

# **Bury Adult Autism Strategy 2017-2020**

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## 1. FOREWORD

We are very pleased to present the Bury Adult Autism Strategy 2017-2020. This strategy follows the initial Bury Adult Autism Strategy published in 2013-16. It highlights the progress made during this time and sets out how we aim to continue improving the lives of people with autism in Bury. It also details how we are continuing to implement the National Autism Strategy "Think Autism" in Bury.

Since 2013 we have seen some significant improvements in the services provided for people with autism and their families and carers. However, we acknowledge that there is still more to do, and so we are hopeful that this new strategy provides a framework that will enable us to continue doing so.

The focus of the updated Bury Adult Autism Strategy is the need to increase awareness and understanding of autism across all sectors in Bury. Taking the lead from the national "*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives*" strategy, and the more recent "*Think Autism*" strategy, and from research carried out for this local strategy, we know that people with autism want to be able to access their own community and live as independently as possible. So, we want to ensure Bury is an autism aware town, where people with autism find that the local community is accessible for them and accepting of them and enables them to live independent lives wherever possible. Therefore, we strive to ensure that Bury Council and its partners aim to work collaboratively to enable equal access to services and a good quality of life for all the residents of Bury.

It is a challenge for all areas of England to make the improvements necessary for people with autism, and that includes Bury. We are also fully aware that this strategy has been developed at a time where public services are undoubtedly facing great financial challenges. However, we are confident that the aims set out in this strategy are achievable, and so the challenge we set ourselves now is to make sure that existing resources are able to make their services even more accessible for people with autism, enabling people on the autism spectrum to access everyday services.

We feel that we have made some great achievements with the 2013-16 strategy. However, we want to do even more, and we feel that this strategy will enable us to do so.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Executive Summary**

The vision of the National Autism Strategy: Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives states that:

*"All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents."*

The national strategy was updated with Think Autism (2014), which built on the Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives strategy, reinforcing the themes and adding a further three new key elements:

1. Enabling people with autism to really be included as part of the community
2. To promote innovative local ideas, services or projects particularly for lower level support
3. To focus on how advice and information services can be joined up better for people

The purpose of this updated Bury Adult Autism Strategy is to provide a basis for partnership working on the provision of services, support and signposting for adults with autism in Bury. It is intended to implement the requirements of the national strategy at a local level.

It is not the intention of this strategy solely to create additional separate services for people with autism, but to enhance current services and supports to people, by ensuring that staff have the necessary skills to support adults with autism in Bury. The strategy aims to ensure that people on the autistic spectrum, are fully understood and their needs are taken into account throughout the assessment, care management, service delivery and review processes. Where people on the autistic spectrum do not access care and support services, this strategy aims to ensure we have a community that is autism aware and can provide them with the services they need to live independently.

This strategy aims to raise awareness of autism, promote early identification of their needs, and seek joint responses to improve the outcomes and quality of life for adults with autism and their families in line with the objectives of the National Autism Strategy.

Bury's Autism Strategy will also reflect those children and young people aged 0 to 25 with autism as there is likely to be a continuum of need into adulthood.

The Adult Autism Strategy also links to Bury's Written Statement of Action (WSOA). The WSoA is Bury's response to the findings of the Joint local area inspection of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in June 2017. The inspection was to judge the effectiveness of Bury in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

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### 3. BACKGROUND

This strategy has been developed by Bury Council's Communities and Wellbeing directorate, with assistance from a number of partners from Bury's Autism Partnership Board and people with autism, including people that access Bury's Autism Service User Group. It is intended to set out a plan for adults with autism across the borough. This strategy is intended to provide a basis for partnership working, and in doing so we can raise the level of awareness in communities across Bury, increase the knowledge and experience of autism in front line staff who can go on to provide reasonably adjusted services, and ensure that people with autism have access to the information and support that they need, when they need it.

This strategy is inclusive and reflect the needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as the legislation for SEND is for the age range 0 to 25 and this strategy needs to extend across both children's and adult services. The SEND cohort will become young adults some of whom will have autistic needs and it is important that there is a smooth transition between children's to adult services and links with a range of partners.

