

# **Report of the Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership to the meeting of the Health and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 6 October 2022**

---

## **Subject:**

**Assessment and Diagnosis of Autism in Adults in Bradford district and Craven: Update on progress and challenges**

## **Summary statement:**

The Bradford and Airedale Neurodevelopment Service (BANDS) was commissioned to provide triage, assessment and diagnosis for both ASD and ADHD for adults (over 18) in Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven.

This report and appendices provide an update to the report delivered to this Committee in March 2022. The March 22 report described the Adult Autism pathway, shared experiences of patients through case studies, and summarised the plan for improvements to the assessment and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in adults in Bradford, District and Craven.

---

**Portfolio:**

**Healthy People and Places**

Report Contact: Walter O'Neill  
Phone: (07432 721557  
E-mail: [walter.oneill@bradford.nhs.uk](mailto:walter.oneill@bradford.nhs.uk)

## 1. Summary

The Bradford and Airedale Neurodevelopment Service (BANDS) was commissioned to provide triage, assessment and diagnosis for both ASD and ADHD for adults (over 18) in Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven.

This report and appendices provide an update to the report delivered to this Committee in March 2022. The March 22 report described the Adult Autism pathway, shared experiences of patients through case studies, and summarised the plan for improvements to the assessment and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in adults in Bradford, District and Craven.

In particular, the report detailed the plan agreed at the MH, LD and ND Programme Board which focussed on 3 key areas:

1. Continue to strengthen the Autism Assessment Pathway (adults) through expanding existing BANDS service to increase capacity and patient throughput
2. Engage with NHS and independent providers for rapid, short term, expansion in capacity for clinical assessments
3. Engage with ICS to explore system approaches to ASD assessment and diagnosis

At the Committee meeting it was agreed that, by March 2023 the BANDS service would deliver:

- 100 assessments through SWYFT
- 100 assessments through the Independent sector
- 56 assessments through core BANDS service

It was also agreed that commissioners and BANDS managers will return to this Committee to share progress and/or changes to the plan;

- Oct 2022 - informal session and briefing note
- March 23- Report to full committees on performance – demonstrate at least 80% of projected assessments are completed. Demonstrate a plan for sustainability and continued improvement of service.

This update to the Committee provides details on the progress, challenges and revisions made to plans since March 2022. Recognising the Committee has new members and a new Chair, some information from previous reports is included for information and context.

## 2. Background

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition, the core features of which are persistent difficulties in social interaction and communication and the presence of stereotypic (rigid and repetitive) behaviours, resistance to change or restricted interests. The way that autism is expressed in individual people differs at different stages of life, in response to interventions, and with the presence of coexisting conditions such as learning disabilities (also called 'intellectual disabilities').

People with autism also commonly experience difficulty with cognitive and behavioural flexibility, altered sensory sensitivity, sensory processing difficulties and emotional regulation difficulties. The features of autism may range from mild to severe and may fluctuate over time or in response to changes in circumstances. (NICE Clinical guideline [CG142])

1% of the general population is estimated to have autism and 50% of those to have intellectual disability. For Bradford the autistic only population is calculated at 3,147 by 2025 (Pansi dataset).

In response to section 2 of the Autism Act 2009, the Department of Health published 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives', The Strategy for adults with autism in England (2010) <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20170207052351/https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/0809556.pdf>

The Government's vision is 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 makes the most of their talents". It outlines five quality outcomes:

1. Adults with autism achieve better health outcomes
2. Adults with autism are included and economically active
3. Adults with autism are living in accommodation that meets their needs
4. Adults with autism are benefiting from the personalisation agenda in health and social care, and can access personal budgets
5. Adults with autism are no longer managed inappropriately in the criminal justice system

The Bradford and Airedale Neurodevelopment Service (BANDS) was commissioned in 2015 to provide triage, assessment and diagnosis for both ASD and ADHD for adults (over 18) in Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven. The value of the contract has increased from £98,000 in 2015 to £152,000 in 2021. N.B. The NHS commissioning budget for BANDS, Adult Autism assessment, diagnosis and support service is 50% of the total BANDS budget - £75,000 p.a. Core staffing consists of:

Lead Autism Clinician	x1	FTE
Autism HCA	x1	FTE
Admin	x 0.5	FTE

Nice guidance states that the local autism partnership should lead on the development of a multi professional pathway and be responsible for ensuring people are trained (all front facing staff) and reasonable adjustments are made, etc. Adult Social Care Services plan to bring together a new vision/plan for integrated care and support pathways/networks including good information and advice, Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP) services will support individuals as well as diagnosis and pathways into adult social care/ housing/ disability employment advisors, etc.

