

Feedback – event for people with autism

11th August 2015, the Percy Centre

13 people attended the session to discuss the experiences and needs of adults with autism in B&NES. These included 4 adults with autism, 8 ‘professionals’ and one carer.

Participants listened to presentations on the national and local autism strategies and the ‘Your Care Your Way’ review of community health and social care services.

There was an opportunity for questions and discussion following the presentations, which resulted in wide ranging comment including:

- Communication and information sharing needs to be improved
- A lot of talking about joined up services, when will this actually happen
- More investment in preventative services needed
- A ‘drop’ in service like the Create Centre (Bristol)
- Take money from acute services and invest in more community services
- Opportunities to access social events and clubs not necessarily autism specific
- Support workers need to be valued and appropriately paid so they will stay in their jobs
- Strategic planning for transition services needs to be more expedient.
- Post 18 services, where are they?
- Sessions needed outside of working hours to ensure everyone has the opportunity to contribute
- More work needs to be done with employers around awareness
- Providers – what are they really doing?
- Drop in/advice and information services need to be available in other areas not just Bath city

Following a break, participants were divided into three tables and asked to consider three questions related to their experiences:

1. What works well at the moment?
2. What should we be focussing on?
3. What could be improved?

Table 1

What is working well?

- Events like today
- Social / therapeutic events
- Provision of supported living flats
- Consistency of social workers

What should we be focussing on?

- Increased understanding and awareness of ASC by all groups, e.g. police, civil service, community, schools, so that all understand, value and respect everyone’s strengths

What could be improved?

- More consistent systems / advice / guidance
- Would like more communication and at suitable times
- Advocacy (facilitator / champion) for people with Asperger’s syndrome
- Helping people in the workplace / community to learn more about ASC

- Work with homeless people affected by drug and alcohol misuse, and prisoners or ex-prisoners with ASC

Table 2

What is working well?

- Got the autism service – social work team and BASS
 - Access to complex health needs service and supervisions for professionals
- Transition – for those who have a social worker as a child (e.g. statements as was)
- Supervision by BASS for others to do the diagnostic assessment – build on that (would help capacity / funding)

What should we be focussing on?

- Better communication of what's out there and joined up information
- Build on things that are good e.g. BASS
- Giving confidence to professionals who work with autistic adults including employers
- More knowledge and understanding of autism to reduce the stigma (e.g. anyone who could come forward to give positive profile such as the Autistic Gardner)

What could be improved?

- Professionals need to have a better understanding of those with ASC but no LD
- Have general awareness – need more in depth
- Better identification of people who become parents and then get a diagnosis of ASC – earlier identification they have ASC
- Adult care more skilled up to support those who aren't eligible / fit specific LD / ASC services
- Social groups – evenings and weekends
- Drop in – at BASS or ?
- College support – better consistency, some good , some not. Staff / individual
- Training from BASS?
- EHCP – early days?

Table 3

- Support for people to have a job and support to keep a job – Taylor made (PCP)
- Encourage people to use mainstream services
- Communication – needs to be improved
- Develop services for people's needs
- B&NES to look at other areas to see what has been done there and what B&NES can improve on / implement
- Process of getting a diagnosis of autism needs to change / improve
- Less talk – more action – following things through
- Advocates for people with autism
- More awareness in society – teaching in schools etc.
- Some good groups for people – some been going for years now

General themes

Overall, the general themes to come out of the session are:

Working well:

1. BASS service and autism social work team
2. Supported living

Focus on:

1. Awareness raising within society, services and employers
2. Improving communication about what's available
3. Building on things that are already working

Improve:

1. Communication, information and advice about what support is available needs to be improved and made consistent
2. Support and services should be available outside of office / normal working hours
3. General awareness of autism needs to be increased, both in mainstream and professional services and within society and with employers
4. Having more opportunities for autistic people to come together socially, share experiences and influence policy