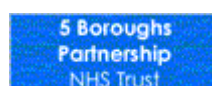




# Communities Directorate and Children & Enterprise Directorate

## AUTISM STRATEGY

2012 - 2016



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## INFORMATION SHEET

<b>Service area</b>	All operational teams
<b>Date effective from</b>	June 2012
<b>Responsible officer(s)</b>	Operational Director, Commissioning and Complex Needs Practice Manager, Autism Policy Officer, People and Communities Policy Team
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<b>Target audience</b>	Children's Services Adult Services
<b>Date of committee/SMT decision</b>	
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<b>Superseded document(s)</b>	N/A
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Cllr Marie Wright

## **PREFACE**

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Cllr Marie Wright is the portfolio holder for Adult Social Care and Chair of the Adult Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Autism refers to a range or spectrum of lifelong developmental conditions that can affect individuals in many ways but share common characteristics, including difficulty with social interaction and communication and a lack of flexibility in thinking and behaving. It can be known by many different names including Autism Spectrum Conditions, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Autism or Aspergers. For the purposes of this strategy the term Autism Spectrum Conditions shall be used to refer to all associated conditions.

Some recent studies have estimated prevalence at about 90 people per 10,000 (or nearly 1%) in the population, or even higher. These estimates are much higher than previously thought with some people concluding that the condition is becoming more common, and suggesting that environmental factors are responsible, although these have never been conclusively identified. The prevailing view is however, that higher prevalence estimates are due to a broadening of the definition of autism, and increased awareness amongst professionals and the population as a whole, and that complicated genetic factors are largely responsible for the conditions.

For a borough the size of Halton, the prevalence estimates would mean there may be about 1090 people with an autism spectrum condition. Of these, many are likely to be able to live relatively independently or without any additional support, whilst around 240 may be expected to have an IQ below 70 (i.e. associated with a learning disability) and likely to require a lifetime of specialist care.

Due to the wide range of conditions covered within the autism spectrum, people with the conditions are likely to access a wide range of local services. In developing a local Autism Strategy, this presents a particular challenge as a coordinated response to autism must necessarily cut across traditional service boundaries.

As a range of conditions that affect so many people directly, and many more indirectly, it is not surprising that they have attracted much attention from national policy makers. In 2009, the National Audit Office presented its report *Supporting People with Autism through Adulthood* which made a number of recommendations for improving outcomes for people with autism. More recently, the Government passed the Autism Act (2009) with an accompanying Autism Strategy, *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives* (2010) and a first year Delivery Plan, with publication of statutory guidance for health and social care and full delivery plan in December 2010. There will be formal review of this guidance in 2013.

Locally, in 2008, Halton Borough Council and NHS Halton and St Helens commissioned the National Autistic Society to produce a strategic review of local services and make recommendations for improvement. In 2012, the Local Authority asked for further recommendations to be made to extend the progress already made following the review

in 2008. The review in 2012 included both children's and adult's service and resulted in a detailed report with recommendations being produced by the National Autistic Society.

There is no attempt in this Strategy to summarise the various requirements and recommendations contained within the above documents, but they have nevertheless influenced the content of this Strategy, which attempts to identify important areas for consideration, reviews where we are up to in Halton, how we may improve, and how we intend to do this over the next three years.

**SECTION ONE:        AUTISM IN CONTEXT**

**TITLE:                 NATIONAL CONTEXT**

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According to the National Strategy Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the Government's vision is that "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."

The statutory guidance published by Department of Health in December 2010 following Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, for health and social care services includes information on the following:-

- The provision of relevant services for the purpose of diagnosing autistic spectrum conditions in adults
- The identification of adults with such conditions
- The assessment of the needs of adults with such conditions for relevant services
- Planning in relation to the provision of relevant services to persons with autistic spectrum conditions as they move from being children to adults
- Other planning in relation to the provision of relevant services to adults with autistic spectrum conditions
- The training of staff who provide relevant services to adults with such conditions
- Local arrangements for leadership in relation to the provision of relevant services to adults with such conditions

For the purposes of this strategy, autism is defined as a lifelong condition that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people. It also affects how a person makes sense of the world around them. The three main areas of difficulty, which all people with autism share, are known as the "triad of impairments", which are:

- Social communication (e.g. problems using and understanding verbal and non-verbal language, such as gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice)
- Social interaction (e.g. problems in recognising and understanding other people's feelings and managing their own)
- Social imagination (e.g. problems in understanding and predicting other people's intentions and behaviours and imagining situations outside their own routine)

*[ Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010]*

The Government's vision for people with autism over the next three years means:-

- Having a right to receive an assessment of need from social services
- Getting the same opportunities for education and further education as everyone else
- Being supported to get a job and stay in work

- Being able to choose where to live just like anyone else
- Having relationships and social networks
- Having their health needs properly met in a way which is appropriate for someone with autism
- Being safe from hate crime and discrimination
- Living in a society where people understand, respect and accommodate difference
- Receiving support to live independently as appropriate

*[Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010]*

## **SECTION ONE: AUTISM IN CONTEXT**

### **TITLE: LOCAL CONTEXT**

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#### **A VISION for HALTON**

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills; enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and a safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhood. *[Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2006-2011]*

Halton's Strategic Partnership Board has set out five strategic priorities for the Borough, in its Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026, which will help to build a better future for Halton:

- **A Healthy Halton**
- **Environment and Regeneration in Halton**
- **Employment learning and skills in Halton**
- **Children & Young people in Halton**
- **A Safer Halton**

Our vision in Halton is that young people with social and health care needs should enjoy the same rights to citizenship and inclusion as all young people.

Support services should therefore be directed towards helping young people to develop choices that are right for them, to realise their full potential, and participate fully in the wider community.

In the sections that follow, the vision is broken down into specific aims. In each section, there is an evaluation of how far these aims are being met already, and how we can improve further, leading to specific actions, which are summarised in the Development Plan in Appendix One.

#### **POPULATION AND SOCIO ECONOMIC DATA**

Halton is a largely urban area of 119,500 people. Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool. The population of Halton was in decline for over a decade, but has recently started to increase. Between 1991 and 2002 the estimated Borough population decreased by 6,500 people from 124,800 to 118,300.

At present, Halton has a younger population than the national and regional averages. The mid-year population estimates, population projections for under 19's, in Halton shows that there has been an increase in the numbers in the 0-4 year olds, the 5-9 and 15-19 year old populations have remained static over the past few years but the 10-14 year old population has decreased. Population projections show that the 10-14 and 15-19 population is predicted to decrease in the next few years.

However, Halton mirrors the national picture of an ageing population, with projections indicating that the population of the Borough will age at a faster rate than the national average. In 1996, 12.9% of the total population were aged 65 and over, by 2006 this had



increased to nearly 14% and by 2015 this is projected to have increased to 17%, which could have a significant impact on the need for health and social care.

The population is predominantly white (98.8%) with relatively little variation between wards. However, in recent years, it has seen a small influx of Eastern European (Polish & Slovakian) migrants.

## ASSESSMENT OF NEED

The following tables details actual and projected areas of need, based on young people currently receiving or likely to need Adult Social Care, those expected to leave school in 2010 – 2012 and those currently receiving services from Connexions for clarity and future service and commissioning development. Please also refer to section two of this strategy: Assessment and Care Management for more detailed information relating to people with autism in Halton. The Positive Behaviour Support Service has been working jointly with the Practice Manager for Autism within the local authority, regarding several key areas such as training, Positive Behaviour Support Service development, family liaison and organisation links to support those with autism spectrum conditions and their families, as well being active members of the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group and training sub group.

### Young People receiving or likely to need adult social care (Financial Year):

	2010/11	2011/12
Turning 18 – still in school	6	9
Leaving school (may go on to college)	7	7
Leaving college	8	Not known

### Young People expected to Leave School in 2010 - 2012

School year beginning	ASC (inc Aspergers)	Physical Disability	Learning Disability	Social & Communication Difficulties for Severe Learning Disabilities
Sept 10	27	9	27	1
Sept 11	36	13	28	3
Sept 12	26	9	21	3

### Young People 19-25 with Learning Disability & Difficulties currently receiving services from Connexions

ASD	Age 19	Age 20	Age 21	Age 22	Age 23	Age 24	Total
Aspergers Syndrome	6	2	2	1	0	0	11
Autism	1	1	0	5	1	0	8
Total	7	3	2	6	1	0	19

PHYSICAL	Age 19	Age 20	Age 21	Age 22	Age 23	Age 24	Total
Cerebral Palsy	1	0	1	1	0	1	4
Cystic Fibrosis	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Head Injuries	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hydrocephalus	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other Mobility Problems	1	1	0	1	0	0	3

Restricted Growth (Achondraplasia)	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Spina Bifida	2	0	0	0	0	1	3
Wheelchair User	0	2	0	1	2	1	6
Total	6	5	1	3	2	3	20

SLD	Age 19	Age 20	Age 21	Age 22	Age 23	Age 24	Total
Severe Learning Difficulties	10	8	2	5	2	1	28
Total	10	8	2	5	2	1	28

[Source of Figure Tables: Halton Multi-Agency Transition Strategy for Young People aged 14-25, 2010-2013]

## DEPRIVATION

Deprivation is a major determinant of health. Lower income levels often lead to poor levels of nutrition, poor housing conditions, and inequitable access to healthcare and other services.

