

“Transforming and integrating services to improve support for people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions”

A Summary Perspective

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‘I invent nothing I discover by listening’ (*Auguste Rodin*)

Sheffield 2014

The Context

- National Audit Office (2009) researched public spending on (ASC), reporting that a shift away from crisis-provision and investment in preventative services can produce significant savings in health and social care budgets (eg by supporting 8% of people with ASC within a local area, cost savings of up to £67 million per annum could be accrued nationally)
- *Autism Act* became law in 2009 – 1st time putting a legal duty on health and social care agencies to provide services for client group, and committing Government to a national autism strategy
- *Fulfilling & Rewarding Lives: The strategy for adults with autism in England* (2010)
- *Implementing Fulfilling & Rewarding Lives* statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations (2010) - set of mandatory action recommendations

The Context

- Statutory guidance placed a legal requirement on developing a range of local services to address the needs of adults with ASC in line with **NICE guidance**
- Enforceable under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Service Act (1970) and, as such, **local authorities and NHS bodies must follow the Act and unless a good reason can be given can be challenged through the courts.**
- Re-enforced concept that **each Local Authority area should have a lead professional to develop diagnostic and assessment services for adults in their area,** and that the local Directors of Adult Social Services, supported by the NHS, responsible for ensuring that **correct local processes:**
 - **conducting needs assessments;**
 - **prompt sharing of information between diagnostic services and other services for adults.**

The Context

- **Think Autism** Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with autism in England: an update
- **Priority Challenges for Action**
 - An equal part of my local community
 - The right support at the right time during my lifetime
 - Developing my skills and independence and working to the best of my ability
- Central to the strategy that:
 - All actions, nationally and locally, should be taken forward in a co-productive way that involves and engages people with autism and their families and carers as partners, respecting the insight and expertise that their experience and lives bring
 - Build communities that are more aware of and accessible to the needs of people with autism

Winterbourne View Concordat

- DH Review: Transforming care: A national response to Winterbourne View Hospital issued (Dec 2012) and then Concordat action programme agreed to transform services for people with learning disabilities or autism and mental health conditions or behaviours described as challenging
- To stop inappropriate spot-purchasing, especially in high-cost out-of-area and/or specialist units by more effective person-centred local practical support strategies
- Recent reviews confirmed that 33-45% people with learning disabilities present with accompanying ASC, and these percentages rise in terms of people actually accessing/requesting specialist services relating to challenging behaviours
- Critical need for the wider reorientation of core CCG and Local Authority commissioned Community Learning Disabilities services to ensure they have an adequate skills base to presenting Autism-related issues

NICE Quality Standards

- People with possible autism needing a diagnostic assessment by an autism service have the **assessment started within 3 months of their referral**
- People having a diagnostic assessment for autism are **assessed for coexisting physical health conditions and mental health problems**
- People with autism have a **personalised management plan that takes into account their strengths and needs**
- People with autism have **a designated professional to oversee and coordinate their care and support**
- People with autism are **not prescribed drugs to treat the core symptoms of their autism**
- People with autism who develop **behaviour that challenges** are **assessed for possible triggers, including physical and medical problems, before any interventions for behaviour that challenges are started**
- People with autism, and behaviour that challenges, are **offered drug treatment for their behaviour that challenges only if psychosocial interventions are not effective or appropriate**

How?

- **Increasing awareness and understanding of autism**
- **Developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis**
- **Improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need – Active oversight / management of services/professionals**
- **Helping adults with autism into work**
- **Enabling local partners to develop relevant services and networks to meet need early**

And ensuring all other existing policies/plans apply equally to adults with autism + their families/carers

NAO confirmed that local service models will deliver substantial cost savings to public service budgets by:

- Providing local diagnostic assessment, and some post-diagnostic support, meaning that people no longer have to be funded to be assessed out-of-area;
- Engaging in preventative treatment work with those at risk of losing their independence, minimising contact with mental health services, and in particular the current over-reliance on crisis intervention and/or acute admissions;
- Supporting local secondary mental health and learning disability professionals to diagnose and manage people with ASC on their caseloads effectively and efficiently;
- Joint-working with care managers to evaluate the quality and value-for-money offered by out-of-area placements, with a view to facilitating the return of people, as appropriate, to the local area.
- Enabling people with ASC to maximise positive education, training and employment opportunities

Good Services from an effective local Comprehensive Autism Commissioning Programme

- Strong integrated health and social care components that focuses on **early identification and support of people with autism, and targets high-risk groups**
- **Locally available assessment and Early Diagnosis services** – with key treatment component **in accordance with NICE recommendations**
- **Evidence-based early interventions targeting social and communication** enhancement interventions
- A **“lifetime” care pathway** for autism across CYPS/Adults – **especially through transitions**
- Identified **range of initial post diagnostic support options for all**, including person-centred, access to support groups and family support programmes

Good Services from an effective local Comprehensive Autism Commissioning Programme

- On-going local post-diagnostic care-coordination interventions and community-based support, especially for individuals with complex support needs
- A range of mainstream community options and 'reasonable adjustments' in place to support access
- Specialist mental health or learning disability care services for people with autism who present with behaviours that challenge, patients whose ASCs are complicated by co-morbid functional mental health problems, and those with complex diagnoses
- Workforce development and facilitation role equally important as direct clinical support
- Involvement of people with ASC and their families in recruitment, training, running and monitoring of services – as well as supporting peer mentorship and user-led initiatives such as self-help groups, employment schemes

Government published list of the 10 outcomes that should be achieved if the Autism Strategy and Statutory Guidance can be judged successful

- Better Health
- More included and economically active - Work
- Living in accommodation that meets their needs - Homes
- Benefiting from the Personalisation Agenda in health and social care, and can access Personal Budgets
- No longer managed inappropriately in the criminal justice system
- Adults with autism, their families and carers are satisfied with local services
- Involved in service planning
- Local authorities and partners know how many adults with autism live in the area
- A clear and trusted diagnostic and support pathway available locally in line with NICE Guidance / Quality Standards
- Health and social care staff make reasonable adjustments to services to meet ASC needs

A Clear Vision

“All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents.”