



Healthier Communities Select Committee

Report title: Lewisham All-Age Autism Strategy Document 2023-2028

Date: 11th January 2023

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: Borough-wide

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Outline and recommendations

The purpose of the paper is to provide the HCSC with outline of the structure and content Lewisham All age Autism Strategy 2023-2028.

Lead by the Local Authority the Lewisham All-Age Autism strategy is intended to convey our collective vision for the borough and describes the priority areas we will work on over the next five years, to achieve our aims and objectives that we have agreed with our partners and community. The development of the Strategy has been a collaborative effort between health and social care professionals across children and young people and adults, council divisions, individuals with lived experience and the wider community.

The strategy and its subsequent action plans will determine the route map to make Lewisham a more autism-inclusive borough to live and work. It outlines the groundwork for a whole-system partnership approach.

The Committee is recommended to:

To note the content and structure of the draft strategy and, where appropriate advise the Mayor and Cabinet committee on any matters that should be taken into account before its formal approval in March 2023.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

May 2021	Engagement workshops with autistic individuals, parents, carers and health professionals
April – May 2022	Internal Council meetings including Divisional Management Teams / Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Board
May 2022	Lewisham Council Public Consultation
September – December 2022	Collaboration with system partners for each of the priority areas to have input with respective leads
October – November 2022	Survey asking young people to share their experiences of living with autism
December 2022	Executive Management Team

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Lewisham All-Age Autism Strategy 2023-2028 has been developed in collaboration with autistic residents, carers/guardians and local professionals, the strategy outlines our vision to make Lewisham an autism inclusive borough and the objectives we need to meet to achieve this
- 1.2. The Lewisham Autism Partnership Board will be established to drive forward progress against the strategy to improve the quality of life of our autistic population.
- 1.3. The Strategy is the first of its kind in the borough and ensures the Council is meeting its statutory requirements as per the Autism Act 2009 and related national Autism Strategy for autistic children, young people and adults 2021 to 2026.

2. Recommendations

- To note the content and structure of the draft strategy and, where appropriate advise the Mayor and Cabinet committee on any matters that should be taken into account before its formal approval in March.

3. Policy Context

3.1 The Councils Corporate Strategy 2022-2026 priorities most relevant to Autism strategy are as follows;

- Young People
 - We will ensure the most vulnerable children are protected from harm, driving improvement in children’s social care and aiming to reduce the number of children coming into care through earlier targeted support for families in crisis.
- Open Lewisham
 - We will celebrate Lewisham’s diversity, ensuring we are a representative and inclusive council and workforce.
 - We will maintain and strengthen the Lewisham Way of working

in collaboration with our voluntary and community sectors and seek new areas where we can partner together. We will actively listen to our residents, being responsive to their concerns and communicative in our approach.

- We will co-design services with those affected by them and ensure strong consultation processes that reach out to people whose voices are seldom heard
- Health and Wellbeing
 - We will learn from our Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review, aiming to mitigate and ultimately end, structural racism and discrimination as a driver of health inequalities
 - We will work with the local NHS to deliver the services Lewisham residents need and create the Lewisham Health Care and Wellbeing Charter.
 - We will collaborate with other organisations to deliver the places, activities and programmes our residents need to feel empowered to live a physically active lifestyle.

4. Background

4.1 Autism is a spectrum condition that impacts the way autistic people interpret the world, communicate and regulate their emotions.

4.2 Autistic people often experience discrimination and isolation as a result of their condition and consistently report a lower quality of life than the general population.

4.3 There are currently just over 4,000 people diagnosed with autism in the borough, however using national figures, the number could be closer to 9,000. Considering the significant inequalities faced by those with autism and the disproportionate outcomes they can often experience.

4.4 Whilst the Lewisham All-age Autism Strategy aligns with the National Autism priorities, several consultation processes have been undertaken during the various stages of development to ensure that the document is oriented around what is important to our local communities.

4.5 In order to ensure that the Strategy remains a living working set of priorities and deliverables we will establish a Lewisham Autism Partnership Board comprised of the Council strategic partners, providers and community members. The role of the LAPB will be to oversee the development and mobilisation and delivery of the Autism Strategy Action Plan.

5. Financial implications

5.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

6. Legal implications

6.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

7. Equalities implications

7.1 Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.2 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

8. Climate change and environmental implications

8.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

9. Crime and disorder implications

9.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

10.1. The health and wellbeing implications are outlined throughout the strategy.

11. Report author and contact

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