Deprivation, measured using the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007, ranks Halton as the 30<sup>th</sup> most deprived authority in England (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived). This is 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 10<sup>th</sup> highest in the North West: St Helens (47<sup>th</sup>), Wirral (60<sup>th</sup>) and Sefton (83<sup>rd</sup>) are way down the table compared to Halton.

The 2007 IMD shows that deprivation in Halton is widespread with 57,958 people (48% of the population) in Halton living in 'Super Output Areas' (SOA's) that are ranked within the most deprived 20% of areas in England.

In terms of Health and Disability, the IMD identifies 53 SOA's (Super Output Areas) that fall within the top 20% most health deprived nationally and that approximately 40,000 people (33% of the population) live in the top 4% most health deprived areas in England. At ward level, Windmill Hill is the most deprived area in terms of health. However, health deprivation is highest in an SOA (Super Output Areas) within Castlefields, ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> most deprived nationally.

## HEALTH

Health is also a key determinant of a good quality of life and the first priority of Halton's Community Strategy states that 'statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country and single it out as the aspect of life in the Borough in most urgent need of improvement'.

## **SECTION TWO: PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING**

### **TITLE: UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL POPULATION**

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#### **AIMS**

- Local commissioners have accurate data on the numbers of people with autism in the area, enabling them to identify need, plan capacity and commission appropriate services

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

We know from national studies that a high proportion of people with moderate or severe learning disabilities are likely to have conditions within the autism spectrum, often associated with other conditions such as epilepsy. These people, due to their need for lifetime care and support, are likely to be known to social care services, although it does not necessarily follow that proper diagnosis has taken place, needs are well understood, and appropriate service responses are in place.

It is also clear from national studies that the majority of people with conditions on the autism spectrum have average or above average intelligence. Many of these are unlikely to be in contact with social care services, either because they have no wish nor need for such services or they have not been eligible for learning disability or mental health services. This complicates the task of understanding the local population.

For children, this is being tackled through the Early Years and the School Age Pathways, which bring multi-disciplinary resources to bear on children and young people, including diagnosis and post diagnostic support. Children may be identified as having special educational needs. In some cases, the child under the graduated approach of special educational needs, will have support from their school setting and in some cases, enhanced provision or a statement of special educational needs. Additionally children whose needs cannot be met in mainstream school, can be supported by resource based provision or special school. Whilst a child/young person is supported through the diagnostic pathway other services and support will be offered appropriate to their assessed needs. If a child does not meet the criteria for an Autism Diagnosis appropriate support and/or services will be offered depending on the identified needs.

Although there is no register of adults with disabilities in Halton, in order to increase understanding within Adult Services, an exercise has taken place to identify people known to services who either have a diagnosis of autism, or who present with typical features of the condition.

Halton's Children Services do hold a register of disabled children but as it is a voluntary "register", it does not represent a complete list of disabled children living within the Borough and does not yet contain specific information relating to diagnosis for each child.

Over the last few years, information sharing as part of the 14-25 Transition process has improved and with better information being available about children and young people, this has the potential to inform adult services and ensure an improved service response.

## **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Complete audit survey of adults to establish how many have a diagnosis of autism or who present with typical features of the condition
- Year on year improvements in information as young people identified and tracked
- Information on higher functioning autism – are we missing people where there is a need to reduce social isolation, prevent mental health difficulties, improve access into work, provide appropriate housing, and offer information and support for carers?

## **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Borough-wide school initiative called Comparison, Analysis of Special Pupil Attainment (CASPA) for all schools to be able to identify the small steps of progress of pupils that enables targeting and tracking. A model of a virtual school is adopted to track a child or young person's progress informing commissioning and service delivery.
- Over the next two years, we will track cohorts of young people leaving school as a way of increasing understanding of response to autism, and in particular higher functioning autism.
- Identify lead officer(s) to explore how information relating to service users with autism spectrum conditions is tracked in both Children's Services and Adult Services e.g. how information is recorded on Carefirst and Tribal and how accurate it is.

## **SECTION TWO: PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING**

### **TITLE: LEADERSHIP**

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#### **AIMS**

- A senior manager within the Authority has responsibility for leading a strategic approach to autism across all its parts
- Local stakeholder representatives are brought together in a group to set a clear direction for improving services for people with autism

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

During 2009, an Autism Stakeholders Group and a Strategy Group were formed in the wake of a report commissioned from the National Autistic Society to review local services. Various working groups have been meeting to look in more detail at some of the areas covered by the report. The working groups established from the Autism Stakeholders group were focusing on the following areas:-

1. **Workforce Planning – Training & Development** – To look at person centred approaches, informing staff/workforce, specialist training and auditing staff knowledge and skills
2. **Commissioning in Transition** – To look at the 5 year plan to find out the numbers coming through transition and to feed back to the stakeholder group. Collate numbers on how many people across all services are on the spectrum and how to meet their needs
3. **Meaningful Employment** – To look at the education pathway and meaningful employment opportunities.

It was recognised that lead officers needed to be identified to carry forward the work. For the working groups, the following lead officers were identified:

**Workforce Planning - Training and Development** – Learning and Development Manager

**Commissioning in Transition** – Divisional Manager, Independent Living

**Meaningful Employment** – Divisional Manager, Community Services

The Autism Stakeholder Group was established in order to focus on the following priority areas:-

- Support the delivery of a workforce across all sectors in Halton that is responsive to the needs of people with autism spectrum conditions
- Deliver greater opportunities for full social inclusion for this group of people
- Ensure that younger people with autism spectrum conditions receive a smooth and seamless transition into adulthood
- Develop and promote a range of information and advice for people with autism spectrum conditions in a range of formats
- Advise the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategy group about current issues in Halton for people with autism spectrum conditions
- Ensure that services which are commissioned for people with autism spectrum conditions are of the highest quality and meet clear outcomes

- Ensure that carers of people with autism spectrum conditions are fully supported and provided with effective information
- Research local needs and development options and report these to the strategic group

In order to ensure work on the priority areas was progressed, the following functions of the Stakeholder Group were agreed:-

- To develop and implement a workforce training plan across all sectors
- To develop and implement a quality outcomes, learning and performance monitoring framework for autism spectrum conditions
- To develop specific information in a range of formats, which meets the needs of people with autism spectrum conditions and their carers
- To monitor the implementation of transition into adulthood processes to ensure that younger people continue to receive services that meet their needs
- To develop a range of suitable employment, education, training and voluntary opportunities for people with autism spectrum conditions
- To develop and implement a communication process with people with autism spectrum conditions and their carers, to ensure that their views are made fully known to the strategic group

#### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Link to National Autistic Society Review 2012 recommendations for both children's and adults services
- Refresh Autism Group(s). The Autism Stakeholder and Strategic Group to merge in order to ensure a cohesive approach to service delivery across children and adults services. The merged groups to be known as the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group.

#### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- The local authority lead professional – Operational Director for Complex Needs, to continue to chair the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group meetings and ensure this group meets on a quarterly basis to keep abreast of all developments in this area.
- The Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group to agree and implement the Halton Autism Strategy 2011-2014
- The lead professional and members of the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group to decide the governance arrangements for the group regarding where it should report into.
- Embracing and implementing the recommendations received from the National Autistic Society review of the authority

## **SECTION TWO: PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING**

### **TITLE: DIAGNOSIS**

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#### **AIMS**

- There is a clear pathway to diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Conditions for both children and adults that meets NICE guidance

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

The current pathways for diagnosis for autism spectrum conditions are:

- 1) Children's Early Years Pathway
- 2) Children's School Aged Pathway
- 3) Adults with a learning disability via the learning disability health services provided by the 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- 4) Adults without a learning disability are referred to Merseycare NHS Trust

For people who are currently known to children's services, these cases are managed through the transition process with full involvement from adult services. The local agreement is that all people managed through this process are referred to adult mental health services as they reach adulthood, so that a full assessment of their needs as adults can be completed. The picture is more complex for adults who have not been diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition in childhood, and who may have a range of additional needs as a result. Currently, they can be referred into a range of services and it is not consistent which service area will be responsible for their care management.

In order to provide more clarity around the pathways for diagnosis, a number of work streams have been undertaken across Children and Adult Services in Halton in order to strengthen the pathways already in place. In the Children and Enterprise Directorate of Halton Borough Council, work has already been undertaken to develop and implement an Early Years diagnostic pathway and a School Years diagnostic pathway for children with autism spectrum conditions.

