

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

8th November 2018

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE
SERVICES – KERI WARREN**

MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Strategic Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on the position of Neath Port Talbot (NPT) in respect of the Strategic Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

2. Executive Summary

The update to the strategic plan for ASD provides an overview of the action plan that is being developed within NPT. This includes developing and monitoring of work that is being undertaken as a multi-agency group, with included views of children and people with autism and their family and carers. The report will explain where gaps in services are being identified and how mapping of services is being undertaken. The update will include information in relation to the regional Integrated Autism Service, and the plan to make NPT Autism aware and an Autism Friendly County Borough.

Background

The Welsh Assembly Government's refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan has been developed in response to what people with autism, their family and carers have said that is important to them. The Welsh Government have worked with a wide range of stakeholders to identify key priority themes and actions that will make a real difference to the lives of children and adults with autism. There is a commitment to improve the lives of

people with autism and to ensure that their parent's and carers also receive the support they need.

NPT hold a monthly ASD steering group which is attended by a range of multi-agency professionals as well as parents and carers of children with autism. The aim of the meeting is to develop an action plan within NPT so that children, young people and adults have their needs understood, to be supported and to voice and achieve their own well-being outcomes to lead fulfilling lives.

The action plan has been in place since 2017 and we are making progress to help ensure that the people of NPT are Autism aware, with the benefits being a more Autism Friendly County Borough. NPT are working closely with the Integrated Autism Service which is being developed across the Western Bay region. The development of this service is the main delivery objective of the refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan.

3. Financial Impact

There are no specific financial implications arising directly out of this report.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

5. Workforce Impacts

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

6. Legal Impacts

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

7. Risk Management

There are no risk management impacts associated with this report.

8. Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

9. Recommendation

Not applicable – report is for monitoring.

10. Reason for Proposed Decision

Not applicable – report is for monitoring.

11. Implementation of Decision

Not applicable – report is for monitoring.

12. Appendices

Strategic Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) – Appendix 1

13. List of Background Papers

None.

14. Officer Contact

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Strategic Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

2018-2020



Introduction

This Plan was written in collaboration with the Neath Port Talbot Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Steering Group, as well as engaging with people with autism and their families and carers.

Overall Aim of Strategy/Plan:

- To make a real difference to the lives of children and young people and adults with autism and to support their families and carers.
- For children, young people and adults with autism and their family and carers to have their voices heard, their needs understood, and to be supported to achieve their own wellbeing outcomes and to lead fulfilling lives.
- To see a real difference in the services, care and support available to people with autism.
- To raise awareness of ASD in Neath Port Talbot.

What is Autism?

The World Health Organisation's definition of autism is as follows:

"Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are a group of complex brain development disorders. This umbrella term covers conditions such as autism and Asperger syndrome. These disorders are characterized by difficulties in social interaction and communication and a restricted and repetitive repertoire of interests and activities".

<https://www.who.int/features/qa/85/en/>

The autism spectrum is very broad and can affect people with all levels of ability.

Appropriate support and intervention can help people with autism to reach their potential.

The Strategic Action Plan is for people on all parts of the autism spectrum and includes individuals who may also have a co-existing learning disability. It is difficult to estimate how many people are affected by autism as studies vary. Current evidence suggests prevalence rates of around 1% of the total population or above. Therefore, based on 2011 Welsh Census data the number of people with autism in Wales is estimated to be approximately 31,000, although many of these may not have a diagnosis and will not necessarily be known to services.

People with autism may have mental and physical health conditions. The most prevalent issues are sleep difficulties, gastro-intestinal problems, glue ear, epilepsy, anxiety, depression, dyspraxia, dyslexia, obsessive compulsive disorder, attention deficits and hyperactivity. The presence of autism in addition to another condition can lead to complex difficulties which may not respond to traditional approaches. It is therefore important that practitioners identify both autism and the co-existing condition and plan the care and support accordingly to best meet their needs.

Although this Strategy is focussing on ASD, it is recognised that ASD is a part of a range of neuro-developmental disorders (NDD) and they can co-exist with other conditions, such as:

- ADHD
- Behaviour disorders
- Brain injury
- Cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Intellectual disability
- Spina Bifida

<https://ici.umn.edu/welcome/definition.html>

Why do we need a plan?

The Refreshed ASD Strategic Action Plan 2016-2020 published by Welsh Government provides a framework for local authorities to ensure people with autism have access to the care and support they need. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requires local authorities to establish an information, advice and assistance service and to ensure people are signposted to appropriate services and support.

Regional Partnership Boards are responsible for ensuring there are services and care and support in place to meet the needs of people in their local area. Autism has been identified as one of the key priority areas and Regional Partnership Boards will need to report on progress, including progress on delivery of the Western Bay Integrated Autism Service.

Neath Port Talbot ASD Steering Group is made up of representatives from Social Services, Education, Health, Voluntary Sector, Private Sector, parents and carers of individuals with ASD. This group has contributed to the ASD strategic plan for Neath Port Talbot.

This plan is for people of all ages, children and adults. It is for everyone with autism and those who support people with autism who live in Neath Port Talbot.

The Local Picture

The Western Bay Population Needs Assessment reported that 327 children and young people in Neath Port Talbot in 2015 had ASD, with many more on the pathway awaiting assessment. It is estimated that autism affects 1 in 100 people, so with there being an estimated 142,090 people living in Neath Port Talbot, that would potentially make approximately 1,421 individuals with ASD in the area.

