

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST		COMPLETED BY: Dr Petra Corr, Jayne Colville, Lisa Curlett, Ruth Adamson, Fiona McClements, Richard Whitehouse
		DATE:
PRIVATE MEMBERS BILL – Autism (Amendment) Bill		Sponsor – Pam Cameron MLA (DUP)
Additional components of strategy		
Section	Objective	Where <u>applicable or relevant</u>, please state how this will impact on your Department, including potential costs.
Section 2 (4A)	<p>The autism strategy must set out how training (including accredited training) is to be provided to the staff of Northern Ireland Departments and other public bodies to best address the needs of:</p> <p>(a) People with autism, and (b) The families and persons with autism.</p>	<p>Costs associated with releasing staff to facilitate and attend relevant training.</p> <p>NHSCT have become the first Trust in Northern Ireland to commit to becoming JAM Card friendly in introducing the JAM Card to support autistic people and those with communication difficulties access the full range of services we provide. Phase 1 covers Emergency Departments, Community Mental health, Supported living, Radiology, Outpatients, Medical Records and Cancer Services.</p> <p>JAM Card training is being rolled out on an ongoing basis to staff within the NHSCT which involves a 10-15 minute online session. JAM Card training which stands for Just a minute is provided by the NOW Group, and although not exclusive to autism supports those with communication challenges and barriers including autism when accessing services, whilst also supporting staff to be more aware. This training involves visual materials displayed in services/departments following completion of training.</p> <p>NHSCT have a contract with Autism NI who deliver 24 full days training/consultancy per year. 20 days are provided/offered to Adult Centres, and 4 specifically to other Trust staff. Courses include -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Autism, anxiety and behaviour • Communication and sensory processing • Fundamentals of autism • Intro to Autism and risk behaviours • Social skills <p>The Paediatric ASD Service provide yearly input into the Social Services Training Directory providing ASD Awareness for Social Work staff "ASD strategies to support</p>

staff working with families". They also regularly engage in training health colleagues in a range of awareness and support to manage children and young people. This training is provided to CAMHS, CEIS and AHP's. Courses include -

- Eating issues related to ASD
- Social and emotional regulation
- Sensory issues and sensory strategies
- Impact of ASD on families
- General ASD Awareness
- Use of visual strategies in supporting families

The Paediatric Service this year are also working with MDT Teams and associated GP's in Causeway Area to develop their awareness of ASD.

In Feb 21 the ASD service released -"Exploring ASD" podcast series aimed at parents and carers of autistic young people to support families with specific areas of need. The podcasts released to date address the following topics:

- Conversations to have before an ASD assessment
- Why does my child go from 0-100?
- Good sleep and how to get it
- Supporting what you say in a visual way
- Lets talk about 'bad' behaviour
- Connecting through Communication

The Paediatric ASD service provide are a range of training courses available through the PACE -Parent and Carers Education Programme at Level 1 (ASD Awareness) & Level 2 (Specialist Training seminars)

HSC staff are offered an online training course (Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness) through the Regional HSC Learning Centre Portal. Please note this has currently been removed while it is being updated – NHSCT, the authors hope to have this completed by end of March 22.

The Recovery College within the NHSCT also provides a course focused on managing emotions in ASD which is co-produced and co-delivered by the Adult ASD Service in conjunction with service users. This course is open to all NHSCT staff.

		<p>The Adult ASD Service also provides individualised person centred training to HSC staff from different services on request. Training is also provided to residential/supported living staff on a bespoke basis.</p> <p>Paediatric and Adult ASD Services in conjunction with service user input are planning to provide training to GPs in the NHSCT catchment area regarding ASD services, and supporting autistic individuals.</p> <p>The Trust is working in partnership with Mid & East Antrim Borough Council to support them in becoming an Autism Friendly Borough. Part of this initiative has involved the Councils, leisure centres and outside spaces becoming autism friendly, and awareness sessions are being rolled out to local business including hairdressers/barbers.</p> <p>NHSCT Emergency Departments will be completing the Autism NI Impact Award in order to create autism friendly spaces, with the development of a specific site action plan containing reasonable adjustments that will be implemented. This is being further explored across other services within the Trust.</p>
(4B)	The autism strategy must set out how the Department is to make provision for an autism early intervention service.	<p>Investment will be required to further develop early intervention services. In particular there are no early intervention services for adult ASD in the Trust.</p> <p>Work continues to further integrate NHSCT service delivery based on children and young people's needs within the subdivision of Child Health, Development and Emotional Wellbeing.</p> <p>*This is in line with the Principles of the Regional Framework and the Subdivision's strategic direction.</p> <p>Ongoing benchmarking work with PHA to inform regional consistency for ASD Services for Children, Young People and their families.</p> <p>Paediatric ASD service continues to offer a Telephone Consult Service to provide timely support and early intervention to children, young people & their families to meet their immediate needs for those with ASD or those awaiting assessment.</p>
(4C)	The autism strategy must set out how the Department is to make provision for an autism	The NHSCT would welcome an autism information service to provide accessible support for all the noted groups. There would be a resource and time implication for

