

Open Report on behalf of Glen Garrod, Director of Adult Care

Report to:	Executive
Date:	03 February 2015
Subject:	All-Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire 2015 - 2018
Decision Reference:	I008262
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

As a proactive development Adult Care and Children's Services, alongside the Lincolnshire Autism Partnership Board and other key stakeholders, have worked together to develop a joint strategy for Lincolnshire for people with autism of all ages.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out the strategic direction to ensure that people with autism in Lincolnshire are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within autism-friendly communities that understand their needs and make reasonable adjustments, so that there is access to and support from mainstream public services and wider community networks.

The draft All-Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire 2015 - 2018 has been produced following extensive consultation and engagement activity carried out during 2013 and 2014 with people with lived experience of autism, family members and carers, and multi-agency key stakeholders in Lincolnshire.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive:

1. Approve the draft All-Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire 2015 - 2018 attached at Appendix A to this report.
2. Agree that the Lincolnshire Autism Partnership Board will monitor and oversee the delivery of the strategy and action plan.

Alternatives Considered:

1. Nationally the Government has introduced an adults only autism strategy and an option was to follow suit for Lincolnshire.

Reasons for Recommendation:

There is no autism strategy currently in existence for people in Lincolnshire.

Health and social care partners, alongside people with lived experience of autism, their carers and other key stakeholders consider that a strategy is essential to provide a strategic framework to develop autism services and improve the lives of people with autism in Lincolnshire.

1. Background

1.1 National Strategy

Fulfilling and rewarding lives, the Government's strategy for adults with autism in England, was published in 2010 with the following key aims;

- To help adults with autism to access the services they need easily and free of discrimination
- To improve diagnosis
- To increase awareness of autism across health, care and community services

A recent refresh of the national strategy, *Think Autism*, was published in 2014 and puts a focus on the need for more autism-friendly communities.

1.2 What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong condition which can be very disabling. It is a spectrum disorder, which means everyone that has autism experiences it differently and is affected in different ways. There are some things that all people who have an autism spectrum disorder will have difficulties with, which include:

- Social Communication
- Social Interaction
- Social Imagination

People with an autism spectrum disorder often experience sensory difficulties such as over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours. It is also more likely that people who have an autism spectrum disorder will experience higher levels of stress than someone who does not have an autism spectrum disorder. This makes mental health problems more likely.

Many people with an autism spectrum disorder are able to live independent lives. Others may need some support or to access services to achieve their full potential. It is common to have accompanying learning disabilities and whilst with reasonable adjustments many people can access mainstream services, some people will require specialist support.

A study cited by the National Autistic Society suggests there are over 700,000 people in the UK with autism – more than 1 in 100 individuals. It is estimated that nearly 6,000 people in Lincolnshire have an autism spectrum disorder, a figure which is predicted to increase. By including people such as family members, carers, friends, professionals in health, social care and education, and other members of the community, the numbers affected by an autism spectrum disorder are much greater.

1.3 Lincolnshire's Approach

The Lincolnshire Autism Partnership was formed in 2010, following the publication of the national strategy, *Fulfilling and rewarding lives*. It was set up to advise on all aspects of implementation associated with national and local autism policy and is made up of people with autism, carers, representatives of community and voluntary groups and professionals from the statutory sectors.

In line with the national strategy, the original intention was to produce an adults' autism strategy for Lincolnshire and a 3-month public consultation was conducted in 2013 in order to help inform its development.

Having comprehensively evaluated all of the feedback from the consultation, a number of key themes arose. One area which received repeated discussion and focus was the transition from children's to adults' services. We recognise that transition is often a very difficult time for individuals with an autism spectrum disorder and as such it is critical that improvements are made to enable a more seamless service so that individuals feel sufficiently supported through the transition from children and young people to adult services.

With this in mind Lincolnshire took the proactive decision to develop an all-age autism strategy. A further engagement process commenced in 2014 conducted by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi), which additionally incorporated themes and key stakeholders representing children and young people, as well as adults.

In addition, an independent review of the services in Lincolnshire for individuals with autism was jointly commissioned by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and the Children's Services directorate management team during 2014. The aim of this review, which was undertaken by the National Autistic Society, was to review the way in which agencies in Lincolnshire respond to children and young people who have autism. This review included a wide range of consultation with services, individuals with lived experience and carers, and the recommendations from the review have been incorporated within this draft strategy.

1.4 Our Vision

The national strategy for adults with autism, *Fulfilling and rewarding lives*, sets out the Government's overarching vision;

‘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 make the most of their talents.’

