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## **Derbyshire Joint Health and Social Care All Age Autism Strategy 2023-2028**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Health and Wellbeing Board and member organisations' endorsement of and support for the new Joint Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care All Age Autism Strategy. Derby City Council has approved and confirmed it will sign up to the Strategy and commends the Strategy to the Board. A final (sign-off) draft of the Strategy is attached at appendix A.
- 1.2 It is estimated in the UK that more than 1 in 100 people are living with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), who face significant health and social inequalities.
- 1.3 The Strategy sets out the work done to date and local aspirations and priorities over the next five years.

### **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board and its member organisations join the City Council in endorsing and confirming their support for the new Strategy.
- 2.2 That the Board receive updates on progress to deliver the Strategy, as appropriate.

### **Reasons**

- 3.1 It is a statutory requirement for the Derby City Council to have an Autism Strategy in place. The new Strategy meets this requirement.
- 3.2 To meet the aims and outcomes of the Strategy there needs to be endorsement and commitment to its delivery, including to raising awareness and to take action, from Health and Wellbeing Board partners.

### **Background**

#### National Context

- 4.1 In 2021 the new National All-Age Autism Strategy was published, replacing the *Think Autism* strategy for adults. The Strategy is a key tool for delivering the 2009 Autism Act. The development of a full, co-produced strategy was constrained due to

the Covid pandemic, so the Government approved this as an interim strategy, which they expect to revisit.

- 4.2 The aim of the national strategy is to improve support for autistic people, those waiting assessment and their families and carers, through collaborative working with all government departments, the health and social care sector and voluntary and community organisations.
- 4.3 Previous autism strategies have been adult only and a key development in the new national strategy is that it *"extends the scope of the strategy to children and young people for the first time, in recognition of the importance of ensuring that they are diagnosed and receive the right support as early as possible and across their lifetime."*

#### Local Strategy

- 4.4 Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCD) has been leading on the new local Autism Strategy, with the aim of having a strategy and priorities for Derby and Derbyshire that align both to the national agenda, and the needs of local autistic people.
- 4.5 JUCD partners have agreed that autistic people of all ages, genders, ethnicities and backgrounds in Derby and Derbyshire must have the opportunity to lead healthy and fulfilling lives however that might look for them. It is important for autistic people to feel empowered and to be able to lead the lives they want. This includes feeling part of their local community, being able to access everyday services easily and to receive any specialist support they may require. The ambition is for Derby and Derbyshire to be a safe and inclusive space for everyone, including people who are autistic.
- 4.6 Since the last Joint Derby and Derbyshire Autism Strategy was published in 2017, progress has been made to improve the lives of local autistic people, including planning, services, support, and outcomes (see below), but much more needs to be changed and improved. As with the national strategy, the Covid-19 pandemic delayed work to develop the new local Strategy. The 2017-20 Strategy was refreshed and carried forward until a new Strategy could be properly co-produced.

#### What is autism?

- 4.7 Autism can be defined as a range of conditions (from autism to Asperger's syndrome) characterised by difficulties in social interaction and communication and by restricted or repetitive patterns of thought and behaviours. It is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to other people, wider society, and their environment. It also affects how people 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.
- 4.8 Some autistic people live relatively independent lives, but others may need a lifetime of specialist support. People on the autism spectrum may also experience over or under sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light and/or colours. ASCs are strongly associated with a number of coexisting conditions including learning disabilities and physical and mental health conditions that may impact on the wellbeing of individuals and their families.

- 4.9 It is estimated in the UK that more than 1 in 100 people are living with an ASC. This means that around **8700** people in Derby and Derbyshire are autistic. It is estimated that by 2030, 1566 people in Derby City will have a diagnosis of autism, and 4734 in Derbyshire.
- 4.10 It needs to be recognised that every autistic person is different, and the care and support available for autistic people and their families' needs to improve. JUCD aims to deliver preventative and flexible support provided in local communities across Derbyshire. The actions we will be undertaking over the next six years, as outlined in the Strategy, aim to make a difference and help autistic people across Derbyshire lead the lives that they deserve.

