

Education Improvement and Scrutiny Panel

23rd June 2003

REVIEW OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER

1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the findings of the Improvement and Scrutiny Review of the County Council's provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

2.1 Establishment of working group

The Education Improvement and Scrutiny Panel approved the scoping report for this review on 28th October 2002. This is attached at Appendix 1. A working group was established and Councillors Mills, Hill and Twigg were appointed to the group. The working group has met regularly through out the review, listening to a number of reports and attending many site visits. A complete list is attached at Appendix 2.

2.2 What is Autistic Spectrum Disorder?

It is now usual to refer to autistic children, as children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). This reflects the range of difficulties within autism. Children with ASD show, in different proportions, a range of core difficulties:

- **Problems with verbal and non verbal communication**
- **Difficulties in understanding the social behaviour of others and in behaving in socially appropriate ways**
- **Thinking and behaving flexibly according to a situation.** Children with ASD tend to play by themselves rather than with other children. They can also have difficulty adapting to new situations and often prefer routine to change
- **Sensory perception and responses.** Some children are over sensitive or 'under sensitive' to certain sounds, sights and textures. This has implications for the child's home and school environment.

2.3 Legal responsibilities

Schools and the LEA share responsibilities under the law and within the Code of Practice for Special Education Needs (SEN). For most children initial identification and action will be within the framework of action by the school, early years providers or before they enter education provision.

Some children with special education needs require the LEA to identify their special education needs and ensure that schools know and meet them. A child with a SEN statement will be entitled to an agreed amount of additional provision over what the school can normally provide.

Under the SEN and Disability Act 2001, LEA's and schools must work together to publish strategies and plans to make schools accessible to pupils with disabilities.

With regard to Social Services, in order to receive an assessment from Social Services under the Children Act 1989, Section 1, the child would have to meet the Children in Need access criteria. A child with a diagnosis of ASD may, following initial screening and assessment, have their needs met by the disabled children's service, or alternatively by mainstream children's services, depending on the level of their need.

2.4 Increases in the administrative rate of autism in Derbyshire

There are major difficulties in studies which show the rate of autism over time. These include greater knowledge, changing diagnostic criteria, and the push for diagnosis where it gives access to resources. All these could increase the 'administrative' prevalence without an actual rise in the 'true' prevalence.

All studies in developed countries indicated steady rises. The American rate of increase is approximately 68% a year over the last ten years to 2002, but this number is certainly influenced by some of the factors set out above.

The prevalence in Derbyshire shows a steady increase. In 1993, there were 59 children identified as having an ASD, by 2003 this has risen to 304. Treating the increase as linear would suggest a rate of increase of approximately 25 cases per year and suggest a yearly increase of approximately 9%.

In Derbyshire, a study of an eight month period during 2002 suggested an increase of 8%, it is reasonable (from the limited data) to suggest a sustained rate of increase of about 10% per year. As the administrative rate of prevalence in Derbyshire is lower than that in international and British studies, it is reasonable to take this as a planning estimate for the medium term (say the next five years).

2.5 How much does the Education Department spend on children with ASD?

Members of the working group asked for information on how much was spent by the Education Department on children with ASD. This financial information

was split between In County Cost and Out of County placements. For the previous year (2002/2003), the Education Department spent nearly £4m on children with ASD. These figures are for LEA spend and do not include mainstream SEN costs within a school's own budget, nor the costs of other LEA services such as Educational Psychologists and Local Inclusion Officers. In addition the figures do not include Social Services spend.

	Budget/Cost
In County Costs 2002/2003	£2,447,418
Out County costs – places as Independent and Non maintained Schools	£1,504,893
Total In and Out County Costs	£3,952,311

2.6 Good practice

In 2002, the DfES published a good practice guidance document for schools and LEAs on meeting the needs of pupils with ASD. For schools, this covered training and knowledge in schools, suggesting that all schools should have knowledge of children with ASD. Mainstream schools and others which are not specialised schools should seek support from LEA Autism Outreach Service and other support services. In addition, the document stressed the importance of communication with Health and Social Services, which also provide support to children with ASD and their families.

At a LEA level, information on the numbers of children with ASD should inform the planning process. LEA policies should provide a co-ordinated service to children and families. The LEA should develop links with Health and Social Services to develop information and training with other organisations.

3. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Develop a long term strategy for children with ASD across the County

At the start of the review, Members were informed about the growth in numbers of children with ASD. Without a long term strategy, provision for children with ASD has been based upon immediate financial pressures rather than a strategic overview of the overall needs across the County. There is now however a real need to address this growing demand for educational provision for children with ASD.

The growth in numbers of children with ASD who are currently in primary school settings will impact upon secondary school settings and then post 16 provision. Currently the Education Department is spending nearly £4m on

children with ASD, at the current rate of growth (as discussed above) and not taking account of inflation this will rise to over £5m by 2005/2006.

Responsibility for children with ASD rests with the both the Education and Social Services Departments, depending upon if the child's need is educational or Social Services. In addition the Health service play an integral part in service provision. Members on a number of occasions heard about the pressures placed upon parents who have children with ASD. Recurring examples were the need for short breaks and help with tasks such as getting their child to school, which are straightforward for most families.

Therefore the need for strategic planning involving all relevant departments across the County Council is required. This planning should integrate with external organisations such as Health and the voluntary sector. Strategic planning should also take into consideration the views of young people

Throughout the review there were a number of issues that arose which need to be addressed as part of a longer term strategy for provision rather than on a one off basis. Therefore although Members have put forward a series of recommendations to be addressed by the County Council, all of these recommendations should be looked at as part of wider picture of providing for children with ASD.

Recommendation

- a) That the County Council develops a long term strategy, possibly 3 years, for children with ASD. This should link into other council plans, including the SEN Strategy, New Millennium Education Plan, Children's Preventative Strategy, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy and the Council Plan. The strategy should take into consideration the view of young people with ASD.
- b) The long term strategy must include a detailed appraisal of capital and revenue implications for the County Council. The outcome of the strategy and the potential financial implications would be judged in the light of resources available.

3.2 Future provision for children with ASD

During the review, Members visited a range of educational settings which provided different levels of support to children with ASD. This ranged from the use of the voluntary sector, ie Sutherland House in Nottinghamshire, to the County Council's three flagship provisions at the Holbrook Centre for ASD, the Peak School and the pilot specialist Enhanced Resource School for children

with ASD at Brampton Primary School. Members also visited several mainstream schools. Members supported the need for a variety of educational settings for children with ASD. However, there are several issues that Members wish to address.

Sutherland House (Out of County provision)

Members were impressed by the facilities available at Sutherland House, Nottinghamshire. The school has places for 86 children across the East Midlands. Derbyshire County Council sends 39 children to Sutherland House. This costs the County Council £1.5m per annum (including travelling costs) and could increase as the number of children with ASD increases. This is an average cost of £39,000 per pupil per annum. It was noted that some pupils who would otherwise have needed to travel to Sutherland House now successfully attend the Enhanced Resource School at Brampton Primary School.

Enhanced Resource School at Brampton Primary School

Members considered the advantages of the Brampton model of provision in that such settings can provide high quality education at somewhat lower cost than in placements outside the County. Members suggested that ways could be sought of increasing this specialist enhanced resource provision across the county.

Furthermore a similar provision may be suitable for the growth in demand for secondary places. Members were informed that the PFI projects for new buildings at Long Eaton and Newbold Community Schools (secondary), due to complete in 2005 will include an enhanced resource component focused on provision for students with ASD and communication disorders.

Holbrook Centre for Autism

Holbrook Centre for Autism has had successful OFSTED reports. However Members noted the physical constraints on needed growth for both Holbrook and the Peak School. To meet the expected demand in growth, additional physical space was needed which would require a consequent growth in staffing and other provision.

Members considered that there should be a plan to develop further capacity at the school to meet present and continuing rise in demand. This may include the development of further classroom capacity to make additional places available at the school. This should link into the recommendation for a long term strategy for children with ASD.

A range of options should be considered, including new build to enable the school to expand its role as set out in the Government's recent consultation on the future role of special schools. This consultation suggested that special schools might in the future take on the role of "extended school" offering a range of services, based at the school. This may include services offered by Health and Social Services thereby offering a more joined up approach to service delivery. Examples include childcare, health and social care, family learning, parental support, study support, sport and arts and ICT access. Such developments from Holbrook and Peak might help the wish identified by families of children with ASD to deal with a smaller number of points of access for service.