Our Vision

Our vision is to make Neath Port Talbot an autism aware authority and an area where people with autism have the same opportunities as everyone else. Key areas we have identified as a priority have emanated from the steering group and by engaging with individuals with autism, their parents/carers, these are:

- Awareness Raising
- Understanding of the Pathways to diagnosis
- Transitions
- Training/Education
- Employment
- Parent/Carer Support

Our Principles

These are the underpinning principles that help to make our plan work:

- To work with individuals with ASD, their parents and carers in order to have a vision on how we can support them
- To promote an increased awareness of ASD and social inclusion across Neath Port Talbot
- To promote a collaborative approach to working
- Help individuals to achieve their personal outcomes

- To ensure guidance, information and support is available and at the right time

Our Plan

It is important that our plan is in collaboration with partners and individuals with ASD and their parents and carers. We consulted with parents and carers from an established local support group and gained views from other parents/carers and individuals with autism through social media. It has been important to engage with those living with and affected by autism to establish:

- What works well?
- What needs improving?
- What is missing? (To help us understand what we need to do).

It is important that our plan makes a difference to people's lives. The Neath Port Talbot ASD Steering Group has strategic oversight of the plan to ensure that the plan progresses.

The following pages gives details on each of the priorities highlighted in our vision, taking into account the information we received on; what works well, what needs improving and what is missing.

Awareness Raising

What works well?

- A very successful awareness raising event in Aberavon Shopping Centre (April 2018). The Centre is now an autism aware Aberavon shopping Centre where the majority of shops have received and display information on being autism aware.
- The current role out of the national scheme within NPT (details below)

The current role out of the national scheme (June 2018):			
	Total		Total
ASD Aware Certification	578	Health/Social Care – Adult	212
Early Years Staff	1	Health/Social Care – Children	138
Teacher certificate	357		
LSA certificate	564	Working with Autism	56
Autism Superheroes	2000	HR training Scheme	3
Primary Whole School Award	5	Leisure Certificate	12
Secondary School Staff	308	Secondary Whole School Award	1
Sgilti Pledge	140		

What needs improving?

- More events throughout Neath Port Talbot are needed.
- All Social Services staff to undertake autism awareness training.
- All schools (including early years and secondary schools) to become ASD aware (this is currently being developed).

What we need to do?

- All public facing Council staff and members to undertake autism awareness training.
- All shops and businesses in the town centres to receive information on being ASD aware.

Understanding of the Pathways to Diagnosis

What works well?

- The neuro-developmental disorders (NDD) clinical pathway is in place.
- People are given information if they refer into Social Services.

What needs improving?

- People need to have a better understanding of the pathways for diagnosis for adults and children.
- The Integrated Autism Services (IAS) needs to be developed and fully functioning as a service.
- Waiting lists need to be reduced.
- People who are waiting for an appointment for an assessment need to be given information about assessment and diagnosis as well as support.

What we need to do?

- Clear information for individuals with ASD and their parents/carers of the pathways for diagnosis needs to be visible.
- A clear understanding on how adults are diagnosed.
- Work with partners to ensure information is given and people are being signposted to access the community directory DEWIS.

<https://www.npt.gov.uk/communitydirectory>

Transitions

What works well?

- Transition from primary to secondary school is working well.

What needs improving?

- Transition from secondary to further education needs improving.
- Transition for people leaving school and accessing further education needs to be improved.
- Social Services transitions – cases transferring from Childrens to Adult Services.

What we need to do?

- Clear communication between secondary and further education establishments.
- Introduction days, meeting staff prior to transitions, clear plans (further education).
- More opportunities for 1:1 travel and transport training for individuals with ASD.
- Person Centred Planning approaches to be put in place to support transition in line with ALN (Additional Learning Needs) reform.

Training/Education

What works well?

- Behavioural strategies for parents delivered via Facing The Challenge both in groups and 1 to 1 sessions.
- 1 to 1 behavioural sessions for parents and carers delivered by the behavioural support officer in the Children with disability Team.
- “Solving the Puzzle” ASD awareness training delivered through schools.
- Recent training to parents delivered through the IAS.

What needs improving?

- More training and Education sessions for parents is needed as sessions are oversubscribed.

What we need to do?

- Work with professionals to ensure that training continues and develops.
- Ensure parents carers and individuals with ASD are aware of all training by making all local support groups aware of the training and using websites already in place e.g. community directory – DEWIS.
- <https://www.npt.gov.uk/communitydirectory>

Employment

What works well?

- Supported employment schemes.

What needs improving?

- Greater understanding and awareness in the Council, our partners and local businesses of interviewing and employing individuals with ASD.
- Individuals with ASD to be aware of and access the right employment to suit their needs.
- Employers to be aware of the strengths that people with ASD can bring to the workforce.

What we need to do?

- HR specific autism training
- Work closely with the local employment centres to look at the barriers and difficulties in employing individuals with ASD and develop strategies to overcome these barriers.
- Raising awareness with employers.

Parent/Carer Support

What works well?

- Local groups providing support, signposting and advice to other parents/carers.
- Carers Service in Neath Port Talbot providing support and information for parent/carers.
- “Solving the Puzzle” parent/carers training sessions.
- Coffee mornings held in schools for parents/carers of children with autism.

What needs improving?

- Ensuring that all communities can access parent/carers support.
- Information to parents regarding benefits that they are entitled to.
- Ensure that we identify gaps in services when we are commissioning services by continuing to work with commissioning officers and offering feedback from parent’s carers and people with ASD.

What we need to do?

- Information and signposting following diagnosis for parents/carers.
- Work with partners and local area coordinators to support parents/carers to set up other groups.
- Continue to work closely with parent’s carers and individuals with ASD to identify gaps in services.