	<p>information service which is accessible (both in person and remotely) by –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) persons with autism, (b) the families and carers of persons with autism, and (c) professionals working with persons with autism, and their families and carers. 	<p>this and it would need to be agreed where this service/provision sits, either locally or regionally.</p> <p>Currently the Northern Area Adult Autism Advisory Service continues to operate weekly by email, and monthly by email, telephone and zoom. Additional support has been added since Summer 2020 in the form of monthly virtual sessions covering topics such as emotional and mental wellbeing, employment, careers, housing advice and life skills.</p> <p>This service is available for anyone 16+ diagnosed with autism in the Northern Trust area, along with their parent/carers/advocates. This service can support in the following areas -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment – referrals to these services. • Education—encourage engagement with student support and establish these links. • Benefits—provide benefits letters regarding the individuals diagnosis. • Social opportunities or community based work—link in with social opportunities that are out there. • Advice around a person’s autism <p>The Paediatric ASD Service is currently developing their website to include a range of online resources. For example – 10 OT Videos to explore sensory difficulties and strategies to help regulation within the home setting.</p> <p>The Adult ASD Service is also developing a range of online resources to be available via NHSCT website.</p> <p>Currently the Adult ASD Service has autism awareness sessions available remotely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users following diagnosis • Carers’ information sessions.
(4D)	<p>The autism strategy must set out how the needs of adults with autism will be addressed, including their needs in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lifelong learning • employment support • recreation • emotional and mental wellbeing, and 	<p>The NHSCT will require additional investment to develop and expand services to meet the emotional health and mental health needs of autistic individuals in adulthood.</p> <p>The Northern Area has in place an action plan to address the outcomes within the Interim strategy (2011-2022). Actions include –</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supported living 	<p>NRC have adopted autism friendly status, providing support to their students including pre course support and visits.</p> <p>The Northern Area Adult Autism Advisory Service continues to operate weekly by email, monthly by email, telephone and zoom. Additional support has been added since Summer 20 in the form of monthly virtual sessions covering topics such as emotional and mental wellbeing, employment, careers, housing advice and life skills.</p> <p>Transitions working group focused on support in navigating transitions which include post 18+ into work, University. Previous seminar hosted by NRC to provide parents/carers/professionals with appropriate info provided by organisations such as NRC, Careers, AAIS, University and the employment support organisations ie USEL, disability Action, Dept. for Communities and NOW Group.</p> <p>Further work to focus on similar event specific to Learning disability, and further longer term plan exploring shorter webinars and podcasts.</p> <p>The Adult ASD Service, NHSCT provides post diagnostic information sessions on emotions management, social skills development, and understanding friendships and relationships. Therapeutic input regarding planning and organising and other executive functioning skills to aid autistic adults' learning opportunities and engagement in recreation opportunities is also provided. Redirection to appropriate Voluntary and Community resources within the Northern Area for employment support is also provided. There is however a gap for autistic adults with housing and supported living when there is no co-existing diagnosis of a learning disability and/or mental health condition.</p> <p>NHSCT is working alongside MEA Council in supporting them to become an Autism Friendly Borough. This has include MEA leisure centres and Outside spaces completing the Autism NI Impact Award, and awareness sessions for local businesses.</p> <p>NHSCT plan to work alongside other Councils to further develop their models of a similar nature improving access to community and recreation.</p>
Section 3 (A) (1)	The Department will take into account best international practice on autism.	NHSCT keep abreast of research and practice in terms of delivering services and supporting the autistic community.

