

## **LGA submission to the review of the national Autism Strategy**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

The Government have announced a [review of the national Autism strategy](#).

The LGA have made a submission to the review and this paper outlines our key messages and other supporting information including an update on the 'Ask, Listen Do' initiative.

The review proposes that the updated strategy will cover children as well as adults

### **Recommendations**

That Community Wellbeing Board members;

1. agree the key messages of the LGA submission to the National Autism Strategy;  
and
2. note the LGA support for and progress of the 'Ask Listen Do' campaign.

### **Actions**

The Community Wellbeing Board will be informed of the outcome of the Autism review at a future meeting of the Board.

**Contact officer:** Kevin Halden  
**Position:** Adviser  
**Phone no:** 0207 665 3879  
**Email:** kevin.halden@local.gov.uk

## **LGA submission to the review of the national Autism Strategy**

### **Background**

1. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Autism Act. To coincide with this the Government have announced a [review of the national Autism strategy](#) – the last strategy refresh ‘[Think autism](#)’ was published in 2014. The Government has announced that the new strategy will be extended to cover children as well as adults.
2. The LGA made a submission to the national review in May 2019 and this paper outlines the key messages and other supporting information. The LGA submission was agreed by the LGA CWB Lead Members and the LGA CYP Lead Members.
3. In May 2019 Sarah Pickup, Deputy Chief Executive, LGA gave evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism - Support in Adulthood. Also in May 2019 the LGA inputted into a Government workshop on the autism strategy – the outcomes of both events will feed into the strategy refresh.
4. The LGA are members of the National Autism Strategy Executive Group and associated task and finish groups.
5. The LGA have supported and promoted the Autism Self-Assessment Framework (SAF). These exercises allow local authorities and their partners to monitor their progress in implementing the Autism Strategy. Through greater transparency they also enable adults with autism, their families and carers, and autism representative groups to see what progress is being made. The findings of the 2018 SAF are to be published shortly.
6. This paper also includes an update on the ‘Ask, Listen Do’ initiative.

### **Key messages**

7. **Participation in the community.** The focus of the revised strategy should be on supporting people with autism to live ordinary lives in their communities not solely a focus on health and social care services. A national awareness raising campaign is welcome and should involve a full range of partners from both private, voluntary and public sector. We fully support a continued focus on putting people with autism and their experiences at the heart of the strategy, which is something councils also try to do locally.
8. **Children and young people.** We welcome the extension of the new strategy to include children and young people as an opportunity to give greater focus to the challenges around transition. However, the strategy also needs to recognise that rising demand coupled with further improving diagnostic rates, will place more strain on already stretched children’s and adults services.

9. **Training.** Training remains a key theme. People with autism should be able to access personalised and joined-up support provided by a workforce appropriately skilled in autism. A range of resourced specialist local support services and a credible local social care, health and education offer is imperative. Robust community provision is vital to prevent admissions to hospital as well as supporting people to move out of hospital settings.
10. **Funding.** Social care and wider council services provide vital support every day to people with autism, their carers and families – but services are under threat because of funding. Between 2010 and 2020, councils will have lost almost 60p out of every £1 the Government had provided for services.
11. **Alignment with other plans.** The future autism strategy needs to align with other strategic plans. A key one is the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP). The LGA welcome the NHS LTPs recognition of autism and learning disabilities as a clinical priority. However the LTP is a plan for the NHS, it offers only part of the solution to the health, social care and wellbeing challenges facing our communities.
12. **Green paper.** Furthermore, it is absolutely vital the Government uses the planned social care green paper and forthcoming Spending Review to set out how it plans to tackle this crisis and ensure that there is a sustainable funding solution that can deliver the care and support that people with autism need as well as contribute to developing autism friendly communities for all and wellbeing challenges facing our communities.

#### **‘Ask Listen Do’**

13. Community Wellbeing Board Members are asked to note the progress of the [‘Ask Listen Do’](#) (ALD) initiative. ALD is a separate initiative to the national autism strategy.
14. ALD supports organisations to learn from and improve the experiences of people with a learning disability, autism or both, their families and carers when giving feedback, raising a concern or making a complaint. It also makes it easier for people, families and paid carers to give feedback, raise concerns and complain.
15. NHS England is leading this project with partners across health, social care and education - including the LGA.
16. The LGA supports this initiative and contributed to co-producing supporting information and call to action. For local authorities, much of the work is increasing awareness and understanding of people with learning disabilities and autism for all staff and members, and ensuring that key processes take due regard of their needs. This may go beyond social care and education staff, with examples being housing, leisure, libraries and other front line services, or complaints being a key relevant process.

19 June 2019

17. Simon Williams, Director of Service Improvement, LGA has been asked to attend a parliamentary meeting in July to put across the sector perspective and summarise any progress since the launch of the initiative in the autumn of 2018.

**Implications for Wales**

18. The strategy and ALD is for England only.

**Financial Implications**

19. Any financial implications will become apparent after the national strategy publication. At present there are no financial implications.

**Next steps**

20. The Community Wellbeing Board will be informed of the outcome of the Autism review.