



Self Assessment of our SEND Implementation

November 19

*A new approach to special educational
needs and disability*



Improvements in Autism Assessment

What was the issue

- Across the County of Devon waiting times for assessment and diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder have been lengthening. For a number of years demand has increased, without corresponding additional capacity. In addressing this, historically resources have been moved towards assessment and diagnosis services and away from intervention. This mirrors the national picture of Autism assessment for under 18s.

Our Journey so far

- Devon CCG and prior to its formation, NEW Devon CCG and TSD CCG, have worked with providers and multi agency partners to address both the increases in referrals and need for system improvement to enable more children and young people to have assessments for Autism. There was also impetus from the Devon County Council SEND Inspection highlighting long waiting times for Autism assessment.
- Multi agency working across providers has led to redesigning of services making better use of resources, information and condensing assessment processes where appropriate.
- Issues have been highlighted to senior leaders across Devon and NHS England.
- Work has taken place with adults services across Devon who are also redesigning their service model for Autism assessment and support.
- Devon County Council's local Area Inspection for SEND in December 2018 highlighted waiting times for Autism assessment as an area for improvement.

What have we done?

- Senior Leaders across Devon have recognised that additional resources are needed for Autism assessment as well as improvements to the offer for children, young people and their families pre and post diagnosis. Funding from the NHS has been allocated to a waiting list initiative which will enable a significant number of patients to undertake their assessment with another local provider and to resource additional staff in Devon and Torbay.
- Funding from Devon CCG, Torbay Council and Devon County Council, for improvements to adults Autism services, will also support education courses for families of young people of transition age, about to move into adults services, (aged 14-18 years). These will be delivered across localities and cover Autism awareness, communication, behaviour and sensory processing.
- Organisations have worked together to map the integrated local offer for Autism across adults and children's services so that families can clearly see what's available to them.

What difference has this made?

- The impact of the waiting list initiative will be that a significant number of CYP will be assessed for Autism, leading to decreased numbers waiting and waiting times for those remaining on the list.

- Autism education courses are due to start in November 2019. Parental feedback from a similar pilot in Northern Devon has been positive and informed the development of this course.
- Mapping of services and improvements to the SEND Local Offer will enable families and young people to better see what's on offer.

Areas for further action

- Further business planning is being led by the CCG with parents, Local Authorities and providers to consider what resources are needed for a better pre and post diagnostic support offer.
- Children and Family Health Devon is leading the redesign of their Autism service to create a stronger system better able to manage the number of referrals for Autism Assessment.

Immediate next steps

- Testing of the Devon Local Offers for Autism will be carried out with parents and professionals and areas for improvement identified.

Author

- Jo Hooper and Charlotte Child