

Local Implementation



In devising our work plan for the next six months, recently submitted to Scottish Government, the Coordination team is currently carrying out another round of local visits, ensuring we engage with all areas over the coming months, prioritising those areas which have been less involved until now. The main focus areas for future work, in line with the headings set out in the policy discussion paper by Scottish Government at the last Governance meeting, fall under the following headings:

- Analysis of integrated local autism plans and ongoing monitoring and support of implementation
- Measure performance outcomes in relation to the Scottish Strategy for Autism

This moves us into a more systematic approach to autism planning and delivery, as we continue to provide support at a local level, either in the development of implementation plans or in practical capacity building, through the tools for the job the Network provides. The development of a performance outcome measurement tool will enable us to measure how localities are able to evidence the extent to which they meet the recommendations of the Scottish Strategy for Autism and related Outcomes.

With Integration, our visits to Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSPCs) have given a varying picture of the level of awareness of the local autism strategy within Integrated Joint Boards and Strategic Planning Groups. With our local discussions at an increasingly strategic level, we can be catalysts of transformational change of local autism policy and practice. An emerging theme is a disconnect with national policy, in that local planning is attempting to address areas which do not have a current focus in the national Working Groups and Governance Group. We have been supporting some HSPCs to address themes such as education, early years, criminal justice and housing, within local autism planning. We are also providing cross-authority support to Midlothian and surrounding localities at an education-focused conference this month, both in terms of autism planning and practical support.

With the evolution of local planning at different stages nationally, the current levels of autism funding and provision are reflected in the Strategy related enquiries we receive. We are providing support in some areas which produced their plans early on, both to support a shift towards the National Outcomes and in reinvigorating local implementation. In some areas, initial strategy funding was used to employ local autism coordinators. As these posts come to a conclusion, we are providing support to ensure autism is recognised as a priority within Strategic planning Groups. Similarly, following the completion of the One-Stop Shops pilot programme, we support local engagement of HSPCs with autistic people and parents in areas such as North and South Lanarkshire, as they move to new arrangements for autism service provision.

In September, we hosted a national event focused on Strategic Commissioning and Self-Directed Support. Normally we would have separate events for the Autism Strategy Collaborative and our Support providers Collaborative. On this occasion, we held a joint event to bring both together to discuss the commissioning of autism services, with workshops on market facilitation and the delivery of services through SDS in times of increasing efficiencies, as well as the sustainability of current service models and increasing need. The feedback from this event was overwhelmingly positive, identifying an appetite for further support in jointly discussing autism service provision.



We continue to support areas addressing ongoing themes such as transitions, diagnosis and post-diagnostic support and areas dealing with issues around where autism is addressed, either through mental health or learning disability services. Complex care and out of area placements remains a regular focus, with support in operational delivery planned in areas such as NHS Highland and others, which have succeeded in bringing people back from other areas. Keeping with our priority of engaging with and listening to the voices of autistic people, we have provided extensive programmes of support in some areas, which will be rolled out over others in the next six months, supporting capacity building within the autistic community, so that it can engage in exploring collaborative solutions with local autism leads and others within HSPCs.

For discussion:

How do we support the longer-term sustainability of what is being achieved at a local level?

How do we move the Collaborative to its next level of evolution to achieve true partnership working?

