

## Annex A

# All Age Autism Strategy for York 2017-2021

## Introduction

This plan was written by The Autism All Age Strategy Board in consultation with York residents. It is really important that York has a plan around autism so that everyone can be involved in making York a more inclusive place to live and people with autism can get the help they need when they need it.

The Autism Strategy Board is made up of people from health and social care organisations, education, the police, charities, people with autism and their families and carers.

This plan is the first plan for people of all ages (children and adults) and it has been written by people with autism, their families, and lots of different professional organisations. It is for everyone with autism and those who support people with autism who live in York.

## What is Autism?

Different words are sometimes used to describe autism. Words like Asperger's syndrome, Autism Spectrum Condition, Autism Spectrum disorder and sometimes just Autism.

Autism is a spectrum condition, this means that everyone with autism is different.

Autism can be defined as:

“a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all autistic people share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some autistic people are able to live relatively independent lives but others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support. People on the autism spectrum may also experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Autistic Society, website definition, March 2016, <http://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx>

## The local picture

It is estimated that approximately 1% of the population has autism with the prevalence rate being higher in men than it is in women (1.8% versus 0.2%)<sup>2</sup>. Current thinking, however, is beginning to question this perceived gender split and querying whether there is a potential under diagnosis of autism in females. **The Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (2014)**<sup>3</sup> states “It has been suggested that assessments for autism may draw more on how the condition manifests in men, and this may lead to under identification of autism in women (Trubanova et al. 2014)”

It is estimated that 60-70% of people who have autism will also have a learning disability.<sup>4</sup>

There are estimated to be 1,635<sup>5</sup> adults with autism in York, either diagnosed or undiagnosed and 388<sup>6</sup>

For more detail about the local picture in York please read the Joint Strategy Needs Assessment for All Age Autism which sits alongside and informs this Strategy.

## Why do we need a strategy?

The Autism Act (2009) says what we need to do to make services better. It says people with autism may not always get what they need. This could be because services do not understand what they need or public places are not inclusive. It can also be difficult to find out if you have autism (a diagnosis).

A strategy is a plan. Every area in the country will have a plan. In York there were two plans for people with autism – one for children with autism and one for adults with autism. We decided to make a new plan for everyone with autism.

This plan is for the next four years – from 2017-2021

## Our Vision

Our vision is to make York an autism inclusive City where people with autism have the same opportunities as everyone else.

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<sup>2</sup> NHS Information Centre, *Estimating the Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Conditions in Adults: Extending the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey*, 2012

<sup>3</sup> *Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing*, England 2014, NHS Digital

<sup>4</sup> NHS Information Centre, *Estimating the Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Conditions in Adults: Extending the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey*, 2012

<sup>5</sup> Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information website (18-65) and Projecting Older People Population Information System website (65+), February 2016

<sup>6</sup> Estimate based on 2012 ONS census 0-17 population, York, assumed 1% prevalence.

We asked the Autism Strategy Board to think about what our key areas should be and then we asked people in York at an event in March 2016 to tell us what they thought.

The Autism Strategy Board thought the key six areas to look at are:

- ⇒ Assessment and diagnosis
- ⇒ Inclusive communities
- ⇒ Transitions
- ⇒ Training / education
- ⇒ Employment
- ⇒ Parent / Carer support

## Our Principles

Principles are the most important things that will help to make the plan work.

Our principles are:

- ✓ People with autism and their families and carers are at the centre of everything we do.
- ✓ Focus on people's strengths to overcome barriers.
- ✓ Guidance, information and support is easily available.
- ✓ The right support at the right time.
- ✓ Increased awareness of autism across the City.
- ✓ Living in your community and being included.

## Our Plan

We have worked hard to develop this all-age autism strategy in a joined up way which has included people with autism, their families and carers, the local authority, local providers and health colleagues. Autism can have an impact on so many areas of an individual's life that we needed to make sure the strategy reflected this.



To begin the process of writing a strategy that is meaningful to York we held an event in March 2016 where we talked about the six key areas and asked people to tell us:

- What works well
- What could work better
- What we need to do

## **Making our plan happen**

We need to make sure that our plan happens and that we make a difference. The Autism Strategy Board will make sure this happens. There will be working groups for each area which has to answer to the Board and let them know how the action plans are progressing. The people involved will have the experience and knowledge to help work on each of the tasks.

These six working groups have taken the feedback from our autism day in March 2016 and created a plan which has 3 sections which mirrors feedback from the day.

From these high level plans action plans have been formed which the working groups will make happen. These are not attached to the strategy as they are working documents which will be updated and changed as the work progresses. These are available for anyone to see on request.

# Assessment and diagnosis

## What works well

## What could work better

## What we need to do

Local diagnostic service



How people waiting for an appointment for assessment are given information about assessment and diagnosis.



Work with partner organisations to ensure good information is given and that the roles of different organisations is made clear.

More people being diagnosed and able to access to support whilst waiting for a diagnosis



Reduce the time spent waiting for an assessment.



