

Equality Impact Assessment

Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed

Reading's Autism Strategy

Directorate: Directorate of Education, Adult Social Care and Children's Services (DEACS)

Service: Disability Service

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: Emily Hodges

Job Title: Project Manager

Date of assessment: 9th December 2014

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service?

The Autism Strategy sets out how Reading Borough Council will work with partners across health services, the voluntary and community sectors and people with autism and their families to support children, young people and adults with autism in the borough.

The Strategy is informed by a needs assessment and mapping exercise completed by Berkshire Autistic Society which included consultation with people with autism and their families and carers.

One of the main aims of the Strategy is to set out the local support for adults with autism that meets the requirements set out in the Think Autism Strategy, published by the Department of Health in 2014 as an update to the Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives Strategy. The parts of the Strategy addressing the support for children and young people with autism aligns with local work to implement the changes to Special Educational Needs legislation in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

The Strategy aims to improve support for all people with autism, whether their needs are high enough to be eligible for support from the Council or not, or if they have not yet received a formal diagnosis of their condition.

What outcomes will the change to achieve and for whom?

The Strategy has six priorities that it aims to achieve for people with autism and their families or carers:

1. Increasing awareness and understanding of autism
2. Improving access to diagnosis
3. Supporting better life outcomes for people with autism
4. Supporting people with autism to live safely and as independently as possible
5. Supporting families and carers of people with autism
6. Improving how we plan and manage support

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

- Children, young people and adults with autism
- The families and carers of people with autism
- Staff across Reading Borough Council services and partners such as education providers, health services and voluntary and community sector organisations who support people with autism

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others?

Yes No

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, feedback.

Yes No

If the answer is Yes to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

Impact of the Proposal

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts?		
Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
People with autism and their families and carers	Consultation exercise completed by Berkshire Autistic Society as part of the Needs Assessment	June 2013 - March 2014
Staff across Reading Borough Council services and partners such as education providers, health services and voluntary and community sector organisations who support people with autism	A multi-agency Autism Strategy Steering Group of key partners	Meetings held between June 2013 - March 2014
	Sharing the draft Strategy with key people for comments and input	April - October 2014

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups

No negative impact in terms of racial groups has been identified from this proposal. There is no evidence that autism spectrum conditions are more prevalent in different racial groups. The profile of RBC Adult Social Care clients with autism matches the profile of the borough as a whole, with 75% of clients from a white background.

The Strategy does not contain any actions that relate specifically to different racial groups, but will involve working with different communities as appropriate to deliver the aims of the Strategy - increasing awareness of autism across all racial groups for example.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)

The National Autistic Society presents research that five times as many males as females are diagnosed with autism. Developing and improving services for people

with autism may therefore impact on more males than females; however, no negative impact in terms of gender has been identified from this.

Research shows that autism is more likely to go undiagnosed for females than for males. Females with autism may benefit positively from the actions in the Strategy to increase awareness of autism and improve access to diagnosis services.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability

Although data on autism is limited, research estimates that around 50% of people with autism also have a learning disability. Of the 92 clients of Reading's Adult Social Care services recorded with a diagnosis of autism, 75 are also identified as having a learning disability (Autism Self-Assessment 2013). The Strategy aims to improve and develop the support available to all people with autism and should have a positive impact on people whether they have additional disability needs or not.

Autism is a spectrum condition that affects people in different ways and to different degrees. While some people with autism are assessed to have needs that meet the eligibility criteria for the Council's social care support, there are other people with autism that do not meet this threshold. The Strategy covers support for people with autism across the spectrum, with actions to meet the range of needs and that consider those accessing social care support and those with lower-level needs.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)

No negative impact in terms of sexual orientation has been identified from this proposal.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Age

No negative impact in terms of age has been identified from this proposal. The Strategy covers children, young people and adults with autism and contains some specific priorities for the different services and support available - however the overarching aims and priorities are consistent regardless of age.

The Strategy should have a positive impact on young people aged 14-25 years as one of the specific aims is to improve transitions between children and adult

services. The Strategy should also have a positive impact for older people as research shows they are more likely to not have a formal diagnosis of autism and the Strategy aims to improve access to diagnosis.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief

No negative impact in terms of religious belief has been identified from this proposal. The Strategy does not contain any actions that relate specifically to different religious beliefs, but services will respond to the needs of people and their families and communities as required - working with local faith groups, for example.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure

Decision

- 1. **No negative impact identified** Go to sign off

- 2. **Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**
You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.
Reason

- 3. **Negative impact identified or uncertain**
What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

An action plan that sets out the detail for implementing the areas of work identified in the Strategy will be developed across partners. Producing and monitoring the action plan will include work to ensure that there is no negative impact on different groups of people.

Signed (completing officer)

Date

Signed (Lead Officer)

Date