There is also a need to expand residential provision at the school, both the number of places and the number of nights available in a given week to children receiving residential placement. Members thought that Education, Social Services and Health should develop an integrated approach to providing short breaks, placing the child with ASD at the centre, and recognising that there is a continuum from outreach to residential provision. This is discussed at 3.6.

Officers are preparing detailed costings for the conversion of the former Stanton Vale building at Stanton Road Ilkeston, to be used to expand the number of places at Holbrook.

Peak School

Similar issues exist for Peak School in that there is constraint on needed growth. Demand remains high for the places Peak School provides for young people with ASD and other pupils with severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour.

The school recently received a very positive Ofsted report, save for its weaknesses in building and physical provision. The building is physically small and the provision is not large enough for the number accommodated, nor the needs of young adults. Formal approval has been given by the County Council for additional investment at the Peak School. The proposed growth in provision will address Ofsted criticisms for the present size of pupil population, but only support to a limited degree expected growth in the demand for students with high needs and challenging behaviour.

Again Members considered that there is a need to expand provision available at Peak and that this should be part of the long term strategy for the county.

Support for mainstream schools

Mainstream and special schools other than Holbrook and Peak receive support from a range of services provided by Derbyshire County Council. These include the outreach service based at Peak Special School and Holbrook Centre for Autism, the educational psychology service and the support service for special needs. Support is received from the health services, particularly through speech and language therapy.

The outreach service, which consists of 2 posts, has an unsustainable workload, which is continually growing. Other local authorities including Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire have larger teams, specifically dedicated to supporting children with ASD. Additional staffing and a development of a service model are needed. This should aim to clarify responsibilities between the specialist outreach service and the Support Service for Special Educational Needs.

The Education Department has started to address this issue by setting up an officer steering group to guide development of the ASD outreach function. Proposals are being developed to expand the outreach service but these have yet to be formalised. This proposal needs to be considered in parallel with the developing role of the support service for SEN.

Some witnesses suggested the need for a multi agency approach to outreach services. Once a child is diagnosed with ASD, a parent comes into contact with a number of different agencies. For the parent, this contact should be as simple and as straightforward as possible. An initial start to streamlining this process would be the development of common protocols for early engagement with families of children with high levels of difficulty. Common protocols should involve both Education and Social Services Departments as well as linking into the health sector.

Recommendation

- a) As part of the long term strategy for children with ASD, the County Council should invest in the future provision for children with ASD. This must include a strategic examination as to the growth needs of Holbrook and Peak Schools and whether these schools can in the long term provide the level of provision required. This must also be examined in relation to the high, continuing and possibly increasing costs that the

County Council spends on out of county placements.

- b) Consideration is given to other options for dealing with the expected growth in children with ASD, this may include the building of a new special school, although it is recognised that this option would have substantial capital and revenue costs.
- c) To set up the officer steering group to guide development of the ASD outreach function. This should regularly report to the Cabinet Member for Education.
- d) To develop interagency protocols for responding to the needs of children newly diagnosed with ASD.

3.3 Communication and co-ordination across the County Council

Throughout the review and from various sources, Members heard that communication from the County Council can at times be confusing and in some cases conflicting to parents. Having a child with ASD is very stressful for parents. The County Council should where ever possible limit the unnecessary anxiety and stress placed upon parents.

In some instances, such as statutory assessments of special needs, Derbyshire has legal constraints on what it can write. Nevertheless, Members would like the County Council to explore, without losing this statutory duty, how it can simplify letters, using advice from parent groups and the Parent Partnership.

The size and complexity of the County Council can be confusing to parents who are unsure which officer to speak to, and find themselves dealing with a number of different officers across County Council departments. Members would like parents to be allocated a single key officer, who, would be their first point of contact over a range of issues across all departments. This officer would take ownership for helping parents where appropriate with any problems that arise.

As well as dealing with County Council departments, parents will be involved with other organisations such as health services and the voluntary sector such as the National Autistic Society. Again it can be confusing for parents to understand the different roles each organisation plays in support of their child. Members have therefore suggested that, all organisations responsible for children with ASD prepare a simple brochure that would explain processes and roles of each organisation. This brochure should be available on all appropriate websites.

