

**Wiltshire Council**

**Health and Wellbeing Board**

**21 November 2013**

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**Wiltshire's Autism Self Assessment**

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**Executive Summary**

The Department of Health (DoH) is currently leading a formal review of progress against the Adult Autism Strategy. Local authorities were contacted and asked to take forward a second self assessment exercise and submit this to the DoH as part of the review.

The report outlines the findings of that assessment.

**Proposal(s)**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to confirm a commitment to the direction that the Wiltshire Autism Partnership is taking.

**Reason for Proposal**

As part of the DoH review process Health and Wellbeing Boards are expected to discuss the second self assessment submitted by the end of January 2014.

**James Cawley**

**Associate Director, Adult Care Commissioning, Safeguarding and Housing  
Wiltshire Council**

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### **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The Department of Health is currently leading on a formal review of progress against the 2010 Adult Autism Strategy "Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives" to assure itself that Local Authorities and the NHS are making progress and to assess whether the objectives of the Strategy remain fundamentally the right ones.
- 1.2 Wiltshire Autism Partnership has submitted a self assessment which will be published in full on line (see Appendix 1). The Department of Health will review the returns and the strategy will be revised as necessary by April 2014.
- 1.3 As part of the process, there is an expectation that the self assessment is discussed by the local Health and Well Being Board by the end of January 2014 to provide evidence for local planning and health needs assessment strategy development and to support local implementation work.

### **Background**

- 2.1 The Adult Autism Strategy 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' was published in 2010. It is an essential step towards realising the Government's long term vision for transforming the lives of and outcomes for adults with autism. The Department of Health is the lead policy department for the Strategy but with delivery shared across a range of government departments and agencies, and local health and social service providers.
- 2.2 The Autism Strategy has five areas for action aimed at improving the lives of people with autism:
  - increasing awareness and understanding of autism
  - developing clear, consistent pathways for diagnosis of autism;
  - improving access for adults with autism to services and support
  - helping adults with autism into work; and
  - enabling local partners to develop relevant services
- 2.3 The Strategy is not just about putting in place autism services but about enabling equal access to mainstream services, support and opportunities through reasonable adjustments, training and awareness raising.

- 2.4 Wiltshire has in place a 'Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adults with Autism in Wiltshire' and a 'Joint Implementation Plan'. (<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/healthandsocialcare/socialcareadults/disabilities.htm>).
- 2.5 Wiltshire's Strategy and Implementation Plan are overseen by the Wiltshire Autism Partnership, and the Board meets every 10 weeks. Within Children's Services there is a Wiltshire Multi-Agency Autism Strategy Group. There are two common members of both Boards to ensure close working, sharing of ideas and issues and to avoid duplication.

### **Relevance to the Council's Business Plan**

- 3.1 The work to ensure that the Autism Strategy is delivered in Wiltshire fits within one of Wiltshire Council's key priorities and one the top 12 key actions to meet those priorities, namely, "to protect those who are most vulnerable".

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

- 4.1 There is some good progress in Wiltshire that has been highlighted by the self assessment:
- 4.2 **Autism Awareness campaign.** This campaign has been highlighted by the National Autistic Society as an example of good practice. (<http://www.autism.org.uk/working-with/autism-strategy/south-west-autism-strategy/examples-of-good-practice.aspx>). The purpose of this campaign has been to raise awareness of autism and show how autism affects people in different ways so a person's actions and behaviours are understood in Wiltshire communities. It has been a yearlong campaign to raise awareness of autism and has included a poster campaign, road shows, talks at Area Board meetings, radio interviews, twitter and a local press interview. As the campaign comes to a close the Autism Partnership will be considering how to maintain the momentum for autism awareness.
- 4.3 **Autism Diagnostic Service.** Since September 2012 Wiltshire adult residents now have access to local diagnostic services (funded through the CCG). The average wait for diagnosis is 4 weeks, and no longer than 6 weeks. In the last year 113 people have been diagnosed – this activity is higher than was expected.
- 4.4 **Training.** A training programme (for 900 professionals) and an Elearning package have been specifically commissioned for training (funded by Wiltshire Council). Although this training programme has come to an end, further training is being planned. Autism awareness training is also included in the adult social care induction programme.
- 4.5 **Employment.** Wiltshire Council has funded two autism specific job coaches who support and job coach individuals but also work with employers to promote the value of employing someone with autism.
- 4.6 There continues to be some areas that need further development:

