



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

3 November 2022

Adult Social Care Autism Draft Strategy

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Andy Burford – Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care and Health, Integration and Transformation
Lead Director:	Sarah Dillon – Director: Adult Social Care
Service Area:	Adult Social Care
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	August 2022
Report considered by:	SMT - 11 October 2022

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- 1.1 Approves the public consultation on the draft autism strategy;
- 1.2 Supports and champions the consultation in the community and with all partners; and
- 1.3 Grants delegated authority to the Director: Adult Social Care in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Telford and Wrekin Autism Partnership Board to take the necessary steps to implement these recommendations.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide background to the draft autism strategy, the previous engagement work completed and to outline the proposed next steps for public consultation.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The National Autistic Society states *“Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive, communicate and interact with others, although it is important to recognise that there are differing opinions on this and not all autistic people see themselves as disabled. With an estimated 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK – approximately 1% of the population – most people probably know someone who is autistic. In addition, there are an estimated 3 million family members and carers of autistic people in the UK”*.
- 3.2 Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people. Autism varies widely and is often referred to as a spectrum condition, because of the range of ways it can impact on people and the different level of support they may need across their lives.
- 3.3 Some autistic people will need very little or no support in their everyday lives while others may need high levels of care, such as 24-hour support in residential care. People may need help with a range of things, from forming friendships, coping at school, managing at work, or being able to get out and about in the community.

Context

- 3.4 We want to create a borough that truly understands and includes autistic people in all aspects of life; one in which autistic people of all ages, and backgrounds have equal opportunities to play a full part in their communities and to have better access to the services they need throughout their lives. This is our vision to make life fundamentally better for autistic people, their families and carers and we are determined to make it happen.

What we have done so far

- 3.5 The development of the Borough-wide strategy has been undertaken using a co-production approach and the consultation was undertaken with due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty of the S149 Equality Act 2010 and in accordance with Telford & Wrekin Council’s values and principles.
- 3.6 We completed a pre-consultation engagement programme in Partnership with Autism West Midlands 2021-2022. The purpose of the pre-consultation engagement was to explore people’s views on specific themes linked to the National Autism Strategy, these were:
- Health, Wellbeing and Care
 - Getting out and about
 - Diagnosis and support
 - Education, Training and employment

- Home
- Getting it Right – accessibility
- Individual – feeling accepted and understood

3.7 The pre-consultation engagement was successful with:

- 230 responses, providing issues and solutions to support Autistic people
- Responses from Autistic people, family members, carers and support workers and other professionals
- Online and face to face engagement sessions
- Analysis report completed by Autism West Midlands
- All-age Autism Partnership Board established and meeting bi-monthly.
- Autism systems Champion in place

3.8 To promote the pre-consultation engagement a wide range of communication methods were used, including utilising promotion through partners' communication routes. The routes utilised directly include:

- Press Releases
- Social Media platforms – Telford & Wrekin Council, Live Well Telford and My Options
- Newsletters:
- Community News
- Safeguarding Partnership Newsletter
- Shropshire Partner in Care Newsletter
- Telford & Wrekin Council Staff News
- Adult Social Care Newsletter
- Provider Forums
- Emails to partners, providers and Telford Interfaith Council
- Internal Telford & Wrekin Council Latest News



3.9 Using the information provided through the pre-consultation engagement a draft strategy was developed through the Autism Partnership Board. Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of the draft strategy.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

4.1 All services across Telford and Wrekin should be working to promote inclusion for autistic people in a way that is accepting and values the contributions the autistic community make to Telford and Wrekin. Autistic people should have access to good advice, guidance, information, relevant support that may include reasonable adjustments, that is aspirational, modern and supports inclusive opportunities.

4.2 The consultation on the draft autism strategy is a significant step in Telford and Wrekin's aspirations to provide an inclusive community throughout the borough. Organisations across the borough, through the all-age Autism Partnership board, working together to support each other in developing businesses, universal services, employment opportunities and/or support services that are impactful for autistic people and their families.

4.3 Following the pre-engagement programme we have taken feedback and produced a draft strategy that drives developments over the next 5 years in key areas. The consultation on the draft strategy will enable people to provide feedback on areas they identified as key opportunities that need further development to deliver a successful strategy. These include: being heard, raising awareness and acceptance, inclusive and flexible services, employment – all areas covered in the consultation questionnaire – please see Appendix B.

4.4 The proposed consultation timeline is:

Out to public consultation – 7th November 2022

Close public consultation – 5th December 2022

Report to be written and any necessary changes made to the Autism Strategy document – December – 21st December 2022

Authorisation by Andy Burford – Cabinet member – Early January 2023

Publication of the Autism Strategy – Late January 2023

Development of action plan monitored and delivered through All-age autism partnership board – Late February 2023 onwards

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 There is a statutory duty imposed upon local authorities to have an autism strategy and an autism partnership board. For that reason, it is not feasible for the council not to adopt a strategy.

5.2 The content of the strategy will be informed and shaped by the results of the consultation and, therefore, an alternative version may be presented for adoption following the consultation.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 In carrying out the consultation, there is a risk that consultation will not reach enough people and, therefore, feedback is not representative of the autistic community, carers and professionals. To mitigate this risk, the community engagement team is supporting the delivery of the consultation following successful models to ensure widespread awareness of the opportunity to comment on the draft strategy and engage with the consultation exercise. The consultation will be carried out adopting a variety of methods to seek views to ensure that it is as accessible as possible for residents.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 Development of the Autism strategy supports the council to achieve the following priorities:

- Priority 1 – every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- Priority 5 – a community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no implications foreseen resulting from adopting the recommendations of this report. All actions will be met from within existing resources. Should additional financial resources be required these will be requested through Governance processes.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 Section 1 of the Autism Act 2009 requires the Secretary of State to publish an autism strategy and to keep the same under review and revise it as necessary. The *National Strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026* was last updated on 22.07.2021 and includes an implementation plan for year one.

9.2 Section 2 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish statutory guidance under which local authorities and NHS bodies have a duty to act. This guidance was published in March 2015.

9.3 As part of the Department of Health's update to the Adult Autism Strategy, the National Autistic Society produced a guide to help local authorities better involve people with autism in their local planning and implementation of autism strategies including through Autism Partnership Boards and wider consultation.

9.4 The proposals contained in this report satisfy the Council's legal obligations.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 All wards will be impacted on by these proposals.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 It is intended that this programme of work will contribute to improve health & wellbeing outcomes within the borough.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment intelligence informs intentions to ensure resources are targeted appropriately to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities. The Strategy has a specific requirement to demonstrate its focus on reducing inequalities and disparities including protected characteristics within the local population and priorities under the Equalities Act.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 This report has no direct climate change or environmental impact.

14.0 Appendices

- A Draft Autism Strategy 2023-2028
- B Draft Consultation Questions

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Finance	03/10/2022	05/10/2022	RP
Legal	03/10/2022	21/10/2022	AL
SMT	03/10/2022	06/10/2022	SD