

Cheshire East

All-Age Autism Strategy

2019-2022: Summary

Draft for consultation



**Cheshire East
SEND Partnership**



Purpose of the strategy

The Autism strategy for Cheshire East is a plan that makes a commitment to improving services, advice and support for children and adults with autism, their families and carers. The strategy outlines commissioning intentions, plans for service re-design and improvement initiatives.

Background to the strategy

There is an increasing demand for services with the numbers of individuals with autism rising in Cheshire East; this causes longer waiting times in health and social care and it causes pressures on the budgets. The recent Local Area Inspection highlighted significant improvements to the diagnostic and care pathway and education health and care plans (EHCP); they are at heart of the strategy.

The new All Age Autism strategy provides an overarching framework for Cheshire East Clinical Commissioning Groups and Cheshire East Council. It defines priority areas based on the national and local findings. The responsibilities of organisations across health and social care are identified to support continued progress.

The strategy has been written to reflect the guidance issued in 2015 (statutory guidance for local Authorities and NHS organisations to support the implementation of the Autism Strategy).

Strategy vision statement

In Cheshire East we are committed to improving the lives of individuals with autism, we will do this by working with families, local groups and partner organisations to address the existing frustrations in accessing a number of services. It is critical that a significant amount of focus is placed to make fundamental improvements to the diagnostic and assessment pathway and to improve the timely process of education health and care plans.

The diagnostic and assessment pathway will be improved, individuals, families and carers will be supported throughout and will have access to clear information and will be signposted to appropriate and active services to meet their needs.

A preventative approach underpins our vision and there is a strong sense of urgency that local providers and commissioners need get it right for individuals with autism and their families.

Ambitions of the strategy

We want to empower individuals and families to participate in decisions about assessments and diagnosis, to receive support, information and advice as early as possible as soon as needs have been identified. To provide support to also help families understand the diagnosis High quality services that are easily navigated will be at the centre of the strategy.

We want people to feel that Cheshire East is a place where you can participate socially and lead an independent life, including reaching their educational potential, gaining and maintaining employment, living close to family and social networks, and can take part in leisure and social activities.

Key areas of focus

In order to meet the ambitions set out in our vision, we have agreed 6 main areas which have been co-produced by carers and professionals;

- Awareness and Information* To ensure people with autism, their careers and families and professionals are able to access clear, comprehensive and up-to-date information about where to go for support, and have a means of sharing knowledge and experiences with others
- Diagnosis* As a partnership, working together to jointly commission a consistent and integrated autism assessment pathway, which is compliant with NICE guidance and Quality Standards, and includes access to evidence-based pre and post diagnostic support
- Education* Making sure that everyone has access to appropriate educational provision so they can fulfil their potential as learners
- Transition* A clear preparing for adulthood pathway, which meets the diverse needs of young people with Autism. This will mean young people will know where to access support as they navigate across different services (health, education, social care, community) enabling them to achieve their aspirations as they move into adulthood
- Employment and training* Pathways to suitable employment and training is not just important economically; it also offers the opportunity for individuals to feel valued, respected and included in society and can help prevent isolation
- Housing and Independent Living* People with autism have an improved housing offer, access to secure and suitable housing, sustaining choice and independent living

7. *Service Provision* More specialist health and social care services will be provided and will be easily accessed by those who need them. Individuals and families encounter a range of high-quality services that are joined-up, easy to navigate and appropriate for their needs.
8. *Support for families and carers* We will seek to ensure that carers are identified, supported and empowered to manage their caring role, and are able to have a life outside of caring

Our ambitions and the success of the priorities are dependent on partner organisations working in an integrated way to achieve the same goals. NHS bodies and Cheshire East Council will pursue continuous progress with all the priority areas in the strategy to put our vision into action in line with the Autism Act 2009, NICE guidance and the written statement of actions following the local area SEND inspection.

Consultation feedback

We would like to produce a new All Age Autism Strategy, for the period 2019 to 2022, the Strategy sets out how plans to improving services and experiences for people with autism and their families in Cheshire East.

The consultation runs for 4 weeks from Monday 04 February 2019 with a deadline for response by 5pm on Monday 04 March 2019.

There are many ways to provide us with your comments about the contents of this draft Strategy;

Questionnaire: Complete the short questionnaire at the end of this document and return it to;

Cheshire East Council
Research and Consultation
Westfields
Middlewich Road
Sandbach
CW11 1HZ

Online: Visit <https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/AutismStrategy/> and complete our online survey

By email: RANDC@cheshireeast.gov.uk

In person: You can visit one of our customer contact centres, please visit www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/contactus for more information