#### 3.1 Definition of autism

In this strategy, we will use the term 'autism' as an umbrella term for all autistic spectrum conditions, in line with the National Strategy: Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives. In the strategy, autism is defined as "*a lifelong condition that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how a person makes sense of the world around them.*" (Department of Health 2010).

The three main areas of difficulty, which all people with autism share and are the basis for diagnosis, are referred to as the 'triad of impairments' these are:

- Social communication (e.g. problems using and understanding verbal and non-verbal language, such as gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice)
- Social interaction (e.g. problems in recognising and understanding other people's feelings and managing their own)
- Social imagination (e.g. problems in understanding and predicting other people's intentions and behaviour and imagining situations outside their own routine).

Autism is known as a spectrum condition, both because of the range of difficulties that affect adults with autism, and the way that these present differently in different people. It is estimated that 50% of those with autism may also have a learning disability (The National Autistic Society 2011). People with high-functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome, are affected by the triad of impairments common to all people with autism described above, but both groups

are also likely to be of average or above average intelligence (IQ of more than 70). Many people with autism also have other conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Deficits in Attention and Motor Perception (DAMP), epilepsy, dyslexia and dyspraxia. The broad spectrum of needs means that some people with autism are therefore able to live relatively independent lives; others need crisis intervention from time to time; and others need a lifetime of specialist support.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0 to 25 years which is statutory guidance for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This cohort includes those children and young people with a diagnosis of autism where he or she has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age. The Code of Practice identifies four areas of need: Cognitive & Learning; Communication and Interaction; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; and Sensory or Physical needs.

### **3.2 National and Local Context**

Since Bury's last adult autism strategy was implemented, there have been a number of national and local developments. Nationally, the autism strategy (Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, 2010) has been updated (Think Autism, 2014). This reinforces the priorities in Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives and added three further areas:

- building aware and accessible communities;
- promoting innovative local ideas, services, or projects;
- a focus on how advice and information on services can be joined up better for people.

The Care Act (2014) has been introduced, which introduced a statutory principle of wellbeing and the requirement to prevent, reduce, or delay the need for care and support, and legal rights for carers too. These national developments influence and drive the work in this strategy. Other policies such as Think Local, Act Personal (2010) and the Localism Act (2011) will also link with the above developments.

Across Greater Manchester, there has been a lot of work underway transforming the services offered by the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium. This service has undergone a full, independent review and a final report was produced making a number of recommendations. The consortium has since been implementing the changes recommended in the report. At the time of writing this strategy, a new service model is emerging, and the services being delivered—and the way in which they are delivered—are changing, involving co-design and co-production of the service.

Locally in Bury, a major development since the last strategy was the successful implementation of the local diagnostic and care pathway for adults with autism.

This means that people in Bury can now access the diagnosis process without being referred out of area.

In early 2016 the Autism Development Board was restructured to ensure the membership and terms of reference was appropriate and meaningful. This led to the formation of the Bury Autism Partnership Board being launched for professionals, along with an Autism Service User Group for people with autism and their carers. More recently, in researching this strategy Bury Council wanted an insight into how autism affects people in Bury. Consequently we conducted a local survey for people with autism and their carers to complete, to gain some qualitative data and information. This provided a small sample of data which highlighted potential risk factors and sources of support for people with autism (see page 11).

Following the Ofsted & CQC Inspection of SEND in Bury new governance arrangements have been established to ensure that the areas for improvement are addressed. The Bury SEND Partnership Board has been re-constituted to oversee the implementation of the SEND Reforms in Bury across the Council, CCG and partner organisations, and to hold the SEND system to account.

