

## **Hampshire County Council Select Committee**

# **Autism Assessment Services for Children and Young People**

**September 2019**



# Current Situation

- ▶ Recognising the need for action to improve access to services, the Hampshire CCGs invested £1m into Autism assessments during 18/19;
- ▶ Assessments are provided through Sussex Partnership and Psicon Ltd;
- ▶ Good progress made with assessments completing c.1000 assessments, but more work to be done to reduce waiting times and demand for diagnosis
- ▶ Barnardo's are commissioned by the CCGs to provide parenting support;
- ▶ Providers sign post families to Autism Hampshire for peer networks
- ▶ Demand and Capacity Peer Review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) completed April 2019 has recommended that Autism assessment should not return to CAMHS
- ▶ The NHS Long Term Plan sets out some ambitious targets for the NHS to improve services for young people with Autism and Learning Disabilities



# Autism Pioneer Programme May - Sept 2018

## Background

- Demand & capacity issues within Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- Backdrop of additional pressures on CAMHS for those referred with mental health needs, including urgent referrals.

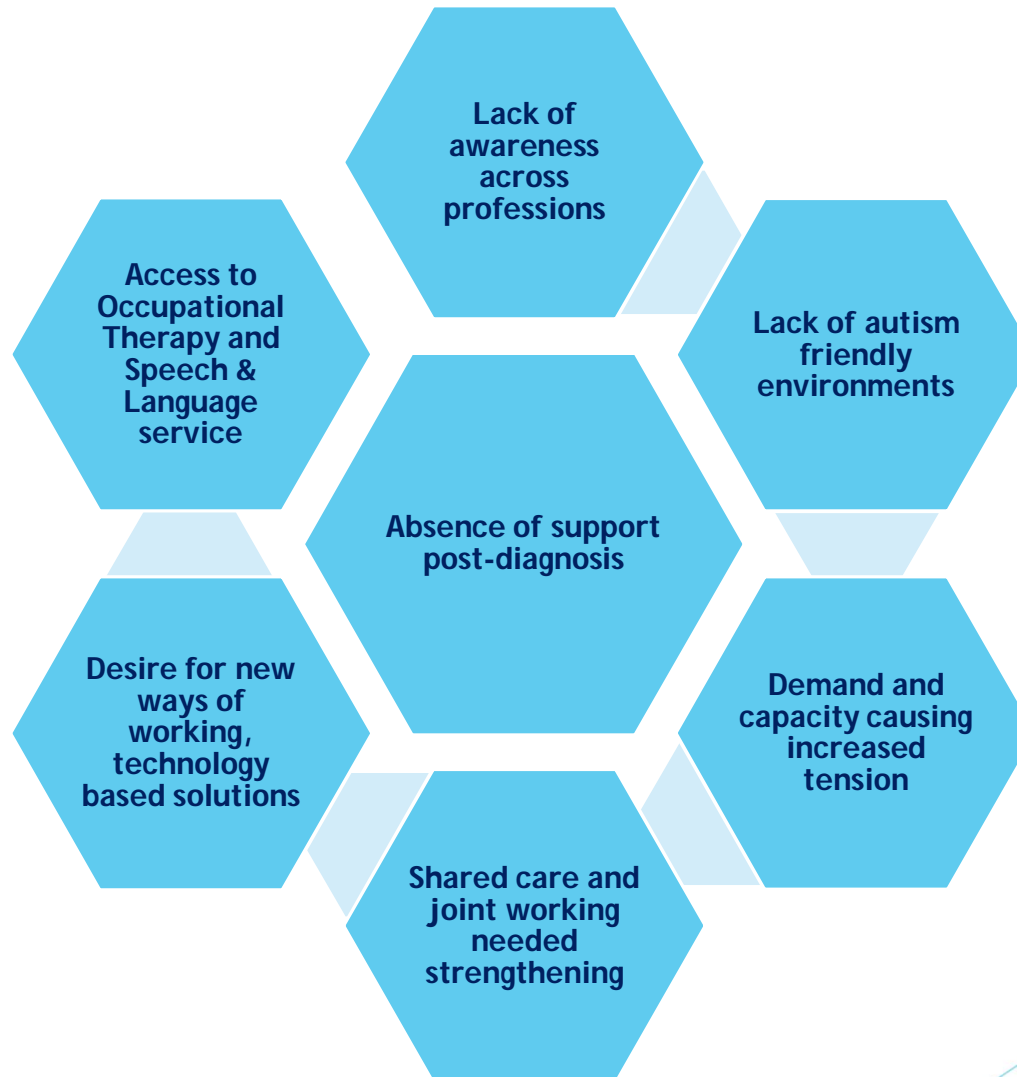
## Drivers for increase in referrals

- Policy & awareness campaigns, as well as social media;
- General increase in awareness of mental health issues in children & young people (CYP);
- Children & Families Act (2014) - amended existing legislation & service provision for CYP, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- Associated with above, lack of support in schools leading to parents / carers seeking a diagnosis in the belief this may lead to their child being eligible for an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) as a means of support.

## Scope of the Pioneer Programme

- Review & mapping out of current Autism pathways (pre & school age) against NICE guidance for CYP;
- Consultation with a wide range of stakeholders;
- Explore opportunities for redesign;
- Explore approaches for e.g. other alternatives to diagnosis; options of working closer with schools / education colleagues; behaviour support teams & education psychology services;
- Opportunities for closer working with the third sector;
- Make a series of recommendations

# Summary of Main Findings



# Summary of Recommendations

- ← Education settings to create neuro-diverse friendly environments. Promoting the requirement for all mainstream schools to have an Autism Ambassador would support this.
- ← Develop a co-produced fact sheet and website around tested interventions in managing behaviours.
- ← Extend interim arrangement in place with Psicon Ltd for Autism assessments.
- ← Introduce a stepped approach - a revised pathway starting with early help.
- ← Children's system wide work stream across Hampshire & Isle of Wight testing a bespoke neuro-development/ neurodiversity service.