The prevalence data contained in the 2019 Public Health report, LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISM IN BRADFORD - A Health Needs Assessment will be used to help understand potential demand for adult diagnosis services and will contextualise something of the challenge faced by commissioners and providers of services to support adults with needs linked to ASD.

<https://jsna.bradford.gov.uk/documents/Mental%20wellbeing/05%20Learning%20Disability%20Health%20Needs%20Assessment/Learning%20Disability%20and%20Autism%20in%20Bradford%20-%20April%202019.pdf>

The NHS Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership Board (BDC HCP) also commissions services to support adults with autism with social, education and

employment needs through Specialist Autism Services and Sacar, through an annual budget of £61,000

### 3. Report issues

#### Update on progress, challenges and revisions made to plans since March 2022

##### Vision

The Bradford and Airedale Neurodevelopment Service (BANDS) aims and objectives are to deliver a clinically led, resilient Adult Autism pathway providing clinical triage, assessment, diagnosis and support. We will provide a service that has capacity to meet demand and can respond to new referrals within the NICE recommended timeline of 12 weeks. We will offer both clinical and social care services that support adults with ASD to have information and access training, employment and leisure across Bradford district and Craven (BdC).

##### Planning and implementation

The Bradford District and Craven ND project group meets monthly to design and manage improvements to adult autism and ADHD pathways (**Appendix 5**, Project Plan) Faced with setbacks around workforce and recruitment to plans to expand the BDCFT BANDS service, the project team took a resilient approach to develop an innovative plan for partnership between BANDS and SWYPFT, putting the principles of our newly formed Integrated commissioning System (ICS) into action. The new plan builds on SWYPFTS proven pathway and ability to recruit. The plan is ambitious in scope to create a sustainable model that can meet increased demand. The new model also takes advantage of BANDS existing networks with BdC referrers and the wider system. We have also worked to increase integration between health, social care and VCS services, ensuring that people can have information about, and be signposted to, the organisations that can help them.

##### Resources (actual)

- £374,000 non-recurring NHSE Transformation Fund Allocation, over 2 years. Will part fund the new model of service and expansion of options for support.
- £100,000 CCG and SWYPFT (joint funded) non-recurring funds to outsource 100 assessments to SWYFT
- £75,000 BDCFT/BANDS Adult Autism core funding (block contract)

##### Resources (proposed)

- £250,000 recurring funding is needed to fund a new, sustainable model for BANDS – a business case is to be presented to System Finance and Performance Committee in October 2022. Recurring funding will support the recruitment process, attracting more and better-quality applicants.

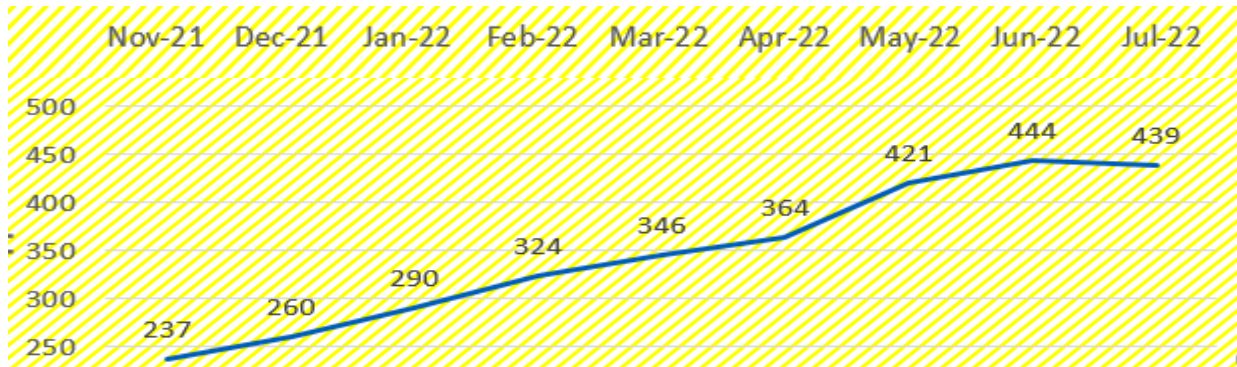
**Challenges and Responses** The challenges we face in realising this vision are not unique to BdC but are also being experienced regionally and nationally.

Capacity and demand - Referrals for assessments for autism assessment continue to rise across Bradford and West Yorkshire, substantially outstripping current capacity (see Table 1) New referrals are as many as 50 per month, whilst the core capacity of the current model is 3 to 5 assessments per month.

