

Highland Autism Improvement Group Workplan

The Highland Autism Improvement Group (HAIG) is committed to enhancing the profile of autistic spectrum conditions, and, critically, to improving the support services provided to autistic adults and their parent/carers.

HAIG Mission Statement:

To contribute to the improvement of the quality of life for Autistic adults and their parent/carers in the Highlands through the development of better awareness, services, support and employment opportunities.

At present the partners include; - NHS Highland, The Highland Council, Job Centre Plus, ARGH (Autism Rights Group Highland), the National Autistic Society Scotland (NAS), Autism Carers Groups and Autism Initiatives.

The aims of the Highland Autism Improvement Group are to:-

- Build capacity of autism services and support particularly in areas where this does not exist or is of a very limited nature.
- Address the needs of all people with Autism and their carers.
- Develop plans for service provision in the future.

Nationally the views of autistic adults have been sought and reported primarily within the Count Us In: It Pays To Listen (NAS, 2012) and the precursors I Exist (NAS, 2008) and Supporting Adults with Autism, A Good Practice Guide (NAS, 2009). The priorities as expressed by adults within these documents include: assessment of needs; sustained employment; choice and control, challenging discrimination; improving professional knowledge and access to support.

Locally, in March 2011 the Autistic people's organisation ARGH (Autism Rights Group Highland) described some of their needs. To -

- Feel secure, safe and understood.
- Be fulfilled and have a sense of achievement.
- Have relationships and social contact with other people on the autistic spectrum.
- Be valued, have our strengths acknowledged.
- Have somewhere we feel at ease and protected in.
- Feel that we are not broken or wrong or bad.
- Feel valued in society and at work and school.
- Have stability, control and order in our lives.
- Have peace and calm.
- Be accepted for who we are with an understanding that Autism is a way of being not a lifestyle choice.

ARGH also listed what they considered would be useful to them in meeting those needs. They are:-

- We need opportunities to work and to study.
- We need safe places.
- We need places where we can go to and be quiet in. Places that we can retreat to when the pressure of being in a public space is too much to deal with.
- Places where we can recharge before we overload, both at home and when out and about.
- We need environments where we don't have to 'read' other people all the time.
- We need places where we can mix together in a social setting, a 'drop in' for people on the autistic spectrum might be good.
- An advice and support service, where we can get help with problems we don't have the ability to deal with on our own. A service that deals with everything from getting a new carpet to dealing with our neighbours. To having help in getting, for instance, a plumber in to the house, when we can neither make the phone call to get their help or deal with them being in the house if we are alone.
- We can have great difficulty in speaking out and, if we don't have family or friends, dealing with things like insurance tax returns or benefits can feel impossible.
- Early help to deal with small problems can make a huge difference and sometimes it is as simple as getting help with going to the shop when we don't feel we can manage it.
- Sometimes what seem like small things are major things for us. A promise to return a phone call can cause a huge panic if that promise is not kept.
- For people in banks, shops, the welfare system, the health service etc to have an appropriate environment and trained staff to help us and deal with our requests.
- Opportunities to socialise.
- For people to be understanding and accepting of our traits and needs and strengths.
- We often need continuity at work and in the wider community.

The Scottish Strategy for Autism

The Scottish Government launched the Scottish Strategy for Autism in 2010 following extensive consultation with those living with autism, their families and friends, service providers and statutory bodies. The Strategy can be viewed here <http://www.autismstrategyscotland.org.uk/>

Part of the national strategy is a list of ten indicators for best practice in the provision of effective Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) services.

Number 1 is to create - ***A local autism strategy developed in co-operation with people across the autism spectrum, carers and professionals, ensuring that the needs of people with ASD and carers are reflected and incorporated within local policies and plans.***

The HAIG has reviewed the national strategy and discussed what they believe should be the initial priorities for improving services for adults on the Autistic Spectrum in Highland. The following is a work plan to address these priorities, acknowledging that this is a living document and should evolve as local needs and services develop, taking account of feedback as appropriate.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| BLUE | Action is Complete |
| RED | Timescale/deadline missed or high risk of failure |
| AMBER | Unexpected delay or medium risk of failure |
| GREEN | Activity running to plan or low risk of failure |
| CLEAR | Action parked. No progress currently planned |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|-------------------------|---------------|
| Action 1: Create stakeholder forums and communication frameworks with and for adults on the Autistic Spectrum and their families, to include virtual media, open meetings, formal frameworks and to explore other opportunities to engage as they arise. | | | | |
| Objective: Adults on the Autistic Spectrum and their families are involved in the development of a local Autism Strategy and its implementation plan. | | | | |
| Evidence: | | | | |
| Links to other Strategies: | | | | |
| Lead: Tony Miklinski | | | Priority: High | |
| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
| 1a) Develop and agree a HAIG communication framework that shows the main communication paths and partners/associates. | Initial framework complete. | Expanded version to include additional members required. | TM Mar 14 | Green |
| 1b) Each HAIG member to develop and publish internal communication paths to ensure information is shared in a consistent and verifiable way. | All HAIG members confirmed that communications frameworks are in place for all sub-groups | | | Blue |
| 1c) HAIG members to hold meetings with their own constituents to develop and pursue ideas/solutions and submit to HAIG for consideration. | HAIG members communicating with their stakeholders | - TM has meeting with HIAS and possibly other groups in April 14 to explain HAIG aim and intent, elicit views/issues and report back - Others to arrange as appropriate | TM May 14 All | Green |