In 2005, a working party of professionals developed a School Aged Diagnostic Pathway for pupils with Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Conditions. This pathway, whilst still in draft form, encompasses all stages in the code of practice and highlights how pupils with Social Communication (SC) and Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) can be supported. The aims of the working party were:-

- To develop a pathway for school aged pupils with Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Conditions
- To agree a common definition of Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Conditions
- To audit current knowledge skills and good practice within Halton
- To examine and share current systems and networks, methods of referral and assessment between agencies
- To highlight training and development needs of Halton Borough Council staff working with Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Conditions school aged pupils

- To highlight resources and provision for pupils with Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Conditions at each stage of their education with a particular emphasis on any stage of transition for example, nursery to reception, key stage 1 to key stage 2, primary/secondary transition, post 16 transition

Since 2005, a pilot that encompasses a working group have been developing a multi-agency pathway for referral and assessment of school-aged children with Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Conditions. The aims of the developed pathway are:-

- To continue to provide a co-ordinated and planned referral and assessment route in Halton for school aged pupils
- To facilitate a better understanding between agencies about their respective roles and support systems
- To highlight and identify resources, training needs and facilities for those people working with and supporting pupils with Autism Spectrum Conditions and Social Communication
- To fit in with the Health strategic priorities and Halton Borough Council's Children and Young People's Plan
- To ensure that those pupils with Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Condition difficulties, receive appropriate support within their respective school and home settings
- To continue to provide a link with the early years pathway for Autism Spectrum Conditions and Social Communication difficulties which already exists within Halton
- To continue to provide information and links and support for families in Halton of Children with Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Conditions

In relation to adults there are currently two pathways for diagnosis. The first is for those with a learning disability or autism spectrum condition which is part of the specialised health services, provided by the 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The second is for individuals who may have an Autism Spectrum Condition or Aspergers Syndrome, where a funding request is made by GPs to the PCT, prior to a referral being made to a specialist team in Liverpool. Over the past two years, there have been between 10-12 requests per annum for Aspergers assessments. The assessment provides a diagnosis and recommendations concerning areas of life where extra support may be required. A pilot project has been established by the 5 Boroughs Partnership, which is offering non-learning disability diagnosis on a spot purchase basis.

A half day workshop was set up in August 2011, to start the process of developing a clinical pathway to address the needs of people with autism spectrum conditions. The aim of the workshop was to produce a suggested best practice clinical pathway for pan-borough discussion, with the possibility of considering its future implementation and impact of coordinated commissioning, service development and workforce planning. This workshop is only the start of this process and does not represent a final agreed model. The stakeholders invited to attend the clinical pathway workshop included representatives from:

- St Helens
- Knowsley
- Halton
- Warrington
- Individuals with a diagnosis of an autism spectrum condition
- Carer group representatives



- Commissioners (social care and health)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) health professionals
- Transition
- Positive Behaviour Support Service
- Care Management
- Adult Learning Disability Services
- Adult Mental Health Services

It was intended that the pathway emerging from this would serve as a useful benchmark against which local services and current provision within each borough can be compared and service needs highlighted and identified as necessary areas requiring further development.

Elements of the clinical pathway, which were discussed at the workshop included:-

- Routes of referral (e.g. self versus professional body)
- Triage requirements (e.g. screening measures made available)
- Pre-assessment support/advice
- Post-assessment support (immediate from assessment team)
- Assessment time-frames and details of content
- Post-assessment support (longer-term individual/systematic support)

It was agreed at the workshop that the proposed clinical pathway produced from the workshop, should be shared with the Autism Strategy Groups within each borough and comments sought regarding:

- Structure and content, highlighting areas of agreement or concern
- Mapping of current links and/or services within each locality that map onto this model
- Identification of current local services that exceeds the model presented

Following the consultation process with each of the local Autism Strategy Groups, all responses received are to be collated and information disseminated to interested parties, with the potential for a further workshop to be scheduled. (Clinical Pathways and Autism Spectrum Conditions: Summary of outcomes from a half-day workshop, Dr Alistair L. Barrowcliff – Consultant Clinical Psychologist/Lead Clinician, 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011)

### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Complete school years pathway
- Review adult diagnostic pathway following the publication of the NICE Clinical Guide

### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

Halton must ensure there is a clear pathway to diagnosis in our local area, therefore, we must:

- Finalise the School Years pathway for children with adherence to NICE guidance for Children 2011

- Agree and implement a revised adult diagnostic pathway once NICE have published their clinical guide in 2012
- Establish a framework to ensure that if a child or adult is diagnosed with autism, they will be offered an assessment of their needs, regardless of their IQ and their carers will be informed of their right to a carers assessment
- Staff working in health and social care are able to identify potential signs of autism and understand how to make reasonable adjustments in their behaviour, communication and services for children and adults with autism spectrum conditions [*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010*]

## **SECTION TWO: PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING**

### **TITLE: ASSESSMENT AND CARE MANAGEMENT**

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#### **AIMS**

- A route to assessment of need for all people with Autism Spectrum Conditions
- Assessors are competent to deal with Autism Spectrum Conditions
- Needs of people with Autism Spectrum Conditions are fully recognised

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

In response to concerns that people with Autism Spectrum Conditions may fall between services and fail to receive appropriate attention, a local protocol has been agreed whereby people with Autism Spectrum Conditions presenting for assessment will be directed towards mental health services unless it is clear that the person has a learning disability, in which case the Adults Learning Disability Team will assume responsibility.

Due to Halton being a relatively small local authority in terms of the size of population in the borough, it is not felt that the best use of resources would be to set up a separate specialist team, to specialise in supporting people with autism spectrum conditions. It is felt that a more appropriate use of resources would be to have specialists within teams, who have received relevant training and support to have sufficient awareness of autism spectrum conditions, to provide an appropriate level of service to individuals.

In light of the personalisation agenda, it is imperative that the needs of individuals with autism spectrum conditions are taken into account in this planning process. In Halton, the staff responsible for completing the supported assessment questionnaires and offering support planning, have been offered autism spectrum condition awareness training. The introduction of an Initial Assessment Team to be based at the Contact Centre, will ensure that the first point contact will provide better signposting and advice to people accessing services and to those who do not meet the eligibility criteria of Fair Access to Care Services. Health Action Plans also help to identify associated health needs and will further allow better support planning for the future. Work with transition cases starts from 14 years and these cases are tracked by various joint panels. Best practice has shown that starting to engage early with individuals has the best results.

Eligibility criteria for Halton Borough Council is currently set to address the needs for those with moderate, substantial or critical needs and are therefore eligible for preventative services. However, a number of referrals are received where an individual's needs may not be classified as moderate or substantial. This highlights the requirement to be able to signpost these individuals to other services for support or advice, needs to be strengthened in order to identify suitable support services in the borough.

The Positive Behaviour Support Service was developed in 2010, with Halton Borough Council as the service provider. The service works with people who present with behaviour that challenges services, which can include those with an autistic spectrum condition, and their family. The service aims are to:-

- Contribute to the multidisciplinary assessment of people. The particular focus of the service is to help with the understanding of underlying functions of behaviour that challenges services, parents or carers
- Acquire evidence to support assessment through a variety of techniques including direct observation of behaviour and gathering background information
- On the basis of evidence gained through multidisciplinary assessment, contribute to drawing up plans designed to reduce behaviour that challenges services
- Directly train frontline staff in the implementation of plans
- Deploy staff from the service to work alongside families and frontline staff where deemed necessary
- Monitor and review the success of planned interventions, refining them as necessary on the basis of evidence, in all cases working closely with the multidisciplinary team
- Provide follow up support after interventions have been agreed and are up and running in order to monitor progress and provide top up training where necessary

For those people who are known to social services and are receiving an active service from a social work team and who present with behaviour that challenges services, they are mostly likely to be referred to the Positive Behaviour Support Service via their social worker. Children who are going through the autism spectrum condition diagnosis pathway, can also be referred to the Positive Behaviour Support Service, as part of the Early Intervention arm of the service. In terms of the support the Positive Behaviour Support Service can provide, there are four key areas in which referrals will be prioritised under:-

- (1) Early Intervention (particularly in relation to Children's Services)
- (2) Crisis Prevention/Management
- (3) Technical Support
- (4) Placement Development

The broad eligibility criteria for a child or adult to receive support from the Positive Behaviour Support Service are that, the child or adult should present with behaviour that challenges services, associated with moderate or severe learning disability, including conditions such as autism spectrum conditions. There must also be continuing active involvement of a referring professional team. The Positive Behaviour Support Service will also be able to provide one off consultations for advice and support to service providers who support those presenting with behaviour that challenges services.

Halton's Children Services have developed Team around the Family (TAF) services to provide advice, information and support to families and professionals, working with children living in Halton including disabled children and their families. This includes the Disabled Children Service, which is a small team that can be contacted by either professionals or families to have an initial discussion about the disabled child's needs and family's circumstances to establish how best to provide them with support that will assist them to lead more ordinary lives within their community.

We understand that most disabled children and their families will have experienced a number of assessment processes and so it isn't necessary to put families through even more assessments before they can have a Short Break or family support. The child might already have one or more of the following:

- Disability Living Allowance for care at middle rate or above
- A Statement of Special Educational Needs
- Individual support at school for 15 hours or more

If this is the case then they could be eligible for Short Breaks. However, the type and level of service will be dependent on the needs of the child and family circumstances. In all cases, a worker from the Disabled Children's Service, with parental permission, will access any assessments that are already in place. This will help to establish which planning and review systems the child and family are already engaged with. The worker will then participate in the current plan for the child, providing advice on services and ensuring that the Short Breaks documentation is completed.

