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July 2024

Standard title slide



Changing the narrative

- An autistic person in a job about autism
- Language – and why I think this matters
- Using the wrong yardstick to measure success
- Some unpleasant statistics...

What is NHS England?


Work my team has done

- Community of Practice
- Autism in Schools
- Support planning and Advocacy + projects
- Eating / Feeding disorder toolkit
- Personal Health Budgets to aid discharge

Working on now

- Residential Care toolkit
- Gender Identity resource
- PHBs for those on the waiting list for assessment
- Clinical Reference group for diagnosticians
- Neuro-divergent employer pledge

Nationally



- Annual Health Checks
- Reasonable Adjustments Flag
- Universal Care Plan (with London pilot)

The Autism Workstream

Purpose: standardisation and equitable delivery of care to London's autistic population and addressing the challenges posed by health inequalities

Policy/strategy alignment:

NHS Long Term Plan (2021-2026)

- Improving understanding, health and wellbeing and community support
- Reducing waiting times for specialist services

National Autism Strategy

- Improving understanding
- Improving access to education and employment
- Reducing health inequalities
- Appropriate community support
- Refining support criminal justice systems

Patient Safety Strategic aims

- Improvement
- Innovation
- Inclusion

Dependencies/interdependencies

- Meaningful coproduction, embedding lived experience input into planning and delivery.
- Workforce teams' development.
- Mental health programmes, improving access to quality community support.
- Voluntary sector organisations community engagement.
- Data availability and quality.

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The Workstream's purpose is to support the standardisation and equitable delivery of care to London's autistic population, addressing the challenges posed by health inequalities (including increased utilisation of Mental Health services, higher risk of unemployment, suicidality and poor health outcomes).

The workstream aligns with the NHS LTP commitments for autistic individuals, striving to create happier, healthier, and longer lives by improving understanding, health and wellbeing, community-based support, reducing waiting times for specialist services, and addressing health inequalities.

The planning of Autism Workstream delivery is also aligned to the 6 key areas in the National Autism Strategy for 2021-2026, including enhancing societal understanding, improving access to education for autistic children and young people and supporting employment opportunities.

The workstream seeks to deliver against the Patient Safety Strategy aims of 'insight', 'involvement' and 'improvement'—particularly seeking to provide innovative solutions to regional issues and embedding coproduction from planning to delivery.

Dependencies (not-exhaustive)

Achieving the objectives of the Workstream depends on collaboration, where coproduction to ensure lived experience insight into the unique needs of autistic individuals is embedded into planning and delivery. Workforce teams will be required to develop and deliver specialised training to implement tailored support for autistic people and streamline diagnostic processes. Additionally, the interplay with mental health programmes and the voluntary sector is crucial for implementing supportive strategies, reducing admission rates, and fostering community engagement to ensure comprehensive and sustained impacts. Lastly, quality data is required to be able to identify areas of inequality in access and experience of care and to measure any impact of improvement activity.

Workstream priority areas

Employment and Education:

- Addressing the employment gap.
- Reasonable adjustments as a standard practices.
- Reducing formal and social school exclusion.

Gender Identity Services:

- Breaking down barriers to healthcare access
- Fostering a sense of community.

Maternity and Family Services:

- Supporting unique challenges experienced by autistic mothers and birthing people.

Autistic Homelessness:

- Identifying and meeting the distinct needs of autistic homeless individuals.

Pre and Post Diagnostic Support:

- Reducing diagnostic waiting times
- Addressing issues affecting healthcare access and contributing to poorer health outcomes.

Criminal Justice System:

- Improving outcomes for autistic people in the criminal justice system.

Co-production:

- Embedding of coproduction in health service planning and delivery

Understanding of Autism:

- Improving societal understanding of autism to reduce stigma and social challenges for autistic people

Mental Health Support:

- Improving outcomes Reducing disproportionately high rates of admissions and risk of suicide.

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Accessible Employment and Education:

- Addressing the employment gap, where only 16% of autistic adults are in full-time paid work.
- Focusing on making reasonable adjustments more commonplace and approachable in standard practices.

Gender Identity Services:

- Breaking down barriers hindering healthcare access for gender-diverse autistic individuals.
- Addressing challenges related to gender reassignment surgeries and creating neurodivergent-friendly healthcare environments.

Maternity and Family Services:

- Supporting autistic mothers and birthing individuals, acknowledging unique challenges, including difficulties in multitasking and social opportunities.

Autistic People Experiencing Homelessness:

- Identifying and meeting the distinct characteristics and needs of autistic homeless individuals within standard service provision.

Pre and Post Diagnostic Support for Autism:

- Responding to the surge in open referrals and ensuring timely and

effective diagnostic support.

- Addressing issues affecting healthcare access and contributing to poorer health outcomes.

Autistic People in the Criminal Justice System:

- Advocating for improved understanding, training, and co-production efforts to ensure fair and equitable treatment.

Co-production:

- Emphasising effective communication and engagement with autistic individuals to inform service design and provision.

Understanding of Autism:

•Challenging and reshaping the current understanding in health and social care of for a more accurate understanding, leading to better provision of care.

•Improving societal understanding to reduce stigma and social isolation.

Mental Health Support for Autistic People:

- Addressing gaps in clinical information and anecdotal evidence regarding mental health issues.
- Focusing on improving outcomes and reducing disproportionately high rates of admissions and risk of suicide among autistic individuals.