Warwickshire and the National Adult Autism Strategy

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Flashback 18 Months … Starting from ….
A confused state …

Unclear of the number of people in the county with autism … NAO return a bit of a shock

Individuals often bounced between Learning Disability/Mental Health Services

No agreed pathway … increased pressure from Elected Members around transition/high proportion of complaints from families of young people with autism

Little strategic thinking … policy and practice developed case by case

No services for people who fell short of the eligibility criteria for adult social care

Little formal support for families of adults and a fragmented co-support network … more support available for children/families
Start by changing what you can change …

Talk to customers/family carers

Build on existing good practice around training raising the profile of Autism Awareness Training as an option for all Council staff.

Improve information where you can … be honest where you can’t!

Develop a pathway and publicise it … then use it! …. 

Help staff across all front line teams to be aware of autism and where necessary carry out better assessments.

Get child to adult transitions right.

Nominate a lead to move things forward.
What helped …. 

Good political support from Scrutiny Committees.

The ability to develop a prevention service that can support people if they don’t meet social care eligibility criteria (yet) and move them into other services quickly when they need them.

Good information around young people in transition and a transition process that works

A group of families and people on the spectrum who wanted to get involved and shape the service … and still do

Countywide Autism Interest Group … an embryonic Autism Partnership Board?
Low Level Support Service ….

Developed from a post destined for a prevention service targeted towards the over-50’s

Gives us the opportunity to provide support to people with high functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome who would not meet the criteria for adult social care but are likely to if we do nothing.

Support is very outcome focussed … many don't want a “social worker” just help to break down a certain barrier. Customers are very clear what they can expect.

Wide brief to support individuals, families and help to develop a self support network in the County.

Caseload of around 40 individuals from 18 years … with a wide variety of needs.

Self Referral … easy in, easy out, easy back in
Focussed towards helping people access mainstream community services rather than specialist services.

Service has been increased to two workers and two days a week support from a specialist carers/family worker on a temporary basis.

Close working links with the Learning Disability Teams who can provide a full assessment and care management service if individuals needs change … We have learnt some important lessons here which have improved the service and people can now benefit from the support of both services at the same time depending on their needs.

Following feedback from families we are to piloting a 16-18 service from July allowing young people access to low level support and provide direct input whilst entering work or college at a critical time. Service essentially action research, working closely with the Centre for Autism Education and Research at the University of Birmingham
Dan’s “Self-Assessment”
The ASC Service Brokers role is fairly unique with a wide-ranging brief including:

- Assessment of individuals on the autistic spectrum who are at risk, without intervention, of becoming eligible for adult social care services. Completion of support plans with a focus on developing links and networks within the local community outside of traditional health and social care services. In reality however this assessment may also provide a route into health and social care services or adult mental health services if identified needs change an individual’s eligibility.

- Provide outcome focussed support initially limited to 12 weeks extended to a maximum of 24 weeks subject to review (whilst the principal remained the same after review we had to relax the time restrictions, in reality though the “on going” support delivered to customers has generally been in the form of telephone or text message).

- Involving close and extended families in the support planning process looking at their needs and also how they can continue to support the person on the spectrum without risk to family breakdown.
• Working flexibly outside of office hours where dictated by the support plan.

• Offer a supported link to key external agencies such as Jobcentre+, Further Education Colleges, universities and employment training providers.

• Developing a service and culture that allowed individuals to self refer as well as dropping in and out for support as need arose rather than people being permanently “allocated”.

• Helping to build some “self-help” infrastructure within the county for both families and individuals on the spectrum.

How much?

Approximately £47,000 per year for the two service broker posts, £3,800 specialist carer worker (6 months). Supervision/Service Development at Service/Assistant Service Manager level.
Are We There Yet? …. Not Quite

Adult Diagnosis/access to specialist health services for people without a learning disability.

Need to agree our approach around a specialist autism team … do we go it alone or join with Coventry will it be a fixed or “virtual” team … we share the same Health provider Trust with the City.

Explore what work we can do sub-Regionally with colleagues in Coventry and Solihull. Explore what work we can do nationally or with neighbouring authorities e.g. Oxfordshire/Leicestershire/Staffordshire

Complete the action research for the young peoples serviceto start July.

Better engagement needed with key external agencies like JobCentre+

Keep up the momentum in an uncertain future

Where are all the 30 year olds?