Action 2: Establish multi-agency commitment from housing, employment, criminal justice, local authority, NHS and the voluntary sector.

Objective: There is a joint multi-agency vision and joint outcomes within the local autism strategy and implementation plan.

Evidence:

Links to other Strategies:

Lead: Jean Pierre Sieczkarek

Priority: Low

| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 2a) Formalise representation at HAIG from statutory agencies and voluntary sector. | HAIG has regular attendees but larger dist list, some of whom attend on occasion. | -Formalise and publish executive membership -Establish who should be on wider, plenary membership | JPS Mar 14 | Green |
| 2b) Formal members to develop action plan on behalf of their agency. | | | | Clear |
| 2c) Members to provide summary progress reports against identified actions. | | | | Clear |

Action 3: The development of a multi-agency training plan.

Objective: Adults on the Autistic Spectrum are confident that professionals are skilled and knowledgeable. **Adults on the Autistic Spectrum** are treated equitably and are free from discrimination. Professionals have access to continued professional development concerning autism practice. General public and professional awareness of autism is raised.

Evidence:

Links to other Strategies:

Lead: Tony Miklinski

Priority: High

| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|---------------|
| 3a) Conduct a training audit to establish target audiences, current training materials available for each, what training gaps exist and identify good practice, ensuring that the views of all groups, Autistic Adults, parents/carers and medical professionals are captured and used in training development. | Decision made to focus on local trg needs rather than potentially unmanageable global need. Current trg providers include FWil and NAS. | Produce grid to allow collection of relevant trg info from HAIG members (trg gaps, target popn, scale of need etc) and dist for population | TM Mar 14 | Green |
| 3b) Help relevant packages in light of above. | | | | |
| 3c) Where training gaps exist, either develop our own courses, or encourage the relevant body to fill the gap. Support delivery of more/better training around the Highlands. | | | | |

Action 4: Remove barriers to accessing services

Objective: Develop multi-agency 'care pathways' for each life stage including assessment and person centred interventions plans.

Evidence:

Links to other Strategies:

Lead: Jean Pierre Sieczkarek

Priority: High

| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
|---|--|---|--|---------------|
| 4a) Develop referral and assessment pathway for primary care | Diagnosis capacity in Highlands is insufficient and backlog building Some draft pathways produced. Transitions protocol for school leavers under development. | Produce statistical evidence to make the case for additional diagnostic capacity | FWil Mar 14 | Green |
| | | Create additional diagnosis capacity to relieve backlog and maintain steady state of diagnosis start within 3 months of request/referral Investigate potential for an Autism Champion GP | JPS May 14 | Amber |
| | | Provide a list of all pathways required and distribute and table draft pathways that are ready to be refined/endorsed at next HAIG Menu of Interventions to be produced | FWil Mar 14 LS Mar 14 | Green |
| 4b) HAIG multi agency partners to develop local standards for supporting adults with Autism. | | | | |
| 4c) Implement transitions guidance for young people with Autism moving on to adult services care and support. | | | | |

Action 5: Improve support for Adults on the Autistic Spectrum.

Objective - Build capacity of Autism services or support particularly in areas where this does not exist or is of a limited nature

Evidence:

Links to other Strategies:

Lead: Arlene Johnstone

Priority: High

| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
|---|--|--|-----------------------|---------------|
| 5a) Utilise Autism Mapping Project report to identify service gaps and prioritise areas for development, including joint plan with Children's Services to assess future demand, calculate capacity requirements and manage transitions. | Major task and fundamental to HAIG's success in achieving its aim. | Set up a WG to analyse Mapping Project results and other data, identify highest priority gaps in Autism services and develop a database of current and future needs within Highlands | AJ Aug 14 | Green |
| | Initial meet planned 27 Feb | Report progress to Mar HAIG | AJ Mar 14 | Green |
| 5b) Draft action plans for each prioritised area for development and identify HAIG members to lead implementation of action plans. | Follows 5a | | | Clear |
| 5c) Set targets for progress and report these to Complex Case Planning Manager. | Follows 5a | | | Clear |

Action 6: Improve employment opportunities and support for Adults on the Autistic Spectrum.

