

## Towards an Edinburgh Autism Plan: summary

Our plan to support people with autism who do not have a learning disability -November 2013

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability. People with autism have difficulty with social communication, social interaction and flexible thinking.

### Background

The Scottish Strategy for Autism 2011 is the Government's vision for autism services in Scotland.

In 2010, the Council set out plans for services for people with autism who have a learning disability. We have since identified that there are significant gaps in services for people with autism who do not have a learning disability.

### Edinburgh Autism Plan

This Edinburgh Autism Plan is about getting the right service at the right time. This is so that people with autism, and their carers, can be independent. We have considered the needs of adults, young people moving into adult services, and children, focussing on people with autism without a learning disability.

We have identified six priority areas for service improvement:

- **development of a care pathway** – getting the right services at the right time
- **the wellbeing of children and young people with autism**
- **housing** – better support on housing matters and the right kind of housing
- **employment** – increased support in finding and keeping employment
- **individual outcomes** – improvements in people's quality of life
- **better training / awareness of autism in services and for carers.**

We consulted widely with people with autism, carers and a wide range of professionals on the plan between May and July 2013. There was significant support for the plan and the service improvements proposed. We are now putting into action the following recommendations.

### Recommendations

1. Children and Families will work with key partners to develop a Children and Young People's Autism Plan for Edinburgh. We will do this by increasing autism friendly environments across services for children through:
  - an autism framework within the Integrated Child Planning Process
  - autism awareness and training across Children and Families' services including an advanced training programme for targeted staff
  - an audit of existing services for children and young people with autism to identify priorities for improvement.

2. Improve service planning and develop shared training to support better transition between children and adult services by:
  - Getting It Right Transition Planning so that adult and children services plan next steps together
  - running transition groups for young people of school leaving age to address skills of independence and social awareness
  - supporting an increased number of students in years five and six at high school, offering opportunities such as the JET programme, working with agencies such as Enable and Caledonia Youth to support skills of independence and relationships.
3. Development of an autism care pathway for young people and adults with autism which is about getting the right services at the right time.
4. The Council and local housing associations seek opportunities for supported housing for adults with autism who do not have a learning disability and promote autism awareness training amongst front line staff.
5. People with autism are encouraged to take part in proposed employment initiatives in the City including Project Search, a model to help young people with disabilities gain employment and the Edinburgh Guarantee.
6. We will support employees with autism at work. This includes providing training for managers about supporting people with autism in the workplace, and for employees with autism for example on autism awareness and managing anxiety at work.
7. Refresher autism awareness training for Jobcentre Plus staff will be run annually.
8. We will consider how to provide/promote volunteering experiences for people with autism.
9. We will develop a network of Autism Champions who are being recruited from a variety of Council, Health and Voluntary organisations. They will have an understanding of autism and promote autism awareness in their teams. We have developed an elearning Autism Awareness module for the Autism Champions and other staff.
10. The Council, in partnership with PASDA, (a local support services for carers of adults with autism) is providing training for carers to build families skills in supporting people with autism.
11. Ensure current information, advice, and mentoring services in the city, for adults with autism, are sustainable and consider ways to increase these services in the city.
12. The Council and our partners celebrate World Autism Day on 2 April 2014 to raise awareness of autism in the city.
13. Edinburgh Autism Plan group has met to consider the on-going monitoring and governance of the Edinburgh Autism Plan. We have reviewed the membership to ensure key stakeholders are represented.
14. The Edinburgh Autism Plan was submitted to the Government in November 2013.

## Further information

You can read further information and the full Autism plan online at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/autism](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/autism)

email: [autism@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:autism@edinburgh.gov.uk)

or for general advice contact Social Care Direct 0131 200 2324

