




**Autism and Neurodevelopmental Diagnosis**

**Regional Priority / Outcome as identified in the Population Needs Assessment:**

- **To provide more timely diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and access to support services and information.**

**HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS? Our Population level indicators.**

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| <b>Increase more timely diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and access to support services and information and advice pre and post diagnosis.</b> | <b>Increase awareness, understanding and acceptance of neurodiversity across the region and recognise the varying individual support needs; via training to health, social care and wider RPB partners, as well as the wider public.</b> | <b>Increase opportunities and practical support for learning, training, volunteering, and paid employment, to support independent living.</b> |

The regional **Gwent Strategic Autism Group** will develop, co-ordinate and monitor delivery of this plan on behalf of the Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership and Regional Partnership Board. A market position summary was undertaken as part of the Population Needs Assessment and actions below have been agreed

- To provide more timely diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and access to support services and information and advice pre and post diagnosis.
- Improve awareness, understanding and acceptance of neurodiversity across the region to health, social care and wider RPB partners, including Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) as well as communities.
- Increase understanding and awareness of the varying support needs of people on the Autistic Spectrum, their families and carers (Some people may require full time and care support, some may be non-verbal and have complex needs, some may need support with day-to-day activities, whilst other people live fully independent lives).
- Support more opportunities and practical support for learning, training, volunteering, and paid employment, to support independent living.

| <b>(WHAT we are doing)</b><br>Action                             | <b>(WHO)</b><br>Partner<br>Agencies                                | <b>(HOW)</b><br>will we deliver  | <b>(WHEN)</b><br>Timescales/<br>Milestones | <b>Progress Measures</b><br><i>How much and how well have we delivered?</i><br><i>What is the difference made?</i>  |
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| <b>Deliver the Autism Strategy for Wales at a regional level</b> | Gwent Autism Strategic Group<br>RPB Autism Champion<br>IAS<br>RSLs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The strategy will be delivered and monitored through the bimonthly meetings of the Gwent Autism Strategic Group. Their action plan is currently being reviewed as a response to public engagement in Gwent around the Code of Practice.</li> <li>RPB Autism Champion reports back to the RPB after each Autism Strategic meeting, to update on developments.</li> <li>Regular reports and updates from IAS to highlight good practice and identify challenges.</li> </ul>   | Bimonthly                                  | <p>An increase in the number of people receiving a timely diagnosis.</p> <p>Individuals with autism and their families have increased direct access to specialist support through a self-referral model</p>   |
| <b>Implement Autism Code of Practice</b>                         | Gwent Autism Strategic Group<br>IAS<br>RSLs                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an audit and self-assessment against Code of Practice (CoP) requirements.</li> <li>Identify gaps, good practice and areas of joint working across the region with an implementation plan.</li> <li>Autism Champion for the RPB is included in governance structure of the Gwent Autism Strategic Group and reports back to the RPB on developments.</li> <li>Experts by experience (people with a diagnosis of autism, ADHD, and other neuro developmental conditions) form a key part of the group to share their knowledge and expertise. (Chair/Vice Chair)</li> </ul> | Bimonthly                                  | <p>Increase in the number of people receiving a timely diagnosis.</p> <p>Increasing in the number of people being offered pre and post diagnostic support.</p> <p>Increased access to accessible Information Advice and Assistance (IAA)</p> <p>Increased uptake of awareness, understanding and acceptance training on autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions.</p> |

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|   |                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore how RSLs can support and increase awareness for staff</li> </ul>   |                             | Increased number of people in training and paid employment opportunities.                                  |
| <b>Oversee and monitor delivery of Regional Integrated Funding delivery models of care and capital spend</b>          | Gwent Adult Strategic Partnership  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Partnership will oversee and review progress of all RIF funded projects through a standing item update at each meeting.</li> <li>A complete list of related projects will be shared with members to determine the schedule of meeting/presentations</li> <li>Projects will use a standard PowerPoint presentation setting out objectives, progress, barriers, and next steps, in delivering against the Area Plan</li> <li>Following the presentation, the Chair with partners will update a risk register for the Chair to update Leadership group and share a partnership report card.</li> <li>The Chair will include an overview of RIF delivery as part of annual presentation to RPB.</li> </ul> | Standing item, each meeting | Support delivery of national Models of Care and monitor effectiveness of projects.                         |
| <b>Review other local, regional and national plans to identify areas of collaboration and alignment of resources.</b> | ISPB<br>NCN<br>LAs<br>ABUHB<br>PSB | <p>Review and identify areas of collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ABUHB IMTP</li> <li>ISPB, NCN</li> <li>Local Authority Corporate Improvement Plans</li> <li>PSB regional Wellbeing Plan and delivery Marmot principles</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify how work contributes and deliver National Outcome Framework</li> </ul>   | Quarterly                   | <p>Maximise resources<br/>Single work programmes</p> <p>Identify opportunities for joint commissioning</p> |

## **Appendix 1: Policy Drivers and current work March 2023**

### **Policy Drivers**

- **Part 2 of the Code of Practice within the SSWB Act**
- **Autism Delivery Plan 2021-2022**
- **Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services 2021**
- **NHS Wales Act**

The Autism Code of Practice was implemented from September 2021 building on the Autism Strategy for Wales and reinforces existing duties within the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the NHS (Wales) Act 2006, as an alternative to a separate autism bill. RPB engagement through the covid 19 pandemic, highlighted the challenges faced by autistic and neurodiverse people and the potential of an increasing need for support. The Gwent Autism Strategic group supported by the RPB are the first in Wales to hold a stakeholder event with neurodiverse individuals, families' carers, and paid professionals to discuss the Code of Practice and what this means to peoples care and support. The workshops identified what is working well, where improvements are needed and gaps in provision, to help coproduce and shape future support provision. Discussions are also taking place around the name of the steering group to incorporate neurodiversity and its programme of work.

### **Current work in Gwent**

- In Gwent the referral rate to the Integrated Autism Service continues to increase. This is resulting in significant waiting times for ASD diagnostic assessment and post diagnostic support. Non recurrent funding has been allocated by WG to help address this and a programme is in place (to end of March 23) which is delivering additional diagnostic assessment clinics, post diagnostic support appointments, 'drop in' clinics and post diagnostic courses. This is in addition to core service provision and is mainly taking place during evenings and weekends.

- Several clinicians within Community Mental Health Teams across Gwent have undertaken training regarding ASD diagnostic assessment. This is allowing secondary care service users to access diagnosis and support in a timely manner.
- A further 4 Neurodevelopmental Practitioners have been appointed to secondary care services. These individuals will be instrumental in further developing and delivering neurodevelopmental services. They are currently developing psychoeducational packages for those referred for ND assessment, both pre and post diagnosis.
- Resources continue to be developed and are available on the Melo website. People may be signposted to these resources, but they are also available to the public and professionals.
- Work is ongoing to increase awareness and improve skills and knowledge of staff working across mental health and learning disability services. An online **Autism Awareness** course has been developed and is currently being rolled out to staff. ABUHB is also currently liaising with the National Autism Team, in relation to rolling out E-Learning modules to staff – **Understanding Autism** is currently available and **Understanding Effective Communication and Autism** will be available imminently.
- We have a Gwent Regional Autism Steering group, that is parent led and supported by the Regional Partnership Board Autism Champion. This is a multiagency group with partners from Local Authority, ABUHB and Independent Third Sector and is in the process of strengthening links with RSL's, so they can improve how they meet diverse needs in housing and support.