



# Doncaster Council

## Report

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Date: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### To the Chair and Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

### All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy - Response to Panel's Recommendations.

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr R Blake Cllr N Fennelly	All	No

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on progress made in response to recommendations made by Members to the Executive, (Appendix 1) and Cllr Blake's response dated 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (Appendix 2). This report should be read in the context of the Doncaster All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy 2021/24. (Appendix 3) and Report to Cabinet (Appendix 4)
2. The six recommendations were made following a series of fact-finding meetings to contribute to the development of the Doncaster All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy, and be included within the emerging Strategy Document.
3. The six recommendations are:
  - a. Recommendation 1 - Investigate whether the Council could provide Supported Internships for people with learning disabilities and autism.
  - b. Recommendation 2 - Review the "Your Life Doncaster" system alongside people with learning disabilities or autism, who do not have a carer or immediate support.
  - c. Recommendation 3 - Ensure that people with learning disabilities and autism have a single pathway of support developed.
  - d. Recommendation 4 - Highlight within the Strategy the frequency and severity of learning disability amongst people within the prison sector.
  - e. Recommendation 5 - Give consideration to writing to the Department for Work and Pensions asking for the requirement of people with a permanent disability, not to have to be reassessed on an annual basis when claiming

PIP (Personal Independent Payment), but to make the award for a longer period.

- f. Recommendation 6 - Ask service users what difference the Strategy has made to them specifically when applying for support, benefits, medical assistance and employment, once the Strategy has been agreed and embedded.
4. The Doncaster All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy was developed and refreshed in partnership with NHS Doncaster CCG, representatives of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector including Autism Plus and Choice for All Doncaster (CHAD), people with lived experience, their families and carers and staff who work in the respective areas relating to the Strategic Priorities.
5. Many of the recommendations made by Members reflected the views and priorities of people with lived experience identified during the consultation exercises, and the actions are embedded within the strategy.
6. Other recommendations are out of scope of the Strategy and reflect other work that is being progressed by the partners. Further detail is provided below.
7. In addition to the recommendations made by members, further detail was provided, which reflected the views of people with lived experience, and response to these comments is also provided below.
8. The actions relating to the strategy and recommendations included within this report will be through the quarterly reporting processes.

## **EXEMPT REPORT**

9. No.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
  - a. Note the progress of actions against each of the recommendations
  - b. Note the status and progress of the Learning Disability and Autism Strategy

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

11. Implementation of the recommendations provides greater support for more people with a learning disability and / or autism to live their best life and experience more of the life chances open to others.
12. More people will have the support they need to access, maintain and develop in their employment, to enable them to live their best life.
13. More people with learning disabilities and / or autism will have access to the advice support and information that meets their needs and choices, based in their own communities.

## BACKGROUND

14. Following engagement and consultation with people with lived experience, five priority work streams were established, reflecting the key priorities agreed with all stakeholders:
  - a. Diagnosis of Autism
  - b. Education and Inclusion
  - c. Employment.
  - d. Carers and Short Breaks
  - e. Housing and support
15. In addition, three cross cutting themes which reflect key concerns of people with Lived Experience were also prioritised, and to be considered within all work-streams:
  - a. Health Inequalities
  - b. Young People in Transitions
  - c. Transforming Care
16. Detail and summary plans against each of the priorities and cross-cutting themes are included in the All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy and Cabinet Report.
17. Further engagement with people with lived experience and the Members identified similar themes, with additional areas of concern or challenge. Members made recommendations to address those concerns.
18. **Recommendation 1 - Investigate whether the Council could provide Supported Internships for people with learning disabilities and autism.**
19. **Reason:** To support the education and employment section within the Strategy, the Panel questioned whether the provision of Supported Internships within the Council could be provided. It was believed that there were very few initiatives across the Borough and there was a wish to see the Local Authority leading and encouraging all employers across the Doncaster area to offer this provision. This would provide opportunities for young people to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, whilst learning in the work environment.
20. **Response:** The Learning Disability and Autism Strategy Employment plan aims to ensure that people with Learning Disability and /or Autism are supported into and sustain meaningful employment. The summary plans are included in the Strategy.
21. The plans include that Doncaster Council and NHS Doncaster CCG will take a lead role in Doncaster in the development of internships and volunteering opportunities for people with Learning Disability and / or Autism.
22. Work is underway to map existing supported employment and volunteering opportunities, and the employment support schemes available for people for people with learning disability and / or autism. Outputs from the mapping exercises will be made available to people with lived experience, and be used to

identify where gaps exist to inform future developments and possible commissioned services.

