

Merton Autism Strategy 2018-2023

Action Plan

August 2018

Introduction

This Action Plan sets out priorities over the life of the Merton Autism Strategy 2018-2023. This has been shaped by the responses to the public engagement on the strategy and should be read in conjunction with the Autism Strategy document.

In the first year of the Strategy 2018/19 the focus is on starting work to deliver the following priorities, which have been highlighted in the plan:

- Action 1.1: Improve the local training and awareness offer, including delivering a training programme for CYP workforce
- Action 2.1: Redesign and improve the assessment, diagnosis and support pathway for 0-18 year olds
- Action 2.2: Raise awareness of the diagnostic pathway for adults
- Action 2.3: Promote autism champions in all education settings
- Action 3.1: Improve customer journey in adult health and social care for adults with autism
- Action 3.2: Ensure people with autism and parents/carers are actively involved in co-designing and delivering services
- Action 3.3: Improve employment opportunities for people with autism
- Action 3.4: Improve opportunities for people with autism to participate socially
- Action 3.5: Increase the number of places within specialist and additionally resources educational provision
- Action 4.1: Improve the quality of transition assessments
- Action 5.1: Identify resources to increase provision of parenting programmes
- Action 5.2: Ensure families and carers are involved in the co-design and delivery of services
- Action 6.1: Improve quality and accessibility of information available to people with autism and their families/carers

Other actions set out in the plan will be developed over the life of the strategy and this action plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Progress on delivering this action plan will be monitored through existing partnerships where appropriate (including the CAMHS Partnership and Preparing for Adulthood Partnership). In the first year an Autism Partnership steering group will be established to provide leadership and oversight, this will report to the Children's Trust Board and Health and Wellbeing Board.

Theme 1: Awareness training and support for staff and services

No.	Objective	Action	Timescale/When completed	Organisation/lead	Expected Outcome/benefit
1.1	Improve local awareness and training offer.	<p><u>2018-19 Priority:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver new autism awareness training programme aimed at wider CYP workforce, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years workforce – early recognition and response • General awareness: wider CYP Workforce including health, education, social care and third sector professionals, with a specific focus on social workers • understanding parent experience and strategies to support CYP workforce • Develop and deliver training to SENCO's and key staff to ensure that CYP in mainstream settings receive appropriate support and access to the curriculum • Utilise the existing early-years accredited SENCO training programme • Review opportunities and seek funding to educate children and young people about autism. 	<p>July 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2019</p>	<p>LBM/MCCG CAMHS</p> <p>LBM CSF SEND</p> <p>LBM CSF Early years</p> <p>LBM CSF SEND</p>	<p>Staff working with people with autism are better equipped to carry out their roles.</p> <p>Improved quality of care for people with autism.</p> <p>Reduction in anxiety/poor outcomes/crisis intervention.</p> <p>Increase understanding of autism and inclusion of CYP with autism in schools</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how social care staff can be better supported when working with people with autism with very complex needs. Deliver a training session for elected members on autism. 	<p>April 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p>	<p>LBM ASC/CSC</p> <p>Merton Autism Partnership Steering group</p>	<p>Ensure people who come into contact with autism, including elected members, are properly trained to understand it.</p>
1.2	Improve autism awareness in the wider population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote uptake of autism awareness training among local employers. Seek opportunities to deliver training to GP's and health professionals in recognising and managing co-existing mental health issues in people with autism e.g. ADHD/anxiety. Work towards all NHS and Merton Council staff undertaking autism awareness training as part of general induction and equality training. Work with the Police and encourage work with partners to offer training to relevant staff groups. 	<p>December 2018</p> <p>April 2019</p> <p>April 2020</p> <p>April 2019</p>	<p>LBM/DWP</p> <p>LBM and MCCG Learning and development teams</p> <p>LBM E&R Community Safety manager</p>	<p>Increase in employment opportunities and financial independence.</p> <p>Improve recognition and management of mental health issues.</p> <p>Improved every day experiences and quality of life for people with autism.</p>
1.3	Involve people with autism in the development of training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise training packages which have been co-developed with people with autism and their families and carers e.g. NAS accredited training 	Ongoing	Merton Autism Partnership Steering group	

