of a national strategy for adults with autism with associated statutory guidance for local authorities,

NHS foundation trusts and NHS bodies. This guidance was updated in 2015 and 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 solely based on their 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/05122018/Q]

- 6.2 Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities must carry out an assessment of anyone who appears to require care and support, regardless of likely eligibility for state-funded support. Local authorities also have a responsibility to assess a carer's need for support. Under the Children and Families Act 2014 local authorities must carry out an education, health and care need assessment for children and young people up to the age of 25 who may have special education needs and/or disabilities. Both the Care Act and the Children and Families Act (and associated statutory guidance) identify responsibilities for local authorities to undertake assessments that are focused on outcomes that the person wants to achieve, and for people to be involved in their assessment processes.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires equal treatment in access to employment as well as private and public services, regardless of protected characteristics, including disability (such as autism). Employers and service providers are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers experienced by people with disabilities. The public sector equality duty resulting from the Equality Act sets out a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## **7.0 Equalities implications**

- 7.1 An initial equalities analysis has been completed. Further equalities analysis is not required. The Autism Strategy aims to promote equality and inclusion by working with and improving outcomes for people with autism, and other developmental or hidden disabilities.

## **8.0 Environmental implications**

- 8.1 There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

## **9.0 Human resources implications**

- 9.1 There are no human resources implications as a result of this report.

## **10.0 Health and Wellbeing implications**

- 10.1 Implementation of the Autism Strategy will promote health and wellbeing by ensuring a joined-up partnership approach to identification and support for people with autism spectrum conditions and working towards improved service standards and outcomes. The promotion of autism awareness and autism friendly organisations can help people with autism to access health care and other support services.

## **11.0 Corporate Landlord implications**

- 11.1 There are no Corporate Landlord implications arising from this report.

## **12.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 12.1 Joint Autism Strategy 2016-2021