

Autism Strategy

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS
Foundation Trust

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Introduction

CWP has been working on improving access to mainstream services for people with learning disabilities through effective use of the Green Light tool kit. Over the last few years, there were a number of initiatives and activities that focused on services for autistic people and for those with learning disabilities.

Background

1. Autism has been part of the national discourse for a number of years within the [Autism Act 2009](#) and [Equalities Act 2010](#).
2. Transforming Care brought attention to Autism and/or learning disability services with a focus on meeting the needs of these population in the community and reducing reliance on inpatient care
3. Autism, learning disability, and children and young people's mental health are key aspects of the NHS long term plan.
4. The Lenehan report (2017) highlighted the lack of alignment between national strategies for SEND/Autism and learning disability impacting on children and young people with the most complex needs ; the Thrive Model proposed by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a multi agency framework for mental health services that may address some of these issues, and is highlighted in the NHS long term plan.

In 2017-2018, CWP went through a re-organisation of its services with formation of Care Groups. It allowed a clinically led approach to service development and innovation. There were number of

initiatives and activities taking place across the trust and across the care groups that focussed on the needs of autistic people and of those with learning disabilities. There were some joint initiatives between the care groups e.g. Children and Young People (CYP) care group and Learning Disability, Neurodevelopmental Disorder, and Acquired Brain Injury (LD, NDD, ABI) care group had started work on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Care Pathways, and on the Intensive Support Function model. All the care groups had engaged in quality improvement and service development initiatives that focussed on needs of autistic people. However, there was a growing awareness of need for a trustwide approach to achieve certain objectives. There was also a need for a coordinated approach to influence wider systems in order to achieve best outcomes. We felt that there was need to bring all these elements together in a cohesive strategic framework so that there was a unified, cross care group, trust wide approach in delivering the best outcome for this population. We also felt a need to interpret the Trust Strategic objectives in the context of the various national drivers and legal frameworks concerning autistic people and people with learning disabilities. It was also acknowledged that any such strategic framework would need to be broader to encompass wider local, regional, and national needs.

CWP vision, values, and strategic objectives

Our vision is: Working in partnership to improve health and wellbeing by providing high quality person-centred care

We have adopted the 6Cs



CWP values

- We aim to recruit people who can clearly demonstrate they share our values and will embrace them in their working life
- Focus on wellbeing and prevention. This means that we will try to help people to stay well, rather than just looking after people once they do become unwell
- Work with our partners to look after the whole of each person's journey of care. This means that our services will support people from the point at which support is needed
- Deliver person-centred care. This means that we will work with people as unique individuals with their own strengths, abilities, needs and goals
- Make sure that we deliver services of the highest possible quality with the resources that we have
- Deliver high quality, integrated and innovative services that improve outcomes
- Ensure meaningful involvement of service users, carers, staff and the wider community
- Be a model employer and have a caring, competent and motivated workforce
- Maintain and develop robust partnerships with existing and potential new stakeholders
- Improve quality of information to improve service delivery, evaluation and planning
- Sustain financial viability and deliver value for money
- Be recognised as an open, progressive organisation that is about care, well-being and partnership

Our vision for services for autistic people and people with learning disabilities

1. We will make the principles of person-centred care, continuous improvement, innovation, engagement and partnership working fundamental to caring for and supporting autistic children, young people and adults.
2. We will provide compassionate care and support, with the individual, their family, friends or people important to them at the centre of our care and support.
3. We will deliver the right care, first time and ensure that every decision supports what is best for the person to help them lead healthy, safe, happy and rewarding lives.

To deliver our vision, we developed an Autism Strategic Framework

Development of Autism Strategic Framework

- CWP, in order to deliver priorities outlined by the Transforming Care framework, had set up Autism Work Stream group. The group was tasked with overseeing service development and innovation initiatives for transforming care of people with learning disability and autistic people receiving services from CWP. The group reported to the LD, NDD, ABI Care Group. Work stream was also linked with the regional Transforming Care Partnership. This allowed the CWP to get a good understanding of current practices and gaps in the services locally and regionally.
- CWP senior clinicians provide clinical leadership in the North West Operational Delivery Network (ODN) and led on the development of the models of care for autistic children and young people and for autistic adults without learning disabilities. CWP clinicians also led on the development of the Dynamic Support Database – DSD risk stratification tool for transforming care and its roll out in North West England for the ODN.
- CWP staff are also involved regionally and nationally through the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and Health Education England in the development and delivery of training.
- CWP has set up a Centre for Autism, Neurodevelopmental Disorders, and Intellectual Disability (CANDDID) to achieve some of the objectives of Transforming Care but also to meet some of the current and future needs of the region including those around workforce development, research, and education.
- Based on the information and knowledge through various initiatives and activities at local, regional, and national level and through links with local, regional, and national groups, CWP worked on the development of a strategic framework.
- The draft framework was then shared with the Cheshire East Parent Care Forum for feedback with an understanding that the detailed implementation strategy will be co-produced.
- The draft framework was then taken to the senior management teams of all the care groups for consultation and input. The care groups agreed for the strategic framework to become a basis of an implementation work plan over the next 3 years.

