

Great Yarmouth and Waveney Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

15 July 2016

Services for Children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Suggested approach by the Democratic Support and Scrutiny Team Manager

The Clinical Commissioning Group and representatives from service providers and the local authorities are invited to update the Joint Committee on plans for improvement of services for children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

1. Background

- 1.1 Great Yarmouth and Waveney Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (GY&W JHSC) last looked at this subject on 23 July 2014 when the following representatives from health and children's services attended:-

Patricia Hagan - Children's Commissioner, NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Michael Bateman - Interim Head of Special Educational Needs, Norfolk County Council (Note – Mr Bateman is now Head of Education Inclusion Service, Norfolk County Council)
Marie Heeney - Educational Psychologist, Suffolk Children's Services
Dr Sue Ellis - Consultant Psychologist, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

The committee discussed waiting times, the increased number of diagnosed cases, capacity and resourcing, funding, and the breadth of responsibility in special and mainstream schools and in the local authorities.

- 1.2 It was noted that the way in which children's services and health services for children with autism were managed differed widely across Norfolk and Suffolk. The Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG used a different diagnostic pathway to that used elsewhere in Norfolk and Suffolk but the CCG was engaging with families on how it could achieve a more consistent model of service delivery across its area and intended to use the feedback to support redesign of local pathways when planning future services for children and young people with autism.

- 1.3 The subject first came to GY&W JHSC in January 2013, following a suggestion by Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC) that the Joint Committee may wish to examine progress with services for children with autism in its area. This followed an NHOSC scrutiny in 2011-12 which identified inequality of access.
- 1.4 Since the last discussion at joint committee in July 2014, GY&W JHSC has received two written updates from Patricia Hagan, Children's Commissioner. The first in April 2015 informed the joint committee that:-
- A single access pathway for referral and assessment for treatment had been established across the GY&W area (i.e. one pathway for pre-school children and one pathway for school aged children).
 - GY&W CCG was working with the two county councils on an all age autism strategy. Work was also underway with Norfolk County Council to look at addressing gaps in provision for children and families with ASD.
 - A new leaflet had been developed for families who thought their child may have autism and within it were contact details for Autism Anglia and Autism Suffolk. Families were being informed of these services as part of the pathway.
 - A specialist health visitor for children under 5 years of age who have complex needs had been in post for nearly a year and was supporting families and professionals.
 - GY&WCCG was continuing to engage with both county councils on the implementation of the Children and Families' Act 2014.
 - Risks to the service in April 2015 were identified as:-
 - Difficulties in recruiting community paediatricians to the area
 - Long waiting lists
 - Increasing level of activity and number of children being diagnosed with ASD.

The second in January 2016 informed the joint committee that:-

- GY&W CCG will carry out a review of Community Paediatric services in 2016-17 and the autism pathway will be part of this review. The referral process and clinical pathways review should be complete by the end of summer 2016.
- A Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) has been in post since September 2015 and is the key link for health between Education and Social Care. The role includes providing professional expertise to the co-ordinating and implementation of the Children's and Families Act 2014 for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND from ages 0-25 years.
- The DCO regularly meets with the local authorities and Education. The process of transition of young people with special needs, who required an Education Health and Care Plan, to colleges at age 16 has been prioritised by the local authorities.
- Local authorities are the lead agency with the Education Health and Care Plan process, which is still in its early stages. Health, through the DCO can ensure that any health recommendations are reported to the local authorities.
- Risks to the service in January 2016 were identified as:-
 - Continued difficulty in recruiting community paediatricians to the area

(there was one vacancy filled with a locum).

- Waiting times were still longer than 18 weeks (but the situation was improving).

1.5 Due to the ongoing recruitment difficulties, delays for first assessment for autism and for follow-up appointments for children, the ongoing concern about links between health, education and social care and in light of the current review of the Community Paediatric service (provided by the James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), GY&W JHSC agreed to look at the subject in more detail at its July 2016 meeting.

2. Purpose of today's meeting

2.1 GY&W CCG and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils' Children's Services have been asked to co-ordinate and provide the following information for the joint committee:-

- a. How are services for children with autism currently being commissioned?
- b. What do the single referral pathways across Great Yarmouth and Waveney look like? *(i.e. for referral to assessment and assessment to treatment / care plan pathways for (a) pre-school children and (b) school aged children)*
- c. What are the numbers and roles of all staff involved in the services for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (i.e. referral, diagnosis, provision of treatment / care plan, family support)?
- d. What are the current staff vacancy levels within the services for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and their families?
- e. How many children have an autistic need in the Great Yarmouth and Waveney area? *(pre school and school aged)*
- f. For both pre school and school aged children, what are the current waiting times between referral and assessment, and assessment and intervention and how do these compare with previous years?
- g. What are the current arrangements for early intervention?
- h. What will change for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders as a result of the Community Paediatric service review?

2.2 Representatives from GY&W CCG, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils' Children's Services and Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust have been invited to today's meeting to discuss the service.

Representatives from Autism Anglia and Autism Suffolk have also been invited to attend or provide input.

3. Suggested approach

3.1 It is suggested that members of the Joint Committee consider the attached reports and raise any outstanding questions or concerns. These may include:-

- a. Steps to fill staff vacancies in services.

- b. The outlook in terms of waiting times for assessment and services.
- c. Progress in liaison between health, education and social care in the care and development of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- d. Support for young people as they make the transition from school to further education, training or employment post 16 or post 18 (particularly Looked After Children and young people who may not have received a formal diagnosis of autism while at school).
- e. The role of individual schools and colleges – how can the local education authorities work with them to ensure that children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders receive the support they need to remain in education post 16?
- f. The extent to which students and their parents involved in co-production of Education Health and Care Plans?

3.2 The following documents are attached:

- i) Annex 1 - Collated Report from the CCG, SCC and NCC, July 2016, 'Briefing for Great Yarmouth and Waveney Health Scrutiny Committee: Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group's Approach to Delivering Services to Children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder'
- ii) Annex 2 - Autism Suffolk, 30 June 2016, 'Information submitted by Autism Suffolk for circulation with other materials for the meeting of the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Joint Health Scrutiny Committee on Friday July 15th 2016'
- iii) Annex 3 – Autism Anglia, July 2016, 'Obtaining a diagnosis of autism for children living within East Norfolk CCG, A report to Great Yarmouth & Suffolk Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee July 2016'

Reference Links:

- 22 January 2016 JHSC, Information Bulletin, Item 3, 'Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group's (GYWCCG) Approach to Delivering Services to Children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)':
<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=22/Jan/2016&c=Great Yarmouth and Waveney Joint Health Scrutiny Committee>
- 8 April 2015, Information Items, Item (a), 'Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group's (GYWCCG) Approach to Delivering Services to Children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)':
<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/329/Committee/25/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>
- 23 Jul 2014, Agenda Item 7, 'Services for Children with Autism in Great Yarmouth and Waveney': <http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=23/Jul/2014&c=Great Yarmouth and Waveney Joint Health Scrutiny Committee>

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