The key themes of Bury's Written Statement of Action on SEND are:

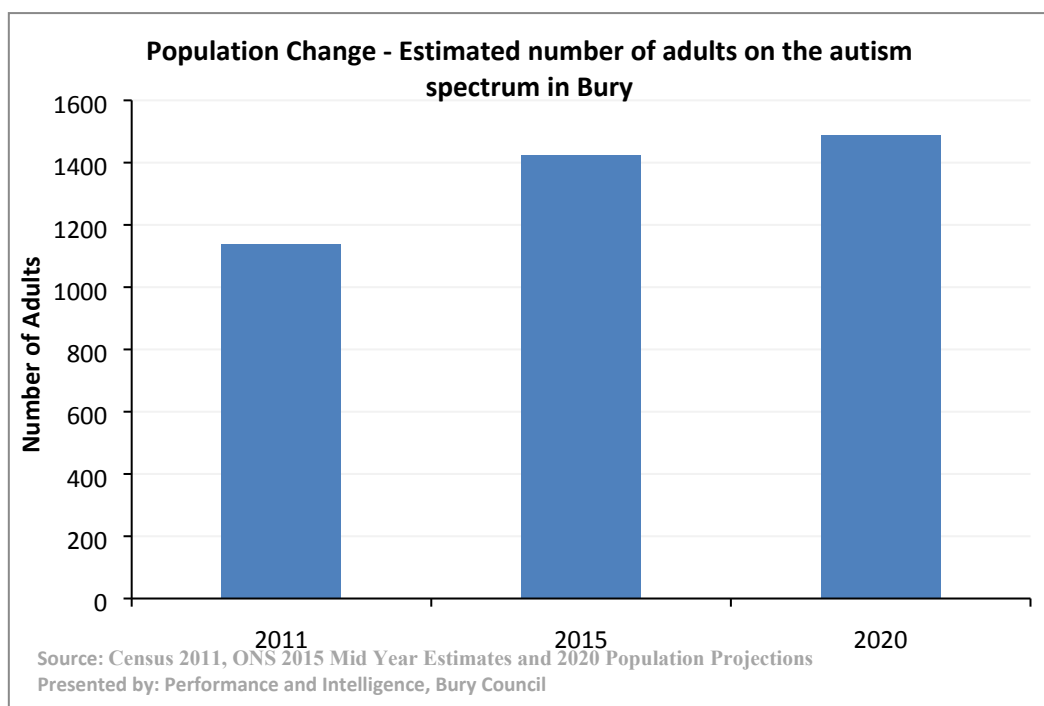
- Engagement and Co-production with young people, parents and families
- Bury's Local Offer of SEND Services
- Identification of SEND Needs by Schools
- Joint Commissioning arrangements for SEND across the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

### **3.3 Prevalence**

#### **Number of People with autism in Bury**

It is estimated that around 1 in 100 people are likely to be on the autism spectrum (Brugha et al, 2009). At the time of writing the last local autism strategy, we estimated that there were 1,139 adults with autism in Bury in 2012, based on Office for National Statistics Population Estimates. Using data from the Office for National Statistics, in 2015 it was predicted there were a total of 1,423 adults on the autism spectrum, a number that is predicted to increase to 1,490 by 2020. Locally, the change in the adult diagnostic service and pathway could possibly see a higher than predicted increase due to easier access for diagnosis.





### **Bury GP and social care data**

Information on people in Bury registered with a GP and having a diagnosis of autism was gathered in May 2017. The results are giving in the table below.

#### **People in Bury with a diagnosis of autism as listed on GP records (May 17):**

| <b>Persons under 18 years old (children)</b> | <b>Persons over 18 years old (Adults)</b> | <b>Grand Total (all ages)</b> |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 220  | 320                                       | 540                           |

However, this data is not completely reliable and based on anecdotal data it is likely to be hugely underestimated. There will be many people living in Bury with a diagnosis of autism that is not recorded by the GP. The reason for this being that up until 2014, it was not a requirement for GP or Social Care to record autism separately. If a person has several diagnosed conditions, the primary diagnosis is unlikely to be autism so this will not be reflected in the figures (see section on risk factors). In addition, unless a person has been diagnosed post 2014 or seen a GP for a condition related to their autism, it is unlikely that this has been reported. Therefore the data from GP records is not a true reflection of the current statistics for autism diagnosis in Bury.

Likewise, data for Communities and Wellbeing is only captured based on data collated for mandatory annual Short and Long Term Care (SALT) return. The requirement for the SALT with regard to people with autism is to record only

those who receive long term support such as a personal budget, residential or nursing care. Therefore no figures are available for short term support to maintain independence. Also, as with GP records if there is a more than one diagnosis and this is the main area for the support given, the autism may not be picked up in the data. Autism has only been recorded as a health condition since 2014.

