



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL
NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD**

21ST MARCH 2024

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SERVICES – K. WARREN**

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

**NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES STRATEGIC ACTION
PLAN FOR NEURODIVERGENCE (Autism and Other Conditions)
2024 - 2027**

Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the draft Neath Port Talbot Strategic Action Plan for Neurodivergence (Autism and Other Conditions) 2024-27 and seek approval to undertake a 90 day public consultation.

Executive Summary

This Strategic Plan sets out how Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council ('the Council') aims to create an inclusive and understanding culture, which supports neurodiverse children, young people, adults, families and carers within their communities, and across the County.

Our ambition is to make Neath Port Talbot an inclusive area for all neurodivergent individuals and families. This strategy is intended to focus partners across NPT to work together to make the changes we need to see for all.

Our vision is simply;

'Awareness, understanding, acceptance, equality and inclusion for all'

Background

The purpose of the Neath Port Talbot Strategic Action Plan for Neurodivergence (Autism and Other Conditions) 2024-27 is to highlight the strategic direction of the Council in supporting the needs of neurodiverse individuals and families, keeping at the forefront of our considerations the Autism Code of Practice (2021).

We want to achieve a neurodivergent inclusive approach across the County and its communities. We want to ensure that services have a more joined-up approach, proactive, timely and accessible provision so that neurodiverse people have equality of access and the right support within our services.

In 2023 there was a collective shift across professional sectors to a more inclusive reference of 'Neurodivergence' or 'Neurodiversity' rather than solely 'Autism'. Much of the publicity, awareness raising, training content, research and data has its basis in Autism.

An action plan has been in place since 2017 and we are revising this, post Covid pandemic, considering current financial struggles, and in-line with the Autism Code of Practice to ensure that the people and services of NPT are not only autism aware, but have an understanding of associated conditions, within the scope of Neurodiversity.

NPT Social Services are working closely with Education, Health and wider NPT services, through training, collaborative projects, stakeholder engagement and support to create an inclusive community.

We are committed to bringing together the right people and the right services to break down barriers to community access and use our resources effectively to deliver the support neurodiverse people need. This will enable us to better understand the inequalities neurodiverse people face, improve their physical and mental well-being, enabling those struggling in a neurotypical world, to better understand themselves, their environment and their future.

The collaboration of our own professionals and those from different sectors, support networks and community services will be directed at improving the lives of individuals and their families

The Autism Code of Practice (September 2021) has four overarching objectives – which are already being met in NPT.

- Autism assessment and diagnosis
- Accessing Health and Social Care Services
- Awareness raising and training on Autism
- Planning and monitoring services and stakeholder engagement

We have set out the Neurodivergence Strategic Plan covering four broad themes:

- Improve our understanding around neurodivergence
- Improve access to the services and support neurodivergent people need.
- Support the development of a training plan for the workforce
- Support accessing community services and the community as a whole.

Population considerations

The population of Neath Port Talbot is recorded as **142,300**.

The estimated autistic population of NPT is 1,423.

Considering the estimation that 1 in 7 people are neurodivergent*, the estimated ND population of Neath Port Talbot is over 20,000.

(*Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust)

'Awareness, Understanding, Acceptance Equality and Inclusion'

Our vision is to transform the lives of neurodiverse people in Neath Port Talbot, and to make NPT a neurodiverse inclusive authority.

Along with the implementation of the Autism Code of Practice, this Strategic Plan will be subject to regular review to ensure it maintains relevance.

A copy of the Draft Strategic Plan is attached at Appendix 1.

Financial Impacts

Taking forward the priorities within the Strategic Plan will be undertaken in line with the available budget.

Integrated Impact Assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016). The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 4, for the purposes of the meeting.

- No negative impacts identified at this stage and the indication is that the impact will be positive. Processes are in place to monitor the impact for any unintended negative consequences.

Valleys Communities Impacts

The Strategic Plan is a high level document intended to meet the needs of the whole county borough including the valleys communities.

The consultation will help identify any impact on Valleys Communities. Furthermore, as actions to take forward the priorities within the

Strategic Plan are developed, consideration of the impact on supporting valley communities around neurodivergence, will be given as part of the individual impact assessments.

Workforce Impacts

Some actions proposed within this Plan will have an impact on the Council workforce. There will be a requirement for, and provision of training for staff around neurodivergence. Training modules are already in place via the training platform through Neurodivergence Wales/ Autism Wales.

These actions intend to provide a positive outcome for employees by providing them with the necessary level of understanding and tools to undertake their roles.

Neath Port Talbot Council have an Autism & Neurodiversity Lead Officer providing information and advice across Adult and Children's Services.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal implications associated with this item.

Risk Management Impacts

There are no known risks associated with this item.

Consultation

It is proposed that, with Members' permission, a 90-day public consultation exercise is undertaken. This will consist of on-line surveys. In addition, officers will attend various groups and forums around the county borough to reach as many stakeholders, including citizens, service providers and other partner organisations as possible. There will be opportunities for one-to-one discussions with neurodiverse individuals, families and community groups. A consultation document, an easy read version of the Strategic Plan, and plan on a page have all been developed prior to the consultation. In addition, all materials are available in Welsh.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members grant permission for Officers to conduct a 90-day public consultation period for Neath Port Talbot draft

Strategic Action Plan for Neurodivergence 2024-27 as detailed in Appendix 1.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

The strategy will promote a cultural shift so that community and services are understanding and welcoming for neurodiverse individuals, families and carers.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Neurodivergence (Autism & Other Conditions)
Social Services Strategic Plan 2024-27;

Appendix 2: Social Services Strategic Plan for Neurodivergence
– Easy Read;

Appendix 3: Social Services Strategic Plan for Neurodivergence
– Plan on a Page;

Appendix 4: Integrated Impact Assessment;

Appendix 5: Social Services Strategic Plan for Neurodivergence
– Consultation Document;

List of Background Papers

None.

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