Initial implementation plan

Transforming lives: care and support for autistic people	Providing best care and support that was person centred, service user/carers experience focussed, and ensured right care first time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person centred care pathways within services, between services and between care groups in order to achieve seamless service delivery • Care pathways that ensured positive experience of care • Pathways that were co-produced • Pathways that were evidence based • Pathways that worked for autistic people in achieving their goal, hopes, and aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism strategic framework implementation group • Agree co-production principles • Stakeholder analysis • Participation and engagement based on stakeholder analysis • Trust Wide Autism Clinical Network Group • Focus group to agree Cross Care Group 3 years work plan based on ODN models • Care group specific 3 years work plan • Development of framework for levels of intervention • Strategy for stakeholder engagement (multi-agency) • Autism friendly environment
	Helping people be best they can be through partnership working, engagement, and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement • Building community resilience • Partnership working with families and carers • Autism informed processes throughout CWP • Autism informed physical environment • Culture of innovation and evaluation • Partnership working with other agencies including third sector providers 	<p>CWP Education and CANDDID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreting Health Education England competency framework for CWP staff • On-going development of e-learning modules • Development of specialist 1-

Helping people to be
the best they can be

			day and 2-day courses
	Developing skills and people including of those who access services, those who support autistic people and those who provide services for autistic people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure autism informed workforce • Levels of competencies • Training of wider stakeholder services • Autism informed service provision across the footprint/agencies • Ensure workforce sustainability • Undergraduate and post-graduate education • Research and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of post-graduate qualification opportunities in NDD • Linking with Universities on undergraduate training <p>CWP R&D and CANDDID:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building capacity for co-produced, multi-disciplinary research • Work towards developing a culture of evaluation and innovation

National guidance

The nice guidelines describe autism as:

The term autism describes qualitative differences and impairments in reciprocal social interaction and social communication, combined with restricted interests and rigid and repetitive behaviours, often with a lifelong impact. In addition to these features, people with autism frequently experience a range of cognitive, learning, language, medical, emotional and behavioural problems. These can include a need for routine and difficulty understanding other people, including their intentions, feelings and perspectives. Approximately 50% of people with autism have an intellectual disability (IQ below 70), and around 70% of people with autism also meet diagnostic criteria for at least 1 other (often unrecognised) physical or mental health problem, such as sleep problems, eating problems, epilepsy, anxiety, depression, problems with attention, dyspraxia, motor coordination problems, sensory sensitivities, self-injurious behaviour and other behaviour that challenges (sometimes aggressive). These problems can substantially affect the person's quality of life, and that of their families or carers, and lead to social vulnerability.

The Autism Act 2009. The Autism Act sets out the duty of the Secretary of state to issue an autism strategy by 2010 and stated that certain guidance must be in place.

Guidance issued under this section must in particular include guidance about—

(a) the provision of relevant services for the purpose of diagnosing autistic spectrum conditions in adults;

(b) the identification of adults with such conditions;
(c) the assessment of the needs of adults with such conditions for relevant services; (d) planning in relation to the provision of relevant services to persons with autistic spectrum conditions as they move from being children to adults;
(e) other planning in relation to the provision of relevant services to adults with autistic spectrum conditions;
(f) the training of staff who provide relevant services to adults with such conditions;
(g) local arrangements for leadership in relation to the provision of relevant services to adults with such conditions.

In 2010, the Government did produce the first autism strategy for England, Fulfilling and rewarding lives. The associated statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisation supported the strategy's implementation, and included duties and recommendations on areas including training of staff, identification and diagnosis of autism, and local service provision. The strategy was updated in 2014 – "Think Autism" built on the 2010 strategy and set a renewed focus on three key areas: building communities that are aware of autism; promoting innovation in service provision; and providing integrated care. Think Autism and the revised statutory guidance contain duties and recommendations for service providers and Government departments across areas including employment, welfare, criminal justice, transport and education services. A progress report on the implementation of Think Autism was published in January 2016.

