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Wiltshire Council

Health Select

18 January 2023

Learning Disabilities Knowledge Café and Autism Partnership update

Purpose of Report

1. The Learning Disabilities Knowledge café and the Autism Partnership are both vital forums for ensuring that learning disabled people and autistic people are involved in shaping services that impact on their lives. This report provides an update on the key work that is being completed.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The Learning Disabilities Knowledge Café and Autism Partnership ensure that the council is improving the social mobility and tackling inequalities for learning disabled and autistic people. This is a guiding theme of the Wiltshire Council business plan.

Learning Disabilities Knowledge Café background

3. The Learning Disabilities Knowledge Café was established in 2019. It replaced the learning disabilities partnership board which had become professionally focussed and was not inclusive of learning-disabled people.
4. Knowledge cafés move away from traditional partnership meetings to allow more free flowing conversation. It is co-facilitated by learning disabled people and ensures that views of all people are captured. Wiltshire Centre for Independent living host the cafés.

Main Considerations

5. During 2020 and 2021 the knowledge café stopped as a result of Covid-19. In 2022 face-to-face meetings started again. There are face-to-face meetings in Devizes and Warminster.
6. The café focused on a series of topics and had some notable successes. The café worked alongside Wiltshire Health and Care, the Integrated Care Board and Wiltshire council to develop a hospital passport. A hospital passport provides information about people's health needs, medication, communication and any reasonable adjustments that need to be made if someone is admitted to hospital. It's co-produced by the individual with learning disabilities and is a vital for ensuring that people are supported properly during their stay in hospital.
7. The knowledge café has worked with local businesses within Wiltshire to improve their accessibility and inclusivity for learning disabled people. This work is essential for empowering learning-disabled people to lead independent, fulfilled lives.

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8. Members of the knowledge café delivered training for personal assistants and bus drivers in Wiltshire. The training was really well received and helped improve the knowledge and understanding of the staff. Training that is delivered by learning disabled people helps improve inclusivity.
9. The knowledge café has identified several priorities for 2023. The knowledge café is continuing to work alongside Health and social care organisations to improve the health of learning-disabled people. Sadly, the life expectancy of learning-disabled people is significantly lower than the general population with 6 out of 10 people dying before the age of 65. For the general population the statistic is 1 out of 10 [Learning from Lives and Deaths - people with a learning disability and autistic people \(LeDeR\) \(kcl.ac.uk\)](#).
10. Improving access to work and employment for learning disabled people is a key priority. Currently on 5.3% of learning-disabled people aged 16 and over in England are in paid employment. This compares to 75.6 % of the general population [Unemployment - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#).
11. In addition work is underway on the “living my life” initiative which focuses on what learning-disabled people want in order to be independent. Choice and control is a strong topic of conversation and is something that the café is passionate about.
12. Ensuring that learning disabled people are able to access their communities. Part of this work is highlighting the positive impact that learning disabled people can have in communities.

Autism Partnership Background

13. The Autism Partnership was relaunched on 29th November 2022. This followed a hiatus during which time the partnership was redeveloped. This is to make it more inclusive and representative of the views of autistic people.
14. The aims of the partnership are:
 - Make sure that the views of autistic people in Wiltshire are represented
 - Work with organisations to improve the lives of autistic people
 - Ensure that the goals in the autism strategy are met
 - Work alongside existing forums to improve the lives of autistic people
15. The partnership has two co-chairs one of whom is autistic (Alice McSweeney) and the other chair is Dan Wilkins who is employed by Wiltshire Council as the Head of Learning Disabilities and Autism Service.
16. The partnership is attended by autistic people, carers and partnership organisations. Participants are given the option of attending in person or joining online via Microsoft teams.
17. The partnership has been tasked with co-producing the implementation plan for the autism strategy which was presented to the health and wellbeing board on 7th September 2022.

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Autism strategy

18. The Wiltshire Autism strategy aims to improve the lives of autistic people. There are six priorities which mirror the priorities in the national Autism strategy:

- Improve the health of autistic people and reduce health inequalities
- Support children and young people with autism to play, learn and move into adult life
- Support young people and adults to access work
- Support autistic people to live independently in the community wherever possible
- Raise awareness of autism and make Wiltshire an inclusive place to love, learn and work
- Improve support for autistic people in the criminal justice system

19. The strategy was presented to the autism partnership on 29th November 2022. Agreement was made that an implementation plan will be developed in the first three months of 2023. At the meetings two priorities will be discussed. The time frame is:

January 2023

- Support autistic people to live independently in the community wherever possible
- Improve the health of autistic people and reduce health inequalities

February 2023

- Support children and young people with autism to play, learn and move into adult life
- Raise awareness of autism and make Wiltshire an inclusive place to love, learn and work

March 2023

- Support autistic people to live independently in the community wherever possible
- Improve support for autistic people in the criminal justice system

April 2023

- Agree the strategy implementation plan and return to Health Select Committee for sign off in May 2023

Safeguarding Implications

20. There are no safeguarding implications as part of the work that the The Learning Disabilities Knowledge café and the Autism Partnership undertake.

Public Health Implications

21. The Learning Disabilities Knowledge café and the Autism Partnership both work to improve the health of autistic and learning-disabled people. The forums provide feedback to the learning disabilities and autism programme board and contribute to learning events.

Procurement Implications

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22. There are not currently any procurement implications as part of the work that is being completed by the Learning Disabilities Knowledge café and the Autism Partnership.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

23. An Equality Impact assessments (EqIA) is not currently required but one will be completed if needed.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

24. There are not currently any environmental or climate change implications as part of the work that is being completed by the Learning Disabilities Knowledge café and the Autism Partnership.

Workforce Implications

25. There are not currently any workforce implications from the work that is being completed by the Learning Disabilities Knowledge café and the Autism Partnership.

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

26. There is not a decision required as part of this paper

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

27. There are no decisions required as part of this paper.

Financial Implications

28. There are no financial implications as a result of this paper.

Legal Implications

29. There are no legal implications as part of this paper.

Options Considered

30. There are no options as part of this paper.

Proposals

31. This report provides an update on the Learning disabilities Knowledge Café and the Autism Partnership. These forums are vital in ensuring that learning disabled and autistic people are actively involved in service development.

32. The autism strategy implementation plan is being co-produced and an update will be presented at the May 2023 Health Select Committee.

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

None