

Appendix 5

All Ages Autism Strategy

Second Phase

Consultation Report

21 October-29 November 2013



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Customer Engagement Officer



Introduction

In March-May 2013 Warwickshire County Council undertook a wide ranging public Consultation in order to develop our All Age Autism strategy, as previously reported.

Once the results had been collated and analysed a Draft Strategy was produced, with seven key strategic objectives, and the aim of this second, shorter Consultation period was to share this with people who had participated in the initial Consultation, and any other Stakeholders and partners. This 'checking' exercise was undertaken to make sure the results of the first Consultation had been interpreted correctly and the Draft Strategy reflected the issues raised and Warwickshire County Councils response and Commissioning intentions.

Process

In order to capture as much feedback as possible we utilised a variety of consultation methods, using a similar model to the first Consultation.

Questionnaires

There was one questionnaire, (but also a version available in Easy Read) available online and in hard copy that was distributed to groups and to anyone on request.

This outlined the seven Strategic Objectives:

- Develop a clear and consistent pathway including offer of support following diagnosis
- Increasing Awareness and Understanding of autism
- Education, Learning and Employment
- Transition into Adulthood
- Access to Services and Support
- Community Life (Social Inclusion, Housing Support & Keeping Safe)
- Supporting Carers and Families of people with autism

It also highlighted, after each objective, what people had told us during the Consultation, the overarching themes and the Council's planned responses, with a tick box to ask if these were a correct interpretation of peoples and views and a free text box for further comments.

We received 108 completed responses.

Social Media  **@ Autism_WCC**

We continued to keep the twitter account active and posted tweets with the Second Phase Consultation links to followers.

We have sent 65 tweets and have 143 followers

Focus Groups

Ensuring that family carers were able to input into the consultation process was a vitally important part of the main Consultation so we re- visited the following groups, informally, during their regular meetings to ensure they knew about the second part of the consultation process and were also able to comment and complete questionnaires before the submission deadline

- Stratford ASA Plus Group
- Warwickshire Voice
- Coleshill ASD Friendship Group
- North Warwickshire Asperger's United

Creative Consultation



In the first consultation we used the innovative approach of a *Creative Consultation*, to ensure the voices of children and young people who face barriers to verbal and written communication were heard, commissioning an artist who used art as a tool to support non language based communication.

Unfortunately it was not possible to bring the artist back for this second phase, so we had to look at a way of ensuring that those children and young people, who had benefitted from this approach, knew about the outcomes of the Consultation they took part in and were able to comment on the *Second Phase*.

We wrote directly to each of the main *School/College* contacts we worked with during the *Creative Consultation*, with a covering letter, some copies of the easy read questionnaires and a poster for them to display in the school/college. We asked them to ensure all the children and young people they worked with had opportunity to see this and that comments /feedback could be via individual questionnaire or as a joint school/college response.

Warwickshire All Ages Autism Strategy For Children & Adults (2014-2017)



You can do this by filling in a questionnaire; you can get one from school to take home.

'What's Important to me'



This is Janetka, the artist who ran a Creative Consultation workshop at school a few months ago that you might have taken part in. Warwickshire County Council asked her to do this for us.

She used models and arts equipment to ask you 'What's Important to me?' about living with Autism.



Some people filled in questionnaires too and we have now used all of that information to write a draft Strategy, or a Plan for the things Warwickshire County Council will do, based on what everyone told us.



We would like you to help us and tell us if we have got it right.

Or



If we need to make more changes and haven't got it right.



Or you can tell your teacher or support staff who can tell us.

The things people told us were important to them about living with autism were:-

1. Having a diagnosis and support afterwards.
2. Everyone having increased awareness and understanding of what autism is.
3. People need good Education, Learning and Employment opportunities and support.
4. Transitions, or moving from children's services to adult services should be smooth and planned well.
5. Access to services and support should be clear and easy to find.
6. Having a good life in the community is important, so people feel included, valued and safe.
7. Carers and Families have good support and information.



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Conclusions

From the questionnaire responses the general feedback is agreement with the seven objectives highlighted and the planned responses, but there remain some caveats and concerns. This is especially around issues of social skills and their impacts on social isolation. Also diagnosis, information and support after diagnosis and the transitions process.

'It's a very traumatic time when you arrive at the transition from full time education to adult services'

'Everyone needs autism awareness training'

'I have OCD and autism. I would like to be able to speak to other people who understand because they have experienced it as well'