

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 14th June 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities

PORTFOLIO: Health and Adults; Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Autism Strategy and Autism Scrutiny Review Final Report

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present the Board with the Autism Strategy 2012-2016 and the Autism Scrutiny Review final report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- i) Approve the Autism Strategy (Appendix 1); and
- ii) Note the contents of the Autism Scrutiny Review and approve the recommendations in the associated Action Plan (Appendix 2).

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 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. The Government then passed the Autism Act 2009, with an accompanying Autism Strategy: 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives 2010' and a first year delivery plan. The publication of statutory guidance "Implementing 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' Statutory Guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the autism strategy" followed in December 2010. There will be a formal review of this guidance in 2013.

3.2 In response to the publication of statutory guidance:

- an Autism Strategy (supported by Halton Borough Council, NHS Merseyside and 5Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust for Halton has been developed; and
- a Member-led Scrutiny Review took place.

Autism Strategy

The compulsory actions within the guidance have been included in Halton's Autism Strategy and applied to both children's and adult's services, to ensure that the strategy is inclusive of people of all ages.

- 3.3 The Strategy builds upon work that has already taken place across children's and adult services, health services and the 5 Boroughs and assesses how this can be improved upon, resulting in a number of agreed action points to be progressed. It has been developed in consultation with representatives from the Autism Spectrum Condition Strategic Group. There are representatives on this group from Adult Services, Children's Services, Health Services, 5 Boroughs and a Parent/Carer representative. The Autism Strategy will initially be reviewed after six months of implementation and at 12 monthly intervals thereafter. The Strategy will be delivered within the available resources.
- 3.4 The recent National Autistic Society review of the Councils services has been instrumental in shaping the Autistic Strategy.

3.5 *Scrutiny Review*

The Scrutiny Review was commissioned by the Health Policy and Performance Board. A Scrutiny Review working group was established with six Members from the Board, a Principal Policy Officer from the People and Communities Policy team, Practice Manager for Autism, Principal and Practice Managers from the Positive Behaviour Support Service.

- 3.6 The Scrutiny Review provided a good opportunity to look at our baseline information in supporting people with autism spectrum conditions living in Halton. The report makes a series of recommendations under each separate area of evidence that was scrutinised and have been collated into an Action Plan for ease of reference and monitoring by the Principal Manager for Commissioning. The Scrutiny Review also played a key role in shaping the Autism Strategy and in particular the section on Education and Employment.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Autism Strategy has been developed in order to ensure that the statutory guidance issued, following the publication of Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, is implemented successfully by health and social care services in Halton.
- 4.2 Following the development of the Strategy and Scrutiny Review an assessment has taken place on associated policies and no amendments are required.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The majority of recommendations could be met from within the existing resources although some required additional resources. Where recommendations could not be met from existing resources, these would be considered in the context of the Council's wider budget review process.

5.2 In terms of the Scrutiny Review there were no financial implications identified as part of the recommendations.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The Autism Strategy will ensure that children and adults living in Halton will have access to effective/appropriate diagnosis, assessment and services for supporting those with autism spectrum conditions. All statutory guidance will be adhered to in order to ensure that services are fit for purpose.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The Scrutiny Review recommendations link in to developing a culture where learning is valued and raise skill levels throughout the adult population and in the local workforce; and promoting and increasing the employability of local people and tackle barriers to employment to get more people into work.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The Autism Strategy will ensure that children and adults living in Halton will have access to effective/appropriate diagnosis, assessment and services for supporting those with autism spectrum conditions. All statutory guidance will be adhered to in order to ensure that services are fit for purpose.

The Scrutiny Review recommendations link to:

- understanding fully the causes of ill health in Halton and act together to improve the overall health and well-being of local people;
- to lay firm foundations for a healthy start in life and support those most in need in the community by maximising and promoting autonomy;
- to promote a healthy living environment and lifestyles to protect the health of the public, sustain individual good health and well-being and help prevent and efficiently manage illness; and
- to reduce the burden of disease in Halton by concentrating on

lowering the rates of cancer and heart disease, mental ill health and diabetes and addressing the health needs of older people.

The Autism Strategy will be going forward to Health Policy and Performance Board in September 2012.

The Autism Scrutiny Review was approved by the Health Policy and Performance Board on 6th March 2012.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Autism Strategy is a statutory requirement issued by the Government and therefore must be implemented fully. Failure to do so may lead the authority to be liable to a judicial review of services, unless the local authority can provide a reason why implementation of the statutory guidance has not been possible.

7.2 The Scrutiny Review report and recommendations support the Council’s strategic priority of Improving Health. Taking on board the recommendations from the report will be a positive step to improving Autism services for people in Halton.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The implementation of the Autism Strategy and the recommendations from the Autism Scrutiny Review will help to improve services in Halton for people on the Autistic Spectrum Condition.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Autism Act 2009	People and Communities Policy Team	Katy Rushworth
Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives 2010	People and Communities Policy Team	Katy Rushworth
Implementing Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives	People and Communities Policy Team	Katy Rushworth