23. **Recommendation 2 - Review the “Your Life Doncaster” system alongside people with learning disabilities or autism, who do not have a carer or immediate support.**
24. **Reason:** To assess how a person with learning disabilities or autism can navigate the “Your Life Doncaster” site. It was highlighted ... during discussions that people with learning disabilities or autism were not always aware of the Your Life Doncaster online system ... particularly for those people who did not have any immediate support mechanisms, that they may not be aware of the system or not able to navigate it successfully, to find what support is available.
25. Concern was also expressed that not everyone had access to a computer or have the ability or knowledge to access the support systems they require. Therefore, Members wished for sampling to be undertaken to see how many people with Learning Disabilities or Autism were having difficulties using the “Your Life Doncaster” site and to ascertain if and how large the problem was and address issues that were identified.
26. **Response:** The Your Life Doncaster website is a key resource for people to access information about services and resources across Doncaster. Development of the Your Life Doncaster website is a Council project that sits outside of the Learning Disability and Autism Programme of work.
27. Doncaster Council has recently undertaken a review and redevelopment of the Your Life Doncaster Website. Prior to the redevelopment, the Council and website developers, PCG, held group consultation sessions, with people from across Doncaster, including with people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism, to ensure their views were reflected in the development of the redesigned website.
28. The developers also undertook a series of user testing exercises with different groups of people to ensure the site is accessible to as many people as possible.
29. The website content is managed and reviewed to ensure it continues to be accurate and accessible. The website will be a key source of information and advice for people with Learning Disability and Autism, while it is recognised that not everyone has the tools to access online resources.
30. A communication and engagement plan is in development to support the delivery of the Strategy, and will include plans to regularly engage with people with lived experience, through a range of channels, to gain better understanding of how people need and want to access information and advice about the services that are available to them. The plan includes the need for a shared approach between the LD&A programme and the Your Life Doncaster team to ensure the needs of people with Learning Disability and / or Autism are addressed.
31. **Recommendation 3 - Ensure that people with learning disabilities and autism have a single pathway of support developed.**
32. **Reason:** It was a common theme throughout discussion ...people with learning

difficulty or autism considered it necessary for their support to be assessed as a whole and not for them to be referred to different services.

33. It was stressed that being referred to different services meant that similar forms seeking the same information had to be completed for each service required... that people were fearful of having to complete forms and were frustrated by having to repeat answers to the same question. ...Concern was expressed that people who did not have any support could struggle with form filling and in turn could create unnecessary stress.
34. The conversations acknowledged that the engagement sessions and development of a new Strategy was just the start and there was a need to continue listening to people with all needs and abilities.
35. **Response:** A significant and frequent challenge to health and care services from people who use services is the repetitive nature of assessments and form filling. While services do aim to share information to reduce the repetitive demand on people using the services, barriers exist that make this a difficult area to address, including IT considerations (e.g. sharing information between different organisations with different systems) and different information requirements for each service. General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) mean that organisations can only hold personal information that they need. For an individual, this means that different parts of the system, e.g. social care and DWP are limited in the information they can hold and share with others.
36. Doncaster partners are mindful of the challenges faced by people with Learning Disability and / or Autism and are making changes to the way in which information is shared and held, where this is possible.
37. In June 2019, Doncaster CCG and RDaSH introduced Learning Disability Primary Care passport which make it easier for people with a learning disability and/or autism to receive care and treatment across primary care. The passport contains an overview of the person's details, their name, age, and other personal information, as well as their needs and requirements (e.g. how they prefer to communicate). The passports reduce the need for individuals with a learning disability and/or autism to be asked common questions, which are often repeated across different services. A purple wristband worn by the individual can help indicate to a health professional that the individual has a care passport.
38. In order to effectively and efficiently support individuals who use social care and health services, care is coordinated through a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) approach. The MDT aims to deliver closer and more effective working between health and social care professionals, to ensure people with a learning disability and/or autism experience a more joined-up approach to care.
39. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this approach has been further enhanced, as MDTs now meet weekly, provide joint visits between health and social care, leading to reduced waiting times between different visits and a more joined up service. The approach will continue past the COVID-19 restrictions as it has been recognised as good practice that benefits the clients we support.
40. For many people, especially those not currently using services, form filling and giving information remains a challenge. DIAL (Disability Information and Advice

Line) is a commissioned service available for everyone with a disability, to access support including Individuals with a learning disability and/or autism including help to fill in forms. DIAL are not seeing people in person but still have their helpline running (01302 327 800) and also an email address ([advice@dialdoncaster.co.uk](mailto:advice@dialdoncaster.co.uk)) so people can still access their support.