Waiting times for assessments to be closer to NICE guidelines (3 months from date of referral by 2020).  
Healthy Child Programme, schools and early years settings to improve early identification of difficulties.

Local diagnostic service



How partner organisations work together to ensure the right information, advice and support for people who may have autism or have been diagnosed with autism



Improve ways of getting help, for example, speech and language, peer group support or education support as soon as concerns arise.  
Strengthen partnership working to deliver support after diagnosis that the person needs

# Parent / Carers

## What works well

## What could work better

## What we need to do

Tuke Centre  
Lime Trees  
Short Breaks



Access to Mental Health Services which are timely and appropriate.



Access to Mental Health Services which are timely and appropriate.

ASCEND course for parents.



More training for parents.



To widen training methods and opportunities.

Peer support / voluntary sector / local support groups which help to direct to relevant services.



Accessible information that is easy to find.



Develop co-ordinated information that is easily available.

# Training and education

## What works well

Autism specific classes at special schools.  
Enhanced Resourced Provisions (ERPs) at two secondary schools.  
Specialist Teaching Team for autism support in mainstream schools.  
ASCEND parent course.



## What could work better

ERPs in primary schools.  
More autism awareness in mainstream schools.  
Peer awareness in education and training settings.  
Reduced waiting time to attend ASCEND course.



## What we need to do

Increase autism awareness training offer to schools.  
Open two new primary ERPs.  
Offer alternative educational provision for young people who cannot access mainstream school.  
Offer more frequent ASCEND or other Parent training courses.

Specific training providers from Post 16.  
Connexions.



Specialist training packages working with local employers, including the police.  
Increased awareness for some providers.  
Improving the learning environment – more autism friendly.



Specialist training package for employers / police.  
Have a designated point of contact with the local police who is autism aware.  
Develop peoples understanding of sensory and environmental factors for people with autism.

Some individual work placements.



More post 16 work placements.  
More mentoring (adapted for people with autism).  
More bespoke training for individuals.



develop supported internships.  
Focus on specific strengths of people with autism and develop opportunities in these areas of work.

# Inclusive Communities

## What works well

## What could work better

## What we need to do

Some good activities and reasonable adjustments have been made across York.

For example, autism friendly cinema screening



More choice of activities across the City, including non specialist places.

For example, libraries, restaurants, shops, GP surgeries.



Make everyone aware, involve a broad base of parties signing up to initiatives.

Peer support groups.

For example, Aspire



Groups for different ages / abilities / interests.



Work with groups to help facilitate group start ups.

Public awareness – people in the community would like to help.



Increase public awareness in the community.



Joint working, creating specific initiatives, use ideas from other initiatives.



# Transitions

## What works well

## What could work better

## What we need to do

Transition from Primary to secondary is effective and managed well



Part of the 0-25 agenda would suggest that commissioning support across this age range or at least 14-25 would reduce the number of changes with a parallel reduction in stress and anxiety for all concerned



To discuss with those who commission support to see if this can be extended

Early intervention, introduction days, meeting staff prior to transition, having a detailed plan



Specialist Autism workers within our Community Support/Community Short Breaks teams /Work with York



To discuss with Work with York and other providers.

Applefields transition team on site to assist post school provision



A wider knowledge of existing Autism provision within schools/education/community. There is a lot of provision but not a lot of knowledge



To scope the current provision including the support that is given outside the specialist sector

To have an Autism Map of York 0-100 which indicates where good support exists and where the gaps are. This would help with planning any type of Transition

# Employment

## What works well

## What could work better

## What we need to do

Supported Employment Schemes including Work Choice and Access to Work



Raise awareness of existing schemes in the community and businesses.  
Increase access to supported employment schemes/providers  
Promote Work Choice and Access to Work for people with autism to help them find employment.  
Use Access to work grants regularly.



Ensure schemes are reviewed so that outcomes are transparent to service users and providers are aware of funds available  
Need to identify jobseekers with autism  
Promote the possibility of work at every opportunity for people with autism and their support groups.

Connexions (Careers Advice)



Young people from Y9 need information about future employment opportunities which is broader than now.  
Connexions links with DWP and Scheme providers/Employers



Identify clear and realistic pathways to work  
Participate in careers / jobs fairs

Working in partnership



Employing people with autism.  
Trade Union and other local partners' involvement and support.  
Transition from education to work includes advice on careers, jobsearch, work benefits and opportunities.



Increase links with business organisations locally.  
Encourage local organisations to make their workplaces autism-friendly, identifying progress and future actions.



## Appendix one: what words mean

City of York Council	is the local authority in York which manages social care and other Public Services.
Clinical Commissioning Group	is a group of doctors and other health professionals who decide what local health services to spend money on.
Diagnosis	is when the symptoms or problems you are having are recognised as being caused by a known illness or condition.
Public Services	are services provided for local people by the council. This includes things like buses, bin collection and traffic wardens.
Priorities	are the things that you must do first because they are the most important.
Transition	a word used to describe when something changes, like when a child grows up into an adult.