The vision for Lincolnshire expands on the national vision by incorporating the need to achieve fulfilling and rewarding lives for people with autism of all ages. We want to build the capacity and understanding of our community and services to deliver the best possible experience for people living with autism and to enable them to fulfil their potential as local citizens.

Our vision is for a strategic model that has the lives of people living with autism and their family/carers at its heart. It takes into account common life events and domains, and the life journey from cradle to the grave, providing a set of clear points of possible support and intervention to help prevent problems and damaging crises, or to reduce the impact of the crisis if it cannot be avoided. It is a model that recognises everyone's fundamental needs, rights and aspirations.

1.5 Strategic Principles

The draft Strategy itself incorporates a proposal for 8 Strategic Principles that underpin the development and model for the Strategy. These are as follows;

- Equalities-based
- Reflects parity of esteem
- Strengths-based
- Person-centred
- Proactive and preventive
- Safe
- Local, mainstream and inclusive
- Ambitious but sustainable

The consultation of 2013 and the engagement process completed in 2014 with people with lived experience of autism and other stakeholders have highlighted key issues and emerging themes. This has resulted in the development of building blocks for action, which incorporate all of these themes, many of which are overlapping and have things in common, and will inform how and what we deliver locally for our citizens living with autism.

An action plan has been developed, which incorporates four key working groups to deliver the Autism Strategy, and has underpinning measurable objectives. It will be overseen by the Lincolnshire Autism Partnership Board, which will take a leadership role and be accountable for the delivery of the plan. Work is being undertaken to develop and strengthen the Lincolnshire Autism Partnership, including a review of the membership, to ensure that it is fit to meet this purpose.

1.6 Draft Strategy Consultation

As detailed earlier in this report, a 3-month public consultation was conducted in 2013, along with a series of engagement activities during the 2014. Additionally,

the independent review of autism services for children and young people in Lincolnshire, produced by the National Autistic Society, included a wide range of consultation with services, individuals with lived experience and carers. The feedback gathered from these exercises has been used to inform the draft strategy that has been developed.

Following the production of the draft All-Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire, a further consultation process commenced in early November 2014 to review the document and ensure that the strategy reflected the views and comments received through the consultation and engagement processes previously undertaken.

The draft strategy was made available to the public via the LCC website and an online questionnaire provided the opportunity for individuals to respond on the proposed 8 Strategic Principles and building blocks for action. Information was also circulated to all members of the Lincolnshire Autism Partnership, along with stakeholders who had participated in engagement events held during Spring/Summer 2014.

As part of the process, the draft strategy was presented to a number of key stakeholders from health, social care and partner organisations for review and comment at the following meetings:

- Adult Care Executive Departmental Management Team
- Children's Services Departmental Management Team
- Specialist Adult Services Delivery Board
- Women and Children's Delivery Board
- Joint Commissioning Board
- Corporate Management Board
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Children and Young People Strategic Partnership
- Lincolnshire Children Safeguarding Board
- South West Lincolnshire CCG Governing Body
- East Lincolnshire CCG Governing Body
- West Lincolnshire CCG Executive Committee
- West Lincolnshire CCG Governing Body
- South Lincolnshire CCG Clinical Committee
- South Lincolnshire CCG Governing Body

The consultation concluded on 19 December 2014 and all feedback has been reviewed and, where necessary, the strategy has been amended accordingly.

1.7 Legal Implications

In 2010 the Government published the Adult Autism Strategy *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives* and the statutory guidance that supported it. Following the release of *Think Autism* in 2014, which refreshed the national strategy, proposed revisions to the autism statutory guidance were submitted for consultation. This revised draft statutory guidance sets a clear direction for how health and social care can continue to implement the national autism strategy and to further improve

mainstream services to accelerate progress towards the vision of fulfilled and rewarding lives for people with autism.

The consultation on the draft statutory guidance ran from 7 November 2014 to 19 December 2014. In liaison with members of the Lincolnshire Autism Partnership, Commissioning Officers from both Lincolnshire County Council and the four CCG's in Lincolnshire have submitted a response to the consultation. In developing the All Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire the contents of the revised statutory guidance have been taken into account to ensure that we comply with all necessary requirements.

The Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 needs to be taken into account when coming to a decision.

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: Equality Act 2010 section 149(1). The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149(7).

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

- Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

This duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

In considering the Council's duty, an Impact Analysis was undertaken on the production of the autism strategy to address the potential for negative impact under each protected characteristic. This is a live document and will be amended as appropriate as the strategy and action plan is delivered.