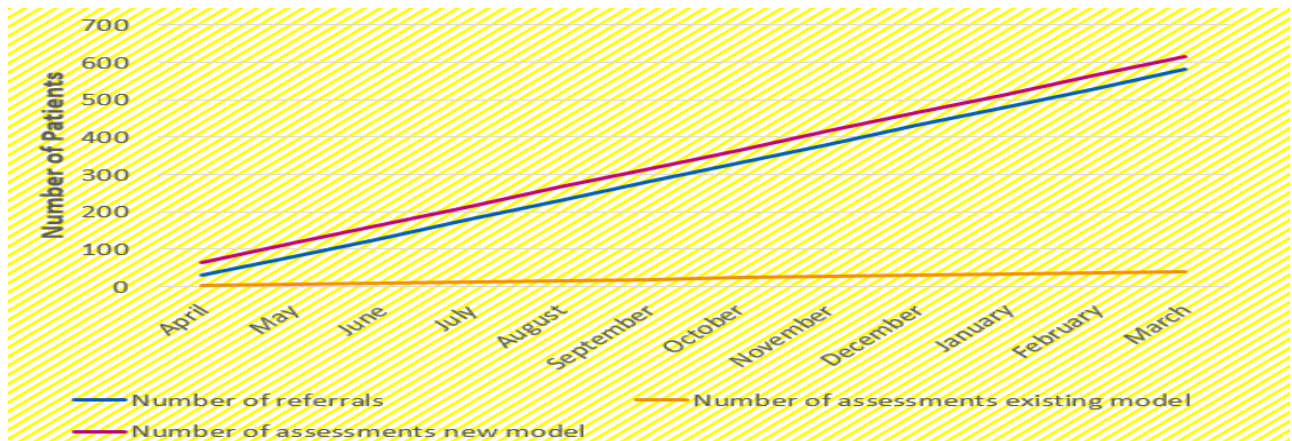
This will be addressed through a new model of service and an expanded pathway for adults with autism (see tables 2 & 3) which can process 50 referrals per month. The new

model includes a process of clinical triage to provide early identification of those referrals where the information provided is not consistent with a presentation of a person who has Autism as described by the diagnostic criteria such as DSM-5.

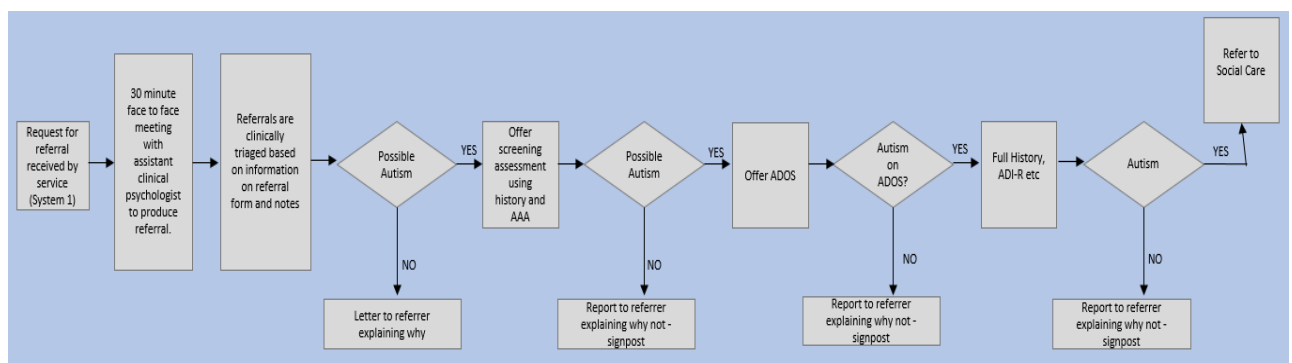
**Table 1 - No of people waiting for first Appointment**



**Table 2 – Capacity and demand gap**



**Table 3 – new Bands adult autism referral process**



**Workforce** - Due to the small size of the BANDS team, BDCFT have been unable to recruit to new posts and, since May 2022, both existing staff have resigned. This is being addressed by entering a partnership with SWYPFT, who have a proven record of recruitment to their multi-disciplinary staff team of 35 people, providing services across 3 CCGs.

Staff have already been recruited for the 100 assessments project and recruitment has started to replace core BANDS staff.

Referrals – in the existing model, clinical time has been used asking referrers for additional information and the quality of assessment has been affected by insufficient information being available. In the new model, an additional step is introduced to offer a 30 minute face to face meeting with the patient to gather all the information and evidence available for assessment.

