

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	21 OCTOBER 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	BRIEFING - UPDATE ON AUTISM BOARD		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR T JONES	PORTFOLIO :	DIRECTORATE OF ADULT CARE & HEALTH SERVICES
SERVICE:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	JON DICKINSON	TEL:	0118 937 4586
JOB TITLE:	DEPUTY DIRECTOR ASC	E-MAIL:	Jon.dickinson@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide assurance that the Autism Board is working with community partners in order to improve the lives of people in Reading with Autism.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the ACE Committee note that the Autism Board has reformed with a new Terms of Reference and focus on improved outcomes for people in Reading and their carers living with Autism.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 National Context:

- The Autism Act 2009 was the result of active public campaigning to ensure that there was a dedicated Act which put a strong national focus on improving support and services for people with Autism.
- The Act did two things. Firstly, it put a duty on Government to produce and regularly review an 'Autism Strategy' to meet the needs of adults with autism in England. The first strategy for Autism, *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives*, was published in 2010 and this was reviewed and refreshed as a new strategy, *Think Autism*, which was published in 2014.
- The impact of this has been felt nationally with councils having a designated mandate to lead the development of adult autism services along with improved diagnosis across the country.
- In 2018 the Government announced that the Autism Strategy would be extended to cover children in order that they could also receive the support that they need.

3.2 Local Context

In line with the national Autism Strategy, Reading recognised the benefit of renewing and re-energising this area of work and revised the Autism Board remit and local plan. It was also recognised that this work required renewed focus with the creation of the Children's Company and that young people and adults received the same commitment towards the future development of support in this critical area.

4. Current Position

4.1 Autism Board 2019:

- In April 2019 the Autism Board was launched with the inaugural meeting taking place in July 2019, ensuring that it reflected current thinking and policy with regard to Autism. The Board is chaired by a Manager from the Directorate of Social Care and Health.
- The Board is designed to drive forward the work of developing the Reading response to Autism. It will meet four times a year in order to inform the creation and implementation of an action plan to deliver the national Autism Strategy.
- The Board will seek to take feedback from and deliver plans to a number of different working groups. The Board will also aim to influence commissioners across the sector to develop improved services for children, young people and adults who may have Autism.
- The board itself will be inclusive, ensuring the active participation of a wide range of experts by experience, parents and carers.
- The board will constantly seek to raise awareness of Autism within the wider community and work to enable autistic people to be fully included in society.
- Renewed Terms of reference have been shared across the Board and membership was also revisited to ensure that there was good representation across the sector (See Appendix A) The inaugural board took place on 15th July 2019 with further diarised into 2020.

4.2 Current Workplan & Next Steps:

The aims of the Board were discussed at the first meeting and the current Terms of Reference subject to sign off show these as:

- To develop and agree the Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults with Autism
- To govern the implementation of the strategy to ensure its effectiveness and that it remains responsive to local need, national guidance and requirements
- Update the local offer regarding the outcomes for people and improvement of services
- To support and monitor progress of the development of services for people with autism and their families
- To provide advice to commissioners about the needs of the population with autism and ensure that commissioned services are needs led co-produced with children and adults with autism together with their supporting voluntary sector/parent organisations.

4.3 Identification of Issues

The next tranche of meetings will see the workplan evolve and start to shape the future programme. Some of the themes raised at the first meeting were:

- Pressure points across the Health Education and Social Care system
- Service Deficits or gaps in provision
- Developing a local strategy
- Neurodiversity - different strengths and challenges
- Ensuring Links with SEND / Family Services
- Celebrating good news stories and positive outcomes.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The formation of the Autism Board alongside key partners across the Health, Educational and Voluntary sector ensure that Strategic Aims set out in the Reading Borough Council Corporate Plan are met:

1. To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children
2. Ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading

5.2 Furthermore the following ambitions are realised through the action plan of the Board.

- *To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all*
- *Contributions to Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing of residents with autism.*

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Communities will be engaged through the work of the Board and the board could benefit from the representation of various community groups and people with lived experience of Autism to contribute towards the success of the board.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 It is not considered that an EIA is required for the decisions being made in this report. Any work that comes out of the Board will be considered separately should this be necessary.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no duties for the Local Authority in regard to the Autism Board other than the requirement to carry out / implement the government's 'Think Autism' Strategy on a local level.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no budget implications regarding the set up and running of the board. Better outcomes for people with Autism and their carers will have a positive impact on the Directorate's budget position.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives - Department of Health 2010*
Think Autism - Department of Health 2014

The Reading Autism Partnership Board

Terms of Reference

The Reading Autism Partnership Board is a consultative body of stakeholder representatives who are committed to improving the lives of people with Autism of all ages and their carers to enable them to lead fulfilling and rewarding lives.

Definitions

It is recognised that there are a number of different terms used to describe autism, for example, 'Autistic Spectrum Disorders' or 'Asperger Syndrome'. For consistency with the national strategy guidance, the term 'autism' will be used in the context of the Autism Partnership Board.

Aims

- To develop and agree the Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults with Autism
- To govern the implementation of the strategy to ensure its effectiveness and that it remains responsive to local need, national guidance and requirements
- Update local offer regarding the outcomes for people and improvement of services
- To support and monitor progress of the development of services for people with autism and their families
- To provide advice to commissioners about the needs of the population with autism and ensure that commissioned services are needs led co-produced with children and adults with autism together with their supporting voluntary sector/parent organisations.

Chair

Jo Purser - Locality Manager Adult Social Care

Board Members

- Chairing - RBC Locality Manager Adult Social Care
- Reading Families Forum
- Head of Snowflakes/Blessed Hugh Farringdon/Avenue
- Preparing for Adulthood - RBC
- Early years
- Reading College (Part of Activate)
- Voluntary sector
- RBC Adult Operational Team Rep
- RBC Public Health Rep
- BWCCG rep
- Reading Council Learning and Development Team

- Providers - Including an Advocacy service. (Need to Specify what type of 'Advocacy' here and if it is for children or adults or both)
- Brighter Futures for Children (Operational and Commissioning representatives)
- Adults Commissioning & Contracts
- Autism Adviser
- Individual with Autism
- Healthwatch
- BFFC head of SEN
- BFFT Clinical Psychology

Please note all members may not have to attend every meeting but should be invited if the agenda is relevant to them.

Other representatives may be invited to attend as appropriate to the work of the Board.

Members who cannot attend meetings of the Board should make this known in advance and where possible, organisations should send a suitable substitute (by prior arrangement).

Meetings

Meetings are held every quarter (4 meetings per year)