#### Derby and Derbyshire Autism Strategy

- 4.11 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on autistic people due to the restrictions this placed on their everyday lives, particularly in relation to accessing services. This has had a significant negative impact on our and JUCD partners' ability to meet our pledges in the previous strategy, in particular to make improvements to autism diagnostic assessment waiting times. The plan is to carry this ambition forward in the new Strategy, to give people timely access to autism diagnostic assessments, and to keep people fully informed of the process and associated timescales. Whilst we have made significant achievements (see below), there are some areas where we have not performed as well as. This has informed the priorities and the developing action plan for the new Strategy.

#### Achievements from the 2017-2020 Autism Strategy

- 4.12 There have been a number of achievements from the 2017-20 Derby and Derbyshire Autism Strategy, set out below.
- 4.13 The 2017-2020 pledge primarily focused on 'enabling people to live well'. Great steps were taken to improve the information and advice available to people. Through the commissioning of a new City and County Autism Information and Advice Service, there is now a single point of access for information and advice.
- 4.14 An autism training task and finish group was set up to map out existing autism training provision across Derby and Derbyshire and understand where the gaps in training were. Areas for further development were identified, including better targeted training provision for organisations delivering crisis support, and clarity regarding the availability of access to good training for people supporting autistic children and young people. Locally we participated in the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training Pilot which is now being rolled out across England.
- 4.15 Citizen's Advice Mid Mercia (CAMM) facilitate an Autism Alliance, on behalf of JUCD, where members of the Autistic community, family, friends, carers and professionals can come together to share their experiences of ASC and feed into the development of autism services in Derby and Derbyshire. The Alliance meets monthly and is open to all to attend. We have a new VCSE "Lead Organisation", which is also a role carried out by CAMM and alongside this have created the lead organisation facilitated Community of Practice for VCSE organisations working with autistic people.

- 4.16 Autistic people across Derby and Derbyshire have access to support via the Brain in Hand app that helps support their independence.
- 4.17 Following the publication of younger adult and specialist accommodation and support strategies, there is now increased provision of accommodation, care, and support for autistic people throughout Derbyshire including in Derby City, Chesterfield and Alfreton, and soon to include Swadlincote and Ilkeston.
- 4.18 We also commissioned new services to increase independence and empowerment through the Living Well with Autism service, Derbyshire Autism Services (DAS) and a new Day Services Framework. All have increased support to help people live the life they want in their community with knowledge and skills to enable them to build personal resilience and a strong support network. These are the currently commissioned services, but we also support other VCSE partners.
- 4.19 With a growth in membership of Experts by Experience (EBE) who attend the Autism Partnership Board (APB) meetings and following concerns that people with lived experience did not feel heard at the APB, agreement was reached to establish a separate EBE meeting prior to each main APB meeting. This offers a safe space for autistic people and their carers/families only to discuss issues, topics and concerns they would like raised at the main APB. It ensures that the voice of autistic people is much better heard and represented.
- 4.20 Locally there is evidence that businesses are working towards being more Autism Inclusive. This includes opportunities for low stimulus environments, reasonable adjustments, and improved awareness, for example relaxed film screenings at the Quad. Also, a specialist Autism Team has been created in the NHS.

#### *The New Strategy*

- 4.21 The new Joint Derby and Derbyshire Autism Strategy (see appendix A) has been coproduced with a wide range of people, including JUCD partners in particular City and County Councils and Health, plus autistic people and their families, and people working in services and organisations that support autistic people. There are five key aims of the new strategy:

##### *1) Providing earlier diagnoses*

In line with the new all age strategy we are committed to work towards improving waiting times for a diagnosis, with a focus on children's diagnosis and ensuring those on the waiting list can receive support earlier.

##### *2) Increased preventative services*

We are committed to increasing the offer of preventative services in Derby and Derbyshire, both pre and post diagnosis. If we can ensure an early diagnosis for example, we can reach and help people earlier. The earlier a good foundation and support can be set up for an autistic person, the more likely we are to support their resilience and independence and prevent them reaching crisis point.