If there isn't a recent assessment available, then a discussion will take place with the family to establish who has the most professional involvement with their child and whether the child would benefit from a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) assessment. The outcome of the assessment process is that the level and type of service is agreed and implemented through the Short Breaks Plan.

The Short Breaks Plan is reviewed on a 6 monthly basis and changed to reflect any changes in the child and family's circumstances. Some disabled children who may have more complex needs or be living in more difficult family circumstances may need a larger package of support from different services. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to have involvement from a social worker. In these cases, the worker from the Disabled Children's Service will make contact with the Children's Social Care Duty Officer and discuss whether a Child in Need Assessment would be beneficial for the child.

## **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Ensure specialist knowledge and skills available in Children's Services, Adult Mental Health and Learning Disabilities services.
- Training of staff to ensure needs around autism spectrum conditions are properly understood i.e. not underestimated.
- In order to provide a more focused service there is a need to develop an ASC Champion programme and network across social care, health, employment and education services and the voluntary sector, based on the Surrey County Council model. This will need to be completed with minimum financial input and will draw on existing staffing resources from within the Council and also partner agencies, commissioned services etc.
- A new multiagency safeguarding unit is being developed. The aim of this unit will be to provide a hub and spoke model which is multi-agency efficient, flexible and a responsive service to the local population. The Unit will lead on adults safeguarding and dignity across health and social care and will be supporting the local authority and its partner agencies to:-
  - Fully embed safeguarding adults policies and procedures and thus deliver consistent and robust outcomes for vulnerable adults
  - Monitoring the effectiveness of the delivery of their safeguarding adults activity
  - Providing advice and support regarding individual safeguarding adults cases

## **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- The introduction of an Initial Assessment Team (adults) to be based at the Contact Centre. This team will receive referrals and staff members will be fully

trained to identify the correct referral and assessment pathway for the individual and reduce the number of people who may be “missed” in our current referral system.

- The development of a resource directory and web portal which will list all support and advice services available in the borough, and will lead to improvements in signposting for those individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria
- GPs and primary care practitioners are aware of the services available to people with autism and the need for reasonable adjustments within their practices
- Ensure that the ASC Champion programme and network is implemented across social care, health, employment and education services and the voluntary sector
- Ensure the multi-agency safeguarding unit is implemented and provides support concerning safeguarding and dignity across health and social care

## **SECTION TWO: PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING**

### **TITLE: TRANSITION PLANNING**

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#### **AIMS**

- There is smooth handover from services that support children and young people to services that care for adults
- Young people with autism spectrum conditions are enabled to develop the choices that are right for them

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

In Halton, a Transition Protocol has been agreed by key agencies, which identifies professional roles at each stage in the transition process. Connexions have a key role in providing a personal advisor service to all young people, particularly including those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or on school action plus enhanced status. Connexions advisors currently prepare a detailed S.139a statement, to enable full information to be made available to post-16 providers and to ensure that appropriate levels of support are agreed.

A Transition Coordinator was appointed by Halton Borough Council in 2007 to support transition, working closely with Adult and Children and Young People's services. The introduction of this post and the development of a transition protocol and associated procedures has improved the transition process in recent years. The tracking of young people from age 14 – 25, who are likely to need support in the future, provides useful information to help plan future services. It also provides potential early indications of future gaps in services that need to be addressed in commissioning plans.

A further appointment was made in 2010 to support transition from an educational perspective within the Division of Inclusive Learning. The Specialist Teacher works within the SEN Service to promote transition across the age range 0-25, working with young people, families, schools and agencies. This role dovetails into all of the processes mentioned above and there is significant partnership working with the Coordinator from within Social Care, in order to ensure an effective level of tracking and support for all children and young adults.

For young people with more complex needs who clearly meet eligibility criteria for adult services, the current systems are working well. However, there are concerns that some young people who do not meet the eligibility criteria for social care services remain potentially vulnerable. Improvements are required around the safety net for young people aged 18-25 in this position by strengthening preventative services.

The Positive Behaviour Support Service also works across children's and adult services minimising the impact of disparity across services. The Positive Behaviour Support Service exists to:-

- Support mainstream services working with people with learning disabilities, whose behaviour is a significant challenge

- Work directly with people whose behaviour presents the greatest level of challenge
- Become a model of excellence, at the forefront of evidence-based practice in this area

The Positive Behaviour Support Service links in with the Transition Coordinator and also attend the operational managers Transition Group and will continue to be an active member of this group.

### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Look at needs of vulnerable young people and gaps in current services with a view to commissioning more low-level support and strengthen preventative services
- The Transition Protocol is currently being redrafted to reflect that adult social care will begin to work with the young person at 14 years during reviews and then care managers starting the assessment process at 16 years to ensure a seamless transition into adulthood. This will be underpinned by the work of the Positive Behaviour Support Service working across children's and adult services.
- The Positive Behaviour Support Service will be developing an assessment tool to capture data on the impact of interventions to collate information on out of borough placements being used linking ABLLS-R (Assessment of Basic Language and Learning, Partington, 2006) assessments in to the transition process
- The Positive Behaviour Support Service will attend the tracking panel and complex needs panel to offer advice. Adult social care is represented on both the tracking panel and the complex needs panel

### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Look in more detail at current cohorts of young people in transition, looking beyond those felt eligible for adult social care services to those identified as having special educational needs associated with higher functioning Autism. Track them for outcomes in terms of education, employment etc and obtain their views about service gaps.
- All young people moving into adult services, will receive transition support as they move into adulthood. *[Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010]*
- Ensure that the young person is involved in their transition planning and that no decision about them is made without them *[Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010]*



## **SECTION TWO: PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING**

### **TITLE: COMMISSIONING SERVICES**

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#### **AIMS**

- Commissioning local services which aim to provide specialist and preventative measures for people with autism spectrum conditions in Halton.
- Provision of robust local services to reduce the need for young people to move away from their local communities to receive the services they need

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

There is an emphasis on providing services able to adapt to a variety of individual needs rather than autism-specific services.

Local services rather than services at a distance linking into existing care service, education provision and resource basis.

#### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Ensure services are competent to deal with the particular needs of people with autism who may require them

#### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Develop a local commissioning plan for services for children and adults with autism spectrum conditions, based on local population needs [*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010*]
- Ensure the views of children and adults with autism spectrum conditions and their carers are taken into account in the development of services locally [*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010*]
- Ensure that if a child or adult with an autism spectrum condition requires a care service, they will be able to make choices about the services they receive and will be able to use a personal budget to pay for the service they want (if they are eligible for a personal budget inline with the Halton Borough Council eligibility criteria). Ensure that no decision is made about a person without them being involved in the decision making process [*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for Adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010*]

## **SECTION TWO: PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING**

### **TITLE: TRAINING FOR STAFF**

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#### **AIMS**

- There is a local strategy for delivering autism training, that identified the training required by different staff groups in order to deliver services that are competent to deal with people with autism
- Quality training in the field of autism is delivered in line with autism training strategy and the National Autistic Society review recommendations

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

A sub group of the Autism Spectrum Conditions Stakeholder group was established to focus on workforce and training issues regarding autism. The purpose of this sub group was to:-

- Support the workforce across all sectors in Halton by providing effective and efficient Learning & Development interventions
- Ensure people with autism spectrum conditions are involved in the design and delivery of Learning & Development interventions
- Develop learning materials, for reference, following learning activity
- Ensure that carers of people with autism spectrum conditions are able to access high quality training

The functions of this group were to:-

- Develop and implement a workforce training plan across all sectors
- Develop and implement a quality learning and development framework for autism spectrum conditions
- Look at good practice guidelines for the workforce

In addition to providing direct support for service users, the Positive Behaviour Support Service also offers a variety of training packages to promote the overall aims of the service. This training can be accessed by request directly to the Positive Behaviour Support Service and such requests shall be reviewed by the team on a regular basis.

The types of training offered by the team include the following:

- Workshops to raise awareness and skills of professional staff
- Generalised training on issues regarding behaviour that challenges services, for frontline staff
- Training on specific issues e.g. active support
- Problem-solving seminars for whole staff teams
- Mentoring of individual staff
- Support groups for family carers

The Positive Behaviour Support Service provides a rolling training programme on the Introduction to Applied Behaviour Analysis, this programme is coordinated through the Corporate Training Centre. The team are also able to design and deliver bespoke training to individuals or teams. The team may identify additional training needs through their work on individual cases and therefore training events to address these needs, will

be held as required. The Positive Behaviour Support Service may also signpost individuals to other relevant training. The team has now started to conduct follow up training with some of the original Halton services to receive training e.g. Inglefield. In addition, parent workshops are now fully developed after being piloted with local parent support groups. Training with Brookfield School has been scheduled in certain key areas and by linking in with the Educational Psychologist for the school.

Representatives from the Positive Behaviour Support Service are also involved in the Autism Spectrum Condition Training Sub Group for both children and adults and the Diagnosis Pathway Sub Group, to ensure that the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis are included in the work of these groups.

### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Ensure Halton Borough Council Corporate Training includes suitable references to autism spectrum conditions in its Diversity Training and that staff dealing with members of the public receive this training.
- Promote basic awareness training about autism spectrum conditions for customer facing staff in commercial sector organisations
- Refresh range and content of autism-specific training for professionals and para-professionals to create training opportunities in line with Autism Spectrum Conditions Training Framework
- Promote the development of specialist autism knowledge amongst professionals and harness skills within the service to promote general staff development and support better outcomes for people with autism.
- Create additional learning resources with easy access by staff, including a directory of on-line resources

### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Resurrect the Autism Spectrum Condition Training sub group
- Review membership of the Autism Spectrum Condition Training sub group
- Review the draft Training Plan and finalise the plan for implementation across Halton
- Establish a budget for delivery of training interventions identified in the Training Plan
- Identify providers internal and/or external, for training delivery
- Identify other Autism Spectrum Condition training delivered within Halton
- Identify other service user groups that could be involved in the design and delivery of training
- Staff working in health and social care have been offered basic autism awareness training as a minimum standard [*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010*]

- Staff in roles which have a direct impact on access to services for adults with autism – such as GPs, community care assessors and commissioners can access specialist autism training [*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010*]
- Explore the possibility of providing refresher training on autism awareness to account for staff turnover

## **SECTION THREE: SUPPORT**

### **TITLE: INVOLVING AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES**

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#### **AIMS**

- Developments in policy and services affecting people with autism spectrum conditions are made with the involvement of people and their families.
- People with autism spectrum conditions are empowered to speak out about their own wishes and feelings and are listened to
- Support to enable young people to continue to live with their families if they choose to do so.
- Ensure there is recognition and practical support for family and other informal carers.
- Develop an information sharing system linking into existing provision to enable relevant information to be shared with parents and carers
- Recognising the cohort requiring support within a setting and ensuring information is available for the SENCO to distribute as required

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

There has been involvement of representatives from local support groups for autism spectrum conditions in Halton and carer representatives as part of the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group and also in some of the sub groups developed to undertake certain work streams in this area. It has been important to gauge the views of representatives and carers to ensure that the local strategy will be fit for purpose and will contribute to positive change in service provision in the future.

It is also important to ensure that suitable support is available for carers, to ensure that their needs are also met. If a person is identified as being a carer, they are entitled to an assessment of their support needs; this does not depend upon a diagnosis for an autism spectrum condition for the person they care for. For example, of the Positive Behaviour Support Service were involved with a service user and a worker within the team identifies that there is a requirement for a carers assessment to be carried out, a referral will be made in accordance with the Halton Borough Council Carers Assessment Policy. The carers assessment can be undertaken by the local authority or through a self assessment process at the local Carers Centre based in Runcorn. The assessments help to identify the support needs required for the carer and enable them to access information and advice services and respite provision.

Carers Assessments for carers of disabled children are completed by the Carers Development Officer. The Carers Development Officer will visit the carer, discuss the assessment with them and explain about what other information and services may be of use to the family. Requests for a carers assessment should be made to the Disabled Children's Service. The Carers Centre is also able to offer advice, information and support including therapies, family events and outings. Through various consultation

events, the local authority and Carers Centre also provide opportunities to meet other carers in similar situations and join carer support groups which have been created across Runcorn and Widnes.

A pilot scheme called Light Relief, funded by Halton Borough Council, has been established in the borough. Light Relief works to support parents of children with additional needs by providing parents/carers with the opportunity to engage with other parents whose children are presenting with similar challenges. Parents and carers are invited to attend established support groups and share their concerns with others. Parents have the opportunity to meet others, make new friends, share ideas, experiences and resources and get advice about any concerns they may have. Through group discussions, small group interaction, topical videos, hand outs and listening to guest speakers, parents will be enabled to improve communication, feel more confident as parents, build self-esteem, encourage cooperation, look for positives and find solutions and suggestions to challenges their child may be facing. Parents and carers are also welcome to take part in a range of activities and to share ideas and opinions with guest speakers. From the groups, parents and carers can expect non-judgemental support and advice, mini pamper sessions, a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, practical tips that have been tried and tested by other parents, a flexible system of support, the opportunity to speak to guest experts and have access to a range of beneficial information and resources.

In Halton, there are also a number of Children's Centres which are located across the Borough. These centres provide a variety of services and support for children and their families, which includes those with disabilities or additional needs. There are also Integrated Working Support Teams (IWST) based in Runcorn and Widnes, who work closely with the Disabled Children's Service to provide information, advice and support to professionals and families in Halton.

Advocacy services are also very important in supporting both service users and families. The definition of advocacy which is used for health and social care is "...helping and supporting someone else to speak up for what they want. This can involve expressing their views or acting on their behalf to secure services that they require or rights that they are entitled." (Definition taken from Newport MIND, Development of Advocacy HUB, Halton Borough Council, draft March 2011).

There are various types of advocacy which are available in Halton, which include the following:

- Information giving
- Advice
- Befriending
- Short-term issue or crisis advocacy
- Citizen advocacy
- Advocacy visitors
- Self advocacy
- Peer advocacy
- Collective/Group advocacy
- Professional advice
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)
- Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)

The provision of advocacy services is currently being reviewed in Halton and over the next 12 months, it is envisaged that a number of improvements will take place which will benefit a wide range of people across the borough. These benefits will include:

- Improved consistency for all providers
- Increased access to all levels of advocacy
- A clear understanding of the role of befriending in the borough
- Improved training for a wide range of voluntary and community sector staff
- A coordinated approach to advocacy across the borough

*[Development of Advocacy HUB, Halton Borough Council, draft March 2011]*

In regards to advocacy services available for children, in Halton there is Children's Right and Advocacy and Independent. Visitors Service, to provide advocacy services for children and their families. It is best practice to have independence between providers of other services to children in care and the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service. This enables children and young people to have confidence in the service and for the service to effectively challenge practices and policy when required. The main key element to the service is to provide age appropriate information for children looked after to enable them to understand their rights and access the service when needed. This includes specific information and tools for children with disabilities who may have specific communication needs. This information and all contact with children and young people is clear with regard to the service provider's responsibilities to balance confidentiality whilst ensuring children and young people are safe from harm and passing on information when required.

In order to ensure that short breaks services is available for children with autism spectrum conditions and respite provision is available for adults with autism spectrum conditions, a training programme is being rolled out across respite providers which is National Autistic Society accredited. This training will ensure all staff members have received training around autism awareness and active support.

The breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, came into effect in April 2011. These regulations stated that Local Authorities must provide short breaks for carers of disabled children to enable them to continue to care for their disabled child and to take part in everyday activities. Local Authorities were asked to produce a Short Breaks Statement, which is to be reviewed and revised when new services become available, or when there are any changes to existing services.

"Halton's vision is to extend the quantity and quality of Short Breaks to ensure that disabled children, young people and their families have a choice of services, increased access to inclusive services and opportunities towards independence. We will continue to develop engagement with families and young people towards the provision of flexible and responsive services that are child and family focused and led." (Halton Disabled Children's Service – Short Breaks Statement, Halton Borough Council, October 2011)

Halton has stated its commitment to:-

- Supporting disabled children and families to take part in local community life
- Providing clear information for families about support, services and how to access them
- Providing clear information for families about support, services and how to access them
- Providing choices for disabled children and their families to help them make decisions that can best improve their daily lives
- Listening to the views of disabled children and families so we can continue to improve the quality of their lives

- Working in partnership with disabled children and families to ensure their involvement in decision making regarding the development of support services
- Supporting disabled young people to become more independent through a smooth transition into adulthood
- Providing services that enable families of disabled children to have an improved quality of life within their communities

To be eligible for accessing the short breaks system in Halton, disabled children as being those children and young people aged 0-18years whose daily lives are substantially affected by one or more of the following diagnosed conditions:

- A hearing impairment
- A visual impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical disability
- A chronic/life threatening physical illness
- A conscious disorder e.g. epilepsy
- A mental health condition
- A communication disorder (including autism)

Their condition should usually be expected to last for more than 12 months and have a substantial effect upon the child in more than one of the following areas:

- Physical ability
- Communication and understanding
- Awareness of risk and danger
- Behaviour
- Independence

(Halton's Short Breaks Statement, Halton Borough Council, October 2011)

Halton commissions short breaks services and carers support for disabled children and their families from a range of agencies, all of whom deliver services to children living with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. Halton Borough Council has involvement with the National Autistic Society, HAFS, ChAPS and Friends through Early Bird. Woodview Child Development Centre, in partnership with Children Centres and Disabled Children Services, also provide support via the Little Stars and the Little Explorers groups in Halton. There is also a parents/carers group called The Powerful Voices Parent Participation group, which enables members to have a greater involvement in boards and steering groups that make decisions about services that affect them and their families. The young people's group Bright Sparks, is supported by Halton Speak Out to ensure that the views of young people are included in all local and national consultations and in decision making processes.

