Adult Autism Strategy Review: What's happening?

The NAS, Autism Alliance and Autism Plus are working with the Department of Health to deliver a number of events, focus groups and workshops, to help to gather views to inform the Government's review of the adult autism strategy (which was published as a result of the Autism Act) this year.

Regional events:

North West -

At The NAS' North West Autism Conference on 11 July, there was a presentation on the Government's review from Michael Swaffield, the lead civil servant working on autism at the Department of Health. There were also short presentations and discussions around the following themes of the strategy:

- training of staff who provide services to people with autism
- identification and diagnosis of autism, leading to assessment of needs for relevant services
- planning in relation to the provision of services to people with autism as they move from being children to adults
- local planning and leadership in relation to the provision of services for people with autism.

There was discussion on progress in implementing the strategy and possible solutions to challenges experienced. 80 people attended this event.

In partnership with other Hidden Impairments National Group members, Autism Plus are holding three focus groups in Manchester, for individuals with autism. Themes, dates and times for each are below:

Diagnosis	19 Sept	10.30am – 12.30pm
Employment	2 Oct	10.30am – 12.30pm
Education	2 Oct	1.00pm – 3.00pm

Each group will be open to up to 30 individuals. At each, there will be a short presentation on the strategy and then a group discussion to gather views on progress of the strategy.

For more information or to book a place, please visit www.autismplus.org/s/autismstrategyreview or email: autismstrategy@autismplus.co.uk

Yorkshire & Humber -

An NAS event is scheduled in the Yorkshire and Humber region for October (date not yet confirmed).

There will be discussion on what has worked well in terms of local implementation and what the key challenges are across the region.

Themes for discussion may include data collection, employment, criminal justice, engagement in local planning, further education provision and ‘low level’ or ‘preventative’ services.

Autism Plus are also holding focus groups for adults with autism across the Yorkshire and Humber region. Details below:

Sheffield	Hate Crime	12 Sept	10am -12pm
Sheffield	Education	12 Sept	12.30pm - 2.30pm
Sheffield	Housing	27 Sept	10am -12pm
Hull	Housing	13 Sept	10.30am -12.30pm
Hull	Employment	17 Sept	10.30am -12.30pm
Hull	Education	17 Sept	1pm - 3pm
Leeds	Housing	18 Sept	10.30am -12.30pm
Leeds	Employment	18 Sept	1pm - 3pm
Leeds	Diagnosis	4 Oct	10.30am -12.30pm

Please email autismstrategy@autismplus.co.uk to book a place.

South West -

An event organised by the NAS will be held on Thursday 3 October 2013 from 10am-4pm at The Canalside, Bridgwater, Somerset.

The day is aimed at people with responsibility for the planning or delivery of services for adults with autism. Members of Autism Planning Boards are also welcome to attend.

There will be a national update from Michael Swaffield, from the Department of Health, as well as regional updates, including feedback from the recent South West stock take exercise:

The NAS South West development team have created a benchmarking tool for local authorities to use to assess how well they are doing at implementing various aspects of the strategy. The South West team have recently undertaken a stock-take exercise assessing all local areas in the South West against this benchmarking criteria. A full report has been completed for the audit and this has been given to the Department of Health to feed into the review.

This event will be an opportunity to update on progress made in the region and to talk through some of the issues and challenges faced in terms of implementing the strategy, as well as how to move forward.

Please contact Sarah Belsten by Tuesday 3 September to request a place: sarah.belsten@nas.org.uk

London and the South East -

The NAS are organising focus groups in London and the South East in September/early October (dates not yet confirmed) for people with autism and their families.

Details are yet to be finalised, though the focus groups will explore local personal experiences of the strategy. The plan is to work with existing groups, from across London and the South East, for people with autism, parents/carers and partners. There will be a report from each group which will be submitted to support the Government's Review.

East of England -

Two NAS events are planned in the East of England.

The first event, planned for the week commencing 18 November 2013, will bring autism leads from health and local authorities together for half a day and will look at regional issues around implementation.

The second event will have a wider audience including people with autism, their families/carers and professionals in the region.

Autism Plus are also holding three focus groups, for adults with autism, in Nottingham. Details below:

Education	25 Sept	10.30am – 12.30pm
Employment	25 Sept	10.30am – 12.30pm
Housing	26 Sept	1pm – 3.00pm

Please email autismstrategy@autismplus.co.uk to book a place.

Other activity:

Participation on Partnership Boards

As well as holding events around the country, the NAS will be talking to people with autism and their families and carers who have taken part in Autism Partnership Boards. We'll be asking them about their experiences of sitting on their local board and exploring what would help them to get more meaningfully involved in future. We will also work with communities in four local areas to collect information on how areas can involve local people with autism beyond their Partnership Boards. Once we've spoken to these individuals and groups we will be producing a guide for local authorities to help them improve the way in which they involve and consult people with autism.

If you'd like any further information about this work, please contact tom.purser@nas.org.uk

Complex needs

We will also be looking at the impact of the strategy on adults with more complex needs and will be consulting with people with more complex needs through NAS services. Details of this are being finalised.

For more information on this, please contact ayla.ozmen@nas.org.uk

Data collection

The NAS have been commissioned by the Department of Health to look into what the main challenges are to implementing recommendations made in the strategy to improve the data collected on adults with autism.

We held a roundtable with professionals from local authorities and the NHS on 31 July to identify the challenges to effective collection of data and to share best practice. The results from the roundtable will be written up into a report that will feed into the Government's review. From this work, we will also produce a good practice guide for local authorities and health bodies on the collection of data.

For more information, please contact ayla.ozmen@nas.org.uk

'Deep Dives'

The Department of Health have committed to carrying out 'deep dives', or in-depth studies, of some local areas to further explore the barriers to progress and identify examples of good practice.

The Department of Health have said that they will look at four local areas representing a range of key characteristics and, towards the end of the review period, will conduct a series of interviews with people in those areas, with a standardised feedback form. Questions will be based on perceived issues and risks identified during the early engagement events.

The NAS are working with the Department of Health to identify local areas to look at in these 'deep dives'.

Autism Alliance

The UK Autism Alliance are organising a number of events involving people with autism, their parents and carers and local partners who are helping to implement the strategy.

For more information on the events run by Autism Alliance, please email info@autism-alliance.org.uk