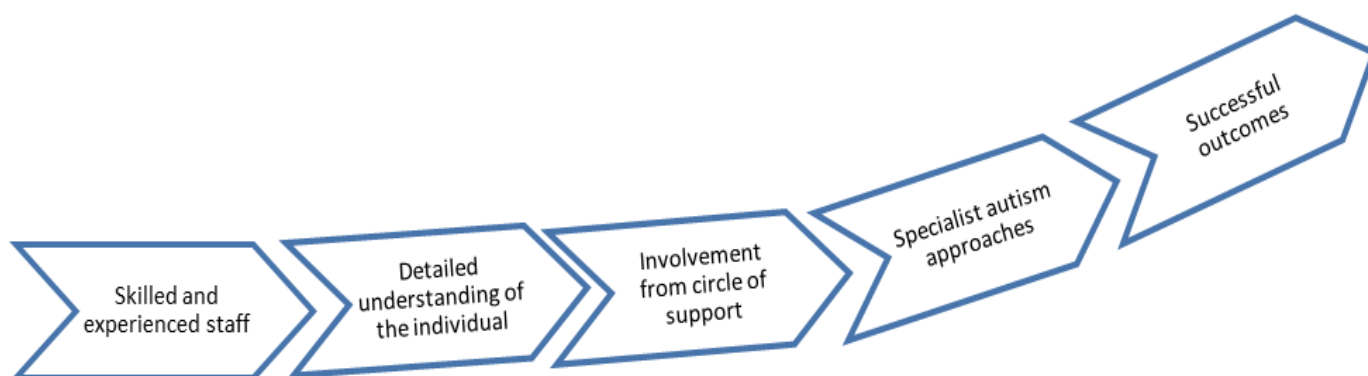
Think Autism states "It is important that health and care professionals have a good understanding of autism. Where professionals do understand autism, the positive impact on the lives of adults with autism can be immense. Health and social care professionals must be able to communicate effectively with people with autism if they are to be able to manage their own care and exercise genuine choice and control."

Think Autism also addressed the needs of those service users who have complex needs it stated that "Some people with autism will have additional, more complex needs. Mental health problems are more common among people with autism and it is estimated that around half of people with autism also have a learning disability. However, poor mental health is not an inevitable consequence of having autism and when someone with autism has a mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression, it is essential that they can access appropriate help and support"

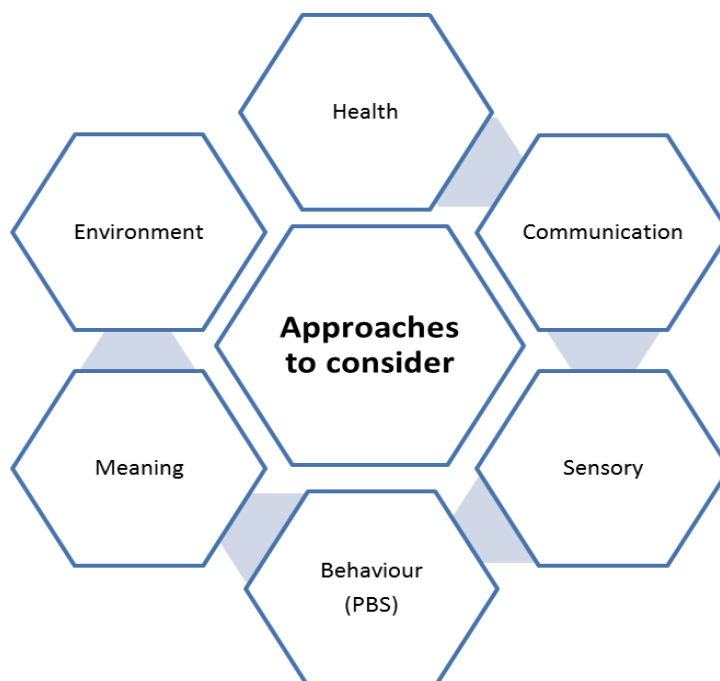
Think Autism recognised the challenges faced by those who have complex needs stating "Some people with additional needs such as these may communicate through behaviours that others may perceive as challenging, particularly if they are in an environment or context which they find unsettling or distressing. Some people with autism will also have additional long term physical health needs such as epilepsy and may require much higher levels of care, support and healthcare. Services and care planning for people with these needs should reflect their needs related specifically to their autism as well as those relating to learning disability or mental or physical health issues."

Developing a pathway

- 1) Developing knowledge and building on skills of experienced staff through training, education and research
- 2) Understanding the individual needs of the people we support through assessment of needs
- 3) Providing a partnership approach involving the individuals 'circle of support' including families, carers, professionals and the individual
- 4) The use of strength-based approaches including Positive Behaviour Support, creating capable environments, the use of reasonable adjustments to support the individual
- 5) Achieving successful outcomes

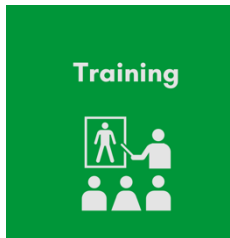


**Autism approaches
for consideration to
employ as part of the
pathway**



Strategy for continuous improvement and innovation

Continuous improvement and innovation; CWP aims to develop implementation within the three core areas of **Training, Education and Research**.



People who access our services	Families, carers & communities
People within CWP	Partners, wider organisations & agencies



Undergraduate education

- Medical, nursing, AHP, psychology, social care, pharmacy
- Apprenticeships

Post-graduate education

- Certificate and diploma
- Masters
- Doctoral



Academic collaborations



Service user/carers led research initiatives



Clinically led research



MDT research

Strategy for wider contribution: Key stakeholders

Local communities

- Partnership development and working with local forums and 3rd sector organisations
- Partnership working with acute and primary care services

Regional

- Transforming care partnerships (TCP)
- Provider collaboratives
- NHS providers
- Operational delivery network (ODN)

National

- Royal College of Psychiatrists
- Other professional bodies and colleges
- NHSE, Learning Disability Senate
- Health Education England

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