ADDITIONAL CIRCULATION

Community Planning Aberdeen
Management Group

The undernoted item is circulated in connection with the meeting of the **COMMUNITY PLANNING ABERDEEN MANAGEMENT GROUP** to be held here in the Town House on **MONDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2019 at 2.00 pm**.

B U S I N E S S

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact EmmaRobertson, tel (52)2499 or email emmrobertson@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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Charter 11.5 - Autism and Employability

CPA CHARTER FEEDBACK FORM		
Project Aim:	Increase the number of autistic people who are supported to be in education, employment or training by 2021 *Note change of terminology reflect the language preferred by the autistic community	
Project Manager	Jenny Rae	
	Training Undertaken: Bootcamp - 31st May 2018	
Reviewed by:	Sacha Will	
Date:	24/10/19	
Checklist	**Summary of feedback**	
1. Is the project aim consistent with aim in the LOIP?	Yes	The aim in the charter is consistent with that in the LOIP.
2. Is there a sound business case explaining why the project is important?	Yes	The charter provides an overview of autism, the challenges and opportunities associated with training and employment. There is a clear link between the issues raised in this section and the changes identified for testing, around employment. The improvement team have indicated that other aspects of support for autistic people in education and training are being progressed through other LOIP projects.
3. Is it likely that the changes being tested will achieve the aim?	Yes	It appears that the changes suggested will improve support provided to autistic people in relation to employment
4. Will the measures demonstrate whether a change is an improvement?	Yes	A family of measures have been identified which should allow the team to track progress towards the aim.
5. Is there a mix of partners involved in this project?	Yes	A range of partners have been included which appear to represent all key stakeholders.
6. Clear outline project plan?	Yes	Project plan has been completed with key milestones and indicative timescales.
CPA Management Group/ Board Ready? Yes		

Improvement Project Title: Autism and Employability

Executive Sponsor (Chair of Outcome Improvement Group): Sandra Ross

Project Lead: Jenny Rae
Job Role & Organisation: Strategic Development Officer, Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership
Email Address: Jenrae@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Aim statement

Increase the number of autistic people who are supported to be in education, employment or training by 2021

*terminology changed to reflect the language preferred by the autistic community and adopted by ACHSCP

Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan:

This is a project within the LOIP under Stretch Outcome 11, Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026, and Key Driver 11.1, Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups.

Linked projects to Education, Training and Employment include:

Increase the number of people employed in growth sectors (digital/ creative; food and drink; life sciences; tourism; social care and health and construction) by 5% by 2021.

Increase the number of Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships in priority and volume growth sectors by 5% by 2022.

Increase the number of people from priority localities employed by public sector partners and in major capital projects by 2022.

Increase no. of people over 50 in employment in Aberdeen by 10% by 2021.

Increase the number of people from priority groups (care experienced young people, people with convictions, people with housing need) employed by public sector partners by 2021.

Increase the number of people entering employment from Stage 4 employability activity to 80% by 2021.

Increase the number of care experienced young people accessing a positive and sustained destination by 25% by 2022.

Increase the number of young people who effectively transition from primary school to secondary school by 2021.

Increase the number of young people taking up foundation apprenticeships to 142 by 2021.

Reduce the number of winter leavers with no positive destination by 50% by 2021.

Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 98% 2021.

Increase the number of young people living in Quintiles 1,2 and 3 who achieve a sustained positive destination by working with communities to 90% 2022.

Reduce the number of young people identified as having indicators of being at risk of being excluded from school by 2021.

Why is this important:

The autistic population face a number of challenges, many of which are based on societal views of what constitutes accepted social norms and behaviours. These social conventions can be exceptionally difficult for an autistic person to navigate, let alone challenge. Autistic people can therefore find it difficult to meet the expectations that are often set for others, finding relationship building and social situations challenging, at times, and often taking more time to find their place in the world because people's knowledge and understanding of autism remains limited.

The spectrum nature of autism means that some autistic people may require the support of multiple service areas due to the complex nature of their needs.

Autism *(also known as Autism Spectrum Condition - ASC, or Autism Spectrum Disorder - ASD)* is a neurodevelopmental lifelong condition. It affects different autistic people in different ways, with some individuals able to live and work independently, and some requiring specialist support. Autistic people develop differently from non-autistic people *(neurotypicals)*, sometimes faster than their peers, sometimes slower.

What everyone on the autism spectrum will have is sensory and social difficulties. These are not always obvious, as they can be masked, and people can develop coping strategies. Most have also held the assumption that others experience the world the same way, so it can make it difficult to recognise these differences.
Autistic people have issues with communication, both verbal and non-verbal, e.g. difficulties with interpretation, tone of voice, facial expressions.

