

STOCKPORT ADULT AUTISM STRATEGY 2017-2020



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INTRODUCTION

In March 2010, the first strategy for adults with autism in England was published. [‘Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives’](#) set out the Governments long term ambition for how public services must address the needs of adults with autism. The Governments vision was to ensure:

All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents. Department of Health (2010)

The Autism Act 2009 remains the only disability specific piece of legislation in England. It places clear legal responsibilities on local authorities, NHS bodies (including Clinical Commissioning Groups) and NHS Foundation Trusts. Local authorities are required to treat the statutory guidance that accompanies the Act ‘as though it were guidance issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 19706 (LASS Act).’ The guidance is organised into the nine themes described within this Strategy and contains a number of ‘must’ and ‘should’ statements. Where the guidance says local authorities, NHS bodies and Foundation Trusts “must” it refers to ‘legal duties imposed upon these bodies by the Autism Act 2009, the Care Act 2014, and the Children and Families Act 2014 (or secondary legislation made under such Acts).’ The Council and its health partners are responsible for providing leadership and to secure the implementation of all aspects of the Act.

Stockport has always taken a positive and pro-active approach to implementing the Autism Strategy to ensure it has the biggest possible impact for everyone living with autism. In the long term, the aim is to have an all age Autism Strategy and the first step has been to bring the age of the current Strategy down to 14. This will help to develop a joined up approach to supporting young people with autism in their transition to adulthood.

The 2017-18 [Stockport Council Plan](#) describes some of the challenges Stockport faces as it moves towards becoming self-funding by 2020. The Council has embarked on a radical programme of reform that aims to reduce spending and at the same time ensure that new approaches to service delivery are effective, inclusive and flexible. The Plan has five key objectives including ‘People who need support will get it’. One of the priorities under this objective is **‘Developing our adult autism pathway and strategy** – working with operational teams, partners and communities across Stockport to improve the awareness, assessment, diagnosis, transitions, support and employment for people with autism.’

Autism is everybody’s business and the Strategy has been co-produced with our partners including people with autism and their families, health, housing, and third sector agencies and organisations. The focus to date has been on increasing levels of knowledge and awareness of autism and encouraging and supporting service providers from all walks of life - employment, leisure, health –to make the ‘reasonable adjustments’ that ensure people with autism to have equal access to local resources and facilities. In future, one priority might be to know

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more about the population of people with autism in Stockport – who they are, what they need support with and where the gaps in our knowledge are.

There are no additional financial resources available to implement the Autism Strategy. Stockport Council will continue to face significant financial challenges in the coming years. By enabling partners to work together more effectively; to review and revise their systems and processes; and to be creative in their thinking about reasonable adjustments, the Strategy will aim to ensure that adults with autism get the support they need at the right time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Autism Strategy has been developed through the time, energy and commitment of a significant number of individuals and organisations. This includes people of all ages, from teenagers to people of retirement age, who are living with autism along with their carers, families and supporters. It also includes people who represent a range of organisations and agencies. There are too many to list them all but special mention goes to the staff of the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium, Healthwatch, Stockport Advocacy, Pure Innovations, the local DWP office and the Council's library service. This is their Strategy.

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BACKGROUND

Following the publication of Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the first Stockport Adult Autism Strategy was produced in April 2014. A series of consultation meetings and events that involved people with autism, their families and carers and a wide range of agencies and organisations set out the local response to the five areas for action identified by the government:

- increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals
- developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment
- improving access to the services and support which adults with autism need to live independently within the community
- helping adults with autism into work, and
- enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities

ACHIEVEMENTS - STOCKPORT ADULT AUTISM STRATEGY 2014 – 16

Over the next three years, some notable successes were achieved despite resources being limited. A training programme designed to increase awareness and understanding of autism, not just among professionals but also with the public and people with autism themselves was delivered. As a matter of principle, the sessions were co-produced with people with autism and their families. Staff and partners from the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium also supported this work, particularly where training on more specialist topics was needed. Stockport is also unusual in Greater Manchester in that it continues to fund a highly successful supported employment service with Pure Innovations. Despite the worsening financial climate, the decision was made in 2016 to re-commission the service for a further three years.

