

Warwickshire's All Age Autism Strategy (2014-2017)

Warwickshire's All Age Autism Strategy provides a real opportunity for the needs of people with autism and their carers to be recognised and ensure that they have the same opportunities as everyone else.

The strategy aims to provide a clear and consistent joined up approach to support throughout a person's life. It also highlights the importance of personalised services and support offering individual's more choice and control, with a particular emphasis on a clear plan and support when moving from children's to adult's services.

A comprehensive public consultation was conducted during March - May 2013 which provided an ideal opportunity for the citizens of Warwickshire to inform and shape the strategy.

A range of innovative methods of engagement were used to obtain views from a broad and diverse range of people including children and adults with autism, their families, social care and health professionals, service providers, as well as the general public on a number of key themes.

These methods included:

- **Twitter** – on line social media which not only promoted and publicised the consultation but also provided an opportunity for people to put forward their views. **We had 42 tweets and 120 followers.**
- **Questionnaires** – two questionnaires were co-produced with adults with Asperger Syndrome. An under 16 year's version which was pictorially supported to appeal to children and younger adults and a generic version which anyone could complete. Both versions were available in paper format and on line on the council consultation website. In total we received **343** questionnaires – **75 Under 16 year's surveys & 268 generic surveys.**
- **Visits to four local support networks** – provided an excellent opportunity to have more in depth 1:1 dialogue with people with autism and their families.
- **Creative Consultation** – an artist was commissioned to work with **147 children and young adults within 11 Warwickshire and Coventry non mainstream schools and colleges**, using art as a way of obtaining views and opinions and posing a key question, 'What's important to me?'

As part of the consultation, the on-line & paper versions of the surveys asked respondents if they would be interested in getting involved with opportunities to implement and monitor the strategy. We received a really positive response with over **120 people expressing an interest.**

Following phase one of the 3 month public consultation (March-May 2013), responses received from the various methods of consultation and engagement were collated and analysed.

These responses highlighted a number of key emerging themes which have set the direction for **seven** strategic objectives including:

- Develop a clear & consistent pathway including offer of support following diagnosis.
- Increasing Awareness & Understanding of autism.
- Education, Learning & Development.
- Transition into adulthood.
- Access to services & support.
- Community Life (Social Inclusion, Housing Support & Keeping Safe)
- Support for carers & families of people with autism.

Each objective outlines views collected during the consultation and future commissioning intentions which will be implemented, monitored and reviewed during the lifetime of the strategy.

Phase two consultation process is currently underway; it started on Monday 21st October and will run until Friday 29 November 2013. The aim of this consultation is to check with respondents whether we have interpreted their views correctly and also share with people how we propose to respond to their views highlighting proposed commissioning intentions within the strategy using 'You said...we will' methodology.

Following phase two consultation, the draft strategy will be updated taking into consideration all comments received. The strategy will then be signed off by cabinet in March 2014 and an Autism Partnership Board will be developed, a multiagency group including people with autism and family/parent carers who will be responsible for tracking and monitoring progress of the strategy.

An autism needs assessment has also been completed providing an analysis of the predominantly quantitative data, available from Warwickshire County Council and partners' systems along with the publically available information on ASD at a national and local level. This supplements the qualitative information and insight gained from the consultation and together provides the most informed and accurate picture of ASD in Warwickshire to date.

See below a selection of images from the creative consultation.



