

Title of paper:	Nottingham's Autism Strategy: An update for Children's Partnership Board	
Report to:	Nottingham Children's Partnership Board	
Date:	28/03/2018	
Relevant Director:	Alison Challenger (Director of Public Health)	Wards affected: All
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	Helene Denness (helene.denness@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)	
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Relevant Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) priority:		
Safeguarding and supporting children and families: Children, young people and families will benefit from early and effective support and protection to empower them to overcome difficulties and provide a safe environment in which to thrive.		X <input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting the health and wellbeing of babies, children and young people: From pregnancy and throughout life, babies, children, young people and families will be healthier, more emotionally resilient and better able to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Supporting achievement and academic attainment: All children and young people will leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and will be ready for independence, work or further learning.		X <input type="checkbox"/>
Empowering families to be strong and achieve economic wellbeing: More families will be empowered and able to deal with family issues and child poverty will be significantly reduced.		X <input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):		
<p>A requirement of the <i>Autism Act (2009)</i> is that councils in England should have a strategy for autistic adults led by a named Autism Lead. In line with Nottingham's move to an all-age approach to disability, the new strategy will encompass priorities for children, young people, adults, families, parents and carers.</p> <p>The strategy group has identified five interconnecting areas of focus in the new strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding autism 2. Health and being well 3. Housing and home 4. Education, training and employment 5. Access and autism friendly <p>The group also recognises that there are additional crosscutting links, which will underpin more than one of the strategy themes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting social inclusion by increasing access and making more places autism friendly • Challenging stigma including through increasing understanding of autism and making places more autism friendly. • Developing the role of Autism Champion and establishing Autism Champions across 		

Nottingham.

- Improving identification of autism and timely diagnosis.
- Transition; a broad term encompassing the many transitions in autistic people's lives.
- Increasing early interventions and interventions at the right time including care and support.

Recommendations:

1	Nottingham Children's Partnership Board is requested to note the contents of this report and support the development of an all-age autism strategy for Nottingham
2	Continue to prioritise autism awareness training for colleagues
3	Identify Autism Champions within their organisation

The development of an all-age autism strategy for Nottingham

1. Context

- 1.1 A requirement of the *Autism Act (2009)* is that councils in England should have a strategy for autistic adults led by a named Autism Lead. The Government published new statutory guidance in March 2015, which, in addition to the requirements of the Act, states that local authorities and the NHS:
- Should provide autism awareness training for all staff
 - Must provide specialist autism training for key staff, such as GPs and community care assessors
 - Cannot refuse a community care assessment for adults with autism based solely on IQ
 - Have to develop a clear pathway to diagnosis and assessment for adults with autism
 - Need to commission services based on adequate population data.
- 1.2 Nottingham's strategy, *One Size Fits One: Ensuring People with Autism Live Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives*, is being refreshed led by the Autism Strategy Group which reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board. This group is chaired by Helene Denness, Autism Lead, and replaces the autism co-production group. In line with Nottingham's move to an all-age approach to disability, the new strategy will encompass priorities for children, young people, adults, families, parents and carers.
- 1.3 The Autism Strategy Group has representatives from education to ensure a close link with SEND reforms and to ensure no duplication of effort. For example, work to increase the proportion of people with autism in employment is a shared priority.

2. Autism in Nottingham

- 2.1 National data suggests that 1 in 100 people are autistic¹ although not all these people will have received a diagnosis of autism. Current data collection and collation makes it challenging to state accurately the number of children and young people with autism in Nottingham. Children and young people with high-level needs are more easily

¹ The NHS Information Centre, Community and Mental Health Team, Brugha, T. et al (2012). [Estimating the prevalence of autism spectrum conditions in adults: extending the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey](#). Leeds: NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care

identified. 340 children/young people have an education and health care plan (EHCP) for autism accounting for 40% of all EHCPs.

- 2.2 Nottingham City Council's Autism Team are working with roughly 970 CYP who are on the autism spectrum across city schools and supporting 86 year 6 pupils with transition to secondary school in September 2018. To increase the skills of teaching and support staff the Autism Team run training by the Autism Education Trust (AET). Since September 2016 the following training has taken place:
- Making Sense of Autism (basic awareness) attended by 1403 staff
 - Good Autism Practice; a whole day training attended by 160 staff
 - Leading good autism practice attended by 16 staff
- 2.3 There are now 96 schools in Nottingham using AET resources such as standards, competencies and/or progression framework. These schools include the hospital school and Denewood.
- 2.4 Educational Psychologists (EPs) provide early intervention support for pupils with autism through 'traded work' in schools. The number of pupils supported has increased from 42 in academic year 15/16 to 56 pupils in academic year 17/18 (up until Jan 2018). In addition, EPs support autistic children, young people and families through education and health care assessment.
- 2.5 Supporting transition is particularly important for autistic pupils whether that is from early years settings to primary schools or secondary schools to college. In 2016/17, Nottingham City Council's Autism Team supported 68 children transitioning from an Early Years setting into school and 84 pupils with transition from primary to secondary school in September 2018. At present, the team are also supporting 6 year 11 students with transition to college
- 2.6 Local intelligence, from school census, suggests that the number of children and young people with autism requiring high-level needs funding is increasing year-on-year. For example, the average cohort of autistic pupils per year group in primary (years 1- 6) supported with high level needs (HLN) top-up was 19 in 2014 but has risen to 30 in 2017, an increase of 57%. This increase in numbers requires careful planning to ensure that there are sufficient, suitable secondary school places.
- 2.7 Supporting more autistic people in to work requires a partnership approach including work with schools and colleges. There are approximately 227,108 adults of working age in Nottingham, 2271 of whom are on the autistic spectrum (assuming 1 in 100 citizens are autistic). The National Autistic Society state that 16% of autistic people are in full-time work². Applying this research would suggest that in Nottingham:
- 363 autistic people are in full-time work
 - 727 autistic people are in some paid work
 - 1544 autistic people are unemployed.
- 2.8 Work is underway with DWP to more accurately identify the number of autistic people claiming out of work benefits so they can be better supported into employment.
- 2.9 In recognition of the limitations of our current data collection and collation on autism in Nottingham, Public Health will lead a health needs assessment to increase

² The National Autistic Society <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2016-10-27-employment-gap.aspx>

understanding of autistic children, young people and adults across the autistic spectrum.