There was also some evidence that significant numbers of people with autism were not eligible to receive Adult Social Care services, despite their high levels of vulnerability. When the Council recommissioned a number of third sector services, the needs of this group were recognised. The services included the Targeted Prevention Alliance (TPA) and the Wellbeing and Independence Network (WIN) which were established during 2015 and which continue to work with significant numbers of people with autism. An Autism Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) was produced to support the development of the Autism Strategy by providing information about the health and lives of people with autism.

There were other areas where local performance was not so good. Crucially, Stockport still does not have a local diagnostic pathway for adults with autism. The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) intends to commission a service in 2017. And although an Autism Partnership Board was set up to plan and develop appropriate local services, it was stepped down because it struggled to be the integrated, inclusive Board it should have been. The new Strategy plans to take a different, more flexible, approach.

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NEW LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

In the years since Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives was published, Governments have introduced a number of initiatives that have influenced how Stockport Council approached the development of its new Strategy in 2016.

In 2014 and 2016, Councils were required to complete a Self-Assessment Framework (SAF) questionnaire. The SAF measures how local services are performing and provides a benchmark on how well they are meeting quality standards and goals. For example, in Stockport the SAF identified that more work needs to be done to support people with autism to find and retain appropriate housing, and to support those who find themselves in the Criminal Justice System. The SAF findings can be viewed on the Public Health England [website](#).

In 2014, [Think Autism](#) was published, following a consultation that focussed on finding out what progress people with autism and their families thought had been made in implementing the Autism Act. It included 15 priority Challenges for Action, identified by people with autism, carers, professionals and others who work with people with autism. This prompted the publication in 2015, of the [‘Statutory Guidance for Guidance for Local Authorities and NHS Organisations to Support Implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy’](#), which introduced the nine themes that provided the structure for Stockport’s updated Autism Strategy.

The Children and Families Act 2014 heralded a major change in the way services for children and young people (up to the age of 25), with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are delivered. It introduced Education, Health and Care Plans and placed a new emphasis on services working together. In the same year The Care Act, the biggest change to English adult social care provision in over 60 years, became law. Amongst other things, it introduced the requirement to promote people’s wellbeing, focusing on prevention and the provision of information and advice; consistent, national eligibility criteria and new responsibilities around transition.

In 2015, following a consultation exercise, the Government updated the [Code of Practice](#) that accompanies the Mental Health Act 1983. Chapter 20 talks specifically about ‘People with learning disabilities or autistic spectrum disorders’ and provides guidance about how to care for a person with autism, as well as acknowledging that family members and carers are likely to have important and useful knowledge which can be shared with professionals.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence or NICE publish a range of resources that focus on improving the quality of care for people with autism. In 2014, NICE published a [quality standard](#) that covers health and social care services for adults, young people and children with autism. It includes evidence based recommendations on the assessment and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders, and the care and support for people diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. And in 2016, NICE updated its clinical guidance on [Autism spectrum disorder in adults: diagnosis and management](#) which covers diagnosing and managing suspected or confirmed autism spectrum disorder (autism, Asperger’s

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syndrome and atypical autism) in people aged 18 and over. It also aims to improve access and engagement with interventions and services, and the experience of care, for people with autism.

DEVELOPING THE STOCKPORT ADULT AUTISM STRATEGY 2017-2020

This new legislation and statutory guidance underpins the Stockport Adult Autism Strategy 2017-2020. To support the work on the Strategy, some short term additional resources were made available in the form of three additional posts. A half time, experienced trainer was appointed to continue to co-design and co-deliver a comprehensive training offer; and a project manager was seconded to develop and write the new Strategy. A social work post was also funded for 12 months to support the development of skills, capacity and confidence both in those staff responsible for making assessments of needs; and other staff, including those working in the third sector organisations, who also provide support to people with autism including those with complex needs. This post is unique across Greater Manchester and recognises the crucial role of social care staff in assessing and supporting people with autism.

A process was designed that aimed to involve as many people as possible in creating a new Autism Strategy for Stockport. People with autism, their carers and families have traditionally made a major contribution to strategy development in Stockport, as have key, experienced members of staff from a number of agencies and organisations. The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium also provided very valuable input, particularly in terms of contributing ideas and approaches that have worked well in other authorities. Two other key decisions were made before work started. Firstly that where-ever possible, [co-production](#) would be at the heart of all local events; and secondly, that people aged 14+ would be asked to participate.

