

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2019**

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR,  
COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**Agenda Item No:**

**OVERVIEW OF HOW THE COUNCIL  
CURRENTLY SUPPORTS THOSE  
LIVING WITH AUTISM WITHIN  
RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1. This report has been prepared at the request of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to provide members with an overview of how the Council currently supports those living with autism within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided
- 2.2 Consider whether there is any further information or matters contained in the report that it wishes to receive and scrutinise in greater depth.
- 2.3 Consider how to engage the experiences of service users in the process of scrutinising this matter and developing potential recommendations.
- 2.4 Consider how partner organisations can be engaged and scrutinised to facilitate the development of proposals to support those living with autism in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee requested an overview of current autism support services available in Rhondda Cynon Taf in order to identify the most practical and effective way to improve outcomes and access to services for those living with autism, following adoption of an amended notice of motion at the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Autism is a lifelong developmental condition that affects how people understand and interact with the world around them. Autism affects 1 in 100 people. It is referred to as a spectrum condition because of the wide range of presentations seen in autistic individuals; for example, some people may also have a co-occurring learning disability. However, all people who are considered to be autistic will share common difficulties, although these difficulties may affect them in different ways. The condition has different names attached to it, such as autism, autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) autistic spectrum condition (ASC). Asperger syndrome and pathological demand avoidance, which are all forms of autism.
- 4.2 The broad areas in which all people with autism will experience difficulties in: are social interaction; social communication and routines; repetitive behaviours and intense interests. Autism represents a very wide range of lived experience for those with the condition. Many individuals with the condition are able to live fulfilled lives with moderate challenges, however, autism can also be a condition which profoundly disables a person through the impact of the condition on their ability to interact with the environment and people in it.
- 4.3 The number of people diagnosed with Autism has increased and in turn has increased demand for diagnostic services for individuals of all ages across all services.
- 4.4 Diagnosis may occur at any stage of life - many people are diagnosed with autism in childhood, but more people are seeking assessments as adults, partly due to increased awareness of autism.

##### Children and Young People (up to the age of 18 years)

- 4.5 Diagnosis is undertaken by the Neurodevelopment Team of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. This multidisciplinary Team provides specialist knowledge and skills for children and young people with complex neurodevelopmental conditions (including ASD and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and their families in the following areas:
- assessment
  - diagnosis
  - advice and intervention (where appropriate and possible), and
  - liaison with existing services within the Health Board, partner agencies and voluntary organisations
- 4.6 Requests for assessment are considered from primary and secondary level care providers, as long as sufficient relevant information is available. However, requests for assessment are encouraged from the professional who knows the young person best.

Adults

- 4.7 The Cwm Taf Integrated Autism Service (IAS) provides diagnostic assessments for adults aged 18 years and over who are suspected of having autism. In addition to the provision of a diagnostic assessment, the Cwm Taf IAS provides:
- support for adults with autism with their social, communication, sensory, dietetic, leisure and employment opportunities and independent living skills via individual and group interventions
  - help parent/carers of children with autism to understand and support; behaviour that challenges, social, communication, sensory and dietetic needs via individual and group interventions
  - post-diagnostic support for adults with autism and their parent/carers
  - autism training, consultation and advice to professionals working with people with autism
  - signposting to other appropriate local services
- 4.8 The IAS forms part of a Wales wide Autism Strategy to develop support for individuals with ASD and their families and key components of the pathways and local services response has also been developed nationally.
- 4.9 Opened in March 2018, the Cwm Taf IAS is a multi-professional team hosted by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board with staff from the Health Board and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council employed as part of Team. The IAS Team is based in Ysbyty Cwm Cynon and consists of the following 10.5 whole time equivalent posts:

<b>Post</b>
Psychologist
Occupational Therapist
Speech and Language Therapist (0.5)
Dietician
Specialty Practitioner Nurse
Social Worker
Support Worker x 4
Administrative Assistant

**5. THE APPROACH OF SCRUTINY - GATHERING EVIDENCE**

- 5.1 To support the committee to develop its understanding of the challenges and experiences of residents in Rhondda Cynon Taf who are required to access Autism services, members are asked to consider what evidence they may wish to consider receiving as part of this matter.
- 5.2 This might include hearing from service delivery leads both in the local authority and from a health perspective.