In the SALT return for 2016-17, there were 94 adults with a diagnosis of autism receiving long term care/support from Communities and Wellbeing.

### **3.4 Risk factors for people with Autism**

Several pieces of research has been undertaken to examine potentials risk factors for people with autism including the impact of socio-economic factors. Key findings include the following:

- Gender: There are predicted to be a higher number of males than females with autism (Brugha et al 2009)
- Age: People with autism in Bury may have different needs according to their age – in particular consideration should be given to those in transition from children's to adult services and older people with autism as they may be more likely to be undiagnosed or misdiagnosed due to the lack of knowledge on autistic spectrum disorders until recent years (Brugha et al, 2009).
- Learning disabilities: 50% of those with autism may also have learning disabilities (The National Autistic Society 2011).
- Race and ethnicity: The figures in Projected Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) show that across Bury in 2012, 10,045 people belong to Mixed, Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British, Chinese or another ethnic group. Potentially therefore, there could be around 100 people in Bury from the BME community group with autism (assuming an autism prevalence rate of 1%).
- Level of deprivation: Autism is significantly associated with levels of deprivation. Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), researchers (Brugha et al 2009) found that in areas with an IMD score indicative of higher deprivation, the rate of autism was also higher. Therefore, this suggests that the areas of Moorside, East, Radcliffe East, Radcliffe West, Unsworth and Besses could potentially have the highest prevalence rates of people with autism in Bury
- Education: People with autism are less likely to have had a higher education (Brugha et al 2009).

- Housing: People with autism are more likely than people without autism to live in accommodation rented from a social landlord (Brugha et al 2009).
- Criminal Justice System: Research nationally shows that people with learning disabilities, learning difficulties and autism experience a number of problems once they enter the criminal justice system. For example, the individual has a lack of understanding of what is required from them and the professionals have a lack of understanding of the needs of the individual (Mason and Murphy 2002; BIBIC 2005).
- Mental health needs of people with autism is a risk factor. There is evidence to suggest that there is a relatively high prevalence of mental health problems in children and adults with autism. The NICE guidance recommends that adults with autism have access to psychosocial interventions, psychological therapies and pharmacological interventions (<http://www.nice.org.uk/CG142>).
- Challenging behaviour and autism is a risk factor. The recommendations from Winterbourne view relate to adults with autism and learning disabilities; who form 50 per cent of adults addressed via this strategy (<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/12/final-winterbourne>). Anecdotal feedback from families and carers of adults with autism but no Learning Disability who access Pennine Care psychological therapy services, is that understanding and managing challenging behaviour is one of their biggest problems, and is often the cause of placement breakdown. It can also restrict opportunities for independent living and employment. NICE guidance has a section on challenging behaviour (<http://www.nice.org.uk/CG142>).
- Health inequalities are a well-known risk factor for adults with learning disabilities: 50% of adults with autism have a learning disability.

Since 2014 autism has been recorded as a health condition by GPs and Communities and Wellbeing. Hopefully, this improved data recording means that over time there will be better quality data and a more accurate picture of the prevalence of autism in Bury.

#### **4. HOW HAVE WE RESPONDED TO THE BURY ADULT AUTISM STRATEGY SINCE 2012?**

Following consultation for Bury's previous autism strategy, a gap analysis was produced which identified eight main issues.

1. There was a lack of a clear local diagnosis and assessment pathway and post-diagnosis support
2. A lack of understanding of autism among frontline staff and those who undertake assessments
3. Few preventative support services such as housing related support, employment support, and lack of availability of information about these services.
4. Lack of coordination of low level services such as social groups, peer support, befriending and lack of information about these services.
5. Lack of accessible and timely information on autism, support, and services available.
6. Absence of robust data collection systems which records numbers of people with autism and the services they use/need
7. Lack of understanding and knowledge of autism within BME communities
8. Lack of facilitators to allow access to social opportunity

##### **Progress to date**

Since these issues were identified, several developments have taken place.