In October 2016, the first co-production event was held. Working on the nine themes from the 2015 Statutory Guidance, people attending were asked to identify the **issues** that need to be tackled in each area. They were also asked to say whether they wanted to be involved in taking the work to the next stage.

The next stage in January and February 2017 was to organise 9 'Panel' meetings (see page 3) where people attending were introduced to the things the Statutory Guidance says that Councils 'must' and 'should' do. They were then asked to identify the **actions** that needed to happen.

The decision was also made to add a 10th 'Panel' meeting to bring together people who might be interested in becoming Autism Champions. Champions were emerging as key way in which the Strategy would be implemented across the Borough. An Autism Charter, adapted from one used by GP's, was drafted and provided a list of actions and commitments that agencies would sign up to (see Appendix 2). The Champions Panel were keen to identify an autism symbol that the majority of people would be happy to use in Stockport for example, to 'flag' patient records at Stepping Hill Hospital.

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In March 2017, the final co-production session was held where people were asked to prioritise the actions over the 3 years of the new Strategy. At this event, the result of the vote for the Stockport autism logo was announced.

Throughout the process, staff were attending the regular meetings of active, local autism groups to keep members informed on progress and to ensure that their views were fed into the process.

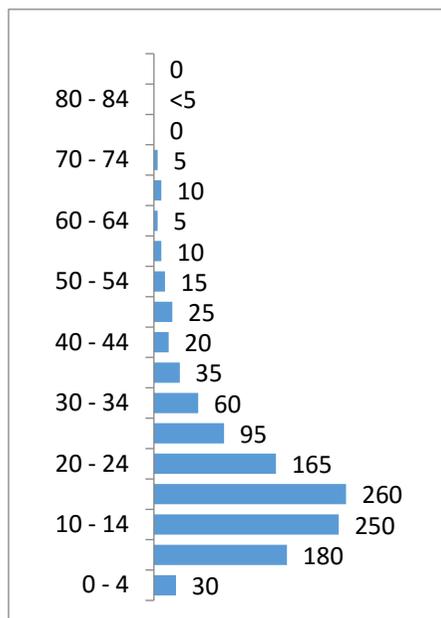
The sections below describe the actions, the time scales and what success will look like for each of the Panel meetings. Although people were asked to prioritise issues and actions, many felt it was more about phasing progress and taking actions one step at a time, regardless of how long it took. Not all Panels prioritised actions over 3 years – some chose to work on a 2 year time scale; and some of the individual actions were identified as needing to continue over all three years. And not surprisingly, some actions came up in more than one panel for example, the importance of easily available information.

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WHAT DOES THE JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT (JSNA) TELL US ABOUT AUTISM IN STOCKPORT?

The Stockport Autism JSNA has been updated in 2017 and is available on the [Stockport JSNA](#) website. It is estimated that 3,140 people in Stockport (640 children and 2,500 adults) are living with autism in 2016. Prevalence rates are stable and are not expected to change significantly over the next 10 years.

From their records, GPs identified 1,170 people with autism, lower than the estimated prevalence of 3,140. However GP recording levels have increased by 50% since the last JSNA in 2013, when the number of people known to be diagnosed was 700. Most of the increase has occurred in those under 20 years old as the diagram below shows.



In Stockport, rates of diagnosis for children with autism match expected prevalence rates. However rates for adults are far lower than expected – there are therefore likely to be many adults with autism who are not known to their GP or to other services. Prevalence rates are also far higher in men than women. In Stockport it is estimated that there are 350 women with autism and 2,200 men. There is some evidence that women with autism are both underdiagnosed and misdiagnosed, often with anxiety and depression. Some adults may chose not to be formally diagnosed either because local diagnostic facilities are not available or because they see no benefit for themselves in being diagnosed.

There is an increase in rates of autism diagnosis as deprivation increases; this relationship is not as strong a deprivation profile as for other conditions, but does suggest that people with autism are more likely to live in areas of social disadvantage.