- ← Implement an early help pathway, work has commenced on the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth.
- ← Following an audit, implement a programme of Autism awareness and strategies training for professionals Build on the Autism Hampshire E-learning platform and current review of levels of training taking place.
- ← Explore opportunities to develop CAMHS and Autism services up to age 25.
- ← Commission the development of an online Autism specific course for families/carers and for CYP. Co-produce with parent carers and young people.
- ← Explore opportunities for joint commissioning in respect of Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Portage (home visiting and support service).
- ← Strengthen shared care arrangements between CAMHS and primary care and Paediatric services.
- ← Explore digital options – CAMHS and Autism assessment services.



# Education support and provision for children with Autism



- ← The majority of children with Autism have their needs successfully met in mainstream schools
- ← Schools have access to a range of advice and guidance through the specialist teacher advisory service, Hampshire's educational psychology service, Hampshire SEN inspectors, camhs professionals
- ← There are also programs run by educational psychologists for parents and schools so that there is continuity of support
- ← This aligns with home support from children's social care
- ← In some cases children's Autism needs cannot be met in mainstream schools there are 4 resourced provisions attached to schools that specifically support pupils with Autistic needs
- ← All of the 26 special schools support some pupils with Autistic needs
- ← Children are provided with support based upon educational need and **no diagnosis** is necessary in either mainstream or special schools
- ← A positive diagnosis of Autism **does not** mean a child meets the criteria for an EHCP
- ← There is a pilot programme taking place where Primary Care Mental Health workers are working alongside Behaviour Support Teams to identify need early and support professional development of teachers
- ← Sussex Partnership also run a range of PACE (Parent and Carer Events) and CARE (Coping and Resilience events) events to raise awareness of how to support the needs of a young person

# Next Steps

- ▶ Implementation of recommendations - Autism Pioneer Programme, with a key focus on early help;
- ▶ Additional investment agreed to support Autism assessment within this financial year £670k;
- ▶ Options appraisal for future Autism Assessment service, including 0-25 or all age options (Autumn 2019); Hampshire Autism Partnership Board involved in initial options appraisal workshop;
- ▶ Additional Funding of £1.7m for 2020/21 being considered at September Boards and Committees, with a view this will bring waiting times down to 6 months by 2021