41. **Recommendation 4 - Highlight within the Strategy the frequency and severity of learning disability amongst people within the prisons**

**Reason:** Following consideration of the Youth Justice Plan at Full Council earlier in the year, there was a fear that children and young people could be criminalised due to their learning disabilities or autism, particularly if it had never been diagnosed with appropriate support put in place.

42. When seeking employment, Members stressed that it could be daunting for a person of any age to attend the job centre. Bearing this in mind discussions highlighted that a person could be left feeling distressed and in a vulnerable position, therefore concern was expressed that they may be unwillingly drawn into criminal behaviour.

43. It was highlighted that sometimes the only contact people within this cohort have is with the Department of Work and Pensions and therefore there was a need for the organisation to work closely with Team Doncaster ensuring joined up working and full support for service users. The current support available in prisons was acknowledged, noting that social workers, worked alongside Prison Officers ensuring

44. **Response:** Identification of people with Learning Disability and / or autism within the prison system is challenging and the data in prisons may be incomplete. The Council's system identifies a small number of Doncaster individuals open to Adult Social Care who are in prison. (The number is very small therefore we cannot publish it as it could potentially identify the individuals concerned).

45. Prisoners are routinely screened for Learning Disability by Prison officers when they enter prison, and offered a Prison Buddy for their day to day support. It is usual that prisoners only come to the attention of the Prison Social Worker at the point of release, and therefore the Prison Social Worker currently is not aware of all prisoners with Learning Disability or Autism.

46. All prisoners are given the contact details for Voiceability advocacy services that they can contact at any time, with the contact number pinned into their phones. Prison Health and Care services are working closely together with an ambition to collaborate and raise the profile of the needs of people with learning disability and / or autism in prison with prison staff.

47. Autism Alert Cards for people with Autism were launched in Doncaster in 2020, and South Yorkshire Police were given training to help their understanding of autism, and improve their approach to dealing with people who are autistic.

48. Development of support for people with learning disability and / or autism, in finding and maintaining employment is addressed within the Employment Priority plan.

49. Representatives from the DWP attend both the Learning Disability and the

Autism Partnership Boards, and regularly provide updates on developments, available support and information that can be accessed through the DWP specifically for people with Disability and / or Autism.

50. Job Centre Plus provides:
  - Support for those not ready for work
  - Support for those wishing to find work
  - Support for those already in work
51. Autism Plus also offers an Employment Support line both face to face (COVID-19 restrictions allowing) and an expanded on-line presence to expand their reach.
52. **Recommendation 5 - Give consideration to writing to the Department for Work and Pensions asking for the requirement of people with a permanent disability, not to have to be reassessed on an annual basis when claiming PIP (Personal Independent Payment), but to make the award for a longer period.**
53. **Reason:** Members learnt that assessment forms had to be completed on an annual basis, providing the same information. It was stressed that if a person had been registered with a permanent disability, particularly from childhood, then a longer period of time for assessment should be considered. This may avoid the repetitive processes that are difficult to navigate and in some cases create a huge anxiety.
54. **Response:** The procedures, guidance and process relating to Personal Independence Payments are set by Central Government, and revision is not possible at a local level.
55. The process for PIP claims can be time consuming and stressful for individuals with Learning Disability and / or Autism. DIAL (referenced above) is commissioned to provide information advice and support for people with all disabilities, and are able to provide support including Welfare and Benefits advice, and help to fill in forms.
56. The Community Adult Learning Disability Team (CALT) Wellbeing Officer has provided additional support to individuals around PIP applications and attending tribunals where and when this has been possible.
57. **Recommendation 6 - Ask service users what difference the Strategy has made to them specifically when applying for support, benefits, medical assistance and employment, once the Strategy has been agreed and embedded.**
58. **Reason:** It was noted that the Strategy engagement sessions had raised many expectations with service users and checks were required to ensure it was meeting its objectives.