Objective - help those with autism find and keep permanent employment

Evidence:

Links to other Strategies:

Lead: Faye Morton

Priority: High

| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 6a) Hold special HAIG employment events across Highland and invite appropriate representatives from employability organisations, statutory sector & employers. | FM currently seeking budget to implement | Identify suitable stakeholders, including Highland employers and employment support organisations, and organise an Employment for Autism Day with the aim of improving employment opportunities for those on the spectrum. | FM Sep 14 | Green |
| 6b) Ensure advisor support through Dept of Work & Pensions and partner organisations is accessed effectively ensuring maximum job opportunities and job retention. | Pathway exists through Albion House/OSS. Needs to be matured and validated. | Establish a DWP WG to develop and validate a pathway from diagnosis to employment. | FM May 14 | Green |
| 6c) For public sector agencies to become exemplar employers of Autistic adults, offering work placements, work experience, equal opportunities for permanent employment and support for existing employees identified as being on the Autistic Spectrum to remain in employments. | Awaits senior level engagement between JPS and other agencies Protected learning time already includes Autism awareness | Engage CEOs of relevant agencies via Elaine Mead | JPS Apr 14 | Green |

Action 7: Provide easy access to information about autism and services.

Objective: Adults on the Autistic Spectrum, their families, and those who support them formally and informally will have access to information about the condition and services that may support them.

Evidence:

Links to other Strategies:

Lead: Gill MacLennan

Priority: High

| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 7a) Work with NHS Communications Dept to develop an awareness raising strategy. | There are a number of overlapping newsletters/info sheets with different dist lists. There is a need for a single coherent (monthly?) newsletter that pulls together all strands and allows quality feedback. Draft newsletter produced. Intention is quarterly. | Liaise with KB, Cal and other stakeholders to develop a single monthly newsletter (digital and paper) for adults on the spectrum and their parent/carers. | GMc Apr 14 | Green |
| 7b) Seek feedback on effectiveness of awareness raising strategy. | Follows 7a | | | Clear |
| 7c) Make best use of digital technologies to provide information and ensure the information is easy to understand and offered in a variety of formats. | Twitter set up for SDS | Develop implementation strategy for digital awareness | AD Apr 14 | Green |

Action 8: Establish a group and process of monitoring and evaluating outcomes (both personal outcomes for autistic individuals and outcomes of the implementation plan) using suitable measurements and data gathering techniques; use this to inform progress and evolve the 10 year strategy.

Objective: Improvements in services are monitored and reported upon.

Evidence:

Links to other Strategies:

Lead: Tony Miklinski or JPS tbc

Priority: tbc next meeting

| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
|--|---|--|--|---------------|
| 8a) Adopt national outcome measures (on publication). | Adult Health and Social Care CG unaware of HAIG plans. | Identify status of National Outcome Measures. Advise Adult Health and Social Care Commissioning Group of HAIG strategy and intention to provide annual progress reports | JPS Mar 14 | Amber |
| 8b) Develop monitoring process. | NHS Highland Performance Officer to attend Mar meeting with view to reflecting HAIG progress in NHS Balanced Scorecard. | Develop suite of PIs to allow effective measurement of progress and have these endorsed by CEO Highland NHS | TM/JPS supported by all HAIG Jun 14 | Amber |
| 8c) Prepare annual report on progress against national outcomes to Adult Health and Social Care Commissioning Group. | Critical to establish status and credibility of HAIG within Highland Council/NHS. No report currently issued. | Make Oct 14 HAIG meet a special meet to consider draft report. JPS to prepare | FW JPS Oct 14 | Green |

Action 9: Make a commitment to the promotion of advocacy and access to advocacy for all Autistic Adults including people who are seldom heard, e.g people living in very supported environments or people who others struggle to communicate with. Include: self advocacy, independent advocacy and collective advocacy.

Objective: All Autistic Adults have easy and genuine access to advocacy.

Evidence:

Links to other Strategies:

Lead: Kabie Brook

Priority: High

| | Current Position | Further actions | Who/Time scale | Status |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 9a) Develop plan for the implementation of a collective advocacy service. | Many gaps and weaknesses in advocacy for autistic adults | Establish WG to take 9abc forward Draw up list of areas/issues to be addressed and report to HAIG | KB Mar 14 Jun 14 | |
| 9b) Develop a plan for the implementation of self advocacy. | | | | |
| 9c) Develop partnership with advocacy organisations to improve access to independent advocacy for Adults on the Autistic Spectrum. | | | | |