

**TO: ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
17 APRIL 2012**

**AUTISM COMMISSIONING STRATEGY - UPDATE
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To inform the Panel on progress in implementation of the Autism Commissioning Strategy, which is the Council and PCT's response to the national strategy *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives*

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That progress is noted.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. n/a

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. n/a

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 5.1. In 14th June 2011, the panel considered the Autism Commissioning Strategy which is the joint approach of the Council and PCT to supporting adults with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). The strategy was approved by Executive on 7th June 2011.
- 5.2. In December 2011, the Department of Health announced that it would be requesting self-assessments from Local Authorities. The main purpose is that the Department of Health, in conjunction with the Public Health Observatory, have identified that there is a lack of national data on adults with autism. The data will be used to inform regional action plans.
- 5.3. The self-assessment submitted by the Council can be provided on request but has not been included here as it is in a lengthy spreadsheet format. The main points of progress are summarised below.
- 5.4. Nationally the demand for support for people with ASD is growing. This may be partly because the condition is now more widely recognised and diagnosed, and eligibility for support is therefore clearer. In Bracknell Forest the numbers of people eligible for social care, whose primary needs arise from their ASD have grown from 4 in December 2009 to 41 in April 2012.

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- 5.5. The approach to supporting individuals with ASD is through the use of personal budgets, which enables creativity.
- 5.6. A lot of support is focused on ending the social isolation that is often a feature of the lives of people with ASD. Some of this work is through supported social groups to build initial confidence and skills, or support to join mainstream clubs or associations: one individual has joined a conservation group to pursue a long-term interest.
- 5.7. Another area in which people often have difficulty is communication, and several people are paying to be involved in 'anime' which is a style of animation originating in Japan. Use of cartoons to create social stories is an accepted way of engaging with people with autism.
- 5.8. Others have used their allocation to engage in art and drama which is an aid to self expression and lowering anxiety levels

Other Progress to Date

- 5.9. The ASD Partnership Board has been established to monitor the implementation of the Joint Commissioning Strategy
- 5.10. A programme of public awareness-raising has been developed, and implementation is under way.
- 5.11. A program of awareness training for health and social care staff and other staff within the Council, has been developed and implementation is under way.
- 5.12. Specialist in-depth training has been commissioned and provided for the Autism Community Team.
- 5.13. In response to growth in demand following the launch of the strategy, resources have been reconfigured to respond.
- 5.14. A Berkshire wide working group has been established to review current practice and resources and develop an assessment / diagnosis pathway (Healthcare)
- 5.15. Specific advocacy arrangements have been commissioned for adults with autism. The advocacy provider, Just Advocacy in partnership with the Autism team, is developing a self-advocacy group for this group of people.
- 5.16. In partnership with Bracknell Mencap, the Council has funded Family Liaison Officers to support families of young people with autism as they approach adulthood, and families of adults with autism.
- 5.17. Individuals with Autism are being supported to attend more social opportunities and other groups. This will enable people to meet other people, and pursue a range of community activities together, and hopefully develop natural relationships / friendships and sustainable mutual support networks.
- 5.18. The Partnership Board has agreed a strategy to support people with autism into employment. Breakthrough, the Council's supported employment scheme, will deliver this service.

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- 5.19. Housing needs of people with autism are being identified and included in the Housing Strategy.
- 5.20. Funded through Adult Learning, Berkshire Autistic Society (BAS) have been commissioned to deliver very specialist courses which help people with autism to understand their condition, and how to manage it effectively. Understanding and managing the condition then helps people to overcome some of the difficulties they experience in interacting with others.
- 5.21. People with Autism now have the opportunity of carrying the Autism alert card, which can help to identify the kind of help and support people might need if they get into difficulties in the community. This was launched in partnership with the Berkshire Autistic Society.

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