

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee: 8th January 2018

Report of the Director of Social Services

Autistic Spectrum Disorder: Adult Autism Team

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the Adult Autism Team and to outline future actions to be undertaken.

Recommendations

1. That the work being undertaken by the Adult Autism Team is noted by Scrutiny Committee.
2. That Scrutiny Committee receives annual updates on the work of this team.

Reason for the Recommendations

1&2 To keep Members apprised of the work of the Adult Autism Team and its achievements to date.

Background

2. In 2009, an Adult Task and Finish Group established by the Welsh Government outlined that:
“a diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder does not necessarily lead to any provision of service. Adults with ASD do not fit easily within Learning Disability (LD) or Mental Health (MH) Services, and for people with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism especially, this is perhaps the biggest barrier to accessing services.”
3. The inception and delivery of the Adult Autism Advice Service across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan was specifically designed to offer low level support, advice and signposting for adults who fall within this gap. The need for such a service has been confirmed in the level of uptake for short term, preventative work.
4. Funding that was originally provided as a grant is now included in the RSG. Sufficient funding has been identified from the ring-fenced amounts for Cardiff and the Vale to continue providing the service.

5. Over the past 6 years the Adult Autism Team have collated information about available services, both within Local Authorities and from external service providers in order to appropriately signpost clients to available services and support them in accessing such services, should this be a barrier. The introduction of the DEWIS Cymru directory of wellbeing services has been helpful in this respect. Many clients due to their communication difficulties still struggle to navigate such systems and benefit from additional support with signposting to available services. This preventative work has aimed to enable clients to access support or opportunities that may already be available to them, with or without a diagnosis, but where they may not have known, or felt able to access the service, without the low-level support available through the service.
6. In March 2017 the Minister for Health and Social Services Welsh Government announced an investment of £13 million across Wales to develop an Integrated Autism Service (IAS) based on health board footprints. The structure of the IAS is prescribed by Welsh Government.
7. Local authorities in both Cardiff and the Vale, through the Regional Partnership Board have supported the local implementation of the IAS. In practical terms this included adding the staff currently making up the Adult Autism Team to the Integrated Autism staff team funded by Welsh Government. Local authority staff has continued to deliver an information advice and assistance service as described above, with the added benefits of being part of a wider integrated service.
8. This preventative work aims to contribute to the Local Authorities work in delivering preventative services that meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
9. The Adult Autism Advice service offers short-term, targeted intervention which promotes the independence and autonomy of adults with High Functioning Autism and Asperger's syndrome by:
 - providing them with a clear point of contact for information and advice;
 - ensuring that those who are eligible for statutory support are re-directed to existing services;
 - signposting those who do not meet the eligibility criteria for statutory social services to appropriate services located in their communities;
 - reducing the risk of crisis and helping to prevent enduring mental health problems by encouraging socialisation and directing individuals to social groups, local events and activities; and
 - profiling any unmet need and highlighting any gaps in provision which can then be relayed to local steering groups and to the Welsh Government for consideration.

Relevant Issues and Options

10. Access to the service is via telephone, on-line interactions, face-to-face meetings or by referral from partner agencies. Some are simple requests for information while others can result in multiple contacts over extended periods, depending on need.
11. The service is effective in preventing or delaying the need for more extensive care and support. The service acts to try to "minimise the effect on disabled people of their disability", one of the key requirements of the Social Services and Well Being Act, Section 6.2.
12. For this particular client group the Service also meets the Local Authority legal obligation under the above Act to "provide people with information and advice relating

to care and support and assistance in accessing care and support". Every request to the service results in the provision of information and/or advice. In addition many enquiries are also followed up with some continued support in accessing services that already exist in the community, for example the staff may accompany individuals to initial meetings with support groups; volunteer agencies and statutory agencies.

13. In addition, the Service continually works to enable clients to live their lives as independently as possible, which is another key aspect of the Act. Rather than creating a dependence on support staff, the service, where possible, works with the individual to encourage their independence and autonomy. Case work is based on short term intervention not long term, continual support.
14. The service had created long standing opportunities for social contact. This is principally achieved through monthly daytime forums in both Cardiff and Barry which provide a medium for adults to influence the development of the service and provides adults with a range of information from local groups and services which they can access.
15. Since merging with other staff to form the Integrated Autism Service the range of opportunities available has been extended.
 - Extra staff has allowed the frequency of delivery of the social skills workshops to adults on the spectrum, the Socialeyes Programme, to be increased from 1 to 3-4 per annum.
 - Staff have undertaken training in Incredible Years parenting programme and have worked jointly with education staff in delivering a course to parents of children with autism. This program provides skills specific to parenting an autistic child.
 - Staff have been supported by the team dietitian and undertaken training in food and nutrition. This training has then been used as part of a new course established, Skills for Life. Skills for Life encompasses a range of skills that adults need to enable them to be more independent. These include cleaning and laundry, personal hygiene, appointments, budgeting and shopping and preparing food.
 - The new IAS team includes clinicians delivering adult diagnosis. Adults who receive a diagnosis are then able to access a 6 week post diagnostic course which has been developed by Cardiff and Vale IAS and shared nationally with other IAS teams.
 - The principle difference arising from the merger with the IAS is that staff are able to access clinical support. This has enabled staff to work more effectively with clients with more complex needs. This is especially noticeable in the area of mental health.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

16. Local authority funding supports two part time ASD Community Support Project Workers who deliver the service across the two local authority areas. The posts are for 20 hours and 13.5 hours a week. Sufficient funding has been identified within the ring-fenced RSG funding across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to meet the running costs per annum of approximately £24,000.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

17. There are no sustainability or climate change implications as a direct result of this report.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

18. There are no legal implications as a direct result of this report.

Crime and Disorder Implications

19. As individuals with high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome may have social communication difficulties and sometimes those who come into contact with the police can be at risk of being misunderstood. The service helps to raise public awareness about how individuals are best supported and also to signpost to existing means of support such as the Keep Safe Cymru Card to help overcome these barriers.
20. For the same reason, individuals with high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome can sometimes be at an increased risk of falling victim to deception or manipulation. By establishing a local source of advice and information, this risk can be reduced.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

21. The service has been established in order to ensure that adults with High Functioning Autism or Asperger's syndrome are afforded the same opportunities in carrying out their daily life as adults who do not have such disorders. Marketing materials for the service are available in Welsh.

Corporate/Service Objectives

22. An Inclusive and Safe Vale, reducing poverty and social exclusion. An Active and Healthy Vale, Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living.

Policy Framework and Budget

23. The report is in accordance with the Council's policy framework and budget.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

24. No local ward member consultation has been undertaken as this is a Vale-wide initiative.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

25. Healthy Living and Social Care.

Background Papers

Refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan

<http://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/resource/161130ASD-actionplanen.pdf>

Refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan Delivery plan 2016-2020

<http://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/resource/161130ASD-deliveryplanen.pdf>

Integrated Autism Service marketing materials, English and Welsh
Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy

Contact Officer

Linda Woodley, Operational Manager for Learning Disability Services
Keith Ingram, Autism Project Lead Officer

Officers Consulted

Suzanne Clifton, Head of Adult Services

Responsible Officer:

Lance Carver, Director of Social Services