1. We now have a diagnosis and assessment pathway including access to post-diagnostic support
2. Social care staff receive specialist autism-awareness training, including those who undertake assessments. This is delivered by the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium Project.
3. Bury has an autism partnership board which includes representatives from services such as Job Centre Plus. Also, the autism lead has been building links with housing. Information on support services is available on the Bury Directory.
4. Information on a range of autism services including organisations in the voluntary and community sector are on the Bury Directory.
5. Information covering a range of topics related to autism—such as diagnosis, support, support for carers, and the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium is available on the Bury Directory.
6. Bury's Adult Care Services database records autism as a primary support reason. This means that we have data on those people with autism that are eligible for social care support. Partners in the health service also collect data on the number of people receiving a diagnosis of autism which we record via the Self-Assessment Framework exercise.
7. The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium has run events on autism in BME communities.

8. There are more social opportunities in Bury in the voluntary and community sectors. Stepping stones across the spectrum and Buddy's 4 Children with Autism are two examples of services that offer social spaces for people on the autism spectrum.

### **What people told us (2016)**

In 2016 we conducted further consultation based on the information we had from the previous survey. A new survey was co- designed and co-produced with a young man with autism who is involved in the Bury Autism Service User Group. We then used the survey to gain some qualitative data, with help from partners who assisted in facilitating completion of the survey including Buddy's 4 Children with Autism, Bury's Autism Service User Group, Bury Carers Centre, Bury College, Stepping Stones across the Spectrum, and Streetwise 2000.

The main difficulty we encountered in the consultation was successfully targeting and engaging people with autism. As described earlier in this strategy, the nature of autism means that social communication is often a difficulty that people on the autism spectrum encounter, and so engaging people in an exercise such as this was expected to have its difficulties. So, in addition to physical consultations and the paper-based surveys we also used an electronic survey and distributed it to partners, who asked their service users to complete it remotely, in their own time. We had some success with this, with 3 electronic surveys returned. In total we received 26 responses, which was a lower number than anticipated, but this may well reflect the nature of how autism affects people in terms of social isolation and social communication.

The main gaps identified through this research were as follows:

- The majority of people on the autism spectrum are not eligible for support from Bury Adult Care Services;
- People stated that accessing social activities was difficult;
- However, where people had informal support they were more able to access social activities.
- A lot of people with autism live with family members (rather than living independently) because they need their support;

However, due to the lower than expected number of survey responses we received it would be difficult to say that these responses reflect the majority of adults with autism. Anecdotal evidence from consultations and from attending services for people with autism and their carers also suggests the same. A lot of people said that because autism affects each individual so differently, it is difficult to say what type of services would be most suitable for people. Therefore, the above issues that affect people with autism are the broad themes that are likely to be among the most common issues.

## **5. OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2017-2020**

In the previous Bury Adult Autism Strategy, a list of priorities was developed and placed under the headings from the national autism strategy. Below each is stated along with the “where we want to be” to report on progress.

### **“Increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals.”**

#### **Where we wanted to be**

“We want to ensure that all staff have an awareness of autism and that social workers have an in-depth knowledge and understanding”

#### **Progress to date**

Basic training was made compulsory for staff across the Communities and Wellbeing Directorate, and frontline staff. This was via an online programme and was monitored by Bury Council Organisational Development Team. Social Workers and Social Care Assessors for Communities and Wellbeing undertake more in-depth, face to face training.

#### **Where we want to be in future**

The training is still ongoing. The online training package is currently being reviewed and updated and the new training package will be made mandatory for all staff in Communities and Wellbeing to complete (even those who have previously completed the basic training).

In future we will seek to ensure that employees across the whole of Bury Council receive this training. This includes those professionals who are working with children and young people with SEND. Workforce development was identified as a priority following the SEND Inspection to ensure that all staff had an awareness of the needs of the SEND cohort including autism.

Frontline staff will continue to receive the more in-depth training.

All training accessed by Bury Council staff will be monitored via Organisational Development.

### **“Developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment.”**

#### **Where we wanted to be**

“In order to improve diagnosis of adults with autism a clear local pathway will be developed which will increase capacity around diagnosis.”

