

Adult Autism Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 11 March 2015

Author: Director of Public Health

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to inform the Health and Wellbeing Board of the findings of the Adult Autism Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA); seek support for its recommendations; and raise awareness of the need to support work to enable all adults in Swindon with autism to live fulfilling and rewarding lives and have access to the right support at the right time during their lifetime.
 - 1.2 The Adult Autism JSNA (attached at Appendix 1) uses available local and national data to describe the current picture with regard to adult autism (age 18 and over) in Swindon. It provides a summary of the estimated number of people with autism in Swindon; information about support and services available; and findings from consultation undertaken to learn about the experiences of people with autism living in Swindon.
 - 1.3 The findings from the JSNA inform a suite of recommendations that aim to support all adults in Swindon with autism to live fulfilling and rewarding lives and have access to the right support at the right time during their lifetime.
 - 1.4 The JSNA focusses on adult autism. It should be noted that autism affects adults and children and the needs of adults with autism may be significantly influenced by their experiences within education and children's services. The needs of children and young people with autism will be considered in the planned needs assessment for children and young people with complex needs. There are important links between these work streams, particularly regarding transition.
 - 1.5 Autism is a national priority. In 2009 the Autism Act made provision for meeting the needs of adults with autistic spectrum conditions. The publication of a national autism strategy '*Fulfilling and rewarding lives: the strategy for adults with autism in England*' followed in 2010 together with statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the autism strategy.
 - 1.6 An update to the strategy '*Think Autism Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with autism in England*' was published in April 2014 and will be supported by new statutory guidance. These updates build on rather than replace the themes of the 2010 strategy.
 - 1.7 The clear vision is that:
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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Cherry Jones, 01793 444681, cherryjones@swindon.gov.uk.

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“All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them makes the most of their talents.”

- 1.8 The requirements set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 will provide new protections for children and young people up to the age of 25 with special educational needs including autism.

2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note and agree the recommendations from the Adult Autism JSNA Bulletin (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Support the development of an Adult Autism Strategy for Swindon in line with national policy, statutory guidance and local need identified through this JSNA. Strategy to be led by the Swindon Autism Partnership Board.

3. Detail

Findings

- 3.1 Autism occurs early in a person's development. Autism affects the way a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. It affects people in different ways; some can live independently without any additional support, while others require a lifetime of specialist care.
- 3.2 The latest prevalence studies of autism indicate that 1.1% of the population in the UK may have autism. When applied to Swindon Borough Council's mid 2013 estimated population (214,000) this equates to just over 2,300 people (adults and children) in Swindon.
- 3.3 Autism is neither a learning disability nor a mental health problem, although mental health problems are more common among people with autism (44% of respondents to a local survey undertaken for this JSNA reported mental health problems) and it is estimated that one in three of adults with a learning disability also have autism which equates to approximately 1,200 people in Swindon.
- 3.4 The JSNA found that there is a range of excellent services and sources of support available to people with autism and their carers in Swindon including those provided by health and social care and the community and voluntary sector. However, consultation with local service users highlighted significant unmet need for support; just 34% of survey respondents felt they had enough support to meet their needs. Frequently reported unmet needs included more

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social activities; relationship advice and counselling; employment support; information and advice about issues such as benefits; and better support and information for carers. Respondents also felt that health and social care staff understanding of autism could be improved.

- 3.5 The JSNA makes 10 recommendations for future work to improve lives of people with autism in Swindon. These are to:
- 3.5.1 Develop an Adult Autism Strategy for Swindon to include action on these recommendations as well as national strategy and statutory guidance.
 - 3.5.2 Ensure that the Swindon Autism Partnership Board has clear Terms of Reference and a work plan informed by Swindon's Adult Autism Strategy and local priorities identified by this JSNA. The Board should include people from across the autism spectrum and their carers, as well as partners from all agencies in Swindon required to deliver the work plan.
 - 3.5.3 Ensure that the right support for people with autism is available at the right time during their life time. This should include good transition support for young people with autism moving to adult services, and that the changing needs of people with autism are planned for as they grow older.
 - 3.5.4 Work with community and voluntary sector partners to promote access to "lower level" local preventative support and activities that enable people with autism to be connected with peers and local community groups.
 - 3.5.5 Ensure that the information about support services in Swindon available to people with autism is up-to-date and accessible in a way that is appropriate and identifiable. This includes maintaining the Autism Directory of Services and ensuring information is easily accessible on the Swindon My Care, My Support website.
 - 3.5.6 Ensure that autism awareness training is available to all frontline staff so that they are able to identify potential signs of autism and understand how to make reasonable adjustments in their behaviour and communication. This may be as part of equality and diversity training. In addition ensure plans are in place to provide specialist training for those in roles that have a direct impact on access to services for adults with autism.
 - 3.5.7 Ensure that GPs, as the gatekeepers to diagnostic services, have adequate training and information available so that they have a good understanding of the whole autistic spectrum and the local diagnostic pathway and how to refer.
 - 3.5.8 Work towards achieving NICE best practice for access to diagnostic services; where people seeking an autism diagnosis have a first

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appointment within 3 months of their referral as set out in the NICE Quality Standard on autism [QS51].

3.5.9 Work with all local service providers to develop and improve methods of data collection to ensure that the numbers of people with autism in their area of responsibility are appropriately recorded and analysed, and information about need (health, social care, education, employment, housing) is captured. Commissioners and service providers should use this information to develop and improve services.

3.5.10 Work with local employers, colleges and support services to ensure that there are employment opportunities for people with autism in Swindon and that appropriate support is available to help people with autism to find and keep a job.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 Not to support the recommendations identified in the JSNA.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no financial or procurement implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.2 If additional resources are needed to implement these recommendations a detailed business case will be developed.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.3 Legal and Human rights have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations within this report are compatible with Convention Rights.

5.4 In consideration of any future guidance and an understanding of best practice from elsewhere, the council will work with the NHS and other partners in order to ensure that equalities and a respect for human rights are at the heart of the development of the Swindon JSNA and that everyone in Swindon has fair access to services and are free from discrimination.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.5 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to support the development of an Adult Autism Strategy for Swindon in line with national policy, statutory guidance and local need identified through this JSNA. This strategy would be led by the

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existing Swindon Autism Partnership Board. Ensuring good governance of this group will form part of strategy development.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.6 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed at this stage but will be part of strategy development.

Risk Management

- 5.7 No specific risks identified at this stage for this report.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) have been consulted in respect of this report.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Survey Results - Swindon Autism Survey 2014.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Swindon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Adult Autism Bulletin.