Autistic people are much more likely than the general population to have certain other long term health conditions. The National Autistic Society suggests that 44% to 52% of autistic people may have a learning disability. In Stockport that would mean around 1,100 to 1,300 adults have autism and a learning disability, and 265 to 300 children. Other health conditions likely to affect people with autism include ADHD, mental

health conditions including depression and anxiety and epilepsy. Up to 70% of autistic children have feeding and/or eating problems with half classified as severe. As well as anorexia, bulimia and over eating, this can include eating only a few types of food or problems with chewing and swallowing.

Carers provide crucial support for both children and adults with autism. With 700,000 people on the autism spectrum and including their families, autism is a part of daily life for 2.8 million people in the UK. Autism itself is a spectrum condition and the complexity and wide variation of needs means that, following diagnosis, each autistic person needs a careful assessment of their health and social care needs.

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PANEL 1: TRAINING OF STAFF WHO PROVIDE SERVICES TO ADULTS WITH AUTISM

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Increase the number of people with lived experience developing and delivering training	
Ensure information about training, dates, venues is widely available & updated	
Organise regular training meetings	
Identify gaps in training and identify local partners who can help deliver specific areas of training	
Audit training availability and take in health partner organisations	
Support and develop a network of Champions in organisations across Stockport	
Involve parent support groups and young people's groups in training	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Work with Pure Innovations to encourage employers to engage with training	
Link training to the development of Autism Friendly Community/Town, Region	
Develop more 'wrap around' training – Equality Act, Mental Capacity Act, hoarding, self-neglect etc	
Year 3 2019-2020	
Ensure the provision of training is sustainable	
Link the development of Talking Libraries to Autism Friendly Libraries/ Town	



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PANEL 2: IDENTIFICATION AND DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM IN ADULTS, LEADING TO ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS FOR RELEVANT SERVICES

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Prepare and publicise and organisational who's who	
Prepare and make available a glossary of terms and abbreviations	
Attend CCG Patients Panel and discuss lack of local diagnostic pathway	
Make contact with local NHS Audit Team about the lack of local diagnostic pathway	
Identify, make contact with and engage the health lead for autism	
Ensure a local diagnostic pathway is commissioned that includes post diagnostic support and that triggers a social care assessment	
Comprehensive Adult Social Care pathway developed, documented and implemented including transition from age 14, and MAARS	
Group to meet immediately if a diagnostic pathway is announced; otherwise in mid 2017	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Clear and up to date information about how to get support and services widely circulated*	
Circulate updated JSNA 2017	
Ensure the Strategy including the Charter goes through the Council's governance process including the Health & Wellbeing Board	
Collate feedback from people with autism and their carers about their experience with GP's and identify good practice	
Develop web based support for people going through diagnostic process – online forum?	

* Information to be widely circulated including to the Targeted Prevention Alliance, neighbourhood teams, Wellbeing and Independence Network, Centre for Independent Living, GP's, schools, Champions, social workers, care workers

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PANEL 3: PLANNING IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM AS THEY MOVE FROM BEING CHILDREN TO ADULTS

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Bring together ONE Transitions group and arrange series of meetings	
Planning and pathways – better communication between children’s and adults social care services; health and education	
Develop a clear vision of transition within a 14+ Autism Strategy for Stockport	
Work with all partners to develop a ‘pain free’ transition pathway between children’s services and adulthood	
Improve the quality and availability of information about transition to people with autism, family and carers; professionals	
Improve the sharing of information between agencies eg using a one page profile	
Provide training for all professionals about the significance of mental health issues	
Review how all services link to mental health provision	
Review and develop support around transport – travel training, bus passes etc	
Share 0-25 SEND Action Plan and Preparation for Adulthood Plan when available.	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Enhance integrated working around whole life and family	
Ensure transition is a key element of the Adult Autism pathway	
Ensure Education, Health and Care Plans clearly balance all three elements for the individual	
Provide a focus on housing issues	
Year 3 2019-2020	
Develop support for adults with low care needs; high social & communication needs	
Increase the range of provision including creative work solutions; more community activities; more housing options for people with and without personal budgets; creative living solutions	

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PANEL 4: LOCAL PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH AUTISM

