

**HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel was held on 19 November 2019.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J McTigue (Chair), D P Coupe (Vice-Chair), A Hellaoui, D Rooney and M Saunders and M Storey

**OFFICERS:** Derek Bertwhistle - Commissioning Lead, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council  
Caroline Breheny - Democratic Services Officer, Middlesbrough Council  
Helen Jaques - Charity Manager, MAIN  
Linda Lord - CAMHS & ASD Commissioning Officer, Middlesbrough Council

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Councillor S Hill, Councillor T Mawston and Councillor P Storey.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**1 MINUTES - HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL - 8 OCTOBER 2019**

The minutes of the Health Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 8 October 2019 were approved as a correct record.

**2 AUTISM STRATEGY - TEESSIDE AUTISM PARTNERSHIP**

In agreeing the annual work programme for 2019/20 the Health Scrutiny Panel had requested that information be provided to the panel on Autism and the work currently being undertaken by various organisations across Middlesbrough to provide support to people with Autism, as well as their families / carers.

An invitation had been extended to the Lead Autism / CAHMS Commissioners for Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, as well as the Charity Manager at Main, to attend the meeting and provide information to the panel in respect of the following areas:-

- The development of the Teesside Autism Strategy
- Progress made to date / future challenges
- Areas for service improvements

The panel was advised that Autism was a lifelong condition and affected how people communicated and interacted with others. It was a spectrum condition meaning it affected each individual differently. It was estimated that 1 in 100 people had a diagnosis of autism and there had been a 25 per cent increase in diagnosis in the last 30 years. Four times the number of males were diagnosed with autism compared with females, although it was known that females were better at masking the signs and symptoms as well as mimicking their peers making it harder to recognise the signs of autism. Fifty per cent of people with autism also had a diagnosed learning disability and 70 per cent of people with autism also had a mental health issue.

In 2005 the MP Cheryl Gilliam started a conversation in the House of Commons, the conversation focused on the lack of support for people with autism spectrum disorders. In 2009 the Autism Act was passed and this led to the Government producing the first Autism Strategy 'Rewarding and Fulfilling Lives' in 2010. However, the strategy and subsequent strategies only cover adults aged eighteen plus with minor reference to transitions. Also in 2010 the first Joint Health and Social Care Self-Assessment Framework process was introduced. This provided a baseline of how the Government Strategy was being introduced across England and although this was not a mandatory process Local Authorities were asked to join health colleagues to complete and submit the online document bi-annually. The next Self-Assessment Framework (SAF) would be released in 2020 and the information from all completed SAF's was collected by Public Health England and was published on the Government website. The SAF consisted of 127 questions covering the following areas;

Planning, Training, Diagnosis, Care & Support, Housing and Accommodation, Employment, Criminal Justice System, Local Innovations.

The panel was advised that a new Autism Strategy was expected to be released soon, which would contain references to children and young people for the first time. It had been expected to have been released in September 2019, however, owing to Brexit and the General Election the release date had been delayed. There would also be a Government Framework released which would detail mandatory training (3 tiered approach) that identified training needs for different job roles. Although these had been expected to be released in 2019 it could be early 2020 before this happened.

In terms of what progress had been made locally it was advised that one of the requirements in the Government Strategy had been for all local areas to develop their own strategy. In Tees, an adult Partnership group had been established in 2010 and a Tees Adult Strategy developed in 2014. A children's group had also been established in 2012 with the aim of producing a children's strategy. However, although the strategy was developed it was never published or progressed.

In 2017 the adult group decided to form an all age group to ensure that a joined up approach was developed. The adult group had started to revamp their strategy and it was agreed that the two existing documents (one for adults and one for children) would be joined together to produce an all strategy. In October 2018 the Council appointed a Commissioning Officer for ASD and CAMHS and an interim strategy covering the period 2019-2021 was developed. The reason for this related to the fact that in December 2018 the Under Secretary of State for Children and Families wrote a letter in response to a campaign the National Autistic Society had been involved in. The letter detailed the Government's commitment to including Children and Young People in the next strategy for the first time, as previously mentioned. The new strategy would continue the Government's commitment to improving the lives of autistic people and would contain information about how health and care services should be supporting children and young people with autism.