3. An Autism Strategy for Nottingham: 2018-2020

- 3.1 The new autism strategy will recognise the differing needs of people with autism, their families and carers, specifically, the broad spectrum of autism and how needs differ across the life course. Figure 1 is a visualisation of the needs of people with autism and how they can be supported to fulfil their potential. It is recognised that this visualisation has limitations in describing the broad range of needs of people on the autistic spectrum.

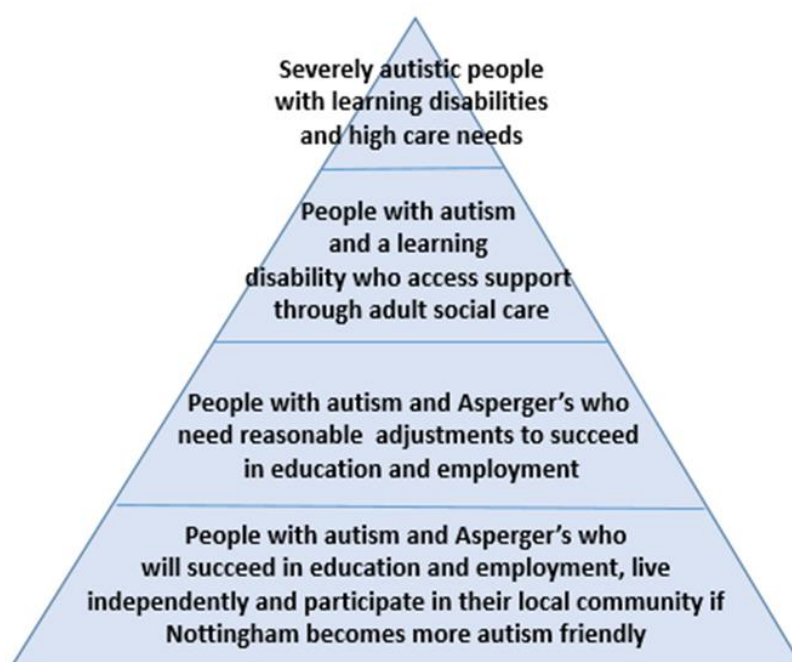


Figure 1

- 3.2 The strategy group has created a visual, figure 2, to describe the interconnecting areas of focus in the new strategy:
- Understanding autism
 - Health and being well
 - Housing and home
 - Education, training and employment
 - Access and autism friendly

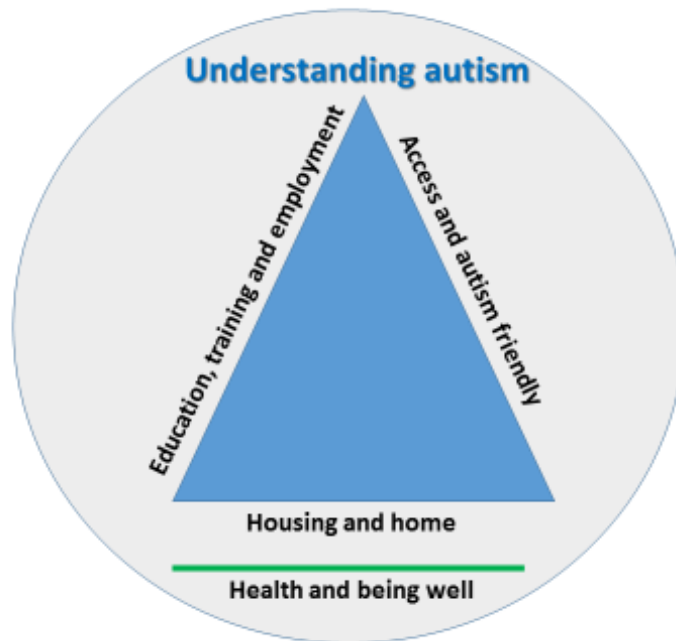


Figure 2

- 3.3 The group also recognises that there are additional crosscutting links, which will underpin more than one themes of the strategy, including:
- Promoting social inclusion by increasing access and making more places autism friendly.
 - Challenging stigma including through increasing understanding of autism and making places more autism friendly.
 - Developing the role of Autism Champion and establishing Autism Champions across Nottingham.
 - Improving identification of autism and timely diagnosis.
 - Transition; a broad term encompassing the many transitions in autistic people's lives.
 - Increasing early interventions and interventions at the right time including care and support.

4. Autism Champions

- 4.1 Nottingham is at an early stage of developing the role of Autism Champion; a role which is not nationally defined. Engagement to date suggests that Autism Champions should:
- Have knowledge and/or experience of autism including attending NCC commissioned, or other, training.
 - Promote autism awareness training to colleagues and reputable sources of further information.
 - Feel able to influence provision in their area of work including steps to make environments more autism friendly.
 - Feel confident to challenge stigma and support people with autism in their work area.
 - Advise on reasonable adjustments including where to seek more formal advice when needed.
- 4.2 The first drop-in session for Autism Champions will be held during Autism Week on the 29th of March at Loxley House.