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Deliver housing access workshop/s including form filling, points, bidding	
Ensure GP's have access to autism toolkit, training and Charter	
Establish how many GP's attended masterclass & follow up	
Ensure all contacts have access to Royal College of Nursing autism awareness poster	
Continue to press for early introduction of local diagnostic pathway – Healthwatch to lead	
Ensure Council leads by example by adopting and implementing the Autism Charter	
Healthwatch to attend Group 48 meeting	
Ensure the Health & Wellbeing Board endorse the Strategy and action plans	
Facilitate Panel meetings and 2 Autism Advisory Network meetings each year	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Ensure GP's have carers register & make reasonable adjustments for carers	
Ensure more active engagement of all health stakeholders	
Year 3 2019-2020	
Secure continued resources to ensure the Strategy is working effectively	The Autism Strategy is sustainable and continues to have an impact

supporting people with behaviour that challenges
 supporting people with complex needs
 planning services



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PANEL 5: PREVENTATIVE SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING IN LINE WITH THE CARE ACT 2014 FROM APRIL 2015

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Identify an acceptable autism symbol/logo for use in Stockport	
Prompt agencies and organisations to update their information on My Care My Choice	
Develop a 'flag' system for autism with Stepping Hill Hospital	
Improve the visibility of the *TPA and the *WIN – clarify roles and benefits	
Improve transition process and experience	
Improve the quality and availability of information about autism to people with autism (including those without a diagnosis), their family and carers; professionals	
Improve our understanding of who the key groups and individuals are particularly workers based in communities – PCSO's, community connectors	
Earlier signposting particularly for those without a diagnosis	
Ensure support is identified and available to help with PIP, other benefits, employment, housing, money management	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Improve transition process and experience	
Ensure housing remains a focus for all Panels	
Develop a 'can do' approach to the early identification of vulnerable adults and young people	
Link to the Accessible Information Standard and Stockport's Local Offer	
Year 3 2019-2020	
Improve transition process and experience across	
Work towards cultural change where people tell their whole story once, 14+, lifepath	
Making sure safeguarding works at all different levels across Stockport agencies and individuals	
Support the adoption of the Autism Charter in Stockport and wider including TfGM and local agencies	

*Targeted Prevention Alliance and the Wellbeing and Independence Network

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PANEL 6: REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND EQUALITY

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Ensure all contacts have access to Royal College of Nursing autism awareness poster	
Develop and deliver a rolling programme of Care Act compliant workshops on self-neglect/safeguarding/autism	
Develop half day course on The Equality Act 2010 with partners – details to go on Council website	
Develop a workshop series on Reasonable Adjustments in a range of settings with partners across Greater Manchester focussing systems and processes; access to services	
Improve the visibility and access to the TPA and the WIN	
Publicise Carers Card/passports at Stepping Hill Hospital	
Develop a ‘flag’ system for autism with Stepping Hill Hospital	
Review language/jargon used on a wide range of forms and promote use of symbols and pictures where appropriate – reasonable adjustments	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Focus on work with Community Mental Health Teams on reasonable adjustments and access to service	
Ensure there is more consultation about changes to services when Equality Impact Assessments are being carried out	



safeguarding
Reasonable adjustments

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PANEL 7: SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS, WHOSE BEHAVIOUR MAY CHALLENGE OR WHO MAY LACK CAPACITY

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Ensure a local diagnostic pathway is commissioned that includes post diagnostic support and that triggers a social care assessment and access to support	
Use networks and contact lists to make sure professionals and parents know about the wide range of opportunities to develop and attend training	
Develop a series of 'handy hints' – how to use the Council website, My Care My Choice, book training	
Work with all partners to develop a 'pain free' transition pathway between children's services and adulthood	
Develop support and resources for adults with low to moderate needs	
Ensure all mental health professionals are fully engaged in developing the Autism Strategy	
Build positive links between all services involved with the individual	
Actively promote the need for more autism resources and support for all schools	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Develop links, practical support, information and advice for adults with autism within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) or who have been sectioned under the Mental Health act	
Co-design and deliver 'handy hints' on how to access information – Contact Centre, TPA, WIN, benefits, housing etc	
Ensure information is shared appropriately between agencies – 'tell my story once'	
Improve the quality and availability of information about autism to people with autism, family and carers; professionals	
Year 3 2019-2020	
Ensure housing remains a focus for all Panels	
Work with housing providers to create workshops on how to access housing, keep a tenancy, explore housing options	