Recommendation

- a) That the County Council ensures that all correspondence is written as simply as possible and that the County Council responds promptly to parents.
- b) That a pilot study is undertaken for children with ASD who have a very high level of need. For these children, a designated officer is allocated to them who is the first point of contact for parents. This officer will deal with any issues/problems that the parent/child has across all County Council Departments. Furthermore, the County Council should consider the feasibility of involving the Health Service in the pilot so that the pilot is across all key agencies involved with children with ASD.
- c) That a simple brochure be prepared that explains the processes and roles of all organisations involved with children with ASD. In addition that this brochure be available on all websites, including the County Council's website.

3.4 Early Intervention by all organisations involved with children with ASD

Early intervention is a crucial theme. Members of the working group heard a presentation on the South West Autism programme (SWAP) which identified the need for early intervention by agencies involved in providing services to children with ASD. This is viewed as particularly important by parent groups in terms of both the child's well being and subsequent progress.

During 2001, the Education Department made a bid to the DfES small projects to fund the Early Bird scheme. This would run jointly between the Early Years Childcare Partnership and the Derbyshire Autism Support Group. This bid was unsuccessful.

Members heard that there is a need for a range of high quality early intervention initiatives which could be integrated with County Council provision for children at school age. However early intervention will be dependent upon high levels of investment.

Recommendation

- a) That the Education Department continues to investigate ways in which it can implement early intervention schemes for children with ASD. This should include meeting with the Early Years and Childcare Partnership to explore approaches to funding and develop early intervention packages for ASD. In addition this should also include working with other organisations such as the Health Service. The Early Years Learning at Home Service and Pre school Teaching Service for children with Special Educational Needs should serve as a foundation for developing early educational input.

3.5 Referrals and placements

Members heard that referrals and placements to schools were complex and at times confusing to parents. It is hard for parents to keep a clear track of, and be involved in decision about placements for their child.

Special school staff suggested a lack of clarity in placements of children placed with them. School staff told Members they sometimes first learned that children were being suggested for placement with them when parents contacted them.

A distinction may need to be made between visits to school which parents have a right to make and suggestions of placement. Parents often visit schools to see the range of special provision; this does not necessarily mean that the LEA intends to name the school in question. Nevertheless there appears to be scope for a development of the placement system so that parents have a clearer idea of the point reached in the process. This would also make the use of LEA placements more effective.

Schools mentioned a small number of incidents where places had become available but this did not appear to be known to the LEA centrally. Given the pressure for provision for children with ASD, the possibility of such incidents should be eliminated.

It was thought there was a lack of clarity about who was placed where, therefore Members suggested there should be a clear, transparent criteria for the use of different placements.

Recommendation

That a Member/officer working group be established to examine ways of improving the education placement system. This may include Members having oversight of placement systems in Education and Social Services and where joint places are made through the Complex Cases Panel.

3.6 Education residential opportunities/Social Services short breaks

The provision of short breaks is a major issue. A parent representative described to Members the stresses placed upon by some children with ASD and the need for flexible models of care.

The Education Department only provides residential opportunities in order to extend educational opportunities for that child. It does not provide a short break service. Residence is part of the provision of certain schools, where it is likely to benefit a substantial number of children on a school roll. This means only children who attend those particular special schools can access residential educational experience.

The Social Services Department as part of their assessment of the child's need, assess the parents' capacity to meet the needs of the child and support the child accordingly, thereby meeting the families need through meeting the child's need. The Department provide short breaks in the form of overnight residential breaks, link foster care or outreach. In addition support and breaks can also be given to children and young people without them leaving home overnight. The Social Services Department also provides home help support to disabled children, including children with ASD and funds a number of voluntary agencies to provide home based support and play schemes.

Recommendation

That Education, Social Services and the Health Service develop an integrated approach to providing short breaks, placing the child with ASD at the centre, and recognising that there is a continuum from outreach to residential provision.

3.7 Training

Training for staff is a central consideration. Derbyshire's training initiatives are mentioned in the web based part of the DfES/DOH 'Autism Good Practice Guide'. A booklet 'A child with autism in my class' has been prepared by Derbyshire County Council to provide support to teachers in the classroom.

Teachers have reported that this is helpful and allays concerns. This booklet has sold well nationally to a range of other local authorities including Buckinghamshire and West Sussex County Councils, London Boroughs of Enfield and Tower Hamlets and Falkirk Council.