- 4.6.1 **Low level social support.** There is a lack of autism specific information, advice, befriending and social support available to people with autism who are not eligible for services but who find themselves isolated and lacking direction and advice. Wiltshire Council is currently offering a grant to an organisation to facilitate a social support group in Salisbury and then to look together at how this provision could be funded to extend across Wiltshire. The provision of low level support has been identified as a need by people with autism and needs to be further developed.
- 4.6.2 **Post diagnostic support.** Post diagnostic support is currently limited and there is a lack of more extended formal post diagnostic support, particularly for people with complex needs who do not have a learning disability, and also support for carers/families. This support needs to link in to mental health services. As diagnostic activity has been higher than expected in the first half of 2013/2014, it has not yet been possible to extend this support, however as soon as budgets allow the CCG hopes to improve this.
- 4.6.3 **Consultation/engagement.** Wiltshire Council has recently awarded a grant to the National Autistic Society to run 5 Autism Forums a year, for 2 years, to enable people with autism to raise issues and concerns with the Autism Partnership and work together in finding solutions and in decision making. This Forum needs to develop to engage with as many people as possible, and also to consider how the Partnership can work with families and carers too.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

5. Progress made towards fulfilling the aims of the Autism Strategy, particularly in raising awareness of autism and training of professionals, will improve how people with autism are safeguarded from harm.

### **Public Health Implications**

6. With full integration into the Council, the Public Health team is now well placed to work with the Wiltshire Autism partnership to ensure that the correct data is captured for on-going monitoring of implementation of the strategy. There are a number of areas where Public Health can be working more closely with the Partnership to ensure that best practice and up-to-date evidence is used to underpin delivery, and we look forward to a closer working relationship in future.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

7. N/A

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

8. Progress made towards fulfilling the aims of the Autism Strategy will:
- promote inclusion and cohesive communities
  - improve employment opportunities

- show a commitment to not discriminating against people with autism in the way services are provided

### **Risk Assessment**

9. There is a risk of legal challenge to Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire CCG if there is not an Autism Strategy in place.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

10. N/A

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

11. N/A

### **Financial Implications**

12. There will be a financial impact on Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire CCG in delivering the Autism Strategy, particularly in the extension of post diagnostic services and low level preventative support. However, without timely support, some people with autism are eventually accessing very expensive acute services, whereas the right support earlier in their lives could have produced both better outcomes for the individuals and have less of a financial impact. At this time it isn't possible to clarify the full financial implications involved, however further detailed reports will be considered by Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire CCG.

### **Legal Implications**

13. Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care 1990 imposes a duty to assess the needs of any person for whom the authority may provide or arrange the provision of community care service and who may be in needs of such services.

It is advised that consultation takes place with the providers of the diagnostic service and the CCG, as to what process will be followed, in the event that a person who has received a positive diagnosis not have the capacity, even with appropriate signposting, to make a self-referral for a community care assessment.

If the Government issues a revised Autism Strategy in Spring 2014 this can be considered for further legal implications.

### **Options Considered**

- 14 One option is to not have a Wiltshire Autism Strategy; however that option has not been considered to be appropriate.

## **Conclusions**

15. The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to consider the report and attached self assessment, and confirm a commitment to the direction that the Wiltshire Autism Partnership is taking.

**James Cawley**  
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## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1 - Wiltshire's 2013 Autism Self Assessment**

**Appendix 2 - 2013 Autism self assessment questions with RAG rating  
definitions**

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