### Partnership

The new model is built on developing the partnership between BDCFT/BANDS and SWYPFT, putting the principles of the WY Integrated Care System into practice. There is now joint recruitment to posts, building on SWYPFTs reputation and success, as well. The revised model of service will increase clinical capacity and end excessive waiting times. The expanded adult with ASC pathway will increase the quality of referrals which leads to better outcomes and improved options for support. There will be education for staff within social care and health to recognise, assess and meet the needs of adults with ASC around education, leisure, and employment

The 100 assessments project is ready to begin face to face assessments from Sept 2022 and the new model will commence from Feb/March 2023.

Through increased co-working with a Bradford based VCS organisation, Specialist Autism Services, we hope to increase the support for young people with ASC in transition from children's to adult services and into education and employment.

### Outcomes

- Improve capacity of Adult Autism Pathway to meet demand
- Waiting times to access service to be reduced to NICE guideline levels
- Improved quality of referrals
- Improved experience of the Adult Autism Pathway

### Revised Plan for the Assessment and Diagnosis of Autism in Adults in Bradford district and Craven

Action	Update
<b>Outsourcing 100 assessments through SWYPFT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estate secured for local, face to face delivery of assessments at Hillside Bridge</li> <li>• Data sharing agreement in place</li> <li>• Clinical triage of 126 people from waiting list complete</li> <li>• Staff recruitment complete</li> <li>• Initial communication to patients complete</li> <li>• Additional step introduced to improve quality of referrals – pre-assessment meeting</li> <li>• Assessment activity to commence September 2022</li> <li>• see <b>Appendix 1</b> for projected activity</li> </ul>
<b>Outsourcing 100 assessments through the independent sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of focus to more sustainable and quality improvement to BANDS through partnership working with SWYPFT</li> <li>• Resource diverted to support contracted outsourcing of 250 ADHD assessments from Clinical Partners</li> <li>• 250 people removed from adult ADHD waiting list of 887</li> <li>• Activity begins Sept 2022</li> </ul>

<p><b>56 assessments through BANDS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has not progressed as planned</li> <li>• Recruitment issue: Despite support from internal and external HR specialists, BANDS unable to recruit to advertised roles.</li> <li>• Resignations: 2 existing staff left the service in May 22</li> <li>• Resilient approach and revised plan to deliver a sustainable and high quality service:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership with SWYPFT developed to include new service model, joint recruitment to posts and management support;</li> <li>• Clinical lead support from Dr Sara Humphrey</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>New Service Model Phase 1</b></p>	<p>Phase 1 recruitment – beginning Sept 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 x Band 8a Psychologist and</li> <li>• 1 x Band 4 Psychology assistant</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint recruitment to new posts from Sept 2022</li> <li>• on-going leadership, referral management and triage of 600 referrals for autism each year</li> <li>• Clear backlog of referrals</li> <li>• Reduce yearly waiting list increase from 560 to 50</li> <li>• total investment £166,752 per annum</li> </ul>
<p><b>New Service Model Phase 2</b></p>	<p>Phase 2 recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 x Band 7 Psychology assistant</li> <li>• Revised Adult ASD Pathway, inc. improved quality of referrals, education, and non-clinical support</li> </ul>

**The BDCFT/Bands and SWYPFT Partnership**

<p><b>Provide emergency support to BANDS. May 22 – Dec 22</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the backlog of referrals.</li> <li>• Apply a Clinical Triage approach to referrals</li> <li>• Stabilise the waiting list</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support with the BANDS waiting list. May 22 – Mar 23</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWYPFT contributed 50% towards assessing 100 patients from the BANDS waiting list.</li> <li>• Deliver a face to face SWYPFT service in Bradford, in collaboration with BANDS</li> <li>• Communication with patients – 126 people from waiting list have received a letter explaining the process (<b>appendix 2</b>)</li> <li>• new step to pathway introduced – initial face to face meeting to gather in depth referral information</li> <li>• Initial steps commenced, assessments begin September 2022</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build up BANDS through partnership with SWYPFT Aug 22 – Dec 22</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising to joint posts based on core funding and transformation funding</li> <li>• Agree an operational model</li> <li>• Clinical Lead, Dr Sara Humphrey</li> <li>• Revise GP ASSIST Pathway – pilot new referral process (<b>Appendix 3</b>)</li> <li>• Review and expand non-clinical support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expand BANDS to create a sustainable model Dec 22 – March 23</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• kick start the new service model through core and development funds</li> <li>• demonstrate a track record of success and develop a business case for sustainability</li> <li>• Apply to our Health and Care Partnership for recurring funding</li> </ul>

**BDMDC – Adult Social Care support and new developments in post-diagnosis and non-clinical support for adults with ASD**