- 5.3 Members are also asked to consider if there would be value in hearing the views and direct experiences of service users, either from individuals or through support groups or organisations with represent users of these key services.
- 5.4 Members may wish to utilise a varied of methods to gather this evidence, including a public 'call to action' to secure this information to support the future work of the committee in respect of this matter.
- 5.5 In taking this approach, members are asked to consider:
- What do we want to achieve?
  - What do we know/need to know?
  - What are we going to ask about?

## **6. SUPPORT SERVICES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

- 6.1 In Rhondda Cynon Taf, there are a range of services provided to children, young people, adults with autism and their families. The provision varies considerably depending upon the complexity of need of the individual.
- 6.2 Some individuals with autism will not use high-level, specialist services for their condition but will use some of the same services as everyone else. As well as the services that are available for everyone, there is also an overview service in Rhondda Cynon Taf for people with autism as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 6.3 There are also a range support services and groups either run in the voluntary sector or self-organised by parents and carers who provide invaluable support for other parents and carers, such as Autism Directory, ASD Rainbow; NSD Rhondda Cynon Taf; Follow Your Dreams, Autism Parent Support Group (Rhondda), etc.
- 6.4 In addition, the DEWIS Cymru Website provide information on autism related support services, events and activities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The National Autistic Society Autism Service Directory also provides information on services and support available for people with autism, their families and people who work with them throughout the UK.

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 This is an information report - there are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 This is an information report - there is no consultation required for this report.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 9.1 This is an information report - there are no financial implications aligned to this report.

**10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 This is an information report – none at present

**11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

11.1 The Scrutiny Working Group report links to the Council's Corporate Plan Priority People – 'Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone' and the Council outcome "Learning and Growing - all people will fulfil their potential through skills and learning".

**12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 This paper seeks to give Scrutiny Members an overview of how the Council currently supports those living with autism within Rhondda Cynon Taf.



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**OVERVIEW OF HOW THE COUNCIL CURRENTLY SUPPORTS THOSE LIVING  
WITH AUTISM WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Council 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**Officer to contact: Neil Elliott, Director of Adult Services. Tel No. 01443 444603**

<b>Service Title</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Service Information</b>
Neurodevelopmental Team	CTMUHB (CAMHS)	0-18	Provides specialist knowledge and skills for children and young people with complex neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism and their families in the following areas: assessment; diagnosis; advice and intervention (where appropriate and possible) and liaison with existing services within the UHB, partner agencies and voluntary organisations.
Integrated Autism Service	CTMUHB	18+	Provides diagnostic assessment for autistic adults (sometimes jointly with other services including support and advice for autistic adults and parent carers, including: anxiety, social skills, accessing leisure and recreational activities, developing your daily living skills (such as paying bills, shopping and cooking) and accessing other services such as healthcare or employment support or other difficulties which you may be experiencing.
Training and awareness	Halcyon Foundation	All ages	Commissioned by Heath and Adult and Children's Services - Halcyon raises awareness of autism and related neurodevelopmental conditions through training and education. It aims to reduce conflict within families and communities and offers advice and support to all those affected. Halcyon is made up of parents, carers, those on the autistic spectrum and professionals.
Educational Psychology	Access and Inclusion, Education	0-19	Highly skilled team of qualified Educational Psychologists (EPs) who support children and young people with a broad range of difficulties and needs. Within this team, there is a specialist subgroup of EPs who have additional experience, expertise and training in relation to autism. This team work collaboratively with school staff, parents and the Health Board to assist in the identification of the needs of the children and young people, recommendations with regards to provision to meet these needs and support with regards to the diagnostic process.
Early Years Outreach project	Access and Inclusion, Education - via Ysgol Hen Felin	3-5	Specialist Teacher and Teaching Assistant input to schools, to support transition of early years learners with additional needs including autism into mainstream school settings. This includes staff training, advice and support to implement recommended strategies over a 6 week transition period.
Home Visiting Service	Home-Start Cymru	0-11	This commissioned service supports families of children under 11 years of age who are experiencing any of the following difficulties; parent or child's emotional wellbeing, low self-esteem, conflict at home; managing children's behaviour and the child's learning and development. Home-Start provide tailored packages of support to all families, including those with autism on either a one to one basis, or by peer support groups, they also have a sensory room within their family area.