<p>3 (A) (2)</p> <p>3 (A) (3)</p> <p>3 (A) (4)</p>	<p>The autism strategy must take into account that persons with autism, and their families and carers, have individualised needs.</p> <p>The autism strategy must take a multidisciplinary approach.</p> <p>The autism strategy must aim to ensure consistency of practice across all HSC trusts.</p>	<p>The Adult ASD Service undertakes person centred needs assessments to inform appropriate interventions, recognising the individual needs of service users. Currently the service is unable to address the demand for services. There are significant waits for both diagnosis and intervention into adulthood.</p> <p>The Adult ASD Services' remit is on diagnostic assessment and intervention, but there is a gap in the wider multidisciplinary areas such as support with wider social issues ie housing.</p> <p>NHSCT is working alongside its Paediatric colleagues across the region, alongside the PHA and HSCB to create consistency of practice.</p> <p>Autism services currently adopt a multidisciplinary approach, and assess needs to develop individualised tailored care plans.</p> <p>Staff from Adult ASD Services meet regularly to consider practice across HSC Trusts with view to ensuring good practice across the region.</p> <p>Important to note that the autism strategy also needs to be take a multiagency approach.</p>
<p>3 (A) (5)</p> <p>3 (A) (6)</p>	<p>The Department must set out measurable targets against which its effectiveness may be assess.</p> <p>Without limiting generality of consultations required under section 2 (2) those measurable targets must be developed in consultation with bodies with an interest in promoting the rights of persons with autism.</p>	<p>The NHSCT welcomes measurable targets regarding the roll out of the Autism strategy, and would welcome targets not only specific to children and young people, but also adults.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to an approach to targets and performance management which goes beyond access targets and considers the goal of the service alongside effectiveness in achieving that goal. Furthermore acceptability to service users should also be considered – e.g. friends and family test.</p>

		<p>At the moment the current target of 13 week wait is not met due to the fact that demand routinely outstrips capacity.</p> <p>Within Paediatrics the current targets are only for those commencing diagnostic assessment, not completing, and post diagnostic support. It does not account for those accessing support with a historical diagnosis of which the demand is increasing.</p> <p>The Adult ASD Service currently has a wait time of 63 weeks for diagnostics and 37 weeks for intervention.</p> <p>The Paediatric ASD Services' longest wait for assessment to commence is 80 weeks, and the longest wait for intervention is 81 weeks.</p> <p>The current target of 13 weeks is part of existing resource allocation. If additional activity is required as a result of amendments to the Bill there will be a requirement for additional resources in order to meet amended targets.</p> <p>The Northern Area Reference Group is a long established group made up of parents/carers and autistic adults. The NHSCT works alongside this group on a regular basis co-producing work and initiatives, as well as holding the Trust to account, promoting a service improvement agenda.</p> <p>The Northern Area Reference Group are also actively involved in the Northern Area ASD Forum, and subsequent working groups which all meet on a quarterly basis.</p>
4	<p>The Minister must lay before the Assembly, for each financial year, a report setting out how the funding for autism in respect of that year, to account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the autism strategy, • the prevalence of autism in children and adults, • the needs of persons with autism. • the needs of families and carers of persons with autism, and • the potential for collaboration with bodies with an interest in promoting the rights of persons with autism 	<p>Please also state how, and if, this can be managed within your Department.</p> <p>Meeting the needs of autistic children, young people and adults is delivered by a range of services within the Health and Social Care sector based on need and not diagnostic led. As a result the Trust may not fully capture the total autistic population accessing all services at this point in time. The Trust will however be able to report routinely on the use of dedicated funding for autism services for both adults and children and their families.</p> <p>Important to note that where any additional work is required investment needs to be considered.</p>

	<p>in this section 'funding for autism' means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) in respect of the Department, the allocation of funding for health and social care, in so far as it relates to the autism strategy; b) in respect of other Northern Ireland departments, the allocation of funding for that part of the autism strategy which falls within their responsibilities. 	
5	<p>The Department must appoint a person as an autism reviewer.</p> <p>The reviewer must issue a report annually on the exercise of their functions and may issue additional reports.</p> <p>The reviewer must send a report annually on the exercise of their functions, and may issue additional reports.</p> <p>The reviewer must send any report to the Department.</p> <p>On receiving the report, the Department must it before the Assembly.</p> <p>The Department must pay the reviewer expenses and allowances which are reasonably necessary in order to allow the reviewer to carry out their functions.</p> <p>The functions of the reviewer are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the autism strategy; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to assess the efficacy of the funding arrangements in respect of autism; • to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the law and practice relating to autism; • to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for persons with autism, their families and carers; • to commission independent research on best international practice on autism; • to advise the Assembly, if requested, on matters relating to autism; and • any other function which the Department may confer upon the reviewer. 	
<p>Further clause (presented in Explanatory and Financial Memorandum NIA Bill 31/17-22 EFM but not in Bill)</p>	<p>As well as an obligation to consult other Northern Ireland departments before preparing the strategy, the Department is now obliged to consult other persons.</p>	<p>A consultative questionnaire to request call for evidence launched on 23 August and will close on 8 October.</p> <p>Autism Strategy 2023-2028 Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk)</p>