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To: Adult Social Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
25 June 2010

Subject: **AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER – “ONE YEAR ON” REPORT**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To advise Members of the actions that have been taken forward since the publication of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Select Committee report in March 2009

The report also appraises Members on ‘Fulfilling and rewarding Lives’: The strategy for adults with autism in England (March 2010) and ‘The first year delivery plan for adults with autism in England (April 2010).

Introduction

1. (1) The Autistic Spectrum Disorder Select Committee reported to the County Council in April 2009.

(2) The Terms of Reference for the Select Committee Topic Review for Autistic Spectrum Disorder sufferers and their carers were:

- to investigate the prevalence of autism in Kent
- to explore existing and emerging national and local policies and strategies with regard to autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
- to examine the effectiveness of current ASD-related services in the County
- to explore existing and emerging approaches to funding, and present financial resources employed to support ASD-related services in Kent
- to investigate the extent of existing collaboration and partnership working between individuals and agencies providing support to people with autism
- having considered all the above aspects, to make recommendations for an approach for Kent.

(3) The Committee received evidence and information from a wide range of stakeholders, professionals, representatives of organisations supplying autism-related services, academics, officers and people affected by autism and their carers.

(4) The Autistic Spectrum Disorder Select Committee made a total of 15 recommendations for further action. The ‘One Year On’ monitoring report (Appendix 1) was considered by the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Select Committee Select Committee on 11 May 2010 to review progress made against the recommendations. See Minutes attached (Appendix 2).

Policy Context

2. (1) The needs of Adults with Autism. As the first ever piece of legislation designed to address the needs of one specific impairment group, it was followed by the 'Fulfilling and rewarding Lives': The strategy for adults with autism in England, March 2010 is attached for information (Appendix 3)

(2) The national strategy is underpinned by the vision 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.'

This would be achieved by the following specific areas for action over the next three years:

- increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals
- developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment
- improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need to live independently within the community
- helping adults with autism into work, and
- enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities

(3) The strategy was followed by a 'Towards Fulfilling and rewarding lives: The first year delivery plan for adults with autism in England in April 2010 (attached as Appendix 4). This sets out how the strategy is being taken forward over the next twelve months. This covers priorities for action and timelines and milestones associated with the priorities. While the strategy acknowledges that change will be a long term process, the first year delivery plan is to act as a driver particularly with the development of statutory guidance and long term delivery plan to be published by the end of 2010. However, specific actions have already been taken. These are:

- Improving training around autism for frontline staff in health and social care and employment support –which the consultation strategy identified as a vital step
- Helping adults with autism into work – an essential priority, given the low numbers of adults with autism in employment.

One Year On

3. (1) Building on the recommendations that the Select Committee made last year, KCC with its partners are taking this forward in line with the national strategy and delivery plan.

(2) Key achievements include

- Coordinating a successful multi-agency funding package for the independent advice and support service run by the Kent Autistic Trust. This maintained the viability of this valued service which now has secured external funding for the next 5 years.
- Mainstreaming the development of Self Directed Support in KASS and the increasing personalisation of support and services for those people with autism who meet KASS's eligibility criteria.
- The establishment of a committed multi-agency group to deliver the recommendations and strategy.

(3) There is significant work which is still in progress, although more slowly than was hoped for. In part this has been because of the changed economic landscape which has raised concerns about the resources available to deliver all that the committee has recommended. The delay in publishing the national strategy, which puts statutory obligations on KCC, has also slowed progress.

Recommendation

4. (1) Members are asked to NOTE the contents of the 'One Year On' report.

Michael Thomas-Sam
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Appendices

Appendix 1 Autistic Spectrum Disorder 'One Year' Monitoring Report

Appendix 2 Minutes of ASD Select Committee 11 May 2010

Appendix 3 'Fulfilling and rewarding Lives': The strategy for adults with autism in England, March 2010

Appendix 4 'Fulfilling and rewarding Lives': The strategy for adults with autism in England and 'The first year delivery plan for adults with autism in England, April 2010.

Background Documents:

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Select Committee Report March 2009