

	<p style="text-align: center;">CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">22 September 2020</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p>Autism Plan</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Barnet Autism Plan 2020</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessments of the Barnet Autism Plan 2020</p>
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Summary	
<p>This report contains the final recommendations and actions relating to the creation of an Autism Plan as requested by the Barnet Children’s Partnership Board to improve services and quality of life for children, young people and adults with autism as well as their families and carers. .</p>	

Recommendations

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| 1. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee agrees the Autism Plan to improve services and quality of life for children, young people and adults with autism as well as their families and carers. |
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1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Children's Partnership Board recognised that the number of people (both young and adults) being diagnosed with autism is increasing and that people are living longer with increasingly complex health conditions. Therefore, the Board chose to review the partnership plans to support people with autism in the borough and has developed an Autism Plan for children and young people.
- 1.2 The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy for the borough sets the vision, aims and priorities for delivery for young people with SEND aged up to 25. The Autism Plan sets out the detail on how the partnership will deliver this vision and aims for children and young people with Autism.
- 1.3 The Autism Plan was developed between Adults and Children's services, as a 'life course' approach - identifying what people may need at different points in their lives - rather than rely on separate plans for under 18s and over 18s as previously. The Plan has also been developed closely with education, health, voluntary sector and service users as this is integral to the success of the plan in improving provision.
- 1.4 The initial work on the Plan was taken to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 16th January 2020 to present the initial ideas on the life course approach.
- 1.5 The draft Autism Plan was then taken to the Children's Partnership Board on 13th February 2020. It was developed using:
- A development day for representatives across the partnership in October 2019, to help understand where we are at the moment
 - Survey and focus group work with parent-carers and young people, to identify where they feel we are
 - Data work to look at the numbers of children and young people, and their needs
 - Conversations with individual partners on what opportunities are available, and how to overcome current barriers
 - Reflections on best practice elsewhere, and national and international research in the area.
- 1.6 Since the Children's Partnership Board reviewed the draft plan in February 2020, the draft plan has been consulted on during February-March 2020 with:
- Barnet Schools
 - Barnet Parent-Carers Forum

- Barnet Young People
- SEND Partnership, including health commissioners/providers, education services, children's social care and adults social care

1.7 There are eight main areas in the plan, covering 35 recommendations. These areas and recommendations have been informed by the needs assessment, consultation and best practice. The table below shows what evidence has informed the development of which area of the plan. In addition to this, Appendix 2 contains local data on people with Autism broken down by protection characteristic. The insight section at 5.9 below also sets out trends arising from an analysis of local and national data.

Plan theme	Evidence supporting the theme and recommendations			
	Data and Service Mapping	Service User Feedback	Provider Feedback	Best Practice
Identification, Diagnosis and Awareness	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information, Advice and Guidance		✓	✓	✓
Early Intervention and Prevention	✓	✓	✓	✓
Formalise Crisis Pathways and Identify Gaps	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provision in Schools			✓	✓
Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Employment	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Co-ordination (including pathways, data and leadership)		✓	✓	✓

- 1.8 As the children and young people's element covers age ranges up to 25, it contains recommendations that cover what are traditionally considered adult orientated services (e.g. Adult Social Care, employment services), but are important to bring into the action plan as they form an important part of a young person's transition into Adulthood. Therefore, any recommendations affecting over 18s have been taken to Health and Wellbeing Board for their review, and they will sign off on actions affecting over 18s. The Adults Autism action plan will also be reviewed at a future meeting of the Adults and Safeguarding committee.
- 1.9 The Autism Plan was signed off by the Children's Partnership Board in August 2020. The Chairman of the CES Committee asked for the Autism Plan to be presented at CES Committee in September 2020.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children's Partnership Board asked for an Autism Plan to be developed for Barnet. This has now been developed, and members of the Committee are asked to review and approve the Autism Plan.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

Not applicable.

4 POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Following the Committee's decision on the plan, the plan will be finalised and circulated to all partners. It will then be handed over to the SEND Partnership to lead the delivery of the plan.

5 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Autism and/or the Learning Disability / Autism programme (formerly Transforming Care) are a priority within the following strategies:

- Children and Young People's Plan (2019 – 2023)
- CYP Mental Health Transformation Plan (2019 refresh)
- NHS Long Term Plan

- 5.1.2 The approach taken supports the corporate and committee aims to:

- Integrate health and social care to provide services for people with complex needs
- Improve services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 The Autism Plan has required some investment to ensure the actions are implemented. These resources are considered via each partners' budget setting and approval process, and will be reported to the SEND Partnership Board.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 Local authorities have specific duties in respect of children under various legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004. They have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and, if this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing services appropriate to the child's needs. They also have a duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing services appropriate to the child's needs, provided this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare. They should do this in partnership with parents, in a way that is sensitive to the child's race, religion, culture and language and that, where practicable, takes account of the child's wishes and feelings.

5.4.2 The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the statutory framework to support children with special educational needs and disabilities. The legislation and the statutory guidance emphasise the importance of a partnership approach and developing services in co-operation with parents and young people. This legislation covers children and young people from age 0 to 25 years and therefore includes duties to children and adults.

5.4.3 The Care Act 2014 reformed the legislative framework for supporting adults with care needs. This legislation places a strong focus on prevention and delaying the need for care and support, providing information and advice for those who may be in need of services and carers and joint working between social care and health services.