Through the Light Relief pilot, it was found that parents wanted to write social stories, so they did not have to rely on a professional to do it on their behalf. Social Stories are a tool for teaching social skills to children with autism and related disabilities. Social Stories provide an individual with accurate information about those situations that he/she may find difficult or confusing. Light Relief arranged for social stories training to be delivered to parents by Speech and Language Therapy Services. On completion of this training, parents received a certificate for their knowledge gained. A further training session on visual supports has also been scheduled for the near future. Parents had also requested that they would like to meet with different professionals, in order to find out more information about what they do and have the opportunity to ask questions. So far, Halton's Transition Manager, an Education Psychologist and an ASD Specialist



Teachers have been invited to attend future meetings. Light Relief have also liaised with the National Autistic Society for them to hold a Help! Seminar for Halton parents around Managing Anger, this will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012.

### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE**

- Improve involvement of the voluntary sector
- Appoint a Practice Manager for Autism to be based within adult services

### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Develop an Advocacy “Hub” specification for individuals and families in Halton who require an advocacy service
- Commission a provider to deliver the Advocacy “Hub” and to ensure appropriate publicity of this service
- Ensure that informal carers and/or family members are offered an assessment for their carers needs, to ensure support for carers is in place
- Continue to promote the increasing take up of direct payments and self directed support
- Suitable provision of a Short Breaks Service is available for families of children with autism spectrum conditions if required.
- Suitable provision of respite provision is available for families of adults with autism spectrum conditions if required.

## **SECTION THREE: SUPPORT**

### **TITLE: SUPPORT WITH ACCOMMODATION**

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#### **AIMS**

- There is a range of signposted accommodation options available for people with autism spectrum conditions
- Where specialised support is required to enable people to live independently, this is available locally

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

There is currently a National Development Team for Inclusion scheme taking place in Halton, whereby individuals with autism spectrum conditions who are currently placed out of area, are being supported to return to Halton, if this is their wish. The Positive Behaviour Support Service recently established in Halton, is also supporting providers to develop appropriately skilled support staff to avoid making out of borough placements in the future.

Information on the range of housing options available (“Six Ways to get a home”) has been produced for professionals and families.

Individuals with autism spectrum conditions are able to access a range of generic support services through Supporting People.

There may be situations where the Positive Behaviour Support Service is working with service users who are placed out of borough. If the intention is to work with this service user to support them to move back to Halton, each case will be reviewed on an individual basis. The review of cases and the procedure to be followed to bring the service user back into borough, will involve the care managers and key workers involved with the individual, family members and carers.

#### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Strengthen mechanisms for overseeing accommodation planning and understanding current and future accommodation needs for people with autism spectrum conditions. Strategic approach should include people with lower level needs – “vulnerable” not “complex” – including people with autism spectrum conditions across the spectrum.
- Consider development of low level support such as “Keyring” schemes
- Need to consider development of new builds for people with more complex needs that cannot be easily met through ‘ordinary’ housing to facilitate the provision of community based support. Design of accommodation needs to be looked at carefully to ensure the needs of people with complex autism spectrum conditions are catered for. This, alongside the development of high quality, inclusive support services will avoid the need for people to go outside Halton to access appropriate support.

- Improved understanding of Autism Spectrum Conditions amongst housing providers would ensure a more effective response to accommodation needs

#### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Review mechanisms for planning accommodation and support for disabled people including people with autism spectrum conditions
- New build programme to cater for specialised needs i.e. more spacious single level accommodation
- Increase accommodation options available for all disabled people including those with autism spectrum conditions e.g. Community Living Networks (Keyring)
- Continue joint working between the Positive Behaviour Support Service and local providers to develop skilled, inclusive local support based on individually identified needs
- Improve access to information for professionals, individuals and families regarding local accommodation and support options

## **SECTION THREE: SUPPORT**

### **TITLE: SUPPORT WITH FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS**

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#### **AIMS**

- There are opportunities and support for people with autism spectrum conditions to make and sustain safe friendships and relationships, avoiding the risk of social isolation

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

In Children's Services there are a number of short break activities available for young disabled children or children with additional needs, which enable them to make and maintain friendships. Organisations such as Youth Services promote healthy relationships and work with young people through any issues and provide advice and sessional work on specific issues such as positive relationships, bullying, confidence and self esteem. Halton Speak Out, a self advocacy charity based in Runcorn for people with learning disabilities, has established the Bright Sparks Project which is funded by Halton Borough Council. The aim of the project is to enable more young people to engage in consultations and participation events. Through this group, young people can develop communication and listening skills and build on their confidence. Some young people have received training to be young ambassadors and role models for other young disabled people. Transition support is also available to those young people moving into adult services. This includes projects that support young people to be aspirational and have a central role in deciding what they want for the lives in the future, which can include maintaining or establishing friendships and relationships.

Friendships and relationships have been identified as a priority theme from Valuing People Now in the North West through the work of Halton's Learning Disability Partnership Board. Various events around Valuing People Now have been held for adults with learning disabilities in order to gain people's views on the barriers and issues they face whilst trying to sustain friendships and relationships. Three nurses from the Adults with Learning Disabilities HUB Team are going to undertake an accredited training course, which will help raise awareness of the issues that people face in establishing and sustaining relationships. The team is also developing and delivering sessions on friendships and relationships and sexual issues. These sessions will also take place in Day Services in the near future.

The Community Bridge Building Team also provides a befriending service for service users who are at risk of social isolation. The Community Bridge Building Team are all qualified travel trainers and they support/train people to travel around Halton on public transport independently, which enables people to meet up with family and friends whenever they wish to. The team also supports people to access social groups such as discos, leisure activities, education and voluntary work. This enables people to have a valued role in their community and sustain friendships and relationships. The Community Bridge Building Team provides support for service users at evening time and at weekends, in addition to the support available Monday-Friday.

#### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Promote friendships, social groups and other ways of reducing social isolation

- Development of schemes such as “Keyring” which include a social networking component
- Increase in low level support networks to work with individuals
- Work with local voluntary support groups regarding the support they can provide to individuals

#### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Continued development and promotion of social groups and befriending services available in Halton
- Ensure one to one or group sessions are available for people to discuss any problems they have with establishing or sustaining friendships and relationships

## **SECTION FOUR: EDUCATION, WELLBEING & HEALTH**

### **TITLE: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

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#### **AIMS**

- Support for people to live fulfilling lives, with well signposted choices
- Support routes into employment for those who are able
- A range of flexible local Education and Training options are accessible to people with autism spectrum conditions, designed to maximise individual potential
- Minimise the number of people with autism spectrum conditions who due to lack of suitable local provision are forced to move away from home to obtain education and training.

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

Community Bridge Builders have developed pilot schemes, and work with a range of people including people with autism spectrum conditions. The Community Bridge Building Team support and enable people to find voluntary work. They will work in a person centred way to find voluntary work that is meaningful to the person. The Bridge Builder will work with the person and together they will market for a job, they will then support that person in the workplace until the person feels confident and has built up friendships to do this themselves. Once the person is settled into employment, the Community Bridge Building Team provides ongoing support via a phone call or visit to ensure that both the employer and the person feel supported.

Halton Day Services also have a number of daytime activities and employment opportunities available for those with autism spectrum conditions. The projects currently on offer include various catering projects such as Norton Priory Café and Cup Cake Catering, a microbrewery, a hair dressing salon, and “Wheels for All” – a scheme to rent out and maintain bicycles at Victoria Park in Widnes and Shopmobility in Halton Lea. The model used by Halton Day Services has been recognised both nationally and internationally, as it offers the opportunity for a more meaningful role in society for people and it provides a pathway to paid employment in the future.

The Learning Disability Partnership Board and the People’s Cabinet held an event in July 2011, to develop a Business Plan. The Business Plan encompassed the key themes from Valuing People Now which include: Employment, Keeping Safe, Health and Housing. A lead officer for each of the key themes was identified to work with the expert Minister from the People’s Cabinet, to agree three actions for each theme to be completed by March 2013. Progress towards completion of each of these actions in the Business Plan, will be monitored on a regular basis via the People’s Cabinet and the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

The Positive Behaviour Support Service has been delivering training to Education Staff in the use of a specific assessment tool for children with autism spectrum conditions or other developmental disabilities, called the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills Revised. This will promote the early intervention of supporting children with autism spectrum conditions in an educational setting.

## **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Need to better understand the range of needs across autism spectrum conditions
- Identify further employment opportunities for paid work for individuals with autism spectrum conditions
- Identify the requirement for services such as social skills training, independent living skills training
- Closer look at destinations, including employment and training of cohorts of young people across Autism Spectrum leaving school. Compare with national picture which indicates that high proportion of people with autism spectrum conditions are not in work
- Set up a support group for close relatives of people with autism
- Involvement of Connexions service up to 25 years. Involvement of Riverside College in the ASC Strategic Group.
- Children and Enterprise Directorate have requested a new post of an Assistant Behaviour Analyst from the Positive Behaviour Support Service to be involved in education specific work in schools
- Adopt the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills Revised assessment tool as a method of assessment and intervention and promote through resource bases and Special Schools.