<p>Parenting Provision</p>	<p>In-house Universal Parenting Team</p> <p>Commissioned - Challenging Behaviour Support Group</p> <p>Commissioned - Valleys Kids</p>		<p>Universal Parenting Team provides a variety of parenting programmes as well as , offering bespoke packages of one to one support in the home, tailored to the family’s needs,. The Team coordinates all the referrals for parenting programmes and allocates them based on need. The dedicated behaviour programmes are: Early Bird; Early Bird Plus; Parent Factor in ADHD and Early Intervention Behaviour Programme.</p> <p>The Team and Valleys Kids co–facilitate the following programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Bird programme for parents of pre-school children with a diagnosis of an autism. The 8 week programme aims to support parents in the period between diagnosis and school placement, empowering and helping them facilitate their child's social communication and appropriate behaviour in their natural environment. It also helps parents to establish good practice in handling their child at an early age, so as to pre-empt the development of inappropriate behaviours.</li> <li>• Early Bird Plus programme for parents of children aged 4-8 years of age with a diagnosis of an autism. The 8 week programme gives parents an awareness of what autism is, the right type of communication and behaviour management strategies.</li> </ul> <p>The Challenging Behaviour Support Group and Valleys Kids co–facilitate the following programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Intervention Behaviour Programme - An 8 week programme developed in partnership to provide support for parents whose children do not have a diagnosis of autism. This new programme has been developed using strategies from existing behaviour programmes to meet the identified gap in support for parents with children who do not have a diagnosed condition.</li> <li>• The Parent Factor in ADHD for parents of children aged 5-16 years who have received a diagnosis of ADHD. The 8 week programme aims to help parent’s to support their child by understanding the ADHD diagnosis and treatment, learning new strategies and to be able to advocate on their child's behalf, particularly within the education system.</li> </ul>
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Parenting Provision	Challenging behaviour Support Group	0-18	The service offers support to parents /carers of children with challenging behaviours, both pre and post diagnosis, by offering families bespoke one to one support, group support, parent link up, peer support / parent match support, thematic training, they also deliver parenting programmes (as stated above).
Parenting Provision	Valley Kids	0-18	The service is commissioned to provide parenting support and open access family play provision. The service offers full inclusion on all parenting programmes delivered (in addition to the specialist programmes stated above), they also offer fully inclusive bespoke one to one support, family engagement and additional support.
Resilient Families Service	Children's Services		The Service is a wider service and not dedicated for people with autism. The Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS) will work with families where the neuro-developmental, cognitive or physical impairment needs of their child(en) are below the statutory threshold for intervention and the family requires specialist support to understand and manage their child's needs and/or address the impact on the wider family. Families may require early intervention or intensive intervention. The CANS team will be responsible for providing bespoke, specialist support to families that focuses on improving the quality of family life; delivering short term intensive packages of support to families in order to develop effective parenting strategies to maximise a child's potential; and advocating on behalf of families with other services and agencies.
Disabled Children's Team	Children's Services	0-19	The Team is the specialist social care service that carries out social care assessments and provides services to children and young people with disabilities, including autism. The Team works with individual children and young people to developing independent skills through an accreditation model following ASDAN or OCN evidence skill building. Some of the support that may be provided include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of short breaks provided in-house and by commissioned services. It is meant to allow families to spend time together without the disabled child and for the disabled child to have fun, try new activities and develop friendships.</li> <li>• Direct payments</li> <li>• Community Occupational Therapy support to reduce the impact of disability within the home environment</li> </ul>
Special School placements	Access and Inclusion, Education	3-19	Highly specialist placements for learners with very complex learning needs including autism. There are four special schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maesgwyn School</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park Lane School</li> <li>• Ysgol Hen Felin</li> <li>• Ysgol Ty Coch, including the satellite site at Buarth y Capel in Ynysybwl to meet the needs of young people aged 14 to 19 with primary need of autism and who had previously been taught in specialist autistic provision.</li> </ul>
Learner Support Service - speech language and communication needs, including autism	Access and Inclusion, Education	3-19	Outreach service to support schools to meet their needs of learners with autism and social communication needs (often first call from schools prior to autism diagnosis).
Learning Support Classes	Access and Inclusion, Education	5-16	<p>Specific classes for learners with diagnosis of autism and high level need. There are learning support classes in ten mainstream schools for pupils with autism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abercynon Community Primary</li> <li>• Hafod Primary</li> <li>• Maesybryn Primary</li> <li>• Oaklands Primary</li> <li>• Penywaun Primary</li> <li>• Perthcelyn Community Primary</li> <li>• Williamstown Primary</li> <li>• Aberdare Community School</li> <li>• Bryncelynnog Comprehensive</li> <li>• Porth Community School</li> </ul> <p>Other classes support learners who may have autism alongside other more complex needs e.g. learning disability, behavioural needs.</p>
Therapies Services	CTMUHB	0-19	<p>Local Health Board Therapies Service which includes Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and Dietetics provide a range of interventions and treatments for children and young people (and their families) for people with special/additional/learning disability needs including people with autism. The services offer evidence based advice and treatment/interventions for children and young people with autism and work closely with the child/young Persons educational placement to advise on strategies/treatments to support the individual.</p> <p>Access and Inclusion work in partnership with Local Health Board to provide pupils within the autism provisions with an enhanced Speech and Language Therapy Service, this is above and beyond the service provided by the Core Team.</p>