5.4.4 The Autism Act 2009 requires the Government to publish an autism plan for adults with autistic spectrum disorders. Guidance under the Act requires Local Authorities to work with key partners and stakeholders to review plans for people with autism.

5.4.5 As outlined in the Barnet Children's Partnership Board Terms of Reference, Council's Constitution Article 7 – The board is responsible for reviewing

summary updates and signing off all agreed Plans and Strategies relating to Children and Young People in Barnet prior to presentation to executive groups (e.g. CES, H&WBB). The Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee has responsibility for all matters relating to children, schools and education.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 Risk assessments will be undertaken as services and solutions are developed. Working across the life course, reviewing needs assessments and receiving feedback from families reduces the risk of developing inappropriate services and unidentified needs.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public-Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

5.6.3 The Autism Plan's impact on people with protected characteristics has been outlined in the Equalities Impact Assessment, which is attached to this report as Appendix 2. The Plan focuses on specific themes which are expected to have a positive impact on individuals with Autism and their families and this will particularly impact on children and young people and their parents, those with a learning disability and females who risk being under-diagnosed at present.

5.7 Corporate Parenting Principles

5.7.1 In July 2016, the Government published their Care Leavers' strategy *Keep on Caring* which outlined that the "... [the government] will introduce a set of corporate parenting principles that will require *all departments* within a local authority to recognise their role as corporate parents, encouraging them to look at the services and support that they provide through the lens of what a reasonable parent would do to support their own children.'

5.7.2 The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

1. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
2. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
3. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
4. to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
5. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
6. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and;
7. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

5.7.3 The needs of children in care with autism spectrum conditions are being considered in the plan development process.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 The Autism Plan has been informed by a considerable programme of engagement work, including:

- 0-25 Development Day involving professionals from social care, education, health, voluntary sector and parent carers
- Parent-carer and young people surveys, which have received around 100 responses
- Four focus groups with young people in Barnet a range of different Barnet schools
- Prioritisation exercise with over 50 parents at the Social Care Conference
- Continued work with the Adults Autism Working Group, which involves parent-carer representatives
- Parent involvement in Autism Diagnostic Pathway review group
- Further 1-1 conversations on the draft plan and recommendations.

5.9.2 The summary of consultation results on the draft plan are set out below. In addition, the equality impact assessment at Appendix 2 sets out some further consultation feedback.

Feedback	Action
Plan didn't recognise the relationship between the Criminal Justice System and Autism	Added in recommendation on the Criminal Justice System
Issues facing girls with Autism are not prevalent in the plan	Actions which have the most impact on girls with Autism have been flagged in a separate briefing note on the plan.

Parent-Carers indicated that they thought that the following was the most important:	Specific actions in plan related to early intervention and prevention offer and training.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention and prevention team to support 5-18 year olds. • Improve professionals' understanding about Autism, how it presents, and how to support children, young people and adults who are Autistic 	
If there is a wait for diagnosis, there needs to be support for parent-carers in the meantime. This should involve the provider contacting the family to let them know expectations of wait times, keeping them updated, and signposting them to peer to peer support groups.	This has been communicated to the lead group working on this, and will be part of the action on improving diagnosis pathways
What should be "Ordinarily Available in Schools" should be clearer for parents and young people	Specific action added to plan on this
Are we looking at what diagnostic tools we use? Current tools in use favour picking up characteristics that tend to be exhibited by boys	This will be explored as part of the recommendation on diagnosis pathways
Young people don't find that information on Housing and Education/Employment for young people is clear, and that there are not enough options for them.	Specific actions on developing the Local Offer, and also on building the options for post 16 education/training and employment and housing options.

5.9 Insight

5.9.1 The needs analysis has been undertaken by Public Health and has been built on local data including social care, education, health and third sector data (commissioned services), and recent national research by bodies such as the National Autistic Society, and the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent.

5.9.2 The needs analysis indicated the following trends:

- The proportion of younger people being diagnosed with Autism is higher than older age groups – research indicates that this is because of better identification, and changes in diagnostic practice.
- People with Autism and their parents/carers value the support they get from school/college, health professionals, short breaks services and the voluntary sector. However, they often have to wait a long time for a diagnosis, and the "system" is difficult to navigate.
- Early intervention services in the younger years can help young people and families to be more resilient.

- More girls are being diagnosed younger, which signifies that identification is improving, but partners felt that we can always do more in this area.
- The data collected on Autism varies greatly between organisations, which results in large data gaps on what we know about people with Autism in Barnet and how they interact with services.
- There are sizable gaps in services around:
 - Housing options for people with Autism who can live independently and need a low level of support.
 - Training and employment options are limited, and young people suffers in the transition from school to further/higher education and beyond.
 - Families do not get much information following receipt of a diagnosis, and would like more structured information about what Autism is and what is available in the community to support them.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Barnet SEND Strategy,

https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sites/default/files/appendix_a_send_strategy_2017-2020.pdf

6.2 Barnet Children's Partnership Board, Draft Autism Plan (13th February 2020) -

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=456&MId=10223>

6.3 Barnet Children's Partnership Board, Autism Plan (6th August 2020) -

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=456&MId=10252&Ver=4>