The Impact Analysis identifies the following possible adverse effects on people with different protected characteristics are impacted differently:

- Failure of the strategy to deliver improved opportunities for people with autism
- Lack of resources or other factors may limit access to services
- Failure of the strategy to provide autism awareness training to health and social care staff
- People with multiple disabilities, including autism, might be disadvantaged if diagnostic services change
- Failure to diagnose at an early or appropriate time might have a negative effect on the individuals mental health or other aspects of their physical health

The strategy as such covers all individuals with autism regardless of their protected characteristic. It is clear, however, that the delivery of services to meet the needs of people with autism will have to be sensitive to the requirements of people with different protected characteristics. As the Action Plan is developed and moves towards delivery the Equality Act duties will be taken into account in the design of services.

Lincolnshire's Child Poverty Strategy is based on four strategic themes. This will provide the foundation for tackling child poverty and improving life chances of children, young people and their families in Lincolnshire:

- Economic poverty
- Poverty of access
- Poverty of aspiration
- Best use of resources

The All Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire does not directly address the issues of child poverty and contains no elements that would conflict with the child poverty strategy.

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The strategy addresses the need to raise awareness of autism and improve the diagnostic pathway. It also makes clear the need for better data recording and reporting processes. All improvements in data quality will assist needs analysis work, which will inform the JSNA.

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Lincolnshire 2013 – 2018 aims to inform and influence decisions about health and social care services in Lincolnshire so that they are focused on the health and wellbeing needs of people in our county.

There are five main themes, with an additional theme of 'mental health' running throughout the document:

- Promoting healthier lifestyles
- Improve health and wellbeing of older people
- Delivering high quality systematic care for major causes of ill health and disability
- Improve health and social outcomes for children and reduce inequalities
- Tackling the social determinants of health

The key themes incorporated within the autism strategy align with and are consistent with many of the themes and cross-cutting issues running through the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Lincolnshire.

There is an emphasis on ensuring that appropriate support is provided to people with autism and that accessibility to mainstream public services and all aspects of community life is available. This social inclusion will aid the development of healthier lifestyles for those people living with autism. Improvements in service provision will be developed, including a fundamental review of the pre and post diagnostic pathways, to ensure that high quality systematic care is delivered. The implementation of autism-friendly communities through increasing public awareness and understanding of autism will help promote equality for those people who have the condition. The proposed strategy also aims to address and include the needs of families and carers of people with autism, who need to have appropriate support themselves to provide the crucial role they undertake.

There are two other significant national policy drivers that affect the lives of children and adults with autism:

- The Children and Families Act (2014) introduces a system of support for children and young people with special educational needs from 0-25, focusing on outcomes, engagement and participation of parents and young people, joint commissioning, coordinated Education Health and Care (EHC) plans and personalisation
- The Care Act (2014) includes Local Authorities' duty to assess and address the needs of adults in need of care and support (including those transitioning from children's services) and their carers, promote wellbeing and provide preventative support, integration with NHS and information.

2. Conclusion

The vision for the All-Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire is ambitious. It challenges us to work together in partnership as commissioners and providers across a number of agencies in statutory and non-statutory services, with people and their families living with autism and with our community at large.

The strategy was developed through consultation, engagement and sharing ideas and experiences with key people in services and communities: commissioners and providers from health, social care, education, criminal justice, housing, employment and other care services in the statutory and voluntary sector. This process has highlighted the key issues that form the basis of the strategy and the approach has been underpinned by the eight strategic principles.

We have translated the key themes into a local offer and a clear action plan. The action plan incorporates four key strategic programmes to deliver the Autism Strategy, and has underpinning measurable objectives. It will be overseen by the Lincolnshire Autism Partnership Board, which will take a leadership role and be accountable for the delivery of the plan.

Subject to agreement, it is expected that the All-Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire 2015 – 2018 will be formally launched in the spring of 2015.

3. Legal Comments:

The Council has the power to adopt the proposed strategy. The report contains assurance that it has been developed by reference to statutory guidance.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive.

4. Resource Comments:

There are no direct financial implications arising from the acceptance of the recommendations in this report. In the event that implementation of the strategy does require additional finance in future this will need to be considered as part of the annual budget setting process.

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 16 January 2015. The Adults Scrutiny Committee will also consider this report at its meeting on 23 January 2015. Comments from these meetings will be presented to the Executive on 3 February 2015.

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Draft All-Age Autism Strategy for Lincolnshire 2015 - 2018

7. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Independent review of services for children and young people with autism in Lincolnshire	
Think Autism - Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with autism in England: an update	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/think-autism-an-update-to-the-government-adult-autism-strategy

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