<p><b>Bradford Local Offer</b></p>	<p>Information on current services and support available for both children and adults with Autism can be found on the <b>Bradford Local Offer</b>.  <a href="https://localoffer.bradford.gov.uk/">https://localoffer.bradford.gov.uk/</a>            General information for adults with care and support needs can be found at <b>Connect to Support</b>.  <a href="https://bradford.connecttosupport.org/">https://bradford.connecttosupport.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Support for families and carers</b></p>	<p>Support for families and carers of children and young people (up to 25 years) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is offered by the <b>Parents’ Forum for Bradford and Airedale</b>.</p> <p>The <b>Carers’ Resource</b> service provides support for carers who are defined as people who, without payment, provide help and support to a friend, neighbour or relative who could not manage otherwise because of frailty, illness or disability</p>
<p><b>Workforce training: (new)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Neurodiversity – all staff</li> <li>• Working with autistic people – social workers who work directly with people with autism;</li> <li>• Level 3 Certificate in understanding Autism (A level equivalent), which once complete will have trained 20 social workers – the course commences in September,</li> <li>• 48 places on a virtual Autism experience bus. This is an immersive training experience to allow participants to understand how autism affects people day to day and how to make adjustments to support autistic people.</li> </ul> <p><u>Outcomes for training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff are aware of autism and neurodiversity and how it might present in work, at home, in care settings and the community; Identify practical strategies to support neurodivergent individuals in a range of day to day situations; Understand how to support neurodiversity people and make reasonable adjustments</li> <li>• Staff who work directly with autistic people understand what Autism is and the varied presentation of autistic people understand the main characteristics which lead to a diagnosis of Autism; Understand the range of difficulties and challenges that autistic people can experience in everyday life; Have an understanding of policy and legislation that underpins good practice; Understand how to make practical adaptations and adjustments to make services accessible to autistic people</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supported Employment: (new)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BDMDC has been awarded grant funding bid from DWP of £350k funding for a local supported employment initiative (LSE) for people with autism.</li> <li>• This new service will support 100 Autistic people into paid employment over the project which will commence next month and is funded until March 2025.</li> </ul> <p><u>Supported Employment Initiative:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a structured 5 stage supported employment model support 100</li> </ul>



	autistic people into sustainable paid employment; provide a job coach to work with individuals through the entire process of gaining employment; to support employers with reasonable adjustments, understanding the needs of autistic people and how they can be an asset to their business; at the end of the project have a sustainable model and robust evidence base to extend the programme post 2025
--	---

**Sacar/Specialist Autism Services, delivering post-diagnostic and non-clinical support for adults with ASD**

<b><u>Autism Engagement</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase opportunities for adults with an ASC across the district (social skills training)</li> <li>• Support social engagement</li> <li>• Support health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Increase awareness and understanding</li> <li>• Support to parents / carers of adults with an ASC by providing respite and encouraging independence / skills development</li> </ul>
<b><u>Autism Works</u></b>	<p>provides a tailored supported employment programme to increase confidence, employability and overall health and well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes peer support , passport to work , work orientation visits, volunteering, paid work opportunities etc</li> <li>• Supports health &amp; wellbeing – person centred reviews, evaluate progression and development.</li> <li>• Increases the overall confidence of adults with an ASC through increased social skills, employability, social inclusion and independence.</li> </ul>

**This plan will be shared with a number of BDC HCP boards between August and November 2022**

<b>Board</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Performance and Commissioning Forum	01/08/2022	Supported
System Quality Committee	23/08/2022 and 03/2023	Supported
Place Leadership Team	28/09/22 and 3 monthly	
HSCOSC Committee	06/10/2022 and 02/2023	
System Finance and Performance Committee	27/10/2022	

**4. Options**

Members may wish to comment on the revised plan for a sustainable BANDS adult autism service and to endorse the application for recurrent funding to the System Finance and Performance Committee.

**5. Contribution to corporate priorities**

This plan supports the BDC HCP priority; Parity of esteem for access and outcomes for people with Learning disability / neurodiversity

**6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the revised plan for a sustainable BANDS adult autism service which responds to issues of recruitment difficulties, referral issues and rapidly increasing demand

**7. Background documents**

➤ None

**8. Not for publication documents**

➤ None.

**9. Appendices**

**Appendix 1** Projected activity for 100 assessments project

**Appendix 2** Letter to patients re next steps

**Appendix 3** BANDS adult autism assessment process

**Appendix 4** Summary of Adult Autism monthly dataset report, Nov. 21 to July 22

**Appendix 5** BdC ND Project Plan