

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	13/09/2018
TITLE OF ITEM	Autism: Learning Disabilities Services
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Gareth Roberts

CONTEXT- The future vision of the Gwynedd Learning Disabilities Service will focus on stepping forward and enabling to encourage the individual's independence.

1. This means that the support from the Service has been designed to assist citizens to focus on their strengths and on what they can safely achieve on their own. Adults with autism often receive support from Services across the Department, mainly the Disabilities Services in terms of more profound disabilities, Mental Health service when the main need are Mental Health issues. Adults Service and the Housing Service in terms of homelessness matters. It is important that these services continue to work closely together to ensure that adults with autism receive support from the correct service, is timely and corresponds to their main need.
2. We want Gwynedd to be a County where people with a learning disability, including autism, can live full lives and realise their potential. This means facing the opportunities and challenges given to them. By focusing on their well-being and enabling them by applying the principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act (2014) Wales, we can improve opportunities for people with learning disabilities in Gwynedd to live full and active lives to achieve their well-being outputs.
3. There are nearly 600 adults with learning disabilities on the Gwynedd learning disability register, and the numbers have been increasing. There are a number of reasons for this increase, namely people living longer, a higher number of children transferring into adults services, and national projections have noted that the numbers will continue to increase for a period, and then stabilise.
4. The aim of the service is to submit follow-up service models that act as a step towards further independence and promote social inclusion and integration in the local community. The support that a person receives, including adults with autism, will change as the person's needs change. As people become more involved with their communities and develop their own support networks, it is expected that the need for formal social support will reduce in some cases and the support will be adapted in response to the changing situation.
5. It has to be recognised that there will be some people who will continue to need a high level of long-term support and there is a need to develop staff skills across our provision to satisfy these needs creatively, including adults with autism.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Integrated Autism Service (IAS)

6. The North Wales Integrated Autism Service was launched in June 2018. The Wales Government has committed £13 million up to 2021 to develop the Integrated Autism Service throughout Wales. This is because many autistic persons fall between the eligibility criteria for mental health services and learning disabilities and therefore they cannot get access to emotional, behavioural, low mental health or life skills support.
7. In north Wales the service is being developed across the six local authorities with the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board. The Integrated Autism Service (IAS) will provide diagnostic services to new adults; life-long support to autistic persons (children and adults) their families and carers; support with the transition from children provision to adults and training for professionals. Gwynedd Council will work with the IAS and there will be a designated Support Worker for Gwynedd within the service.

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)

8. Being a part of a broad range of activities is a part of a valuable social life. The basic requirements to live a full life include the following opportunities:
 - Take part in the same range of activities as everyone else
 - Be involved and share interests with other people
 - Develop relationships, skills and experience.
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When a person lacks ability to participate in normal activities independently, they will need support to participate. Therefore, to achieve this the principles of positive behaviour support (PBS) are applied and Active Support.

We have developed a short term multi-disciplinary 'Active Support' team to work across the county with all providers. Direct support staff have been trained in Active Support and PBS via a training package separated into three stages, which are (a) workshop – where we understand the theory of the subject (b) role play where staff have an opportunity to practice through doing (c) Interactive training where staff learn through live situations in their workplace, this stage is accompanied with mentoring and coaching from the trainers within the multi-disciplinary team (See Appendix 1: Example of the contents of workshop training).

Case One

Mr A is on a two to one basis and has high end escalated behaviour. Prior to the Active support plan he spent his time in the house or on ad hoc, unstructured day trips. But now, he has developed 20 tasks, which he carries out and he is also about to start a new job helping at the foodbank.

Having work opportunities is very important.

9. Asking 'what do you want to be when you grow up', dreaming about the work we could do and the type of future that could be had is an important part of growing up. However, for people with a learning disability, including adults with autism, many lose out on the right to have a career, and the broader social networks, better emotional and physical health and more independence as a result of having a job.
10. It is acknowledged that developing employment opportunities is a priority for the Service, and is an area where working in a multi-agency partnership is needed. Obviously, there is potential to extend employment opportunities, however, considerable work is needed to achieve the outcomes of developing mainstream employment options for people with a learning disability and for them to be considered as a valuable member of the workforce by every employer.
11. The Learning Disability team will cooperate closely with the OPUS team in order to identify suitable follow-on and employment opportunities for individuals out in the community. The service has identified 60 adults who would benefit from the support of a job coach. Work is also in progress to re-assess some individuals by using a strength based assessment and then looking at opportunities for the most able to get work. There will also be a need to develop meaningful opportunities for those individuals with complex needs, and there is an opportunity here to link in with the requirement to enable people to contribute to their communities.
12. A 'Community Hub' has been established at the Caernarfon Leisure Centre. This will provide opportunities for work experience and training for adults with a learning disability to develop important practical life skills, along with providing a new service for the wider community and improve the well-being of the local community. Work is also afoot to organise a range of community activities around the new café, based on the needs of the local community. This work was enabled by funding from the Welsh Government.
13. The future aim is to develop employment opportunities and community hubs across the County, with the design of four community hubs via a grant from Schemes that are in the pipeline over the next three years.

Case Two

Mr B used to have a reputation of 'running off' on a regular basis. Now, his mother says the days he works at the shop are the days where he wants to get out of bed. He used to be disengaged but wanted responsibility and a job. Now he helps at a shop run by our provider, including helping customers, and getting the stock out for customers, and arranges it neatly around the shop. His behaviour has changed as the behaviour of 'running away' has ceased and he is well known by his customers.

