

## All Age Autism Strategy Consultation Report

To: Adults and Health Committee

Meeting Date: 22 September 2021

From: Janet Dullaghan, Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Outcome: This five-year (2021-2026) All Age Autism Strategy supports the aim for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be an autism friendly place where autistic children and adults can live full and rewarding lives, within a society that accepts and understands them. The vision is for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be recognised as autism friendly places to live, where people with autism of all ages have access to equal opportunities.

Recommendation: The Adults and Health Committee is being asked to:

- a) comment and note the contents of the proposed All Age Autism Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- b) respond to the consultation on the All Age Autism Strategy.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The national guidance “[Implementing and Rewarding Lives](#)” and “[Think Autism](#)” puts a statutory duty on local authorities and health services to have in place plans in relation to the provision of service for autistic people. While the guidance was initially just for adults in 2017 the government stated it was extending this to cover children and young people.
- 1.2 The guidance sets out requirements for local authorities and NHS organisations to work together with partners to develop a strategy for autistic people and gives a framework of what this should include, for example:
- A clear assessment of need for people with autism
  - clear diagnostic pathways with good pre and post support
  - Joint commissioning
  - clarity about what needs to be developed to meet the needs of autistic people, including preventative support and safeguarding.

It is vital that this is a coordinated system approach, with all partners, to provide a range of support that autistic people may need at different times in their life. This may include Health services, Education, colleges, local businesses, housing, independent or supported living and support within the justice system.

- 1.3 This five-year (2021-2026) All Age Autism Strategy supports the aim for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be an autism friendly place where autistic children and adults can live full and rewarding lives, within a society that accepts and understands them. The vision is for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be recognised as autism friendly places to live, where people with autism of all ages have access to equal opportunities.

It has been co-produced in partnership with autistic people and their families across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

## 2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 The foundation of this strategy is the Autism Needs Assessment collated by Public Health which provided a comprehensive overview of the prevalence of autism across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It highlighted some of the gaps in current services and made recommendations that have been explored with all partners and through focus groups.
- 2.2 A countywide all age autism strategy group has been developing this strategy for the past 8 months with all key partners including:
- Family Voice
  - Pinpoint
  - VoiceAbility
  - Healthwatch Cambridgeshire
  - Healthwatch Peterborough
  - National Autistic Society, Cambridge Branch
  - Speak Out Council
  - Cambridgeshire Constabulary

- Autism Centre of Excellence
- Peterborough City Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG

2.3 The priorities and recommendations being taken forward through the working groups of the all age autism strategy are:

- Having clear diagnostic pathways for children and adults with good support throughout the process, combined with good pre and post diagnosis support.
- Training and raising awareness for all areas that helps services and professionals understand the needs of autistic people within our local communities and services and recognises that autism affects different people in different ways.
- Services that take a lifelong approach and supports autistic people in school, colleges, and universities, to be able to live independently and have meaningful employment opportunities.
- For Health and social care to work together to commission integrated services that make the best of the resources available.
- For services to understand what reasonable adjustments are and how they can improve settings so autistic people can have positive experiences when they go into healthcare settings such as primary care hospitals etc.

2.4 The All Age Autism Strategic Group wants to take time now to ensure that this co-produced strategy meets the needs of all people with Autism across our area and gain the views of local people on the principles and priorities identified by the group and the partners that worked alongside them to co-produce this strategy.

### **3. PRE-CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

3.1 The All Age Autism Strategy was shared the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Governing Body on 7 September 2021 who approved the consultation process plan and agreed that the launch of the six-week consultation.

3.2 The All Age Autism Strategy and consultation process plans were shared with both the Peterborough Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee and the Cambridgeshire Adults and Health Committee in June 2021. The documents were shared with these committees remotely and both approved the process plans for the six-week consultation as well as giving feedback on the strategy.

3.3 Councillors from Peterborough thought the strategy and report were well constructed, comprehensive, and informative. They were pleased to see constructive co-production of the strategy and approved the process for consultation. Their feedback was constructive, and an additional question has been added to the consultation survey around health and care settings and their appropriateness for people with autism. The Peterborough Councillors were interested in more information on why there are more people with autism in Peterborough, and also more details on employers who were willing to offer work and work experience to people with autism.

3.4 The Cambridgeshire Councillors also gave feedback that they felt the consultation

timescales were appropriate. They gave feedback that they would like to see representatives from education and skills providers represented during the consultation and asked how people with Autism would be consulted. The consultation process plan has been updated to reflect this feedback.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note and comment on the All Age Autism Strategy as part of this six week consultation running from 7 September 2021 to 19 October 2021.

#### **5. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 The consultation is to enable the CCG to meet its statutory duty 14za of the Health and Social Care Act 2021 and the CCG Constitution Section 5.2.
- 5.2 This consultation will also meet with the national guidance "[Implementing and Rewarding Lives](#)" and "[Think Autism](#)" which requires local authorities and health services to consult on their All Age Autism Strategy in relation to the provision of service for people with autism.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 This co-produced All Age Autism Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has been developed over the past 8 months with all key partners. A six week consultation will run from 7 September to 19 October 2021 to gather further views and input from key stakeholders and local people.
- 6.2 The implementation of the final strategy will enable the NHS and Local Authorities to meet the statutory duty placed on health and local authorities and to have in place plans for the provision of services for autistic people.

#### **7 APPENDICES:**

Appendix one:	All Age Autism Strategy
Appendix two:	All Age Autism Strategy Summary document for consultation
Appendix three:	All Age Autism Strategy Easi-read version for consultation