Young Adult Carers Project	Carers Support Project	18-25	The project is fully inclusive and provides a 2 tier level of support. They provide intensive support to all newly referred young adult carers, by offering tailored packages of support based on their assessed need, and provide support to the established young adult carers who continue to participate with the project following their intensive support phase.
Parent Carer Network	Carers Support Project		The network is a separate database within Carers Support Project with 448 parent carers registered. The majority of these care for children with autism. The network have their own newsletter section (called Smalltalk) within the Carers News booklet 3 times a year with specific information and news related to parent carers. During the school holidays, Carers Support Project will organise family events, requested by the Disabled Children's Team, for example circus skills workshop, Pontypridd Park takeover and trips to Techniquet and Cantref Farm. During term time the focus of events tends to be on carer learning, most recently nutrition for autism, CV workshop and functional reflexology. During the coming months, information coffee mornings will take place with speakers from the Disabled Children's Team, speech and language and resilient families to name a few.
Adult Social Work Teams	Adults	18+	Teams across Adult Services carry out social care assessments for adults with autism who may also have a learning disability or mental health condition in order to assess what care and support they need. Some of the support that may be provided include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice and assistance</li> <li>• provision of respite services</li> <li>• accommodation services</li> <li>• day service opportunities,</li> <li>• care at home and direct payments</li> </ul>
Specialist day and residential placements - Ty Coryton, Cardiff	Ty Orbis	8-19	Commissioned by Children Services - Ty Coryton provides a specialist integrated day and residential service for children and young people who have a diagnosis of autism.
Specialist College placement - Beechwood College, Sully	Beechwood Court Ltd	16+	Commissioned by Adult Services - college offers day and residential placements to learners aged 16+ who have learning disabilities and/or autism.
Junior Stars	Leisure Services	Up to age 24	Focussing on access to physical activity and sport this service supports children and young people who are vulnerable, at risk or have identified health needs, including autism.

Day Services - Autism Life Centre	Autism Life Centre	18+	Commissioned by Adult Services - Autism Life Centre (based in Trealaw) provides specific day time service for adults (up to 10 attendees) who have a diagnosis of autism but also a complex learning disability.
Day Services - Complex Autism Service	Adult Services	18+	Specific in-house day time provision (based in Treforest) for adults with autism who have a learning disability. The Complex Autism Service follows the Teech Method. Due to a projected increase in demand we are currently exploring options for more specialist provision in the Cynon Valley rather than place individuals out of County.
Day Services - Learning Curves	Adult Services	18+	In-house learning disability day services (Treforest, Llwynypia and Gadlys Aberdare) that support a number of individuals with autism and an associated learning disability and support individuals stepping down from the Complex Autism Service.
Residential Placements - Ty Coed, Longford Court, Neath	National Autistic Society	18+	Commissioned by Adult Services - Ty Coed provides a specific residential service for adults who have a diagnosis of autism.
Residential Placements - Pen Y Coed, Crumlin and Green Gables, Aberkenfig	Values in Care	18+	Commissioned by Adult Services - these residential placements provide 24-hour specialist support and accommodation for young adults with learning disabilities who have complex needs including those on the autistic spectrum.
Respite Accommodation	Adult Services	18+	In-house respite provision that supports adults with a learning disability who may also have a diagnosis of autism. Current facilities include Beech Cottage, Aberaman; Clwyd Wen, Miskin; Ystrad Fechan Bungalow, Treorchy and Belle Vue, Treforest. Beech Cottage and Ystrad Fechan offer an option of loan or selected occupancy in order to support individuals with a more severe diagnosis of autism.
Supported Living Accommodation	Adult Services	18+	Both provided in-house and commissioned externally - we support adults with a learning disability who may also have a diagnosis of autism to live independently in their own homes as tenants with others.