59. **Response:** Regular updates about the progress and developments of the Learning Disability and Autism Strategy are provided to and discussed at both the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Autism Partnership Board, which are co-chaired by individuals with lived experience. Attendees include individuals and groups that represent and advocate for individuals with a learning disability and/or autism.
60. The Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Boards provide regular feedback, challenge and updates from individuals with lived experience about the difference the Strategy and associated projects and initiatives are having on their lives.
61. Communication and engagement plans are in development to work alongside the Priority plans, to ensure that more people in Doncaster are kept informed and updated, are given the opportunity and support to get involved in the delivery of the plans, and greater opportunity to be able to share with us the impact and difference made their implementation.
62. **General comments not addressed above: A further area that was close to people's hearts was having somewhere to meet and make friends, particularly when some live in more rural and outlying areas. Such places are available in other towns in South Yorkshire and it is hoped that a venue can be developed in Doncaster. It was noted that at the "Big Health Days" workshop at the Doncaster Deaf Trust, information would be provided in terms of adult relationships.**
63. Making and maintaining friendships is very important to people from all backgrounds and walks of life. The emergence of COVID-19 has made this more challenging for people in general, and those with learning disability and autism in particular.
64. During the restrictions, greater focus has been placed on the use of technology to help people maintain social contact with friends and families. While this has helped many people, there is a significant group of people for whom this is not a satisfactory solution.
65. Key developments within the All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy take account of the importance of friendships and supporting networks, for example, the type and location of accommodation and support available to meet people's needs and preferences.
66. Developments across the wider Doncaster footprint and localities in particular will need to take account of the needs and preferences of people with Learning Disability and Autism to ensure they are accessible to all, with reasonable adjustments in place where needed.
67. The need for adult relationships was also raised during consultation. Choice for All Doncaster (CHAD) contacted Luv2meetU, a friendship and dating agency for people with a learning disability or autism aged 18 and over and shared their contact details on their website and newsletters.
68. Progress on the delivery of the Strategy and the recommendations detailed above will be monitored and updates provided through the Service Delivery Plans quarterly reports.

**OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 69. a) Do nothing.
- 70. If the recommendations are not addressed people with lived experience who contributed to the fact-finding meetings may feel their views and experiences have been ignored after they were explicitly sought.
- 71. b) Adopt all recommendations
- 72. Adopting the recommendations will ensure that people with lived experience are more likely to have their expectations met and their experience improved. Most of the actions described are embedded within the existing strategy. Where they are not, they provide an opportunity to raise the profile of the needs of people with Learning Disability and Autism with the wider community and partner organisations.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION**

- 73. The approach of the Council and its partners in the development and delivery of the Learning Disability and Autism Strategy is to put the views and needs of people with lived experience at the heart of its plans.
- 74. It is important for people with lived experience that their concerns, challenges and opinions about how they experience the services they use or come into contact with are heard and acted upon.

**IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES**

	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Implications</b>
	<p><b>Doncaster Working:</b> Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better access to good fulfilling work</li> <li>• Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish</li> <li>• Inward Investment</li> </ul>	<p>Employment is one of the key priorities for delivery, supporting more people with learning disabilities, autism or both into work. Work is underway to identify key opportunities, ensuring that local schemes are more joined up and people have access to the support they need, to access and maintain employment.</p>
	<p><b>Doncaster Living:</b> Our vision is for Doncaster’s people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster</li> </ul>	<p>The actions included within this report along with those detailed in the All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy will ensure that people are more active members of their community. Care and support is aimed at supporting more</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people can live in a good quality, affordable home</li> <li>• Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport</li> <li>• Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean</li> <li>• Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage</li> </ul>	<p>people to access community based opportunities, from where they live, where and how they receive their care and support.</p>
	<p><b>Doncaster Learning:</b> Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school</li> <li>• Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better</li> <li>• Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Doncaster Caring:</b> Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have the best start in life</li> <li>• Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust</li> <li>• Older people can live well and independently in their own homes</li> </ul>	<p>The all age strategy and response to the recommendations above, aims that people with learning disability and autism to have equal citizenship promoted and embedded at an early stage and maintained throughout their lives.</p>
	<p><b>Connected Council:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A modern, efficient and flexible workforce</li> <li>• Modern, accessible customer interactions</li> <li>• Operating within our resources and delivering value for money</li> <li>• A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents</li> <li>• Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths</li> <li>• Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance</li> </ul>	<p>The actions described here and in the strategy are developed and delivered in partnership between people with lived experience, statutory and non- statutory partners, with shared planning and monitoring arrangements in place.</p> <p>Implementation of the strategic plans, the actions relating to the recommendations and key developments impacting on people with learning disability and / or autism are delivered by both system partners and different teams across the Council.</p> <p>Links are being developed through locality commissioning</p>

