
To: Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board 5

Date: 7 December 2022

Subject: Autism Task and Finish Group – Update on Recommendations

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 The Autism Task and Finish Group, jointly established by Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board 5 and Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board 2 took their recommendations to Cabinet on 12th April 2022. The recommendations within the report were approved.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations (Appendix 1).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board 5
 - 1) Note the update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Autism Task and Finish Group
 - 2) Note there is a joint Task and Finish Group considering issues of Autism in Schools which is due to report to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) this municipal year
 - 2) Make recommendations or comments to the appropriate Cabinet Member or organisation regarding the progress on the implementation of the recommendations.

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 At the start of the 2021/22 municipal year, the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) and Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) agreed to set up a task and finish group to look at support for children and young people, and their families, who had been referred for an autism assessment. This work was prompted by concerns raised regarding the wait times for assessments and diagnosis. The Task and Finish group wanted to understand the reason for the lengthy waits and what support was available during that time, particularly for children and young people.
- 3.2 Officers from a range of Coventry Council services attended meetings to provide evidence including Children's Services, Education, Adult Services, Human Resources, ICT and in addition Officers from Warwickshire County Council and representatives from Coventry and Warwickshire CCG Joint Commissioning Team.
- 3.3 Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust also participated in the meetings.

- 3.4 Task and Finish Group members attended a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) Briefing. There were representatives of around 80 schools present who shared their views from an educational perspective about the support to autistic children and young people and their families including those awaiting assessment.
- 3.5 A report with a number of recommendations was written by the task and finish group and agreed by Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board 5 prior to the report going to Cabinet on 12th April 2022. The final task and finish group report can be viewed following the link [here](#).
- 3.6 This report follows up on the recommendation made for an update to be provide to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board 5.

4 Health Inequalities Impact

- 4.1 The following paragraph from the Coventry and Warwickshire All Age Autism Strategy outlines some of the health inequalities suffered by autistic people
- 4.2 *“The difficulties autistic people experience with communication, interaction, and social imagination lead to inequalities in health, education and social outcomes for autistic people compared to non-autistic groups for almost all conditions studied. This includes mortality, obesity, smoking, bullying, social isolation, education, criminal justice, employment, and homelessness. 80% of autistic adults and 70% of autistic children will experience mental health conditions including anxiety and depression, leading to higher rates of self-harm, suicide, and admissions to mental health hospital. In Coventry, the largest proportion of children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans have a primary need of Autism.”*
- 4.3 Many of these adverse health outcomes are avoidable and can be addressed through appropriate levels of preventative care, support and lifestyle interventions. For this reason it is important that timely access to diagnostic assessments is provided so needs can be identified and addressed.
- 4.4 The recommendations in this report compliment the Coventry and Warwickshire All Age Autism Strategy 2021-26 and the National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026 which strive the reduce the health inequalities experienced by autistic people.

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