

Warwickshire Autism Webinar 14th December 2021 Q&A's

What is the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) doing to reduce the waiting times for a diagnostic assessment?

Coventry and Warwickshire CCG has committed significant additional long-term and short-term investment in diagnostic assessments and specialist post diagnostic interventions, with an aim to reduce waiting times significantly to a target of 13 weeks. An additional £1.5 million has been committed to date to address the waiting times.

The challenges in achieving this target include national shortages of specialist clinicians to undertake diagnosis and limited capacity in independent providers to deliver assessments. To address these risks, the CCG has agreed to long term funding for additional permanent posts in Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, as well as short term funding to purchase additional capacity from independent providers.

Part of the plan to address waiting times includes exploring what specialist support is needed to enable diagnostic assessments to be completed by paediatricians and psychiatrists in the RISE service ('RISE' is a family of NHS-led services providing emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people in Coventry and Warwickshire). without the need to refer to another specialist service for the children that are already under their care.

As outlined in the Ofsted/CQC inspection, there is a significant waiting list which needs to be addressed. It is expected that the target of 13 weeks will be met by mid 2024, due to the large numbers of children, young people and adults currently waiting for a diagnostic assessment.

How will equity with other regions be achieved in terms of waiting times for an assessment?

Nationally it is difficult to compare data on waiting times. Nationally published statistics indicate that 16% of referrals for a diagnostic assessment are seen with 13 weeks, with a further 5% seen between 13 and 26 weeks <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/autism-statistics/quarter-1-2019-20-to-quarter-1-2021-22>. The remaining referrals are seen after 26 weeks and there is no data published about the length of wait above 26 weeks.

The Coventry and Warwickshire CCG recognises the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline of 13 weeks and has committed to working to achieve that target by 2024, as outlined above and in the Written Statement of Action.

How is Coventry and Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group accessing national funding to support this initiative?

There are a number of sources of short-term funding which have been made available to local areas through the national autism strategy. In 2021/22 financial year, Warwickshire and Coventry have received £245,000 national funding which is being used to support delivery of the Written Statement of Action.

What support is available while waiting for an assessment?

A key priority within the All-Age Autism Strategy is to ensure that people and families can access the support they need with or without a diagnosis.

Coventry and Warwickshire CCG, Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council jointly commission pre assessment and post diagnostic community-based autism support which offers 1:1

appointments and peer group support, as well as autism awareness sessions and networking for parents.

Information and Advice currently available

All individuals referred for an assessment will receive an acknowledgement letter and an information pack containing an FAQ document on diagnosis and support queries, prioritisation criteria for assessment and a Top Tips document for supporting a neurodiverse person.

Information about support available to Coventry and Warwickshire families can also be found on SEND Local offer pages:

- Coventry's Local Offer: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer>
- Warwickshire's Local Offer: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send>

SENDIAS (Special Education Needs Information Advice and Support Services)

- supports parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities, from 0 - 25 years of age. It is a free, confidential and impartial service that offers independent support for parents and families who have children and young people with a SEND, as well as provision of independent advice directly to children (0-15yo) and young peoples (16 to 25yo) with SEND.
- Warwickshire: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send>
- Coventry: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer>

Warwickshire County Council's autism webpages are currently being refreshed and a new format will be available in early 2022: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/autism>

The following services are currently available both pre assessment and post diagnosis:

Community Autism Support Service for children, young people and adults delivered by Coventry and Warwickshire Mind

- Available to children, young people and adults awaiting an assessment or diagnosed living in Coventry and Warwickshire. The service can provide one-to-one support (on referral only), social clubs, peer support groups, and educational sessions.
- Children and Young People support T: 024 76 631835 e: vibes@cwmind.org.uk, website: www.cwmind.org.uk/diverseortypical

Parent Training delivered by Act for Autism

- Children Autism Support Programme (CASP) Parents of autistic children (4-12), residing in Coventry and Warwickshire.
- Teenager Autism Support Programme (TASP) Parents of autistic teenagers (13-18), residing in Coventry and Warwickshire.
- Focussed on understanding, supporting and empowering people with autism. Act for Autism use a self-developed training model – the 3Cs Pathway (Connect Calm Communicate) to offer advice on additional support strategies to parents/carers of autistic people.
- There are 6 courses running in 2022 and it is a 4-week programme. Contact julie@actforautism.co.uk or visit <https://actforautism.co.uk/> for more information.

Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust telephone clinic

- 32 hours a week to respond to calls from families on the waiting list. Calls are triaged in the central Navigation Hub and where appropriate transferred to a clinician who can offer tailored advice, pre-assessment support and signposting.
- Call 0300 200 2021

Dimensions Tool

- A web-based app that guides users towards wellbeing support that is specific to individual need. The tool points to relevant advice, support, and local interventions after users have answered a series of multiple-choice questions related to their individuals circumstances.
- <https://cwrise.com/dimensions-tool>

Speech and Language Therapy

The Speech and Language Therapy service aims to support children with difficulties communicating. These children may have difficulty:

- Understanding instructions
- Communicating their wants and needs
- Producing speech sounds
- Eating, drinking and swallowing

The service will support children in a range of settings including pre-schools, mainstream schools, special schools and in the community. Contact for Warwickshire is South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust Tel. 1926 495 321 and for Coventry - Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, Tel: 02476 961 453

Educational Psychology Service

- A group of educational psychologists (EPs) who have in-depth knowledge of development, learning, human behaviour and relationships. Educational Psychologists work in partnership with parents/carers, school staff and other professionals to promote the learning and mental health of children and young people from birth to 25 years. Referral by nursery or preschool staff, your health visitor, social worker, family support worker, GP or children's centre staff.
- Warwickshire EP Services: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/educationalpsychology>
- Coventry EP Services: https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/223/educational_psychology/3290/coventry_educational_psychology_service

What are the plans for enhancing existing information, advice and support offer?

Additional investment will be targeted in 2022 and 2023 to improve the information, advice and navigation to access support available to autistic people and their families pre assessment and post diagnosis. This includes an online portal of information, coproducing a range of communication resources, introducing a new navigation function to help people to access the appropriate support, peer mentors and allocated support workers. The new model will be in place by the end of 2022.

What support is available for young people with mental health needs?

The Written Statement of Action includes a commitment to ensure that there is an appropriate and accessible offer within Emotional Wellbeing and Specialist Mental Health (MH) provision for autistic

children, young people and young adults through a combination of staff training and increased joint working between emotional wellbeing, specialist mental health and autism services.

For example, neurodevelopmental liaison roles have been established within Coventry and Warwickshire mental health services to improve professionals' awareness of autism and their ability to provide reasonable adjustments for autistic people within specialist services.

The following provides information about how to access RISE and wellbeing support.

Coventry and Warwickshire Children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and Rise

- Rise is a family of NHS-led services providing emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people in Coventry and Warwickshire, and includes:
- Online based resources and signposting to support <https://cwrise.com/>
- Helpline for Rise (Coventry and Warwickshire) Tel 024 7636 2100
- Crisis Line for Rise 08081 966798

Kooth

- A digital mental health platform that provides a confidential, anonymous space for all young people, including neurodiverse individuals, aged 11 - 25 years old who are worried about their mental health or are experiencing mental health issues. Kooth offers free, immediate, online counselling as well as access to lots of self-help tools such as discussion forums with peers, an online magazine and even an activity hub of challenges.
- www.kooth.com

Peer Mentoring mental health support

A new Peer Mentoring mental health support service has been commissioned for 16 - 18 for those in Children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), 18 - 25 care leavers and for those at risk of accessing mental health services. Using a combination of peer support workers, peer leaders and experts by experience – somebody who has current or past experience of living with a mental health problem – the service will provide one-to-one peer mentoring support, both face-to-face and virtually, targeted at each individual's need. The service is delivered by Coventry and Warwickshire MIND Tel: 02476 552 847 or email admin@cwmind.org.uk

Mental Health in Schools Service

A Mental Health in Schools Service has been introduced as part of the national Trailblazer Project for children, young people and their families within the education setting. Working across Coventry and Warwickshire, the team provide low-intensity mental health interventions and support. Contact with the service is through the Rise Navigation Hub: 0300 200 2021.

Family Information Service

- provide information, advice and one-to-one support for families with children and young people on issues including family relationships, finance, housing, parenting support, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), childcare, health and wellbeing.
- Warwickshire's FIS (supporting CYP aged 0-25): <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families>
- Coventry FID: <https://cid.coventry.gov.uk/kb5/coventry/directory/family.page?familychannel=0>

Early Help service

- Facilitates provision of support to potentially vulnerable children and young people (0-19), and their families through sharing of information, advice, guidance, and provision of support to families as soon as a concern emerges or seems likely to emerge.
- Warwickshire's Early Help and Targeted support: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families/early-help-warwickshire/1>
- Coventry's Early Help support: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/earlyhelp>

What support is available for autistic children under 5 years old?

