

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### **SELECT COMMITTEE - AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) held in the Stour Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 11 May 2010.

PRESENT: Mr J D Simmonds (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, Mrs E Green, Mr S J G Koowaree and Mr M J Northey

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G K Gibbens and Mr D Walker (Kent Autistic Trust)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr O Mills (Managing Director - Adult Social Services), Mr D Douglas (Policy Officer), Mr M Thomas-Sam (Head of Policy and Service Development), Mr D Waller (Directorate Manager: Governance, Member Support & Communication) and Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview))

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

##### **1. Autistic Spectrum Disorder - Response to the Select Committee Report (Item. 1)**

(1) Mr Mills and Mr Thomas-Sam introduced a report which updated the Select Committee on the general progress that had been made in this area since the Select Committee had submitted their report to Cabinet in March 2010.

(2) Mr Mills stated that progress had been made with all the recommendations but he acknowledged that there was still more to do in certain areas. Since the Committee produced its report the financial context had become more challenging, but this area was a high priority and the recommendations were still being progressed. ASD was also a high priority with the Department of Health. The Government had published "Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives" a strategy for adults with autism in England and a first delivery plan. There was also a close link with the Valuing People Now delivery plan. In Kent there was a group overseeing the delivery of Valuing People plan and they had links to the Learning Disability Board and the Executive Board on Transition which Mr Mills chaired. In relation to transition a base line survey was being carried out.

(3) Mr Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, commended the Select Committee report as an important piece of work which was ongoing and evolving and confirmed that ASD issues were high on the list of priorities. He stated that he would like the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at this issue on a regular basis, annually and possibly more regularly.

(4) In response to a question from Mrs Allen, Mr Thomas-Sam confirmed that Adult Social Services had good links with Housing Departments in the 12 Districts. When the Districts refreshed their housing strategy's County Council officers made sure that they had input in relation to Social Care issues. There was also a strong

Countywide Housing Forum, on which Adult Social Services were represented and which fed into the work of the County Council.

(5) Mr Mills referred to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for people with a Learning Disability, this included information about the needs of people with ASD. Mr Thomas-Sam explained that this was complicated as assessment would depend on the criteria used, and that further work was needed on prevalence.

(6) Mr Simmonds referred to the Select Committees suggestion that work should be commissioned from the Tizzard Centre, Mr Waller explained that the Government had now funded a national prevalence study, which removed the need for the County Council to commission its own study. However, the national study had been delayed until 2011. Mr Walker, from the Kent Autistic Trust, pointed out that the number of adults with ASD who were in need of services was different from the total number of adults with ASD, and that there was no central data.

(7) In response to a question on home to school transport for young people with ASD, Mr Mills explained that this fell outside of the scope of this review.

(8) Mr Thomas-Sam explained that the xxxxxx Act placed a requirement on the Secretary of State to publish a strategy and to issue guidance. This was the first time that the same duty had been applied to the Health Service as was placed on Local Authorities to deliver and respond to guidelines. However, this did not apply to Foundation Trusts and if the Kent and Medway Partnership Trust achieved Foundation Trust status these duties would not be applied to them which was causing some concern locally. He reminded Members that the commissioning responsibility would still rest with the Primary Care Trusts (PCT's).

(9) Mr Simmonds raise the issue of joint working between Social Services and the Health Service which has been an issue highlighted by the Select Committee. Mr Thomas-Sam stated that since the Committee had completed its work there was now a protocol with both PCT's to deal with people who presented with joint issues such as ASD and Mental Health issues or Learning Disabilities. Staff had been trained on these joint protocols. The effectiveness of the protocol was being tested by a survey of those who had gone through the services.

(10) Mr Waller explained that the protocol separated out needs and financial responsibility. The first point of contact would fund the client initially and then the conversation about who should fund them in the long term went on while the client was accessing support. Therefore services would be commissioned while any disputes over funding were being resolved,

(11) Mr Mills informed the Committee, that in relation to transition, the County Council were in a stronger position than they had been a year ago. There was now a transition protocol and staff had been trained to use it. There had been good feedback on this from a baseline survey, on transition generally, not just for those with ASD. He stated that there was still more to be done and that the monitoring would continue.

(12) Mr Waller explained that information on transition was providing good demographically data. Following the work of the Select Committee on Transition, young people were now more closely monitored on transition and information was

passed on in a more structured way. More young people were getting a good or adequate service at transition.

(13) The Committee discussed the progress made on each of the 15 recommendations and Officers answered specific questions on the action taken to date and action proposed:-.

*Recommendation 1 –*

(14) It was noted that this had been covered in the comments earlier in the meeting on prevalence data and Members were satisfied with the progress made.

