

Midlothian Draft Autism Strategy

Report by Eibhlin McHugh, Director Health and Social Care

1 Purpose of Report

The report describes the new Midlothian Autism Strategy, outlining the needs and demands on services and how these can be addressed, in line with national policy.

2 Background

2.1 The National Autism Strategy was launched in November 2011 and a total of £13.4 million of additional investment was announced to be distributed across Scotland between 2011 and 2015. A round of bidding resulted in a number of initiatives being funded including two in Midlothian. In addition to this, each local authority was allocated a one-off payment of £35,000 to develop and publish a local autism strategy.

2.2 Midlothian took part in a national Autism Spectrum Disorder Mapping Project, a short term fact finding exercise and analysis of information relating to the delivery of services for individuals with autism locally. The findings of this project were published in September 2013. This mapped out existing service provision which has helped to inform the recommendations of the Strategy.

2.3 In April 2013 the Communities and Wellbeing Divisional Management Team agreed that a the £35,000 one off payment would be used to recruit to a post to refine and develop the Draft Strategy and work with partners to develop an Action Plan for the development of ASD services locally.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The Strategy outlines the intention to use the £35,000 payment to recruit to a post to refine and develop the draft strategy, to identify service gaps and solutions and to develop a local action plan.

The post holder will also seek out funding to resource initiatives to respond to local need in partnership with third sector agencies and develop local commissioning models for Autism Services

There are no other specific financial commitments at this stage.

3.2 Risk

The needs of people on the Autism Spectrum in Midlothian differ widely and the aggregation of these needs into one strategy precipitates a number of challenges in itself. Failure to plan a multi agency and multi disciplinary approach to the needs of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder could lead to negative outcomes for people.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- x☐ Adult health, care and housing
- x☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- x☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- x☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

This work supports a number of outcomes described in the Single Midlothian Plan. These include:

- Promote independence for people with disabilities
- Enhance social inclusive and personalised services
- Enhance support system for carers
- Every child in Midlothian has the best start in life and ready to succeed
- Our people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The growing budgetary pressures and increasing numbers of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder make it essential that there is a clear agreed and coherent way forward across organisations in the planning of services and support for people and their families.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

A local event was held in Midlothian in February this year bringing together representatives from Social Work, Health, Community Planning, Education, and Voluntary Organisations to explore current service provision and identify gaps in provision and areas for improvement.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

A full equalities impact assessment will be carried out, but the equalities implications of the recommendations are likely to be positive.

At the heart of the report is the recognition that people with a learning disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other people. The emphasis is on the development of services and supports that enable people to participate and contribute as citizens requiring less support from social care by creating capacity for social inclusion, equality and fairness.

The emphasis on developing services around people, and the use of natural supports inherent within families and communities, serves to challenge the kinds of inequality that are inherent in more traditional and less flexible services that cannot respond as effectively to people's ethnicity, gender, faith, age, disability, or sexuality.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The core group proposed in the strategy will refine an effective system for collating information about young people with Autism to assist with planning for Transition and Adult Services. They will also ensure that a system is in place for people with Autism, families and carers to contribute to service improvement.

3.9 IT Issues

No IT issues have been identified at this stage.

4 Recommendations

1. Cabinet is asked to note and endorse the Midlothian Autism Strategy.

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Background Papers:

Midlothian Draft Autism Strategy