Autistic people may engage in repetitive behaviours. While these may, at times, be restricting for their families *(e.g. only eating a limited range of food),* many autistic people love to engage in areas of special interest repeatedly.

The ability many autistic people have to focus intently, spot small details and notice patterns can be of great value to businesses and society generally. While some autistic people may, at times, be frustrated with their need to obsess over a certain topic, they generally derive much pleasure from doing so.

Autistic people can experience sensory input in a different way from non-autistic people. Being autistic means that they are more likely to have issues filtering out sensory information which can lead to being overwhelmed and/or under sensitive. Some of the repetitive behaviours referred to above, may also be a coping strategy to manage and control this feeling of being either overwhelmed or under sensitive.

Education, Training and Employment are key themes within our local Autism Strategy and Action Plan. The aim within the LOIP is broad and aspirational in nature, for the purposes of an improvement project that can be defined, tested and refined a more specific approach is required.   A focus will be taken on employment within this Project Charter, with a refined aim to improve employability for autistic people by working with 2 employers and 2 existing employability programmes to provide autism specific employment information which is tailored to organisational need in 2020-2021. This will aid understanding and acceptance of autism within the workplace and promote the valuable skills of autistic people within employment settings.

The greatest capacity for change sits within the sphere of employment. This targets a wider proportion of the public (working age or approaching working age); allows for sustained improvements in quality of life; and supports and promotes partnership working. Additionally, employment is a core factor of our lives as active citizens, with education and training typically preparing people to engage in the world of work. Learning from this project can be cascaded to training and education services, and links will be made to other relevant projects within the LOIP.

Benefit to Individuals

Many autistic people want to work. They possess valuable skills which may enhance team delivery and effectiveness however they often face barriers into employment which prevents them from being able to demonstrate their skills. Employability skills should be more readily taught or explored during education or within other formal supports.

Supportive aspects such as work trials, getting the right support at the Job Centre, reasonable adjustments or the Project SEARCH programme can be positive for autistic people, but these are not always available or utilised options. Often the key is finding the right work environment or one member of staff who can offer support. Providing support to increase knowledge and understanding of autism in the context of employment may lead to further positive opportunities.

Research commissioned by Scottish Government launched in 2018 titled 'The Microsegmentation of the Autism Spectrum', identified a new national prevalence rate

of autism of 1.035%. Additionally, research also suggests that prevalence of autism with an intellectual disability is noted as 32.7%, which is less than previously evidenced.

Cost of Issue

The Microsegmentation report also provides a Scotland wide context to the previous estimates of the cost of autism, suggesting a cost of £2.2 billion a year. The recently revised prevalence rates, including the presence of intellectual disability, also enable a lifetime cost per person to be identified of between £900,000 and £1.6 million. Many of these costs are related to the loss of productivity, i.e. employment of autistic people.

As stated, many autistic people want to work and have the skills to undertake a variety of roles successfully. The provision of information to employing organisations can support increased understanding and acceptance of autism, autistic people undertaking meaningful and active roles in society and could lead to employers considering how the skills of an autistic person can benefit their organisation on a wider basis.

Existing Support

There are a variety of employment support approaches which are undertaken locally, however none which centre on autism. Locally a Project SEARCH site provides support to young people (16-25) with additional support needs to gain skills towards employment. Although autistic young people can access this project, criteria is such that limited numbers may be able to access if they require the support the project can give. A number of employability projects exist in Aberdeen, which although may have supported autistic people into employment, had a broader remit and do not have specialist knowledge of autism and the workplace. There are no projects locally which offer to work with employers directly to enhance their ability to value autistic people within the workplace.

Some nation and global organisations have adopted schemes which recognise and value the skills and abilities of autistic people within the workplace. Google, Microsoft and JP Morgan are some of the organisations actively seeking to attract autistic employees into their organisations. JP Morgan are working with Autism Network Scotland in Glasgow to deliver upon this aim.

Project Aim

Learning from existing projects, locally and nationally, has supported the development of this project to centre on identified gaps; more specially on assessing and enhancing the confidence of employers to recruit and sustain autistic employee within their organisations. This also extends to employability programmes knowledge and skills in supporting autistic people to gain employment.

Currently little data exists on number of autistic people in employment, there are a number of reasons for this. Autism is generally a hidden condition; if someone is autistic they do not need to disclose this within a workplace; lack of diagnostic services mean

that many people will lack the confidence to state they require support around autism in the workplace as the may be asked to prove this requirement; there is still stigma and discrimination around autism meaning people may be less inclined to disclose; data may be collected at school leaver stage but there is no way to track people's destinations and ongoing support needs. Where we do hold data around health and social care need it is likely that the needs of the individual make sustaining employment difficult.