In addition to the above, the following services are available for children under 5 years old

Health Visiting Service

- South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (SWFT) deliver the health visiting service to support families with children under school age. Healthy Child Programme – aimed at ensuring a healthy start for a child, ongoing support for parents, and access to a range of community-based services and resources. It is a universal service that is offered to all parents.
- Universal Plus gives parents an expert response from health visitors when specific help is needed. This may be in the case of:
 - post-natal depression
 - sleep problems
 - breastfeeding
 - other feeding issues
 - speech development
 - concerns regarding your child's behaviour and/or development
- To speak to a Health Visitor, please ring the local health Visiting Team OR TEXT Chat Health on 07520 615293.

Community Paediatricians

- provide specialist care for children and young people and carry out a range of duties in relation to child protection, medical advice for special educational needs, and health assessments of children in care. The role of the paediatrician involves prevention, identification, assessment, diagnosis, treatment and support.
- Referral is through a GP.

Social Care Support

Families can ask for a social care assessment through the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). MASH deals with all social care requests, including 'children in need' and child protection. Children with disabilities are defined as 'children in need' under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Where children have disabilities considered to be severe or profound, it is recognised that a specialist service is likely to be required. These children and young people will be referred to the Children with Disabilities Team (CWDT) if they require a social work service. The level of support offered will depend on the outcome of assessment.

If eligible for social care support, an individual personal budget will be agreed that the Local Authority will make available to pay for your needs. It will be an individual decision whether this amount could be paid as a Direct Payment, which is a cash amount so that you can arrange and pay for social care support instead of the Council arranging these services. Direct Payments offer greater flexibility, choice and control than support being arranged by a social worker.

All people considering themselves as carers have a right to a care act assessment by their Local Authority. Please contact your LA customer service centre to enquire.

Short Breaks / Respite Offer

Warwickshire County Council commission several providers of community daytime short breaks who would be able to offer support in the community or within the family home for young people aged 0-18. Further information on the available options can be found through the SEND local offer webpage (<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send>). Overnight respite support for young people aged 0-18 is also available, please contact Warwickshire County Council on 01926 410410 for further details.

What is being done to support children and young people who are not in school?

As part of the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme Warwickshire County Council aims to provide every child with access to high quality education so they can achieve their full potential. Working together with our partners, the aim is to improve the outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) by promoting inclusion in mainstream settings, giving schools the skills and resources to meet the needs of learners and building the confidence of parents and carers.

A new pathway to support young people who are not in school is being developed as part of the SEND and Inclusion Change programme. This will include consideration of the needs of young people with social, communication and sensory difficulties, including those with an autism diagnosis. This pathway will build on the learning from a pilot with 2 schools in Rugby which aimed to support young autistic people back into school through early and targeted intervention from education, health and care services.

Does Warwickshire recognise PDA diagnosis?

PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) is not currently included in the Diagnostic Manuals that clinicians used (DSM5) so it is difficult to diagnose.

Training is offered to Warwickshire schools to support them to meet the needs of young people presenting in this way. The Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can also be updated to capture needs and provision.

Projects on annual reviews and workforce development are part of the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme and we hope will also impact on the areas you have raised. There will be opportunities for parent carers to feed into the learning in these areas.

What is being done to train and develop the workforce to support autistic people?

Training and workforce development is a key part of the Written Statement of Action, to increase the knowledge and confidence of staff in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND, particularly in schools. We will develop a workforce development action plan, carry out a needs assessment survey and rollout a programme of support. This will help promote and embed the 'graduated approach' so reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure that most children and young people with SEN are able to access and have their needs met within mainstream provision wherever possible,

There will also be more guidance from specialists to enable children and young people to stay in school and more clarity on the health and social care offer for schools and families.

Act for Autism have been commissioned to deliver a number of autism awareness workshops, called Connections, for professionals working with or supporting children and young people with autism or potential pre-diagnosis complex social communication needs across Coventry and Warwickshire. Training objectives include improving understanding autism from a social and historical context, how to facilitate reasonable adjustments, communication with autistic individuals and hearing from the experts with lived experience. Bookings are through Warwickshire County Council's See Hear Act Learning and Development Partnership team.

An online autism awareness e-learning is available to any professional via Warwickshire County Council's e-learning portal WILMA, as well as commissioned provider workforce via the SCILS website.