Socialising and creating relationships

14. Clubs exist across the county which provide opportunities for individuals with autism to be supported in groups. There is less intervention with groups such as these, they

- promote the individuals' independence, increases their presence in the community and changes the image that people have of group work (rather than 1:1 support).
15. Individuals are able to split their hours to carry out group activities. This is also a way to respond to isolation and offers an opportunity for individuals to socialise together and with others and be a part of our communities. This work stream corresponds with the active support work in terms of offering opportunities for adults with a broad range of needs.
 16. The well-being outputs of these groups include training and developing skills; helping people to live independently; promote socialising and develop individuals to try leisure opportunities; ensure that they are not isolated and increase self-confidence. They also develop skills and knowledge, such as keeping safe, knowing their rights and developing relationships. Of course, everyone cannot be supported in a group, and they will get the same opportunities but with 1:1 support.
 17. Several successful provisions already exist in the County in order for individuals to be able to socialise. We have to ensure that we can offer valuable activities for the individuals and can integrate these opportunities with what already happens in communities.

Case Three

Every Saturday the Council's in-house provision holds a group in Caernarfon between 10:00 - 1:00. They meet in the Leisure Centre before splitting into smaller groups depending on the type of activity they wish to do. The group is very popular and a high number of individuals attend. It is an excellent opportunity for individuals to socialise and to also gain new experiences. Some choose sport and others enjoy going out into the community to shop and have lunch out. There are also opportunities to invite a guest speaker or to learn a new skill.

Anheddau, an external provider, offers all types of groups in the Bangor area, they make use of different buildings within the community and offer dancing, music, art and drama sessions. In addition, there is a walking group every Wednesday that is open to all and is very popular. Some persons attend independently and others receive more support in accordance with their needs.

Various cookery groups take place jointly with Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor. The college provides the tutor and the Learning Disability Team provides support through support workers and volunteers. It is an excellent way for individuals to develop skills and gain more independence.

This year, for the first time, we jointly organised groups/courses with the college during the Summer holidays at Coleg Glynllifon. Individuals had a choice to attend gardening, cookery and animal care groups. The groups were mainly for transition age persons and we worked in close collaboration with the Derwen service. It was a special opportunity for individuals to get a taste of college courses, gain a qualification and socialise with other individuals. The groups also provided respite for carers.

Case Four

Example of a middle aged man with Autism who finds it very difficult to socialise, but wants to be part of a 'group'. He joined the Rugby Group locally which takes place weekly for people with learning disabilities. He participated in a Rugby day where the players of the Rugby Club's first team played with them, he scored a triple hat-trick! He is in his element having an opportunity to take part in an activity that he would not have been able to undertake if this Rugby Group had not been established. Otherwise, he would never have been able to join a Rugby Club because of his communication difficulties, but with support he has had an opportunity to be part of a team and to show talent in a sport that no one knew he had.

Suitable Accommodation / Home

18. In order for individuals to live independently in the community, having different living models in the community is important. For the majority of people, it is seen that this is more appropriate than long-term placements in care homes, as it means that people are tenants with their own rights and with more control over their daily routines. It enables people to live in a normal house as a part of the community.
19. By now, we have moved from the use of residential care for people with a learning disability to supported housing services which enable individuals to live more independent lives. This shift has also made services more person-centred as this model provides more personal support to individuals than residential care. It also means that individuals live and participate in their local communities. Identifying suitable housing locally is a challenge, we continue to investigate alternative housing options with the key stakeholders of the Housing Service to work together to identify housing solutions for people with a learning disability. This could include better designs and adaptations to existing property and learning from good practice and successful housing projects in other areas, such as ideas for better use of assistive technology to support independence.

Case Five

A person's circumstances can change quickly and we often face emergencies. This is very difficult to control and it is very important that we continue to make different links in order to satisfy the accommodation needs of individuals in a creative way. We map out the accommodation needs of individuals that include transition age persons, out of county persons and also persons who live with older carers. We use this information in order to plan ahead.

Mr C lived with his sister but following a deterioration in his physical and mental health he had to be admitted to hospital for treatment. The sister found it difficult to continue to care for her brother and Mr C went into a residential care home. The home could not respond to his complex needs and the environment was not suitable, he spent a long period at Bryn y Neuadd under the Mental Health Act. During this period the Team cooperated closely with the Local Housing Agencies to identify a suitable bungalow close to his sister. Following adaptations to the bungalow and commissioning private providers to care for Mr C, he moved back into the community. Mr C now has his own tenancy, has regular contact with his family, his health has

stabilised and he enjoys going out every day to socialise and attends the Day Centre once a week. The support scheme is funded jointly with the Health Service and we regularly monitor to ensure that the location is a success.

We work closely with a private landlord who owns flats and houses in the area. We have supported individuals to get their own tenancies and following an assessment of need have organised support for them via the Supporting People grant. There is an example of three young people who have had a tenancy in Caernarfon from the same landlord. The landlord has been very flexible and we have reduced the support which indicates an increase in the skills of the individuals to live independently. The location of the flats in the town centre answers the needs of the individuals and make it easier for them to use public transport and attend their work placements.

There are several successful examples of Supported Housing in the community. Recently Antur Waunfawr has built housing in close proximity on one site. This model has permitted several persons to get a tenancy and support dependent on their need. It gives more independence for some individuals as they can have periods on their own but have access to support if required.

SUMMARY

We are cooperating with the Health Board to identify a wide range of services and opportunities to address a wide range of needs of adults with autism. We do not directly employ an autism officer, rather the aim is to look at all the needs of the adults that we serve across Gwynedd and respond to their needs in a bespoke, creative and person-centred way. It is important that every officer across the Service develops the skills and expertise to work with adults with a wide range of needs, including autism. The intention of the Service is to develop a preventative team from April 2019 in order that there is a preventative team and a complex needs team to work across the service to support adults with autism.