The DfES guidance suggests that an ASD-friendly LEA should have a policy on provision for children with ASD that includes training and the need to extend expertise in ASDs at different skill levels.

The LEA provides a range of training activities to support teachers, these include: -

- Short courses in the 'course and conference' programme, mainly for mainstream teachers
- Longer courses for teachers in mainstream and special schools at Certificate and Diploma
- Longer courses for teachers and others in support services

The Education Psychology service co-ordinated the development of a training course for primary school classroom teachers. Over 400 mainstream primary teachers have attended the course. The course is to help teachers recognise and meet the needs of children with ASD. The course is run by a training delivery group which includes educational psychologists, outreach teachers, the Brampton Primary specialist teacher and a speech and language therapist. The training delivery group is currently developing courses for secondary schools and a specific course on Asperger syndrome.

However, Members were concerned that all teachers should have some training on children with ASD, and were particularly concerned about supply teachers who may miss out on essential training opportunities and training for secondary school teachers. In addition support staff, pre-school providers, other departments such as Social Services and possibly parents should be involved with some training initiatives.

Recommendation

- a) That the training course currently being developed for secondary schools is implemented as soon as possible
- b) That the County Council encourages both schools and the proposed Derbyshire Recruitment Agency to offer training courses in ASD to supply teachers
- c) That the County Council encourages all schools to avail themselves of whole school training (ie teachers, education care officers, and administration staff). This is essential for

children with ASD who will come into contact with teaching and non-teaching staff.

- d) That the County Council officers seek where appropriate to develop multi-agency training involving Social Services staff as well as those from Education.
- e) That parents be involved where appropriate in the planning of training for Council staff
- f) That in developing services, officers seek to make approaches available which train and support parents working with ASD.

3.8 Speech and Language Therapy

The effective and reliable provision of speech and language therapy is an important component in supporting children with ASD. Members have noted that levels of speech and language therapy varies across the County.

The provision of speech and language therapy is a Health Service responsibility. There is an assurance of level of service by the health service, although there is a national difficulty in supply, recruitment and retention of speech and language therapists. Within the health service there are conflicting demands between adult and child services.

The County Council has in specific circumstances bought in extra speech and language services from the health service. This may be the result of a SEN tribunal that has ruled that it must be made as part of the educational provision for a particular child. This SEN tribunal has ruled that the level of service available from Health is insufficient to meet the needs of a particular child.

When a new provision for children with ASD has been set up, the existence of speech and language service there can make the provision more attractive to parents. Parents tend to see a high provision of speech and language as a quality mark in services for children with ASD. In national calculations for education funding there is no allowance to provide a general speech and language therapy.

There is scope to explore more creative ways of working. For instance, if a block of speech and language therapy time was purchased for work with children with ASD, but not assigned to a particular school. It could be used creatively, by dividing the time between special schools, enhanced resource schools and outreach teachers.

Recommendation

- a) That discussions take place between officers of the LEA and managers of the speech and language service to identify a model of provision of speech and language therapy for all educational settings for children with ASD.

3.9 Other issues for future reviews

The Derbyshire Autism Support Group has raised a range of additional parental issues. The need for lifelong provision for many people with ASD was identified by the National Autistic Society in the 1970's. The expansion of lifelong provision, and its link with school age education so that transfer to adult services in health, social services and education are as seamless as possible, are important factors in reducing the stress on young people with ASD and their families. The issue of Post 16 provision could be a future review for the Education panel.

Recommendation

That the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee's Education Panel consider a follow up review of Post 16 provision for young people with ASD, and others with substantial special education needs.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Education Improvement and Scrutiny Panel agree to the recommendations outlined in Section 3 of this report and refer the report with completed Action Plan at Appendix 4 to Cabinet for consideration.

Working Group – Review of County Council's Provision for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Councillors: **Gary Mills**
 Janet Hill
 Mrs Judith Twigg

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

EDUCATION - IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of the Chief Executive_

28th October 2002

REVIEW OF COUNTY COUNCIL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER– SCOPING REPORT

1) Purpose of the Report

To consider the scope of the Improvement and Scrutiny review of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

2) Information and Analysis

The review will examine what provision exists for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within Derbyshire and how this can be improved.

