

Questions

a) What are your views on the effectiveness of the current arrangements for improving autism services in Wales?

- We welcome the new funding stream from the Integrated Care Fund to establish the Integrated Autism Service across Wales, in Particular the funding for the West Wales area.
- We have some concerns about all Health Services ability to recruit the necessary trained specialist staff into this service and acknowledge that this level of knowledge and experience may not be readily available across Wales. As a number of Health Boards are competing for the same pool of staff, there may need to be an approach of training our own staff in ASD diagnosis to ensure we have enough specialist staff to be able to provide the new Integrated Autism Service.

b) Do you believe Wales should have legislation requiring the Welsh Government to publish a national autism strategy for children and adults and issue guidance to local authorities and NHS bodies on implementing the strategy?

- We would welcome the introduction of this legislation in Wales to bring us into line with the other UK jurisdictions.
- Our concern would be the imposition in law of another statute alongside the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which may cause confusion for Local Authorities, Health Boards, Families and Practitioners

c) To what degree of detail do you think the content of a national autism strategy should be defined in legislation?

- Legislation by its nature has to include a degree of detail as at any time it can be open to challenge from citizens as to the way it is interpreted and implemented. Without a degree of detail it is difficult to see how the legislation can be effective on to what extent statutory duties are being met. A broad strategic aim has to be underpinned with detail as to its implementation.

d) What (if any) consultation do you think the Welsh Government should be required in legislation to undertake, when developing, reviewing and updating a national autism strategy?

- As it would for all groups including stakeholders, service users and their families, carers, Health Boards, Professional Staff Bodies, Local Authorities and any other identified interested parties

e) Do you believe that legislation should define how often a national autism strategy should be reviewed and updated? If so, how often should it be reviewed and updated?

- Our view is that if legislation is passed then the broad strategic view should be underpinned by guidance as to how this is measured, including the frequency and detail of the review and a requirement to update as needed.

f) Do you have any views on how Welsh Government should monitor what progress is being made and how public services should be held accountable for how they support autistic people and their families?

- As is the case for related legislation in Mental health we would encourage the similar scrutiny for all legislation that involves the care of vulnerable groups. So Scrutiny would be required as to how Local Authorities and Health Boards are implementing the detail of any legislation and be accountable for this.