

**Report from Bradford City and District CCGs, Airedale Wharfedale and Craven CCG and Bradford Metropolitan District Council to the meeting of the Health and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 20 February 2019**

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**Subject:**

**Bradford City and District CCG's, Airedale Wharfedale and Craven CCG and Bradford Metropolitan District Council's response to Healthwatch Bradford and District's report on:**

**Autistic Spectrum Conditions: access to support in Bradford and District**

**Summary statement:**

This report sets out a joint response from the Council and NHS to the recommendations made by Health-watch Bradford and District, presented to Health and Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2018, on the experiences of autistic people across the area on accessing support.

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## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out a response to the recommendations from a report by Healthwatch Bradford and District presented to the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2018. The report highlighted the experiences of autistic people across the area. It identified the challenges that people face accessing both diagnosis and support, and the impact that these have on them, their families and carers.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Healthwatch report: Autistic Spectrum Conditions: access to support in Bradford and District (Sept 2018) highlighted the following experiences from people with autism across the Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven district.
- 2.1.1 People struggle to find information about the pathway for diagnosis, the support available, and about their condition.
- 2.1.2 While increased resources have been made available for diagnosis, demand still far outstrips capacity, as the diagnosis service, Bradford and Airedale Neurodevelopment Service (BANDS) remains closed to new referrals.
- 2.1.3 People continue to wait a long time for an assessment. Their choices are therefore to attempt an Independent Funding Request through their GP for assessment out of area, pay for private assessment, which many cannot afford to do, or wait for it to reopen to new referrals.
- 2.1.4 Specialist support for autism is vital to people's wellbeing; helping them socialise, learn skills, stay in education and employment, and manage their mental health. Despite this, people struggle to access the support they need:
- Without a diagnosis, people are not entitled to specialist support, which means they can be waiting for help for years.
  - People are therefore referred to alternative forms of support, e.g. mental health or learning disability services which are not equipped to meet their needs.
  - The support that is offered can be short-term or inconsistent, and people can find the help they are getting is reduced after a while.
- 2.1.5 There is a lack of understanding about Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) among some GPs and other professionals, including dentists, those working in schools, and social workers, which can make it difficult for people to access diagnosis and support, but can also leave them shut out of other support such as primary care.
- 2.1.6 Because services do not understand their communication needs, autistic people often struggle to understand the information provided to them, or to engage effectively with healthcare professionals.
- 2.1.7 The cumulative impact of these issues has an often devastating effect on the mental health of autistic people and their families.

### **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 Since the Healthwatch report was presented to the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, all Local Authorities completed Public Health England's Autism Self- Assessment in December 2018. The self- assessment shows that in Bradford, eight years after the Autism Act 2010 came into law and the NHS Autism Strategy 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' was published, we are still falling short of our ambitions for people with Autism. Particular challenges are in relation to the quality of our data that would allow a clearer picture of how the system is responding to people with Autism. See appendix 2 for the Bradford submission. .
- 3.2 Public Health Bradford, have undertaken a local health needs assessment for people with learning disabilities and people with autism and this will form part of the new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which will be launched in the near future.
- 3.3 In order to address the gap in leadership and governance for this important area of work, the Transforming Lives Programme Board will include the Autism Strategy as part of its scope. It is proposed that the Autism Strategy Group/Partnership Board is re-established and the Transforming Lives Programme Board is split into two separate agendas, covering Learning Disability and then Autism. The first meeting was on 31st January 2019.
- 3.4 The Neuro-diversity strategy (October 2017) action/work plan will be reviewed and form part of the new SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced, timed) plan to be developed by the newly constituted Autism Strategy Group/Partnership Board.
- 3.5 The work of this group will also focus on addressing the challenges in the autism self-assessment and will also consider the Autism health needs assessment
- 3.6 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the Local Authority, CCG and BDCFT response to the recommendations from the Healthwatch report.

### **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 Bradford CCGs is nearing agreement with service providers regarding additional non recurrent funding to address the waiting list for the BANDS service.
- 4.2 Bradford CCGs is contributing to the Autism work stream of the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Integrated Care System development which is seeking to consider alternative sustainable approaches to delivering high quality adult autism diagnostic services which link to local care pathways.
- 4.3 Bradford Council has earmarked funding in the iBCF (improved Better Care Fund) specifically to respond to the anticipated increase in demand for social care support from people who have received a diagnosis of autism through the NHS service.

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- 5.1 By addressing the issues raised, the statutory needs of people within the Bradford district will be met appropriately.
- 5.2 The governance structure of this work will sit within the Transforming Lives Board. This will report to the Executive Commissioning Board and to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

- 6.1 There are no specific legal issues arising from this report.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

- 7.1.1 Equality objectives – this report outlines the actions to be taken to address the equality objectives for people with autism.

## **9. OPTIONS**

- 9.1 None to report

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 That the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the plans to re-establish the Autism Strategy Group who will oversee the delivery of a SMART action plan that will demonstrate improvements for people with Autism in Bradford.
- 10.2 That a further update report be submitted to the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to show the progress against the action plan in 12 months' time.

## **11. APPENDICES**

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Summary of actions addressing the recommendations from Health Watch report on the experiences of people with autism across the Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven District.
- 11.2 Appendix 2: Bradford's Autism self-assessment – submitted to Public Health England (December 2018).