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PANEL 8: EMPLOYMENT FOR ADULTS WITH AUTISM

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	
Year 1 2017-2018		
Develop half day course with partners on The Equality Act 2010, aimed at employers. Details to go on Council website		
Audit Council job application and recruitment process – demonstrate good practice		
Ensure people know that the WIN can provide a complete support package for people seeking employment		
Generate and publicise positive stories about people finding employment		
Ensure employers know about the Learning Pool and how to access free training and e-learning		
Ensure the broadest possible group of partners are involved in supporting people with autism to find and retain employment		
Provide bespoke training for Jobcentre staff		
Co-produce and deliver Reasonable Adjustments workshop for employers		
Year 2 2018-2019		
Ensure employment support is a key element in the transition from children’s services to adulthood		
Advertise the resources that are available in/through the Jobcentre – poster, resources, people with specific expertise		
Encourage older people with autism to provide experience/mentoring to younger people who are struggling to find work		
Ensure employers have access to post diagnostic support/training and advice for employers when employee diagnosed		
Review referral pathway to Pure Innovations from Adult Social Care to ensure it has enough flexibility within it		



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PANEL 9: WORKING WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Contact and work closely with the National Probation Service (NPS) in Tameside	
Ensure that a person's information goes with them at all times – on arrest, between settings, on transfer, on release	
Co-design and deliver with the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium bespoke training for NPS in Stockport and across Greater Manchester	
Co-design and deliver with the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium bespoke training for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Stockport and across Greater Manchester	
Identify partners (MAARS/SSAB/Court Service/CRC Liaison & Diversion Panel) and co-design and deliver a workshop on autism; prevention; and identifying people at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System	
Clarify and increase knowledge about all pathways – diagnostic, transition, adult social care, between custodial settings including prisons	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Continue to deliver autism training for NPS staff with Greater Manchester Autism Consortium	
Work towards <u>continuity of care</u> between custodial settings	
Ensure information is available for offenders with autism in accessible formats	
Promote awareness among professional of the impact of sensory sensitivity	
Improve appropriate information sharing between agencies - 'tell my story once'	
Year 3 2019-2020	
Explore using a Health Passport to share information across agencies	
Develop ways to identify vulnerable young people and adults with autism and put in place diversion strategies	

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AUTISM CHAMPIONS AND CHARTER

ACTION	WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
Year 1 2017-2018	
Review learning from Dementia Strategy and Dementia Friends model	
Identify potential Champions	
Update and circulate Autism Charter	
Identify an acceptable autism symbol/logo for use in Stockport	
Identify funding for lanyards, resources to increase visibility of Champions	
Ensure information about the Learning Pool and how to access training is widely available & updated	
Ensure a local diagnostic pathway is commissioned that includes post diagnostic support and that triggers a social care assessment	
Year 2 2018-2019	
Develop top ten Reasonable Adjustments tips	
Engage employers and encourage them to adopt the Autism Charter	
Develop links with Time Banks – give2gain and 1GoodTurn	
Year 3 2019-2020	
Audit mental health services and identify reasonable adjustments	
Ensure housing remains a focus for all Panels	

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KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

The Panel meetings identified a number of issues and actions. The issues outlined below were raised as a priority in a number of the Panel meetings and underpin the Strategy:

Information and advice – the need for easily accessible, up to date information and advice was raised in most of the Panel meetings. The ability to signpost people with autism to the services and support they need as early as possible was seen as important for making sure people stayed as well and independent as possible. The information on the Council website has been substantially updated.

Housing – access to appropriate housing was identified as the key to independence, and one of the hardest things for autistic adults to achieve. Many autistic adults live with their parents for much longer periods than other adults and face particular difficulties understanding the process of applying for housing, applying for housing benefit and doing all the practical tasks needed to maintain a tenancy. The challenge for the Council and housing providers is to try to be as creative as possible within the resources available and some notable successes have already been achieved.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) - every local authority is required to prepare a JSNA that provides information and intelligence to help local partners work together to deliver change which improves the health and wellbeing of people in Stockport and reduces health inequalities. In Stockport, an Autism JSNA was prepared in 2013 and this has been updated in 2017. Some of the data from the Autism JSNA is included on page 7 and this important document adds to our knowledge and understanding of autism in Stockport.