Attached as an appendix is the proposed scoping report which sets out broadly, the issues that the review will consider and also how the review will be conducted.

As part of the review process, the Committee is asked to consider appointing two or three Members to form a Working Group to work alongside officers in undertaking the review.

3) OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That (1) the scoping report for the Improvement and Scrutiny review into County Council provision for children with ASD be approved.

(2) two or three Members be appointed to a Working Group to support the conduct of the review.

**Nick Hodgson
Chief Executive**

Education Improvement and Scrutiny Committee

5 Review of County Council Provision for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

1) Scope of the Review

The review will examine what provision exists for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within Derbyshire and how this can be improved.

2) Issues to consider

2.1) Legal Responsibilities

- What is the statutory responsibility for the County Council, and is this subject to change?
- What is the statutory responsibility of schools?
- What is the content and impact of national guidance in relation to children with ASD?

2.2) County Council Policy

- What is the County Council's policy/guidance on children with ASD?
- What training is provided for teachers, other education workers, social workers and other Council staff in working with children with ASD?

2.3) Current provision

- What are the implications of research into incidence of ASD for the Council and other services?
- What response is the Council currently making to the growth in diagnosis of ASD which has already occurred?
- What further response is needed to continuing growth in diagnosis?
- What is the provision made by all County Council departments for children with ASD?
- What support both with education and with care and family issues is given to families where children have ASD?
- What joint working and partnership arrangements exist between the departments within the County Council, and with external agencies and providers including Health?

2.4) Financial Issues

- What is the budget for educational provision for children with ASD and where is the budget spent?
- What indicators exist of the efficacy of this spending?

- What external education funding exists to help schools and the LEA and has the County Council been successful in accessing it?
- What is the budget for Social Services provisions for children with ASD and how is it spent?
- What indicators exist of the efficacy of this spending?
- What external education funding exists to help the Social Services Department to meet need and has the County Council been successful in accessing it?

2.5) Comparative analysis

- Compare provisions and funding for children with ASD in statistical comparator Authorities for education and Social Services?
- Identify Derbyshire examples of excellence and those in other Authorities

3) Methodology

3.1) Who should the Committee interview: -

- Internal County Council officers:
- Education officers with SEN responsibilities
- Education services providing SEN support, eg teaching support, outreach, educational psychology
- Early Years and Child Care staff
- Social Services managers
- Respite and other care providers
- School head teachers and other staff
- Voluntary organisations
- Primary Care Trusts

3.2) Other information sources

- Ofsted reports on Derbyshire and other schools
- School performance indicators where available and relevant
- Any information on Beacon Councils
- Application to Derbyshire services of the DfES Good Practice Guidelines for Autism
- National publications and conferences
- Regional Special Educational Needs Partnership
- Exercises already carried out to make cross-cutting examinations of provision (eg West Midlands Regional SEN Partnership study)

3.3) Timescale

Once the scope of the review is agreed, the work will have to be programmed into the following dates. It is suggested that the review be completed by February 2003.

APPENDIX 2

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS RECEIVED AND VISITS MADE BY MEMBER WORKING GROUP ON AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Visits and presentations:

The Holbrook Centre for Autism
Peak School
Sutherland House School
The Child Development Centre, Chesterfield
St John Houghton School, Kirk Hallam
Brampton Primary School, Chesterfield
Herbert Strutt, Belper
Derbyshire Autism Support Group
Derbyshire Parent Partnership
Valerie Webster, South West Autism Project (University of Bristol/Bristol
LEA)

Reports:

Report of education officer working group on autism, September 2002
(Principal educational psychologist)
Report on Social Services provision for children with autistic spectrum
disorder (Assistant Head of Service (Disability))
Report on speech therapy provision for children and young people with
ASD (Speech therapy managers and principal educational psychologist)
Report on outreach services to mainstream schools (Peak and Holbrook
head teachers and principal educational psychologist)
Report on County training provision for autism (Education autism
training group)
Report on LEA Financial Costs for Autism (Senior Education Officer
(Special Needs))
Report on Support on Autism for mainstream schools (County
Psychologist)
Report on Residential Provision made in Derbyshire Special Schools
(County Psychologist)

Action Plan

The table below sets out the recommendations outlined in this final report.