#### **Progress to date**

The diagnosis pathway is now in place in Bury. This means that people no longer have to go out of area to undergo the diagnosis process. Following diagnosis, people are now referred to Adult Care Services if and when they state that this is what they want.

### **Where we want to be in future**

The diagnosis pathway is in place and ensures that people accessing a diagnosis can do so locally without going out of area.

For those young people with SEND transition pathways need to be developed from children's into adult services so that the diagnostic process is joined up and seamless for any young adult with autism.

### **Improving access to the services and support which adults with autism need to live independently within the community.**

#### **Where we wanted to be**

We want to ensure that adults with autism are aware of the advice and information available to enable them to make choices about their care and ensuring there is a support system available if they require help to make their choice, and/or arrange services to meet identified needs.

We want to continue to develop universal services and current services to ensure they are more accessible for adults with autism.

Young people with autism should have support in transition as they move into adulthood. They will be informed of their right to a community care assessment and the right of their carer to receive a carer's assessment. Young people with autism and their parents/carers will be involved in their transition planning and support. They should be given information about self-directed support and services to enable them to make informed choices about the way they are supported in adulthood.

Timely, accessible and appropriate information should be provided to adults with autism and their carers. Information should also be accessible.

#### **Progress to date**

Information on all services in the Borough is available in one place on the Bury Directory, including services aimed at people with autism. This contains information on specialist and low level services, including opportunities for social activity.

Universal services are continuing to develop to be more accessible to people with autism. There are a number of low level services available in Bury for people with autism and other work areas such as the "*Bury Safe Places*" scheme overlap some of the work areas around autism and help deliver the same outcomes.

The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium Project is assisting authorities in producing a pack for young people with autism. In Bury, discussions have begun with partners to look into this work area which would assist in transition planning for young people.

Housing and independent living were included in the survey carried out in 2016. The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium held an event on housing options and living independently including sharing models of practice. The Strategic Planning and Development Team also have links with housing groups. Putting these resources together we are beginning to look at housing and living independently for people on the autism spectrum.

There are a number of opportunities for social activity in the borough. Low level services include social spaces provided by Stepping Stones Across the Spectrum and Buddy's 4 Children with Autism who provide an autism friendly space. Information on these activities is available on the Bury Directory.

### **Where we want to be in future**

Further work around transitions for young people may take place in the coming year in Bury. This will be aimed at assisting young adults with autism to be as independent as possible and to seek the right support early to prevent reaching crisis. This work would involve the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium Project which is compiling similar work across Greater Manchester.

More work is needed with those young people with autism transitioning into adulthood where the outcomes in their Education Health and Care Plan include independent living skills. We will work towards developing a planned, holistic approach to independent living across adults and children's services.

More work may be needed on housing options. People on the autism may need a variety of housing options to live independently.

We will continue to build links with existing organisations and services to ensure mainstream services are accessible to people on the autism spectrum. One example of this may be the Safe Places scheme in Bury, which aims to ensure that every day facilities and businesses are utilised to make the local community more accessible.

### **"Helping adults with autism into work."**

#### **Where we wanted to be**

"We will work with partners with the aim to improve access into work by identifying the personal needs of the adult with autism and providing the appropriate level of support required. We will examine current services and supports in place and ensure that these meet the needs to support adults with autism into work.



As part of the autism training and awareness raising development, we will endeavour to include employers, Job centre and employment support agencies so they understand the needs of people with autism and how to make reasonable adjustments and highlight the benefits of employing people with autism.

More and appropriate information on support services should be available for adults with autism."

### **Progress to date**

Bury Council co-ordinated an "*Autism Employers Event*" that targeted employers to raise awareness of people with autism and highlight their skills. More recently partners within Bury Council co-ordinated an "*Employment, Health and Skills*" event aimed at bringing employers and people trying to enter the labour market together. This included people with autism and invitation to the event was distributed to interested parties. Also, partners such as Job Centre Plus are represented on the Bury's Autism Partnership Board.

### **Where we want to be in future**

Adults on the autism spectrum are still much less likely to be in employment than the general population. Further work will be carried out to promote employment in people with autism. This will include working with partners as with previous events.