Autism Friendly communities/town/region – the idea of developing an autism friendly community, town and/or region has emerged over the last five years, based on the approach of the Dementia Friendly Communities programme. Stockport, along with the other 9 councils, is an active member of the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium and discussions have begun to explore what an autism friendly community might look like and how it might be achieved. With the recent election of an ‘autism friendly’ Mayor for Greater Manchester, the discussion has broadened to consider how, working together, it would be possible to create an autism friendly region.

Finally, the [Greater Manchester Autism Consortium \(GMAC\)](#) is an important autism resource and Stockport has been actively involved since GMAC started in 1988. The 9 other Greater Manchester authorities are members, and more recently the Clinical Commissioning Groups have all signed up. Crucially, the Consortium supports work on issues that all members are struggling with and seeks to find solutions across the region. Following the recent self-assessment exercise, regional priorities include work on housing and the criminal justice system; and current projects include developing a resource for young people with autism called “Growing up with Autism in Greater Manchester” and running parent workshops on understanding autism, sensory issues, managing anger and carer’s resilience.

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WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Leadership - Stockport Council has committed to working towards implementing the Stockport Adult Autism Strategy in the 2017-2018 Council Plan and through the inclusion of the Autism Strategy in the Cabinets Adult Social Care Portfolio. The decision has already been made by the Corporate Equalities Group that autism awareness training will be part of the induction package for all new staff, and existing staff will be expected to complete the training as part of their annual performance review. The Strategy will be presented to the Senior Management Team of the People Directorate for discussion and approval. It will be on the agenda of the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2017 where it will be discussed and endorsed by partner organisations. The Council will then adopt the Autism Charter in April 2018, once a significant proportion of the workforce have completed the training. The Council has taken a very positive approach and is providing clear leadership to agencies and organisations across the Borough.

Stockport Council works closely with a wide range of partners in order to meet the requirements of the Autism Act both in legal terms and within the spirit of the legislation. In the lifetime of this Autism Strategy, Stockport Council and its health partners - NHS Stockport Clinical Commissioning Group, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust (mental health services), Stockport NHS Foundation Trust (Stepping Hill hospital and community health services) and Viaduct Care (a federation representing all Stockport GPs) will come together through [Stockport Together](#) to form Stockport Neighbourhood Care. Adult Social Care has nominated a senior manager to be their autism lead; similarly Stockport CCG needs to identify a clinical lead for autism. This powerful alliance, with nominated leaders, will be able to provide a focus for the wide range of individuals, groups and organisations who have been active in developing and delivering the Strategy.

Implementing the Strategy – during the next three years, the nine Panels and the Autism Champions will meet to carry out the agreed actions and implement the Strategy. For practical reasons, some of the Panels will be merged where there is considerable overlap to ensure there is sufficient capacity to support their work. The Training Panel, Reasonable Adjustments and Equality Panel and the Autism Champions Panel will meet together; as will the Prevention and Safeguarding and Complex and Challenging Behaviour Panels. The Transitions Panel will meet with an existing local multi-agency group who have been actively working to improve transitions for some time; and work on the Criminal Justice System Panel will have a Greater Manchester focus and be co-ordinated with GMAC. The remaining Panels will stand alone and will rely heavily on members to facilitate and deliver the agreed actions.

The Panels will report their progress to the Autism Advisory Network. A number of the actions identified by the Panels for Year 1 have already been fully or partly completed.

Monitoring the Strategy: Autism Advisory Network - the Autism Strategy will be monitored twice a year by the Autism Advisory Network. The Network will be attended by anyone with an interest in autism including adults with autism and their families, agencies and organisations, and employers. At the Network meeting, Panel members will provide an update on their activities, progress will be monitored and priorities

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reviewed. Updates on the work of the Panels and the Network will be provided to the Adult Social Care and Health autism leads; the Health and Wellbeing Board and regular updates will be included in the quarterly Adult Social Care Portfolio reports.