This project seeks to create an approach where knowledge and skills of employers are enhanced in relation to confidence to employ autistic people. The project will seek to do this by:
- Develop, test and refining a self-evaluation tool to gauge autism knowledge in employers and employability programmes in order to establish within individual organisations' where their baseline knowledge sits and where improvements can be made
- A toolkit of information for organisations will be developed, tested and further refined
- A self-evaluation will then be repeated to measure improvements within the organisation
- Continual reviewing and testing will take place aligning with the PDSA cycle

In order to robustly test this methodology a varied group of employers/employability programmes will be approached; this will ensure varied size and structure of organisations as well as varying levels of pre-existing knowledge.

Measures: (How will we know if a change is an improvement?)

Outcome measures
- Number of autistic people engaging in existing employability programmes
- Number of autistic people entering employment
- Number of employers with increased knowledge of autism in relation to employment
- Number of employability programmes with increased knowledge of autism in relation to employment

Process measures
- Number of employers engaged
- Number of employability programmes engaged
- Number of organisations accessing autism specific employment information
- Type of autism specific employment information required

Balancing measures
- Number of autistic people entering other 'positive destinations'
- Number of referrals to for Social Work intervention

Change ideas (What changes can be made that will result in improvement?)

- Develop, test and refine a self-evaluation tool to gauge autism knowledge in employers and employability programmes to establish a baseline of knowledge of employer's autism confidence. A repeated self- evaluation will gauge improvements
- Develop, test and refine a toolkit of autism specific employment information which increases knowledge and skills of organisations
- Work with organisations to further develop and refine the toolkit available to ensure relevancy and sustainability and repeated improvements
- Develop, test and refine the creation of a platform to showcase 'good' stories/case studies which encourages organisations and autistic people to learn from one another, seek to provide good outcomes and improvements, and enhance quality of life

Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these

There is a risk that autistic people may not wish to enter employment. This is mitigated by showcasing the 'good stories' of autistic people in employment. This also supports the risk that employers or employability programmes do not wish to engage. Additionally, employers and employability programmes will be approached who have links to our Project Team, autistic-led organisations, the Community Planning Board and those organisations who already hold an 'autism accreditation award'.

Employment is not the sole responsibility of the Health and Social Care Partnership or the Council, as such engagement with partners is key. A range of partners are part of the Project Team and additional links will be made with relevant parties as the project progresses, including engagement with autistic people.

Project Team:

Sponsor – Sandra Ross (Chair of RIS Group & Chief Officer - ACHSCP)

Project Manager – Jenny Rae (Strategic Development Officer - ACHSCP)

Subject Matter Expert – Bill O'hara (Principal Educational Psychologist -ACC)

Subject Matter Expert – Lesley Parker (Autism Outreach Principal Teacher – ACC)

Subject Matter Expert –Ruth Bell/Claire Rankine (Careers Advisors - Skills Development Scotland)

Subject Matter Expert – Ann Morrison/Derek Wright (Disability Employment Adviser/Employer & Partnership Adviser - Department for Work & Pensions/Job Centre Plus)

Subject Matter Expert – Marion McLaughlin/Alastair Meek (Vice Chair/Social Coordinator Triple A's)

Subject Matter Expert – Brian Walsh (General Manager - Grampian Autistic Society)

Subject Matter Expert – Heather Crabb (Business Liaison - Project SEARCH)

Subject Matter Expert – Sandy Reid (Lead – People and Organisation - ACHSCP)

Subject Matter Expert – Martin Allan (Business Manager - ACHSCP)

Outline Project Plan - Set out your initial plan about the timeline for your project. (This should be reviewed regularly)

Project Stage	Actions	Timescale
Getting Started (Project Score 1-3)	**What initial activities are required to get started?**	**When do you expect to complete this stage?**
	Forming the improvement team	
		September 2019
	Developing the project charter	
		October 2019
	Gathering and analysing baseline data	
		January 2020
	Understanding the current system	
		January 2020
Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7)	**What activities are required to start testing changes?**	**When do you expect to complete this stage?**
	Identifying changes and prioritising	March 2020
	Engagement with customers & colleagues	Ongoing throughout project lifespan
	Identifying the people, place to start testing	June 2020
	Commence Testing	September 2020 onwards
Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement (Project Score 7-10)	**What actions would be required to implement and sustain the changes that have resulted in improvement?**	**When do you expect to complete this stage?**

	Reviewing findings and forward planning for upscaling or revising project	March 2021
Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10)	**What actions are required to reach the full scale of the project? (Engagement of other teams/colleagues; other locations?)** Reviewing findings and forward planning for upscaling	**When do you expect to complete this stage?** July 2021

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