## **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- The three actions identified for Employment in the Learning Disability Partnership Board Business Plan to be completed
- Develop an Employment Pathway to address the needs of people with autism spectrum conditions in Halton
- Identify any training and support requirements e.g. specialist job trainers, needed for people with autism spectrum conditions such as social skills training
- Employer education – actively promote the benefits of employing people with autism spectrum conditions to employers

## **SECTION FOUR: EDUCATION, WELLBEING & HEALTH**

### **TITLE: STAYING HEALTHY**

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#### **AIMS**

- To ensure equal access to health and wellbeing services

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

The work to date has focused on learning disabilities in response to Valuing People Now, but will benefit those adults with autism who also have a learning disability. This includes annual health checks with their GP practice, accessible information and health passport.

The adults with Learning Disabilities Partnership Board has led on work in response to Six Lives (Ombudsmen, 2009), which highlighted cases of poor care and treatment.

#### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Knowledge and awareness of autism among staff, especially front line (i.e. GPs)
- Knowledge and awareness of reasonable adjustments, as well as supporting a culture of innovation across the system
- Access to health promotion and screening (e.g. cancer) by making reasonable adjustments
- Access to psychological therapies through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services via Bridgewater or Self Help Services

#### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Halton Borough Council has a Learning Disability Nursing Team based within the joint Adults with Learning Disabilities Team. The individual workers within the team are allocated as a link worker to each GP practice in Halton
- To discuss with the local autism community the reasonable adjustments they need to access health services and then put into practice
- To review the Department of Health's plans around personal health budgets to see how they relate to adults with autism, especially in regards to facilitating and supporting access to health services
- To ensure that health passports and Health Action Plans are available for all adults with autism and not just those with a learning disability



## **SECTION FOUR: EDUCATION, WELLBEING & HEALTH**

### **TITLE: INFORMATION**

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#### **AIMS**

- Helpful information to explain the support and services available in clear and appropriate formats, including online

#### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY?**

Work is currently taking place in Halton to develop a User Led Organisation. This charity called Halton Disability Partnership, has been set up in order to represent all disability groups in Halton. The Charity has recruited trustees who are all local residents and are keen to represent the views of people with a range of disabilities living in Halton. Work that will be undertaken by Halton Disability Partnership, includes the development of a resource directory of all voluntary sector charities in Halton, who provide information and support services to residents of the Borough. This information will be developed into a web portal and will improve the current level of signposting as key workers will be able to access this information readily. Halton Disability Partnership will also be able to signpost people to relevant agencies to form a more cohesive approach to information and support services.

Information on services for disabled children and families is available through various routes, including the Family Information Service, Children Centres, Carers Centre, Halton Borough Council publications and local press. The Disabled Children Service maintains an information network and families agree for their contact details to be held, so that they can receive information and be included in consultations etc.

The Halton Borough Council website has two areas dedicated to information specifically aimed at families of disabled children, which includes Halton's short breaks statement. The Disabled Children Service have set up a twitter account **@haltondcs** and regularly post local and national information that may be of use to families.

The Light Relief pilot project has commenced work to compile a list of useful resources that can be shared with parents and carers. Information sheets are also being developed, with reference to common parental concerns around autism spectrum conditions. These information sheets will available at [www.inclusionhalton.co.uk](http://www.inclusionhalton.co.uk)

#### **HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?**

- Develop better accessible information on services, updated online
- Stronger specialist response to autism spectrum conditions with range of information for people and families, including directory of online resources
- Recruitment of a Practice Manager for Autism, to be based in adult services

#### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?**

- Launch and promotion of Halton Disability Partnership

- Development of resource directory and web portal to strengthen information and support services available in Halton
- Ensure that if a child or adult is diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition, they will be given access to information about autism and details of potential sources of support such as local voluntary groups and national representative groups [*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for adults with Autism in England, Department of Health, 2010*]

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[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Development Plan covers the period from 2012 – 2016 and is open to review at any stage. It sets out our initial priority areas and identifies lead officer(s) and timescales, to help start the delivery on the priorities set-out in this strategy. The Development Plan will be regularly reviewed with periodic progress reports to the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group.

The strategy will be reviewed in its entirety initially within six months and thereafter at 12 month intervals.

SECTION	SECTION TITLE	WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	LEAD	BY WHEN	OUTCOME
<b>Autism in Context</b>	The National Context	No actions identified	No actions identified	No actions identified	No actions identified
<b>Autism in Context</b>	The Local Context	No actions identified	No actions identified	No actions identified	No actions identified
<b>Planning and Commissioning</b>	Understanding the Local Population	Borough-wide school initiative (CASPA) for all schools to be able to identify the small steps of progress of pupils that enables targeting and tracking. A model of a virtual school is adopted to track a child or young person's progress, informing commissioning and service delivery.	School Improvement Services	March 2013	
		Over the next 2 years, we will track cohorts of young people leaving school as a way of increasing understanding of response to autism and in particular, higher functioning autism	Practice Manager, Autism	March 2013	
		Identify lead officer(s) to explore how information relating to service users with autism spectrum conditions is	Practice Manager, Autism With support from	June 2012	

		tracked in both Children's Services and Adult Services e.g. how information is recorded on Carefirst and Tribal and how accurate it is	Carefirst 6 Team (to be confirmed)		
<b>Planning and Commissioning</b>	Leadership	The local authority lead professional – Operational Director for Commissioning & Complex Needs to chair the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group meetings and ensure this group meets on a quarterly basis to keep abreast of all developments in this area	Operational Director, Commissioning & Complex Needs	Ongoing	
		The Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group to agree and implement the Halton Autism Strategy 2011-2014	Operational Director, Commissioning and Complex Needs	April 2012	
		The lead professional and members of the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group to decide the governance arrangements for the group regarding where it should report into	Operational Director, Commissioning and Complex Needs	September 2011	
		Embracing and implementing the recommendations from the National Autistic Society Review 2012 of the authority	Practice Manager, Autism	March 2014	
<b>Planning and Commissioning</b>	Diagnosis	To finalise the School Years Pathway for children with adherence to NICE guidance for children	Divisional Manager, Inclusion 0-25 (to be confirmed)	August 2012	
		Agree and implement a revised adult diagnostic pathway once NICE have published their	Senior Commissioning Manager, NHS	August 2012	

		Clinical Guide in 2012	Halton and St Helens		
		Establish a framework to ensure that if a child or adult is diagnosed with autism, they will be offered an assessment of their needs, regardless of their IQ and their carers will be informed of their right to a carers assessment	Divisional Manager, Inclusion 0-25 & Divisional Manager Assessment & Care Management & Senior Commissioning Manager, NHS Halton and St Helens & Practice Manager, Autism	August 2012	
		Staff working in health and social care are able to identify potential signs of autism and understand how to make reasonable adjustments in their behaviour, communication and services for children and adults with autism spectrum conditions	Learning and Development Manager & Principal Manager, Positive Behaviour Support Service	Ongoing	
<b>Planning and Commissioning</b>	Assessment and Care Management	The introduction of an Initial Assessment Team to be based at the Contact Centre. The team will receive referrals and staff members will be fully trained to identify the correct referral and assessment pathway for the individual and reduce the number of people who may be “missed” in our current referral system	Divisional Manager, Independent Living Services	April 2012	

		The development of a resource directory and web portal which will list all support and advice services available in the borough and will lead to improvements in signposting for those individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria	Divisional Manager, Independent Living Services	September 2012	
		GPs and primary care practitioners are aware of the services available to people with autism and the need for reasonable adjustments within their practices	Senior Commissioning Manager, NHS Halton and St Helens	March 2013	
		Ensure that the ASC Champion programme and network is implemented across social care, health, employment and education services and the voluntary sector	Practice Manager, Autism	September 2012	
		Ensure the multi-agency safeguarding unit is implemented and provides support concerning safeguarding and dignity across health and social care	Divisional Manager, Independent Services	September 2012	
<b>Planning and Commissioning</b>	Transition Planning	Look in more detail at current cohorts of young people in transition, looking beyond those felt eligible for adult social care services to those identified as having special educational needs associated with higher functioning autism. Track them for outcomes in terms of education, employment etc and obtain	Transition Coordinator	March 2012	

		their views about service gaps etc			
		All young people moving into adult services, will receive transition support as they move into adulthood	Transition Coordinator	Ongoing	
		Ensure that the young person is involved in their transition planning and that no decision about them is made without them	Transition Coordinator	Ongoing	
<b>Planning and Commissioning</b>	Commissioning Services	Develop a local commissioning plan for services for children and adults with autism spectrum conditions, based on local population needs	Divisional Manager, Commissioning & Divisional Manager, Commissioning Children & Families	March 2013	
		Ensure the views of children and adults with autism spectrum conditions and their carers' are taken into account in the development of services locally	Practice Manager, Autism	Ongoing	
		Ensure that if a child or adult with an autism spectrum condition required a care service, they will be able to make choices about the services they receive and will be able to use a personal budget to pay for the service they want (if they are eligible for a personal budget in line with the Halton Borough Council eligibility criteria). Ensure that no decision is made about a person without	Divisional Manager, Assessment & Care Management	Ongoing	



		them being involved in the decision making process			
<b>Planning and Commissioning</b>	Training for staff	Resurrect the Autism Condition Training sub group	Learning and Development Manager	August 2011	Training sub group has been resurrected and meets on a bi-monthly basis. The group is chaired by the Learning & Development Manager
		Review membership of the Autism Spectrum Condition Training sub group	Learning and Development Manager	December 2011	The membership has been reviewed and appropriate representatives from the ASC Strategic Group attend the sub group.
		Review the draft Training Plan and finalise the plan for implementation across Halton	Learning and Development Manager	March 2012	
		Establish a budget for delivery of training, interventions identified in the Training Plan	Learning and Development Manager	March 2012	
		Identify providers internal and/or external for training delivery	Learning and Development Manager	April 2012	
		Identify other Autism Spectrum Condition training delivered within Halton	Learning and Development Manager	March 2012	
		Identify other service user groups that could be involved in the design and delivery of training	Learning and Development Manager & Practice Manager, Autism	March 2012	
		Staff working in health and social care have been offered basic autism awareness training as a minimum standard	Learning and Development Manager	Ongoing	
		Staff in roles which have a direct impact on access to services for adults with autism	Learning and Development Manager	Ongoing	

