

Report to	Health Outcome Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting	8 December 2021
Report Title	Autism Waiting Times Update
Prepared By	Sharon Binyon, Medical Director, CWPT Helen Stephenson, Associate Director for Learning Disabilities and Autism Services, CWPT

Purpose of the Report

- To provide an update to the Board on current capacity and waiting times for an autism diagnostic assessment
- To share commenced and emerging plans to mobilise additional diagnostic capacity and transform neurodevelopmental diagnostic pathways.

Introduction / Background

- Autism Waiting times have been identified as a system challenge which predated COVID but have exacerbated due to assessments having to be paused during the pandemic as part of the pandemic emergency response requirements
- The recent CQC and OFSTED SEND inspection in Warwickshire (12 July-16 July 2021) highlighted several areas of improvement. One of the 5 key areas of improvement was Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) waiting times and pre and post diagnostic support which resulted in a Written Statement of Action (WSOA)
- In September 2021 it was agreed that Health Overview and Scrutiny Board would monitor waiting times for an assessment as part of the regular performance reporting to the Board
- Additional non recurrent funding of £1M (CWCCG) and £500K (CWPT) has been committed in Summer of 2021 to provide additional capacity to tackle some of the backlog for assessments.

Key Points

- Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT) have completed work to model the current capacity of diagnostic services and the current financial resource allocated to the neurodevelopmental service
- The level of referrals to the service is approximately double the commissioned capacity. Following review and redesign of pathways, CWPT have modelled both the current financial resource in the service as well as the recurrent capacity required to meet the level of referrals to the service
- This will be incorporated into a business case for the additional capacity required in the neurodevelopmental diagnostic pathway which will go to NHS Coventry and Warwickshire CCG for approval.

Actions Taken

1. A thorough review of the assessment process has recently been carried out to streamline the assessment and subsequent report writing component.

2. Triage Processes have been revisited and refreshed to streamlining:

Actions taken:

- Several Assistant Psychology posts have already been recruited and started in July 2021. They have so completed additional triages for school age children
- As a result of the further recruitment outlined above, Diagnostic Clinicians have been able to be released from triaging functions and can fully support the increase in clinical diagnostic capacity required
- All embedded administrative processes have been reviewed where possible and paper-light and/or agile working systems are being adopted
- A newly appointed Data Quality officer has started to support the teams with waiting list management data
- Telephone clinics for all clinicians including diagnostic staff have been reviewed and a service formula has been developed to map capacity and increase productivity.

3. External Providers have been sourced to offer further additional diagnostic assessment capacity alongside the CWPT service:

- The external providers will be working under CWPT protocols, be overseen by, and supporting the CWPT clinical teams where clinically appropriate
- The providers are currently setting up assessment capacity and capability from November 2021 to fully support the CWPT teams from Early in the New Year.

Summary

The Written Statement of Action report will identify further detail in relation to the diagnostic and intervention capacity provided by CWPT and other partner agencies across the system.

The All-Age Autism business case developed by Commissioning colleagues, in partnership with CWPT will provide the assumed trajectory and financial modelling to support sustainable clinical capacity following the non-recurrent investment this year.

The business case is due to be agreed by Coventry and Warwickshire CCG committees in due course.