The panel was advised that a workshop was currently being planned for the beginning of 2020 for parent carers and autistic people (funded by the CCG) along with gathering information from professionals. People would be asked for their thoughts about what the local strategy should focus on and life experience quotes on what was good / what needed to change would be captured. It was advised that some work had already commenced on gathering the views, wants and wishes of children and young people (with the help of Healthwatch) and this would continue over the next 12 months.

A number of groups had been established including the Tees All Age Partnership, the development of task and finish groups where applicable and the South Tees All Age Autism Operations Group. However, it was advised that at the present time Stockton had withdrawn from the group. It was explained that currently the South Tees Operations Group had established a task and finish group to explore the redevelopment and expansion of the current Middlesbrough adult day care provision. Conversations focussed on the development of a South Tees provision, if this should be all age, what support services could be included and most importantly the flexibility of a new service which would truly meet the needs of the population. This was still in the early stages but represented an exciting opportunity.

An Autism Provider Forum had been established and it was noted that this was a supportive platform where Providers could raise and discuss mutually relevant issues, share good practice and collectively problem solve. The group helped with gathering and disseminating information to members of the autistic community and their families, along with providing accurate information about emerging needs (based on fact). It was hoped that this group would also take part in raising awareness of autism amongst our local communities, provide feedback on where good practice was happening and most importantly advise on what really needed to change in order for people with autism to be accepted in society.

In terms of relationships it was advised that the local authorities had developed really good relationships with Parent Carer Groups. These included MAIN, Asperger's Group (Supported by Carers Together) Redcar and Cleveland Parent Carer Forum, Carers Together and the

TEWV Parent Carer Groups. For example, the Asperger Group had helped develop Top Tips on how to support people with ASD which had been shared with a wide range of health professionals.

In terms of other progress that had been made the panel was advised that Autism Awareness Training (delivered by Yo Dunn, a person with Autism) had been rolled out across Middlesbrough Council and places had been offered to a number of our partners. Those who attended gave excellent reviews with some who had already undertaken training previously describing it as "opening their eyes to Autism". It was advised that TEWV had rolled out autism awareness as part of their mandatory training linked to equality and diversity and TEWV had set itself the goal of becoming the most autism friendly organisation in the North of England. TEWV ran training courses for parents and carers which contained a number of autism training courses and parents who had attended had rated the training as excellent and advised they would recommend it. There were a range of local providers offering and delivering training including Middlesbrough College and the Open University, ESPA and Main.

In terms of the work undertaken by MAIN across South Tees the Charity Manager explained that the organisation was originally established at Beverly School in 2002 and worked with both children and adults with autism. She had joined the organisation in 2011 and became the Manager in 2015, the organisation provided short breaks to offer parents of children with autism a break from their caring responsibilities, as well as provide children with somewhere to socialise. The charity currently delivered 30 different types of clubs, which varied depending on age and the organisation operated from Riverside Park. The premises was currently rented but a donation from the Billy Cooper Fund had enabled them to move into accommodation in North Ormesby and they were currently renovating the old unity house to enable them to offer much more tailored services. It was hoped that the renovations would be completed by 1 January 2021 and would become a beacon for services in the Tees Valley.

Finally, it was advised that there was a lot of work taking place to improve the autism offer in South Tees and it was an exciting time, as it extended the opportunity for everyone to work together to make South Tees an Autism friendly community. It was advised that this could be achieved through:-

- Helping others to understand more about the condition
- Making sure our workforces were trained to understand and deliver autism support
- Ensuring the right services were in place
- Having accurate data which provided intelligence about our autistic population and their needs
- Making sure autistic people and their families were fully involved in the work undertaken

**AGREED** as follows:-

a) That Autism Training for Members be requested as part of the Members' Development Programme for 2019/20 - 2020/21 and rolled out in a similar vein to the Dementia Friendly Training delivered in recent years.

b) That increasing awareness and understanding of Autism amongst all Members be widely encouraged.

c) That the invitees be invited to attend a future meeting of the panel following publication on the new Government guidance expected in 2020.

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### **REGIONAL JOINT HEALTH OSC - UPDATE**

The Democratic Services Officer provided an update in respect of the following regional meeting:-

Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee held in Hartlepool on 2 September 2019.

It was also advised that the South Tees Joint Health Scrutiny Committee would be held in Middlesbrough on 29 November 2019.

**AGREED** that the regional health scrutiny update be noted.

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update in relation to matters considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 14 November 2019.

**AGREED** that the OSB update be noted.