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Theme 2: Recognition, support, referral and assessment					
No.	Objective	Action	Timescale/When completed	Organisation/Lead	Expected outcome/benefit
2.1	<p>Improve the assessment, diagnosis and support pathway for 0-18 year olds, ensuring there is capacity to meet demand.</p> <p>Ensure service users and families/carers are involved in service re-design.</p>	<p><u>2018/19 Priority:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign local referral, assessment and support services to meet the needs of children and young people (and their parents or carers) who may need diagnosis of autism. Develop 5 Year milestones plan for achieving NICE guidelines compliance. Incorporate findings from 'Exploring the diagnostic experiences of Merton young people who have ASD' paper and additional engagement exercises in diagnostic pathway re-design. Ensure there is awareness that support begins when need identified and patients do not need to wait for diagnosis to access support. 	April 2019	LBM/MCCG CAMHS	<p>Improved experiences for service users in accessing assessment and diagnostic services.</p> <p>Increased support for those waiting for diagnosis, or those who chose not to have a diagnosis.</p>
2.2.	Raise awareness of diagnostic pathway for adults.	<p><u>2018/19 Priority:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish and promote awareness of diagnostic pathway for adults with a learning disability. 	April 2019	LBM Learning Disability Team and SWLSTG diagnostic ASD Team/MCCG	<p>Improve experience of adults seeking diagnosis.</p> <p>Improve awareness of adults with autism amongst professionals and wider society.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish and promote awareness of diagnostic pathway for adults that have no prior diagnosis. 		SWLSTG & MCCG	
2.3.	<p>Raise awareness of autism amongst staff in educational provision</p> <p>Support earlier identification of autism</p>	<p><u>2018/19 Priority:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote autism champions, who may be pupils, in all education settings to raise awareness amongst staff and enable early identification of autism. Use the SEN quality assurance framework to ensure that staff provide appropriate support. 	<p>April 2019</p> <p>On-going</p>	LBM CSF	<p>Earlier identification of autism leading to improved outcomes for CYP</p> <p>Staff are adequately trained to identify and support CYP in education settings.</p>
2.4	Ensure new pathway is NICE compliant by 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the newly designed pathway for CYP 0-19 is fully embedded, has sufficient capacity to meet demand and work towards quality that complies with NICE guidelines. Audit the new pathway against NICE autism quality standard (QS51), using this as a tool for continuous quality improvement. 	<p>December 2022</p> <p>Annually</p>	MCCG/LBM CAMHS	0-19 Pathway meets quality standards.
2.5	Improve post-diagnostic support for adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage staff and clients of adult services to explore options for post-diagnostic support. 	December 2021	MCCG	

Theme 3: Involving and supporting people with autism

No.	Objective	Action	Timescale/When completed	Organisation/lead	Expected Outcome/benefit
3.1	Improve customer journey in adult health and social care for adults with autism.	<p><u>2018/19 Priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise and publish a protocol outlining social care needs assessments for adults with 'high-functioning' autism and support pathways available through services including the voluntary sector. Improve service development by mapping customer journey through health, adult social care and SWLSTG. Develop a support offer for people with autism and complex needs, with early co-ordinated multi-disciplinary support, including transition from children to adult services. 	<p>December 2018</p> <p>April 2019</p>	<p>LBM Adult Social Care (ASC)</p> <p>LBM ASC/CSC</p>	<p>Increase numbers of adults with autism accessing support services.</p> <p>Improvement in preventative/holistic support and reduction in crisis intervention.</p>
3.2.	Ensure people with autism are actively involved in co-designing and delivering services.	<p><u>2018/19 Priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage people with autism in co-production of redesign of the 0-19 assessment and diagnostic pathway 	December 2018	MCCG	Maximise use of resources to provide services which meet the needs of users.
3.3	Ensure people with autism are involved in the	<p><u>2018/19 Priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan for communication and 	December	Merton Autism	Increase involvement and inclusion for

	implementation of this strategy.	<p>engagement with people with autism over the life course of the strategy which links with exiting forums, for example the SEN user voice forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a time limited Autism Partnership Steering Group or similar, which regularly engages and seeks feedback from people with autism and parents/carers.. 	<p>2018</p> <p>September 2018</p>	Partnership Steering Group	people with autism.
3.3	Improve employment opportunities for people with autism.	<p><u>2018/19 Priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the South London partnership 'Better Working Futures' programme and Project Search. Promote the Government's Disability Confident scheme among local businesses/organisations. 	<p>April 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>DWP/LBM E&R</p> <p>DWP/LBM E&R</p>	<p>Increase numbers of people with autism in paid work.</p> <p>Increase independence.</p> <p>Reduce social isolation.</p> <p>Increase financial resilience and quality of life.</p>
3.4	Improve opportunities for people with autism to participate socially.	<p><u>2018/19 Priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the voluntary sector to develop a support offer for adults with autism with intermittent, lower level needs. This may include advocacy and advice services, peer support, volunteering programmes, social prescribing etc. 	<p>April 2019</p>	<p>LBM C&H</p> <p>Merton Mencap</p>	<p>Increase in social participation.</p> <p>Increase access to mainstream services</p> <p>Reduction in isolation and mental health problems.</p>

3.5	Improve inclusion and support for all CYP with autism in education provision	<p><u>2018/19 Priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of places within Specialist Maintained schools and additionally resourced provisions so that CYP with Autism can be educated locally. 	December 2019	LBM CSF SEND	<p>Increase local provision to prevent CYP with autism being educated out of the Borough</p> <p>CYP with autism are better equipped for adulthood.</p>
3.6	Ensure equal access to housing options for adults with autism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include autism in the council's new Housing and Homelessness Strategies. • Work in partnership with colleagues from the Learning Disabilities team to develop a housing offer for people with Autism. 	April 2019	LBM C&H Housing team	<p>Minimise numbers of homelessness episodes in people with autism.</p> <p>Reduction in need for residential placements.</p> <p>Increased independence and quality of life.</p>
3.7	Improve local infrastructure to meet the needs of those with autism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health services, education settings and libraries will consider how their physical environments may be improved to better meet the needs of those with autism and take steps to achieve this. 	December 2022	LBM/MCCG	<p>Local services more accessible for those with autism</p> <p>Increased autism awareness throughout the borough, making Merton a more autism-friendly borough.</p>