*3) Having a stronger professional peer support offer*

We are committed to improving the peer support available locally and increasing the role of experienced and knowledgeable autistic people who wish to deliver peer support services.

*4) Increasing meaningful employment opportunities*

We are committing to ensuring more autistic people are employed and have a more active role in Derby and Derbyshire's workforce.

*5) Delivering training that goes beyond awareness raising*

We are committing to widening our autism training offer to deliver more targeted and specific training.

## **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 The local Strategy has been coproduced with a wide range of people, including autistic people and their families and people working in services and organisations that support autistic people.
- 5.2 This Strategy is a product of a programme of engagement and coproduction including:
- Three system-wide workshops involving experts by experience, including autistic individuals, and professionals from across the system, to plan and develop the approach to producing the Strategy.
  - Monthly task and finish workshops for each of the five priorities of the Strategy, made up of a group of experts by experience autistic individuals, and professionals, coming together to discuss and feedback on the five priorities.
  - A comprehensive review of achievements during the 2017-2020 Autism Strategy period, for Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council and voluntary and community sector organisations operating in Derby and Derbyshire. Areas for local focus during the next Autism Strategy period, 2023-2028 were also identified.
  - Listening to the voices of autistic people through their health and social care assessments, hearing about their experiences and acknowledging their future needs and wishes.
  - The Derby and Derbyshire Autism Partnership Board (APB) which meets monthly and feeds back to the Health and Wellbeing Board, made up of experts by experience including autistic individuals, their friends, families, and carers, professionals, and support organisations.
  - An APB Experts by Experience Advisory Subgroup which ensures that the voices of autistic people and their families and carers are better heard and have greater influence within the main APB.

## **Other options**

- 6.1 It is a legal requirement for us to have a local autism strategy, so not doing so was not considered as an option.
- 6.2 It could have been an option to have a Derby City-only Autism Strategy. However, we agreed with JUCD system partners that we should continue to work at a system level, to ensure a more consistent and joined up approach for the people that we are trying to help.

## **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 No funding is specifically attached to the Autism Strategy so will largely be based on service development and transformation within existing budgets from across JUCD partners. Types of activities where resources from multiple partner resources will be needed include:
  - Training and education – resources and staffing to deliver training and awareness raising.
  - Strategic, commissioning, operational care, and accommodation support - to ensure that individuals can live as independently as possible in homes suitable for their situation.
  - Crisis care - to ensure that autistic individuals are prevented from reaching crisis with the right support available at the earliest opportunity when needed.
- 7.2 The financial benefits from delivery of the strategy will be derived by helping people to live better lives, in their local communities, which should mean there will be less need for taxpayer expenditure on care and support.
- 7.3 Any additional staff or funding resources to support activities under the strategy will need to be the subject of future business cases across the JUCD System.

## **Legal implications**

- 8.1 It is a legal requirement to have the strategy in place under the Autism Act 2009.

## **Climate implications**

- 9.1 Not applicable

## **Socio-Economic implications**

- 10.1 Autistic people face discrimination, social and economic, financial inequality, and exclusion from society. The Strategy directly addresses these issues and should therefore have a positive impact on social and financial resilience and sustainability of people and the inclusion of this cohort of people within society.

- 10.2 Delivering the Strategy should help to provide better access to assessment and support, meaning that people will have the opportunity to become more independent and less reliant on services.

### Other significant implications

- 11.1 In endorsing and supporting the Joint Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care All Age Autism Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Board and its member organisations will be committing to delivering the Strategy vision, aims and goals and will be held to account by the APB, amongst others, as per the intention of the 2009 Autism Act.

**This report has been approved by the following people:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b>	Olu Idowu.	31/01/2023
<b>Finance</b>	Janice Hadfield	31/01/2023
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Kirsty McMillan	23/02/2023
<b>Report sponsor</b>	Kirsty McMillan	23/02/2023
<b><u>Other(s)</u></b>		
<b>ICB</b>	James Lewis	04/01/2023

#### **Background papers:**

- [National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026](#)

#### **List of appendices**

- A. Derby and Derbyshire Joint All age Autism Strategy 2023-2028