More work is needed with those young people with autism transitioning into adulthood. Employment is a Preparing for Adulthood outcome in a young person's Education Health and Care Plan where this is realistic and achievable. This should be planned holistically across adults and children's services so that the transition is smooth and takes account of prior learning and skills acquisition.

**"Enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities."**

### **Where we wanted to be**

We will develop a commissioning plan which will identify gaps in services and how we will ensure that adults with autism can access and benefit from personalisation of social care to have more choice and control of their lives. We will consider where a separate service offer needs to be considered as part of the commissioning intentions. We will improve our data collection to gather relevant local information and ensure autism is firmly embedded within our JSNA.

We will develop clear leadership and governance procedures which will be communicated so that our processes are transparent to all. We will improve our consultation and engagement processes to encourage all adults with autism and their carers to have a voice.

In order to effectively plan for the future we need to understand our market. Therefore we need do further work to understand what people currently access and any gaps in the market. We also need to develop effective data collection processes for the future.

Endeavour to engage with mental health services to facilitate access to interventions for co-existing mental health problems and/or challenging behaviour.

As part of the pathway, we need to consider how adults with autism can access specialist interventions, as outlined in the NICE guidance, e.g., psychosocial interventions, communication interventions, interventions to understand and manage challenging behaviour, risk assessment and management (including forensic risk). Adults with autism who do not have a Learning Disability are in most cases unable to access the specialist interventions they require because these services are not specifically commissioned, and they are not eligible to access services provided by learning disability or mental health services.

### **Progress to date**

Bury Council completed their commissioning intentions in 2014. We also completed a market position statement identifying gaps in services. Autism has more recently been entered into the JSNA and will continue to be in the future.

When the Bury Autism Partnership Board was launched, so too was a service user group. This enabled engagement with people with autism and their carers in a forum solely for their use. Minutes are taken at group meetings. Also, in consultation exercises we have used electronic surveys as an extra mechanism to engage people with autism who may not ordinarily feel able to attend group meetings in person. We have also engaged a number of partners to assist with our consultations who provide front line services to people with autism.

### **Where we want to be in future**

We have improved our consultation and engagements processes to encourage more people with autism and their carers to have a voice. We will continue these efforts to further engage people via the Bury Autism Service User group and use consultation exercises when necessary to reach more people with autism. Also, engaging partners in the borough has helped us to reach people with autism and we will continue to use these mechanisms and engage these partners.

The JSNA is to include a section the needs of the SEND cohort.

An all age Autism Strategy will be developed for Bury that meets the needs of both adults and those children and young people with SEND as the Local Authority has statutory duties for this cohort.

## **6. MONITORING THE STRATEGY**

The Bury Autism Services Development Group was in place to monitor and track progress within the work streams and the action plan. This was a multi-agency group with representation from people with autism and carers. Since the last strategy it was recognised that professionals and service users have quite different agendas and topics to discuss. Therefore, the Bury Autism Services Development Group was disbanded and Bury Autism Partnership Board was put in its place. This provided professionals with the means to discuss issues and oversee actions. Simultaneously, Bury Autism Service User Group was formed (now called The Autism Get Together). This provided a forum for people with autism and their carers to discuss issues pertinent to them, and also to give formal feedback on developments. The Autism Partnership Board and the Autism Get Together Group will continue to track and monitor progress. Both Groups meet on a quarterly basis. The Autism Partnership Board monitors the progress on the action plan and will flag up any issues to be raised at management board or dealt with by partners. The views and ideas from the Autism Get Together Group are used to influence and develop future actions and targets.

The monitoring arrangements will include children's services. The Bury SEND Partnership Board is the Governance Group for the Written Statement of Action and will monitor progress.

### **Resources**

Although the implementation of this strategy does not bring any specific funding, the majority of the actions will be achieved by greater partnership working and investigating new ways of working. This is particularly true in the case of awareness raising, social activity and ensuring availability of information. We will continue to invest in the required training to raise awareness and knowledge which is a theme that runs through this strategy.

### **Action plan**

An updated action plan for the Bury Autism Development Board based on the priorities within this strategy, Think Autism and the statutory guidance is in place.