Theme 4: Preparing for adulthood					
No.	Objective	Action	Timescale/When completed	Organisation/lead	Expected Outcome/benefit
4.1	Improve the quality of transition assessments.	<p>2018/19 Priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure transition assessments are structured and use a framework such as the national Preparing for Adulthood framework. Ensure assessments are multi-disciplinary, involving health, social care and educational professional as necessary. Involve the young person and their families and carers in transition assessments. For those receiving treatment or care from CAMH's, audit transition process against NICE guidelines (NICE clinical guidelines 170). 	<p>December 2018</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>LBM transitions board</p> <p>MCCG CAMHS</p>	<p>Better continuum of support for young people as they reach adulthood and increased involvement of young people in decision making.</p> <p>Reduction in 'fall off a cliff' effect' in accessing services as CYP move towards adulthood.</p> <p>Improved quality of care for those receiving care or treatment from CAMHS.</p>
4.2	Support young people to reach their potential and develop independence as they move towards adulthood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new programme of work experience within the council for vulnerable cohorts, including those with autism. Work with FE colleges to increase understanding of the needs of CYP with autism in further education and to improve their access to support within colleges. 	<p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p>	<p>LBM E&R LBM HR</p> <p>LBM CSF SEND</p>	<p>Increase independence and resilience of CYP with autism as they move towards adulthood.</p> <p>Increase access to appropriate curriculum and support for CYP in colleges.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with schools, libraries and adult education to explore their potential for providing more life skills training for young people with autism e.g. interview training, extended work experience opportunities, financial management training and cooking classes. 	April 2020	LBM CSF/LBM C&H libraries	
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Theme 5: Think Family					
No.	Objective	Action	Timescale/When completed	Organisation/ lead	Expected Outcome/benefit
5.1	Improve the 'local offer' of support for families.	<p><u>2018/19 priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the development of the CYP 0-19 assessment, diagnosis and support pathway, we will work with partners to identify resources to increase the availability of parenting programmes on offer in the borough-particularly for those with children over 8 years old. Produce clear information about local parenting support as part of the 'local offer'. Promote support available to carers of adults with autism and the 'Thinking Ahead' plan. 	<p>December 2019</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>MCCG</p> <p>LBM SEND/Voluntary Sector</p> <p>LBM C&H ASC</p>	<p>Improved sense of support, knowledge and quality of life for families/carers of people with autism.</p> <p>Improved communication and interaction between families/carers and people with autism.</p>
5.2	Ensure families and carers are involved in the co-design and delivery of services.	<p><u>2018/19 priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote co-production amongst organisations re-commissioning or delivering new services that support families and carers of people with autism. 	Ongoing	Merton Autism Partnership Steering Group	Increased opportunities for families/carers to feedback their experiences and use this to shape future services, leading to improved quality of services.
5.3	Improve wider support for families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities for improving the availability of counselling and emotional 	December 2020	LBM/MCCG/Voluntary	Improved sense of support, knowledge and quality of life for

	and carers.	<p>support for parents and carers of people with autism. This could include raising awareness of the Merton IAPT service or supporting autism champions to facilitate peer support groups for parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for opportunities to increase training for staff in evidence based interventions, such as 'video interaction guidance' (VIG).		sector	families/carers of people with autism.
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Theme 6: Access to information					
No.	Objective	Action	Timescale/When completed	Organisation/lead	Expected Outcome/benefit
6.1	Improve quality and accessibility of information available to people with autism and their families/carers.	<p><u>2018/19 Priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an all-services, electronic information hub to provide a single place for information about local services and resources relevant to autism, including the local SEN offer. When producing information, stakeholders will consider its accessibility in terms of clarity (easy-read), whether translations into non-English languages are required, and whether cultural factors have been taken into account, seeking to ensure information is widely accessible. 	<p>April 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>LBM CSF</p> <p>All</p>	<p>People with autism and their families/carers are empowered to make more informed choices about the care and services available to them.</p> <p>Reduction in information inequalities.</p>
6.2	Ensure people with autism are able to provide and share information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold an 'autism fair' to promote autism-friendly services and activities in the borough and increase wider awareness. Explore opportunities for a system to enable key groups, including people with autism and their families/ carers, to share local information with the community. This may involve partnership working with local voluntary sector organisations. 	<p>April 2020</p>	<p>LBM/Voluntary sector</p>	<p>People with autism and their families/carers are empowered to make more informed choices about the care and services available to them.</p>