Recommendation	Implement Yes/No	What action has taken place?	Lead Officer	Timescale
3.1 Develop a long term strategy for children with ASD across the County				
c) That the County Council develops a long term strategy, possibly covering a 3 year period, for children with ASD. This should link into other council plans, including the SEN Strategy, New Millennium Education Plan, Children's Preventative Strategy, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy and the Council Plan. The strategy should take into consideration the view of young people with ASD.				
d) The long term strategy must include a detailed appraisal of capital and revenue implications for the County Council. The outcome of the strategy and the potential financial implications would be judged in the light of resources available.				
3.2 Future provision for children with ASD				
a) As part of the long term strategy for children with ASD, the County Council should invest in the future provision for children with ASD. This must include a strategic examination as to the growth needs of Holbrook and Peak Schools and whether these schools can in the long term provide the level of provision				

Recommendation	Implement Yes/No	What action has taken place?	Lead Officer	Timescale
<p>required. This must also be examined in relation to the high, continuing and possibly increasing costs that the County Council spends on out of county placements.</p> <p>b) Consideration is given to other options for dealing with the expected growth in children with ASD, this may include the building of a new special school, although it is recognised that this option would have substantial capital and revenue costs.</p> <p>c) To set up an officer steering group to guide development of the ASD outreach function. This should regularly report to the Cabinet Member for Education.</p> <p>d) To develop inter agency protocols for responding to the needs of children newly diagnosed with ASD.</p>				
3.3 Communication and co-ordination across the County Council				
<p>a) That the County Council ensures that all correspondence is written as simply as possible and that the County Council responds promptly to parents.</p> <p>b) That a pilot study is undertaken for children with ASD who have a very high level of need. For these children, a designated officer is to be allocated to them who is the first point of contact for parents. This officer will deal with any issues/problems that the</p>				

Recommendation	Implement Yes/No	What action has taken place?	Lead Officer	Timescale
<p>parent/child has across all County Council Departments. Furthermore, the County Council should consider the feasibility of involving the Health Service in the pilot so that it is across all key agencies involved with children with ASD.</p> <p>c) That a simple brochure be prepared that explains the processes and roles of all organisations involved with children with ASD. In addition that this brochure be available on all websites including the County Councils website.</p>				
3.4 Early intervention by all organisation involved with children with ASD				
<p>a) That the Education Department continues to investigate ways in which it can implement early intervention schemes for children with ASD. This should include meeting with the Early Years and Childcare Partnership to explore approaches to funding and develop early intervention packages for ASD. In addition this should also include working with other organisations such as the Health Service. The Early Years Learning at Home Service and Pre school Teaching Service for children with Special Educational Needs should serve as a foundation for developing early educational input.</p>				
3.5 Referrals and placements				
<p>a) That a Member/officer working group be established to examine ways of improving the education placement system. This may</p>				

Recommendation	Implement Yes/No	What action has taken place?	Lead Officer	Timescale
include Members having oversight of placement systems in Education and Social Services and where joint places are made through the Complex Cases Panel.				
3.6 Education residential opportunities/Social Services short breaks				
a) That the Education and Social Services Departments, and the Health Service, develop an integrated approach to providing short breaks, placing the child with ASD at the centre, and recognising that there is a continuum from outreach to residential provision.				
3.7 Training				
a) That the training course currently being developed for secondary schools is implemented as soon as possible b) That the County Council encourages both schools and the proposed Derbyshire Recruitment Agency to offer training courses in ASD to supply teachers c) That the County Council encourages all schools to avail themselves of whole school training (ie teachers, education care officers, and administration staff). This is essential for children with ASD who will come into contact with teaching and non-teaching staff.				

Recommendation	Implement Yes/No	What action has taken place?	Lead Officer	Timescale
<p>d) That the County Council officers seek where appropriate to develop multi-agency training involving Social Services staff as well as those from Education.</p> <p>e) That parents be involved where appropriate in the planning of training for Council staff</p> <p>f) That in developing services, officers seek to make approaches available which train and support parents working with ASD.</p>				
3.8 Speech and Language Therapy				
a) That discussions take place between officers of the LEA and managers of the speech and language service to identify a model of provision of speech and language therapy for all educational settings for children with ASD.				
3.9 Other issues for future reviews				
a) That the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee's Education Panel consider a follow up review of Post 16 provision for young people with ASD, and others with substantial special education needs.				