

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Children and Young People Select Committee
<b>Date:</b>	22 September 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Update on Autism Services Commissioning for Children and Young People in Hampshire
<b>Report From:</b>	Mental Health and Learning Disabilities / Autism Delivery Directorate, Southampton and Isle of Wight ICB

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the current status of action that is underway by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board to tackle the ongoing challenges in relation to ensuring access to autism assessments in Hampshire.

### Recommendation(s)

2. For the Children and Young People Select Committee to note the progress made and ongoing issues outlined in the following update report.
3. For the committee to receive an in-person update in November 2023 and agree future reporting requirements.

### Executive Summary

4. This report updates the Select Committee as to the current state of progress in relation to achieving timely access in relation to Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) assessments and related support and services, outstanding and new issues to address, and next steps.
5. Whilst NHS HIOW ICB, and Frimley ICB (in relation to provision for children and young people living in North East Hampshire), has implemented significant financial investment to expand Autism Assessment activity across Hampshire, referrals have continued to increase which has resulted in a growing assessment waiting list. To address this, the two ICBs:
  - Are developing an improvement group to facilitate, monitor and oversee the transformation of services across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB geography.

- Have secured non recurrent funding through a public health bid, for 350 people in Hampshire (aged 16-25), to be assessed more quickly.
- Have established a new all-age commissioning framework which supports more agile arrangements for procuring additional Autism assessment activity.
- Are working with system partners to ensure contracts and services due to expire in March 2024 are secured, whilst plans for long term capacity to meet ongoing needs for Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are developed.
- Are reviewing aspects outside of the assessment pathway, such as mental health inequalities, age based thresholds, transition, mental health comorbidities, earlier identification and needs-led support and workforce training.
- Have worked with Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Autism Partnership Board to develop a new Local Authority Autism Strategy.
- Have worked with HCC Public Health to highlight mental health inequalities for those with Autism within the Hampshire County Council Mental Health Wellbeing Strategy.
- Have successfully achieved the increases in Autism Assessment activity that it set out to achieve, moving from an average of 600-700 assessments per year before 2020 to approximately 1,500 per year from 2021 onwards.

6. To Note:

- Despite significant investment in Autism assessment capacity, in Hampshire we continue to find that this has not been sufficient to achieve the objective of a 3 month (12 week) wait by March 2024, largely due to the increase in referrals made since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- In June 2023, an average wait of 18 months was reported to the committee. Following identification of a data error and subsequent analysis and cleanse, the average waiting time for children and young people in Hampshire has been confirmed as currently 12.7 months.
- Continued partnership with HCC SEND services and other education colleagues will be necessary to help understand, address and potentially reduce (if appropriate) current levels of referrals.

### **Contextual information**

7. Nationally, regionally and locally, Autism and ADHD assessment services are facing significant capacity issues, with increasing waiting lists as a result of an unprecedented surge in demand. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, long waiting times for both ADHD and Autism assessments were widely reported and acknowledged. As a result, the NHS has been clear about its ambitions to make significant improvements both in the NHS Long Term Plan and the national strategy for autistic children, young people, and adults.

8. In early 2021, a revised and improved service specification for a new assessment service (across Hampshire the Isle of Wight) was jointly designed with families, clinical experts and relevant professionals across multiple agencies and disciplines. Following a competitive tender process Psicon Ltd was awarded the contract The current service contract expires on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
9. Key improvements and changes that were introduced in the Psicon assessment service that started in October 2021 included:
  - Expanded age range down to 3 years old (originally 5 years) to 18 years (and up to 19 years for those with a mild to moderate learning disability)
  - Provide an accessible and flexible NICE Compliant service which supports patient choice, family life and offers a range of assessment formats including face to face, online and hybrid models and includes post assessment follow up sessions.
  - Provide a local service, with established local links which ensures joint working with other agencies and services, including clear specific and meaningful signposting to the child and family.
  - Ensure that children and their parent/carers are involved in each step of the pathway.
  - Continue to work with Hampshire and Isle of Wight commissioners to develop services for Autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions.
  - Expansion of referral sources to support referrals from any health education or social care professional.
10. In order to design and deliver a new pathway that identifies need at the earliest point and offers the right support at the right time, it is vital that the whole system work together. Whilst the NHS plays a clear role in the formal diagnostic pathway, there are actions we can take across the system that will change the way in which families engage services and rely on diagnosis as the default position to meet need. As such HIOW ICB is working with partners, including Frimley ICB in relation to North East Hampshire children and young people to deliver system wide transformation of all services related to Autism and ADHD Scope as follows:

#### Workstream 1: Transformed Service Model – Diagnostic Service

- Design a service that fully meets current and projected demand and offers a response which is proportionate to need.
- Meet the 12-week NICE recommended waiting times target by maximising capacity and minimising waste.
- Facilitate the smooth delivery of triage, assessment, diagnosis and prescribing services as well as signposting/referrals onto other services.
- Ensure reassuring and safe transition/discharge.
- Provide the infrastructure required to maintain safe and equitable shared care.
- Manage patient expectations and reduce inequalities.

#### Workstream 2: Transformed Service Model

- Secure funding for short-term capacity to clear or reduce current waiting lists.
- Map the entire pathway, to include diagnosis and early intervention and support through to crisis – identify gaps, areas of good practice and areas of risk of harm to children, young people and their families.
- Collate and maintain data sets to build a true, dynamic understanding of demand across all parts of Hampshire and the wider HIOW ICS area.
- Assess the harm and costs of waiting to individuals and the system, using resulting data to anchor change.
- Implement sustainable shared care arrangements which match national policy and are locally agreed with Primary Care.
- Codesign support services which meet need and offer evidence based NHS interventions and support at the right time – non diagnosis reliant.

### Workstream 3

- Understand and implement change alongside those people with lived Experience using them as Subject Matter Experts.
- Enable access to innovative models of needs led and accessible support/alternative pathways for individuals across every stage of need, including evidence-based psycho-social interventions.
- Identify and mitigate interdependencies between agencies which are historically reliant on diagnosis to access support.
- Develop collaborative partnerships (example strategies) for action on local systemic change, to ensure consistency across the ICS.

### Timeline

	2022/23				2023/24				2024/25			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
All Age ASC& ADHD Service Review												
Independent review	■	■										
Interim service stabilisation		■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Service requirements review			■									
Engagement/Coproduction				■	■	■	■					
Business Case Submission					■							
Pilot transformation initiatives					■	■	■	■				
Service mobilisation							■	■				
Service GO Live									■	■	■	■

### **Conclusion and Next steps**

11. As the ICB develops plans to establish a co-designed, all age transformed pathway model to meet ongoing demand for ADHD and ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition) across HIOW, the current priority is to ensure that services contracted until 31st March 2024 are re-commissioned to

guarantee there are no gaps in provision. Proposals regarding procurement strategies are currently being considered by appropriate ICB governing bodies.

### **Consultation and Equalities**

12. Children and young people in Hampshire impacted by autism and neurodiversity are recognised by HIOW ICB and Frimley ICB as having vulnerability to poor outcomes under the Equality Act in relation to disabilities (learning disabilities) and age (children and young people).