FINAL THOUGHTS – it is worth flagging up a couple of issues that are likely to have an impact on this three year Strategy. The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium (GMAC) has recently been re-commissioned, not only by the 10 Greater Manchester Councils, but also by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across the region to provide autism training and support. Stockport is an active member of GMAC and in particular, contributes significantly to the development and delivery of training packages. This marks a new, closer relationship between social care and health organisations across the region and by working together more effectively, the ambition is to make significant improvements to the quality of life of people with autism. It is hoped that by working with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the new Mayor for Greater Manchester and the Transforming Care Partnership, GMAC will have a real and lasting impact.

In 2019, the Autism Act will have been on the statute book for ten years. There are strong indications that the Government is planning to mark the anniversary of the Act with a refresh of their Autism Strategy. This will be just in time for Stockport to build any new challenges into the next Stockport Adult Autism Strategy.

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APPENDIX 1 STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND NHS ORGANISATIONS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUTISM STRATEGY MARCH 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-autism-strategy-statutory-guidance>

This statutory guidance is issued under section 2 of the Autism Act 2009 (the Act) to local authorities, NHS bodies and NHS Foundation Trusts and replaces the 2010 statutory guidance. It relates to England only.

Local authorities and NHS bodies must not only take account of this guidance, but also follow the relevant sections or provide a good reason why they are not doing so (one example might be because they can prove they are providing an equivalent or better alternative). If they do not follow the guidance and cannot provide a good reason, they may be liable to judicial review or action by the Secretary of State

The guidance also includes good practice and suggested actions that build on the statutory requirements and existing guidance.

Where the guidance says local authorities, NHS bodies and Foundation Trusts “must” it refers to legal duties imposed upon these bodies by the Autism Act 2009 or other Acts of Parliament e.g. the Care Act 2014, and the Children and Families Act 2014 (or secondary legislation made under such Acts). Each of the nine themes of the statutory guidance includes a number of actions that MUST be carried out and some that should be carried out.

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APPENDIX 2 - AUTISM CHARTER

Stockport Council is providing a framework for making its services more 'autism-friendly'. We want to make sure that people who have autism have access to the highest quality of services and support. Therefore, we will ensure the following:-

Staff awareness

- All staff are more 'autism aware' by providing access to information, guidance and training

Environment

- Working with people with autism to develop autism-friendly spaces

Identification/disclosure

- Creating an environment where people feel comfortable disclosing their condition should they wish to, and making reasonable adjustments should staff suspect a person has autism

Communication and customer service

- Ensure staff are aware of the different ways people with autism may choose to communicate, and will try to communicate by the most appropriate means for the individual concerned

Challenges

- Make staff aware of the challenges people with autism cope with daily, how they might react in situations and how to communicate effectively with someone in distress

Champions

- Having in place one or more Champions who can act as an autism resource for staff and customers, and who will work towards creating an autism friendly environment



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APPENDIX 3 - GLOSSARY OF TERMS - AUTISM AND RELATED CONDITIONS

AD(H)D – Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder

PDA – Pathological Demand Disorder

SCD – Social Communication Disorder

ASC – Autistic Spectrum Condition

OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

PDD – Pervasive Development Disorder

GLOSSARY OF TERMS - SERVICES

CAF – Common Assessment Framework

CCG – Clinical Commissioning Group

CLDT – Community Learning Disability Team

CPN – Community Practice Nurse

DLA – Disability Living Allowance

GMCA - Greater Manchester Combined Authority

IMHA – Independent Mental Health Advocate

IATPS – Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

MAARS – Multi-agency Adults At Risk System

PCP – Person Centred Planning

Pennine – Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

RP – Registered provider – another name for a housing association

SENCO – Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator

Stockport FT – Stepping Hill Hospital Foundation Trust

WIN – Wellbeing and Independence Network

HYMS – Healthy Young Minds

CDT – Children’s Disability Team

CMHT – Community Mental Health Team

DoH – Department of Health

GMAC - Greater Manchester Autism Consortium

IMCA – Independent Mental Capacity Advocate

JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

LA – Local Authority

NAS – National Autistic Society

PECS – Picture Exchange System

SALT – Speech and Language Therapy

SEN - Special Educational Needs

SHH - Stepping Hill Hospital

TPA – Targeted Prevention Alliance