

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Date of Meeting

25 January 2017

2016 Autism Self Assessment Framework (SAF) Return

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Public

Purpose of this report

1. The Health and Wellbeing Board has a role in overseeing the implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy as set out in the Department of Health's 'Statutory guidance for Local Authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy' (March 2015). The Department's role is to continue to support Health and Wellbeing Boards through the local area autism self-evaluation exercise on an annual basis and to make the responses publicly available.
2. This report advises the Board about the 2016 Autism SAF which was submitted to Public Health England on 17 October 2016. It provides an update on the local area partnership's progress in key areas of the Strategy aimed to assist people with Autism on the journey to reach their potential, to have full lives and to live as independently as possible.
3. The report also identifies areas for further work identified through the SAF and, to ensure a systematic method of identifying the unmet health and social care needs of people with Autism, recommends that an updated Autism Health Needs Assessment is undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

1. **note that an updated Health Needs Assessment (HNA) for Autism, to refresh the last evaluation undertaken in 2010, will be undertaken; and**
2. **note that further work identified will be progressed through the Think Autism Partnership Board (TAPB) and the development of an associated action plan.**

National Legislative Background

4. In 2009, The National Autistic Society led a national campaign to raise awareness and gain recognition of the needs of people with Autism which led the Government to enact the 2009 Autism Act; the first ever disability-specific law in England.
5. The Act placed a duty on Government to produce a strategy for adults with Autism which was published as 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives', 2010. The same year, the Government also published statutory guidance for local councils and local health bodies on the implementation of this strategy.
6. Following feedback from adults with Autism, parents, carers and professionals, a new strategy 'Think Autism' was published in April 2014. This tells us about the strong foundations for change that have been made in line with the 2010 strategy. These include local authorities appointing Autism leads with responsibility for mapping local need and developing plans and, increasingly, engaging people with autism in the local planning and designing of services. Diagnostic pathways have been established, staff training requirements have been strengthened and help for people with autism into employment and education has improved.
7. In January 2016, the Government published a progress report on the 2014 strategy looking forward over the next 18 months with a number of refreshed actions building on progress made. The 2010 statutory guidance was updated in March 2015.

Self Assessment Framework Background and Progress to Date

8. The Autism SAF covers implementation on progress against the Adult Autism Strategy and contains a section on planning in relation to provision services as children with autism as they move into adulthood. This exercise builds on the third Autism self-assessment exercise completed between December 2014 and March 2015. The return is usually conducted annually and is a snapshot in time (in this case, as at 31 March 2016) of a progress review in meeting statutory guidance.
9. Acting as a local self-audit tool for services affecting people with Autism, the SAF has two purposes. First, it is intended to provide an opportunity for local Autism strategy groups to review their progress and revisit future planning with partners including people with Autism and their families. The exercise is also a key means for the Government to identify progress across the country in the implementation of the Strategy.

10. The submission is a joint venture between the Council and Bedfordshire CCG and involves working with partners from health (specifically, the East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) provided the responses to the diagnostic questions), employment, criminal justice and other sectors. People on the autism spectrum as well as their informal carers, friends and family were asked to comment on service planning, the available information and advice, housing, employment and access to public services and their views were taken into account in preparing the SAF submission.
11. The local authority is tasked with the consolidation of the return as the lead body locally. The data is collated and analysed by Public Health England who will provide the Cross Government Autism Programme Board with a report of the findings before the information is shared more widely. The Department of Health asks that local authorities continue their support in undertaking this exercise and for sustained commitment to raising the awareness and equality of people on the Autistic spectrum.
12. Since the SAF was introduced, considerable local progress and improvements have been made for customers in Central Bedfordshire. The appointment of a senior practitioner autism specialist care manager in the Adult Learning Disability Team in 2012 has ensured that assessments are carried out by a trained professional. The establishment of an autism diagnostic service in July 2013 commissioned from ELFT has ensured timely diagnosis of people suspected of being autistic and offers a variety of post diagnostic support. The Council's commissioned services from Autism Bedfordshire (a local charity established over 25 years ago) to provide help for people with autism with social integration and skills development and the designation of an Autism lead commissioning officer has resulted in good progress made towards statutory responsibilities.
13. **Appendix A** sets out the principal requirements from the March 2015 'Statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the adult autism strategy' together with a summary of how the Council is meeting its responsibilities.
14. There has been some good progress in meeting statutory requirements particularly around the diagnostic pathway and post diagnostic support. The TAPB is a well attended and lively forum for customers with Autism, their carers, friends and families as well as other interested professionals. Awareness training for relevant staff is widespread and social care assessments are undertaken by the specialist care manager.
15. The SAF leads to the development of a local action plan which the Council supports Autism Bedfordshire to develop. The action plan is co-produced with customers who are asked to identify the issues that they feel are most important to them.

The plan will also monitor progress towards the Council's statutory obligations as well as acting as the conduit for identifying local innovations and initiatives that will lead to better care for people with Autism.

Financial and Risk Implications

16. There are no specific financial implications identified in this report but there could be reputational risk for both the Council and CCG if satisfactory progress is not made towards the government strategy.

Governance and Delivery Implications

17. In accordance with good governance, customers are involved in the decision making process through attendance at the TAPB, which meets quarterly, and in agreeing the Autism action plan. The Autism SAF, whilst co-ordinated by the Council involving partner organisations, also includes stakeholders through the TAPB who agree the action plan.

Equalities Implications

18. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Autism is a recognised disability and the implementation of the strategy is helping to improve outcomes for people with Autism. It is recognised that there is a need to:
 - improve the collection of data on older people with Autism, those in the BME community and women. It is acknowledged that these groups often have dissimilar needs;
 - Identify unmet need particularly for people who have Autism without a learning disability or mental health issue.

Implications for Work Programme

19. No specific implications for the work programme, though the Board may wish to consider receiving an update of the Autism action plan in the autumn.

Conclusion and Next Steps

20. As indicated in the report considerable progress have been made in developing services for people with Autism as a result of the action plans to date. This year 2016/17, further work has been identified from the findings in the SAF and will be used to inform current local strategy and the action plan.

This includes work on data collection, identifying unmet need for people with Autism and Asperger's and a focus on training. (See **Appendix A**). Progress will be monitored by the TAPB.

21. Since the introduction of the first Autism strategy in 2010, good progress has been made by the Council's multi-agency approach to supporting people with Autism. However, with growing awareness of Autistic conditions and better diagnoses, it has increased the realisation that there is unmet need in local communities.
22. Autism Bedfordshire were recently awarded a new outcomes based contract to provide customer voice and empowerment services to people with Autism which was co-produced with customers. The award is for three years from 1 October 2016 with an option to extend for a further two years.
23. The National Autistic Society (NAS) estimates that 1 in 100 people in the UK have Autism. For Central Bedfordshire, this would translate to over 2,700 people. Even if all these people were identified, not everyone with Autism would require health or social care support or meet social care eligibility to receive a service. However, given the relatively low numbers currently known to Adult Social Care it would suggest there is considerable unmet need across our localities. For this reason, it is recommended that a Health Needs Assessment for people with Autism is undertaken.

Appendix – Summary of SAF

Supporting papers: Appendix A – Identified further work from the SAF findings and summary extracts of the Council's progress towards meeting the principal requirements of the statutory guidance.

Background Papers

The results of the 2014 SAF (which was the last time the exercise was conducted) can be found here:

<https://www.improvinghealthandlives.org.uk/projects/autsaf2014results>

The results of the 2016 SAF are expected to be known in March 2017 and will be published in a similar format to that of the 2014 exercise on the Public Health England website.