		– such as GPs, community care assessors and commissioners can access specialist autism training	& Principal Manager, Positive Behaviour Support Service & Senior Commissioning Manager, Halton and St Helens		
		Explore the possibility of providing refresher training on autism awareness to account for staff turnover	Learning and Development Manager	Ongoing	
<b>Support</b>	Involving and Supporting Families	Develop an Advocacy “Hub” specification for individuals and families in Halton who require an advocacy service	Commissioning Manager, Older People	October 2012	
		Commission a provider to deliver the Advocacy “Hub” and to ensure appropriate publicity of this service	Commissioning Manager, Older People	October 2012	
		Ensure that informal carers and/or family members are offered an assessment for their carers needs, to ensure support for carers is in place	Divisional Manager, Assessment & Care Management	Ongoing	
		Continue to promote the increasing take up of direct payments and self-directed support	Divisional Manager, Independent Living & Divisional Manager, Assessment & Care Management	Ongoing	
		Suitable short breaks service is available for families of children with autism spectrum conditions, if required	Principal Manager Disabled Children’s Service	Ongoing	
		Suitable respite provision is	Commissioning	Ongoing	

		available for families of adults with autism spectrum conditions, if required	Manager, Disabled Adults (to be confirmed)		
<b>Support</b>	Support with accommodation	Review mechanisms for planning accommodation and support for disabled people including people with autism spectrum conditions	Commissioning Manager Disabled Adults (to be confirmed)	Mach 2013	
		New build programme to cater for specialised needs i.e. more spacious single level accommodation	Commissioning Manager Disabled Adults (to be confirmed)	March 2013	
		Increase accommodation options available for all disabled including those with autism spectrum conditions e.g. Community Living Networks (Keyring)	Commissioning Manager Disabled Adults (to be confirmed)	March 2013	
		Continue joint working between the Positive Behaviour Support Service and local providers to develop skilled, inclusive local support based on individually identified needs	Principal Manager, Positive Behaviour Support Service	Ongoing	
		Improve access to information for professionals, individuals and families regarding local accommodation and support options	Divisional Manager, Commissioning	Ongoing	
<b>Support</b>	Support with friendships and relationships	Continued development and promotion of social groups and befriending services available in Halton	Clinical Lead Nurse, Adults with Learning Disabilities Team & Practice Manager, Autism	Ongoing	
		Ensure one to one or group sessions are available for	Clinical Lead Nurse, Adults with Learning	Ongoing	

		people to discuss any problems they have with establishing or sustaining friendships and relationships	Disabilities Team		
<b>Education, Wellbeing and Health</b>	Education and Employment	The three actions identified for employment in the Learning Disability Partnership Board to be completed	Lead Officer, Environment & Economy	March 2013	
		Develop an employment pathway to address the needs of people with autism spectrum conditions in Halton	Divisional Manager, Community Services	June 2012	
		Identify any training and support requirements e.g. specialist job trainers etc, needed for people with autism spectrum conditions such as social skills training	Lead Officer, Environment & Economy & Divisional Manager, Community Services	March 2012	
		Employer Education – actively promote the benefits of employing people with autism spectrum conditions to employers	Lead Officer, Environment & Economy	Ongoing	
<b>Education, Wellbeing and Health</b>	Staying Health	Halton Borough Council has a LD Nursing Team based within the joint Adult with Learning Disabilities Team. The individual workers within the team are allocated as a link worker to each GP practice in Halton.	Clinical Lead Nurse, Adults with Learning Disabilities	Ongoing	
		To discuss with the local autism community the reasonable adjustments they need to access health services and then put into practice	Senior Commissioning Manager, Halton and St Helens	TBC	

		To review the Department of Health's plans around personal health budgets to see how they relate to adults with autism, especially in regards to facilitating and supporting access to health services	Senior Commissioning Manager, Halton and St Helens	TBC	
		To ensure that health passports and Health Action Plans are available for all adults with autism and not just those with a learning disability	Senior Commissioning Manager, Halton and St Helens	TBC	
<b>Education, Wellbeing and Health</b>	Information	Launch and promotion of Halton Disability Partnership	Divisional Manager, Independent Living	December 2011	Update to be provided
		Ensure that if a child or adult is diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition, they will be given access to information about autism and details of potential sources of support such as local voluntary groups and national representative groups	Practice Manager, Autism	Ongoing	

## Glossary of Terms

*The glossary provides definitions of frequently used words in relation to autism. For a more detailed glossary please refer to [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)*

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Asperger Syndrome	An Autism Spectrum Condition that affects the way a person communicates and relates to others. A number of traits of autism are common to Asperger syndrome including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in communicating</li> <li>• Difficulty in social relationships</li> <li>• A lack of imagination and creative play</li> </ul> However, people with Asperger syndrome usually have fewer problems with language than those with autism, often speaking fluently through their words can sometimes sound formal or stilted. People with Asperger syndrome also do not have the accompanying learning disabilities often associated with autism; in fact, people with Asperger syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence.
Autism	A lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. Children and adults with autism are unable to relate to others in a meaningful way. Their ability to develop friendships is impaired, as is their capacity to understand other people's feelings. All people with autism have impairments in social interactions, social communication and imagination. This is referred to as the triad of impairments.
Autism Spectrum Conditions	An Autism Spectrum Condition is a complex lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. Many people have a mixture of features from these two syndromes but do not fit neatly into either. The whole spectrum is defined by the presence of impairments affecting social interaction, communication and imagination known as the triad of impairments. This is always accompanied by a narrow repetitive range of activities.
Challenging Behaviour	Behaviour of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to or use ordinary community facilities, or impair a child's personal growth, development and family life.
Communication Disorders	Impaired ability to communicate usually due to speech language or hearing disorders.
Developmental Disorders	Generic terms relating to all children and adults with substantial continuing disability originating in childhood.
Diagnosis	The skill of distinguishing one disease from another. The opinion arrived at as to the nature of disease.
Early Intervention	Action taken utilising medical, family, school, social or mental health resources and aimed at infants or children at risk of, or in the early stages of mental, physical, learning or other disorders.
Inclusion	Placement and education of students with disabilities in general education classrooms with students of the same age who do not have disabilities.
Interventions	All planned attempts to promote the welfare of exceptional individuals. There are 3 types: preventive (efforts to thwart the appearance of disabilities); remedial (the process of

	overcoming a deficit); compensatory (providing a means to circumvent, substitute or offset and irremediable deficit).
Language Skills	The use of language for communicative competence. The ability to use language as a tool to aid interaction within society, via communication with individuals and groups.
Learning Disability	A permanent condition, arising during childhood or adolescence, characterised by a state of incomplete development of mind that includes significant impairments of intelligence and social functioning.
Multiple Disabilities	Simply the presence of more than one disability in the same individual. There are too many possible combinations to list e.g. autism and deafness, physical disability and Downs Syndrome.
Nonverbal Communication	Communication through use of facial expression, posture, gesture and body movement.
Peer Interactions	Interpersonal interactions between children within the same set, age range or school.
Prevalence	One of the main ways to measure the frequency of a disease in a particular population – it is the total number of cases that are present at any one time – covering both old and new cases.
Prognosis	A forecast as to the probable result of an illness, particularly with regard to the prospect of recovery.
Respite Care	Provision of care, relief or support to carers of physically or mentally disabled persons.
Self Injurious Behaviour	Self directed violence including hitting the head with a clenched fist, banging the head against hard objects, skin picking and eye gouging.
Social Behaviour	All individual's social abilities such as establishing and maintaining satisfactory interpersonal skills, displaying behaviour within reasonable social expectations and making personal adjustments.
Statementing	Preparation of a formal document that specifies any additional input or support required to best meet the learning needs of an individual child.
Triad of Impairments	Impairments affecting social interaction, social communication and imagination which are essential features of an autism spectrum disorder.