		<p>and underpinned by the Joint Commissioning Strategy and delivery plan, which aims to provide greater value for money, and a coordinated, whole person approach.</p> <p>Developing the workforce by raising awareness of learning disability and autism and a more joined up approach to training are integral to the strategy and its delivery.</p>
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## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

75. An assumption is made that support available to people is improved based on the principles of equitable access to community and universal services, and evidence based developments will ensure that services offer best value for local people and the Doncaster Pound.
76. However there is a risk that public services will not be effectively funded to deliver improvements as quickly or as robustly as local people need them.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [MCC 2/3/21]**

77. Section 1 of the Autism Act 2009 required the Government to introduce an Adult Autism Strategy and Section 2 provided for associated statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS bodies. 'Think Autism: Fulfilling And Rewarding Lives: The Strategy For Adults With Autism In England' was published By the Department of Health in 2010 and subsequently strengthened by 'Statutory Guidance For Local Authorities And NHS Organisations To Support Implementation Of The Adult Autism Strategy' published in 2015, both of which require local authorities, NHS bodies and NHS Trusts to support the national Autism Strategy. In 2019 the Government reviewed the Autism Strategy to include children as well as adults.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [CE 03/03/2021]**

78. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [PM 02/03/21 ]**

79. There are no direct HR implications in relation to this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [PW 01/03/21]**

80. There are no anticipated technology implications relating to the recommendations in this report. Paragraphs 25-29 provide responses in relation to a review of the Your Life Doncaster website alongside people with learning disabilities or autism.
81. There are many existing solutions within Doncaster's Digital Platform that could

assist in supporting the delivery of an All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy. All are secure/maintained and meet mandatory requirement such as GDPR. Many existing integrations already exist, not only within DMBC, but also with the wider NHS and regional partners. Moving forward it is paramount that the appropriate processes are followed to ensure we utilise the existing technologies and investments to their maximum, reduce duplication, increase integration and data sharing opportunities, while providing the best technical solutions to underpin the business processes and services we provide to our citizens.

## **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [JK 03/03/21 ]**

82. No further health risks are identified as a consequence of these recommendations, over those identified in the All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [JK 03/03/21 ]**

83. A Due Regard Statement has been completed alongside the refresh of the strategy, and this response to Overview and Scrutiny, and attached as Appendix 5. Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization; and other conduct prohibited under the act. In addition, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.
84. The focus of the All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy, and response to the recommendations, is to support people of all ages with learning disabilities, autism or both to have opportunities in life that are equitable with the wider community, and have access to services and support which take their unique needs and strengths fully into account and meet any specific needs.
85. A comprehensive Communications and Engagement plan is in development, which aims to keep carers and people with learning disability and / or Autism informed of progress, and support them to get involved in the delivery of the plans. The plan will reflect the engagement that is already in place, through the Autism and Learning Disability Partnership Boards, and the Carer Oversight and Carer Action groups, with further work being planned to support people who wish to get involved, especially those from less represented groups.

## **CONSULTATION**

86. Extensive consultation was undertaken in the development and refresh of the Learning Disability and Autism Strategy, and final reports are available. The consultation has continued throughout implementation to date, through regular updates to the Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Boards, and through the Carers Oversight Group and Carers Working Group. Some work streams have representation from people with lived experience in the project meetings.
87. Strengthening of consultation, engagement and involvement will be included in the developing Communications and Engagement plans.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 Final H&SC O&S LD&A Review Letter 041019

Appendix 2 O&S LD&A Response 301019

Appendix 3 All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy 2021/24.

Appendix 4 Report to Cabinet – All Age Learning Disability and Autism Strategy 2021/24.

Appendix 5 Due Regard Statement

Appendix 6 Easy Read of the Learning Disability and Autism Big Plan 2021/24

Appendix 7 Summary Easy Read of the Learning Disability and Autism Big Plan 2021/24.

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

88. None

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