‘Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives’

The Adult Autism act and strategy: What will it mean in practice?

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How Did We Get Here?

‘Fulfilling and rewarding lives’

The strategy for adults with autism in England (2010)

Accept difference. Not indifference.
Quotes from ‘I Exist’

“Keeping [her] clean, cooking food for her, doing all her paperwork, opening her letters, doing her washing and ironing and keeping her company because she’s very lonely, trying to cheer her up, trying to motivate her. Somewhere in between is ME, hanging on by my fingertips.”

*Parent, page 7, I Exist campaign report, 2008, NAS*

‘My obvious intelligence masks the level of my support needs. My mental health history biases ‘professionals’ against taking me seriously. The last support worker I had knew nothing about autism at all and could not understand the help I required.’

*Adult with autism, I Exist campaign report, p21*
What is in the strategy and delivery plan?

• Five main chapters:
  – Increasing awareness and understanding of autism
  – Developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis
  – Improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need
  – Helping adults with autism into work
  – Enabling local partners to develop relevant services to meet need

• Also sets out existing policies that apply to adults with autism
Some key headlines

• Improved training of all frontline professionals in autism.
• A recommendation to develop local autism teams
• Actions for better planning and commissioning of services, including involving people with autism and their parents/carers in this process
• Actions for improving access to diagnosis.
• Leadership structures at national, regional and local levels to support delivery
• Proposals for reviewing the strategy to make sure that it is working
Increasing awareness and understanding of autism

The first year delivery plan sets out further details, including:

• New training materials developed on autism for health and social care professionals will be available by December 2010

• All DEAs will get autism training by 1st January 2011. The delivery plan also sets out the training in autism available for others working in employment and benefits

• Proposals for a public awareness raising programme by Autumn 2010

• Work being undertaken to roll-out awareness raising in the criminal justice sector.
Developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis

The first year delivery plan sets out further details, including:

• A restating of the need for each local area to appoint a lead professional to develop diagnostic and assessment services for adults with autism.

• All areas should have a clear pathway to diagnosis in every area by 2013.

• National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines to help local areas design their diagnostic pathway to be published June 2012

• Work to highlight the fact that the strategy states that a diagnosis of autism should trigger a community care assessment and a carers assessment.
Improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need

• Personal budgets to be made available for all adults with autism who are ‘Fair Access to Care’ eligible

The first year delivery plan sets out further details, including:

• Guidance on reasonable adjustments that should be made to better meet the needs of adults with autism by 1 January 2011

• Jobcentre Plus should also be making reasonable adjustments for its clients who have autism: contact centres within JCP are being made aware of some of the difficulties that adults with autism can face when trying to claim for benefits over the phone
Helping adults with autism into work

Further details in the first year delivery plan including:

• Explaining how existing programmes on getting people with a disability into work should apply to adults with autism
• Review of Government campaigns promoting diversity at work with aim of including more autism examples
• Guidance on reasonable adjustments that should be made to better meet the needs of adults with autism by 1 January 2011
• Jobcentre Plus should also be making reasonable adjustments for its clients who have autism
Enabling local partners to develop relevant services to meet need

The first year delivery plan sets out further details, including:

• Developing regional delivery and action plans by end March 2011
• Importance of involving people with autism and parents/carers
• Examples of local autism partnership boards set out to help local areas set up their own
• Sample business cases for setting up local autism teams to be published by the end of the year
• Local self assessment tool to assist local areas in checking how they are progressing
What happens next?

- 17th December: Publication of statutory guidance to cover
- By end of 2010: Publication of delivery plan for years 2 and 3
- 1st April: First annual report on implementation
- June 2012: NICE guidance published
- 2013: Review of strategy
“Our daughter’s a very bright, healthy, lovable individual - if only the world would notice.”

*Parent, I Exist campaign report, 2008, NAS*