*Recommendation 2 –*

(15) Mr Thomas-Sam explained that the Maudsley Hospital system was not considered to be a good vehicle for Kent. The Kent and Medway Partnership Trust had commissioned good quality ASD assessments. In the Nation Delivery Plan there was a requirement for a piece of work which would set out the standard of support for people with ASD, once complete this could then be used at a local level.

*Recommendation 3*

(16) Mr Thomas-Sam confirmed that anyone qualified to carry out a community care assessment should have the confidence to do this in relation to ASD, and that training was critical to achieve this. Mr Waller explained there was information from the National Autistic Society that there was a critical hurdle for those with ASD to overcome in order to access services and a positive community care assessment. Those with ASD functioned at different levels and it was difficult to know where to concentrate resources.

(17) Mrs Allen asked that this awareness training be taken further and that officers working in the contact centre and on reception should also have an awareness of ASD and how to deal with people appropriately.

(18) Mrs Green sought an assurance that the training budget for staff awareness of ASD would not be reduced. Mr Gibbens stated that he could not comment on the budget as that had yet to be decided, but he assured Members that this was an area that he felt strongly about and he would do all he could to protect it in difficult times. It was a question of making best use of resources and facilities available. There were a whole range of possible approaches to training and evaluation and it was a case of selecting the most effective. Mr Waller explained that there was a lot of sharing of expertise amongst staff which was cost effective.

*Recommendation 4*

(19) Mr Gibbens stated that across the Directorate there was a lot of good work being carried out to develop personal budgets and it was important to carry on with this as there was always more than could be done.

(20) Mr Thomas-Sam gave feedback on the personal health service pilot which was being piloted by NHS East Kent. Mr Douglas referred to the “Right to Control” which covered ASD and went wider than just the services provided by local

authorities and the Health Services. There were eight trailblazer areas, and lessons would be learned from these.

*Recommendation 5*

(21) There were no comments on the progress with this recommendation.

*Recommendation 6*

(22) The importance of people having access to adequate information in a timely manner was emphasised.

(23) In relation to the use of data within the County Council, Mr Waller explained that for Adult Social Services access to education information about a client had got easier, information on young people with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or who were school action or school action plus was now transferred more readily on to Adult Social Service, therefore they had information on those requiring a high level of services. Adult Social Services did not have such good information on those who were on a low level package but this was improving.

*Recommendation 7*

(24) It was acknowledged that work on this recommendation was complete.

*Recommendation 8*

(25) It was acknowledged that work on this recommendation was complete.

*Recommendation 9*

(26) In response to a question on the availability of specialist psychology, psychiatry and speech therapy health services for people with ASD both during transition and into adulthood, Mr Waller stated that these services could be improved by increased capacity.

(27) Mr Thomas-Sam undertook to raise the capacity issues for these services at the agenda for the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

*Recommendations 10 & 11*

(28) Mr Thomas-Sam referred to the ASD Working Group which was focussing on a strategy to raise awareness of ASD with County Council staff and Partners. This Group had held two meetings and Members would be kept informed of progress. This Group reported to the Executive Board on Transition which Mr Mills chaired.

(29) Mr Gibbens acknowledged that these areas relating to communication required more work and he would arrange to meet with officers to discuss what could be done to be more pro-active.

(30) The importance of using links between the County Councils Website and others such as the Kent Autistic Trusts were emphasised,

### *Recommendation 12*

(31) Mr Gibbens explained that he had been involved in an Employability Strategy which was due to be considered by Cabinet in July 2010 which contained a strong recommendation on how this could be taken forward. This was a cross directorate strategy and not solely the responsibility of Adult Social Services.

### *Recommendation 13*

(32) Mr Michael-Sam stated that KASS district plans included results of the Housing Needs Assessments across the county and such information was shared with Housing Departments.

### *Recommendation 14*

(33) Mr Waller explained that in terms of the facilities provided by the National Autistic Society these were very expensive. Work had been done in house to set up support groups. Adult Social Services had a couple of support workers who worked with a small group to enable them to form facilitated friendships over time and as these groups became established the support worker would pull back and start another group in a different area. This had been started in Thanet and Ashford but was very slow work.

### *Recommendation 15*

(34) As previously stated the prevalence study had not yet been carried out. Mr Waller referred to the respite support given through the use of day centres and the more to direct payments for those that preferred to control of the way that they were supported. There were currently six respite units in Kent and, for historical reasons five were located in East Kent and one in West Kent.

### *Summary*

(35) The importance of this issue being reported to Adult Social Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis was emphasised.

(36) Mr Walker (Kent Autistic Trust) stated that he was pleased that the County Council had raised the profile of ASD through the work of this Select Committee. The biggest issue for his Members was that of assessing services for those that fell between the criteria of different organisations.

(37) RESOLVED that the progress made on the recommendations, and the work that was in progress be noted.