

Local Implementation



Collaborative working

As the Coordination team focusses its work on better outcomes for people and listening to people on the spectrum, our work with local partnerships increasingly involves a move towards engagement and partnership working with autistic people, their carers and families. Recent local strategy events have seen a significant increase in the involvement of people at a local level, working together with practitioners around the table on structuring local implementation around the national outcomes framework. This capacity building aspect of the local work is vital in times of integration and austerity, so that communities have an understanding of structures, limitations and opportunities that they can engage with to improve local outcomes for people. Some areas, such as East Dunbartonshire, have given Local Area Coordination a role in strategy implementation and capacity building. Recent re-launch events in Renfrewshire and Argyll and Bute have seen a dramatic increase in engagement. The increase in involvement of representatives from community groups has been significant at these events and within local strategy groups. The work in NHS Highland continues to develop, with involvement of people on the spectrum at every level within the strategy group and national outcome orientated subgroups. The recent Autism Strategy Collaborative Business Meeting and Workshops was delivered in partnership with the Wider Engagement Group and will lead to the construction of an online toolkit for practitioners in Health and Social Care Partnerships.

Other areas of engagement have included facilitation of an evaluation of the Expert Patient Programme delivered by the Adult Autism Team, in Glasgow. This involved working with cohorts of people who had a recent diagnosis and had been through this post-diagnostic support programme to evaluate the programme in detail and inform its future development, acting as independent brokers in this forum. Feedback of this unique programme was overwhelmingly positive.

Other themes that localities are grappling with include complex care and out of area placements, a theme explored at our first Collaborative event, which we continue to pursue, sharing practice across the country. Recent involvement through the Midlothian strategy group has involved consideration of how to develop robust, community based models of support, rather than viewing inpatient support as the only option for people with high support needs. In NHS Highlands, a support service involving imaginative use of council housing has enabled the return of people with high support needs from out of area.

Education is another area where the team supports the sharing of good practice. It will be part of the future focus of support in areas such as Argyll and Bute. We will also be involved in the delivery of a conference this autumn, working with a cross authority group which was started in Midlothian, which is gaining momentum, its aim being to share best practice in education for autistic pupils between localities. Linked with this is the importance of improvement in Transitions, a major focus within implementation plans and a major concern at a community level. We recently held the first of a series of meetings with the Working Group chairs, starting with the chair of Working Group 2, to plan how we establish synergies between its findings and outcomes and those working at a local level. This will involve ongoing engagement with the Autism Strategy Collaborative, to share its



workplan and cascade the work to localities, exploring solutions to local transition-related issues, such as the importance of transport.

Ongoing partnership work with NES in relation to workforce upskilling has involved a recent joint visit to Western Isles, involving some practice-focussed work and more strategic planning around an integrated training plan. We were also both involved in a recent event aimed at raising awareness both in terms of skills and policy with psychological therapists in Forth Valley. We involved autistic presenters in delivering these sessions, which were well received, and are considering its wider application.

Increasingly, enquiries received by Autism Network Scotland have taken more of a local and national strategy focus, with a recent upsurge in enquiries around the continued funding of One-Stop Shops. We have been working closely with local leads and the Scottish Government team in supporting this communication.

Future work includes a continues focus on the National Outcomes Framework, both with Health and Social Care Partnerships and with providers, as they strive to upskill the workforce and improve services. The next Autism Strategy Collaborative will take a continued focus on current national policy and will involve both groups in considering Strategic Commissioning within the context of autism.

