

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Scrutiny Panel on Adults with Autism: Report
Date of Meeting: 10 March 2011
Report of: The Strategic Director, Resources
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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 In 2010 the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee (ASCHOSC) set up a scrutiny panel to look at services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC). The immediate context for this was the publication of the Autism Act (2009) requiring local authorities to develop their own strategies for adults. (The Act focuses exclusively on services for adults with ASC, and the scrutiny panel consequently looked only at adult services and at 'transition' provision for people moving from youth to adult services.)
- 1.2 Panel members were: Cllr Harmer-Strange (Chairman), Cllr Meadows, Cllr Phillips and Cllr Watkins.
- 1.3 The scrutiny panel report on services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions is included as **Appendix 1** to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members endorse the scrutiny panel report on services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 There are a number of different terms for Autism, some of which include Asperger Syndrome. The report used the term Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) to reflect the range of ways in which those with autism or Asperger can be affected. The term 'autism' is used in the National Autism Strategy and is defined as:

“a lifelong condition that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how a person makes sense of the world around them. The three main areas of difficulty, which all people with autism share, are known as the ‘triad of impairments’.”

- 3.2 The Report reflects the four areas identified in the Government guidance, namely; training, identification and diagnosis, transition and planning. There are a number of recommendations in each of these areas.
- 3.3 The Panel held six public meetings, including two to hear from service users and their carers. They heard twice from Professor Jeremy Turk, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, and an expert in childhood ASC. Other witnesses included: the Lead Commissioner for Learning Disabilities; the Acting Strategic Commissioner, Mental Health and Substance Misuse; the Manager of Adult Learning Disability Services; the Service Director for Working Age Mental Health Services for the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT) and the Deputy Service Director from the SPFT; the Professor Hugo Critchley and his team at the Diagnostic Service; the Head of Child Development and Disability Service; a GP, Access Point; Housing Revenues and Benefits; Housing Options; the Youth Offending Service; a Sussex Police Officer, and others. They also from the voluntary sector - Assert and Amaze - and talked to the National Autistic Society and Autism Sussex.
- 3.4 More detailed information on Autistic Spectrum Conditions and the scrutiny panel investigation may be found in the panel report (**Appendix 1**).
- 3.5 The bulk of the recommendations in the panel report are intended to inform the design of the local autism strategy, which is currently being developed by the council and city partners. If endorsed by the ASCHOSC, these will be presented to the council's Executive, who may then choose to refer them to the partnership group charged with formulating the autism strategy. Other recommendations are directly for the council's Executive or for NHS Brighton & Hove.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A draft version of the panel report was shared with the city commissioners of ASC services and their comments were taken into consideration when compiling the final report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 ASCHOSC's decisions in relation to this report (i.e. whether to endorse the Scrutiny Panel report and refer its recommendations to the council's Executive for consideration) have no direct financial implications.

However, members should bear in mind that the implementation of some of the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations might have significant financial implications for the council, and that any Executive decision in relation to these matters will need to be made with reference to these costs.

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 If ASCHOSC endorses the Panel's report and accepts its recommendations, it is required to prepare a formal report and submit it to the Chief Executive for consideration by Cabinet or the relevant Cabinet Member.

If ASCHOSC cannot agree on one single final report, up to one minority report may be prepared and submitted, alongside the majority report, for consideration by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member.

Lawyer consulted: Oliver Dixon

Date: 2 March 2011

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Information on equalities issues is contained in the main report (**Appendix 1**)

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 None directly

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None directly

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Detailed information on the risks posed by ASC is included in the main report (**Appendix 1**)

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 Ensuring that people with ASC, their families and their carers live lives of quality and dignity is a key challenge for city health and social care partners.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Scrutiny panel report on adults with autism

Documents in Members' Rooms:

1. Volume 2: minutes of panel meetings and written evidence

Background Documents:

1. Autism Act (2009)