

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **9 March 2009**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategy Implementation Plan**

Purpose of report: **To inform the Committee of the action plan underpinning the ASD Strategy presented in September 2007**

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## **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to note and comment on the actions taken and planned to underpin the ASD Strategy and to note the progress made to date.

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 The actions within the ASD Strategy Implementation Plan are contained within current budgets, supported by County Council Invest to Save projects and through the Aiming High for Disabled Children grant from the government in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 The Committee will recall discussing the Children's Services ASD Policy and Strategy in September 2007 (attached as Annex 1). The Strategy is supported by an implementation plan (Annex 2) and this report provides an update on actions taken and describes further planned action.

2.2 A range of actions continue to be undertaken towards implementing the ASD Strategy including the following key successes:

a) A further class has been added to the specialist unit established by New Horizons School catering for young people with autism and extremely challenging behaviour.

b) A review of all special facilities attached to mainstream secondary schools has been completed which identifies improvements to the range of facilities in the county and the establishment of a network of secondary ASD facilities similar to the Heathfield facility.

c) The focus of the special facility at Filsham Valley School has been developed to provide for young people with severe autism.

d) The plans for the new Bexhill High School as the Building Schools for the Future pathfinder includes a specialist ASD facility.

e) Negotiations are underway for the establishment of two further secondary facilities and one further primary facility.

f) Discussions are underway with the Cuckmere House/St Mary's School, Horam around the possibility of specialist provision for young people with autism and challenging behaviour.

g) A strong partnership has been developed with the Further Education sector and in particular Hastings College of Arts and Technology (HCAT) has been identified by the Learning and Skills Council as the lead College for ASD in the region and is seeking accreditation from the National Autistic Society in partnership with East Sussex schools.

h) Torfield School has achieved Autism accreditation from the National Autistic Society. Six further special schools, three mainstream schools (Heathfield Community College, Manor Primary School, Filsham Valley School and Bexhill High School) and the two short break services for disabled children continue to work together to achieve accreditation.

i) The Children's Disability Service has set up an ASD Service (Spectrum) which works with local providers to increase the access to leisure and out of school activities for children and young people with autism.

j) The very highly rated East Sussex Early Support Programme Care Coordination Scheme will be extended from age 5 to age 7 for those families who continue to require a key worker rather than transfer to a lead professional.

k) The high profile transformation of short breaks for disabled children: Aiming High for Disabled Children Short Breaks Agenda will provide nearly £3m over two years to the county council to extend the availability of short breaks for children and their families. Children with ASD and other impairments including challenging behaviour are one of the two priority groups for this funding.

l) The availability of interesting and fun activities in East Sussex for children with ASD has been considerably enhanced by the County Council's support for the after school and holiday activities in special schools. In November 2008 this provision had already supported nearly 250 children access exciting activities and support them in making friends.

m) A specialist participation worker has been appointed to the Participation Unit to facilitate and promote the participation of children and young people with disabilities including those with ASD.

n) A review is underway in partnership with the Primary Care Trusts and the Mental Health Trust to look at how best to support families and children from the point of diagnosis through their lives through to transition to adulthood in order to ensure processes support best outcomes.

2.3 The development of the ASD Strategy has led to a range of key coordinated actions as indicated in the attached update to the implementation plan (Annex 2). Many actions require a multi-agency response and progress has been supported by the partnership between the local authority and health services, in particular, through the Children's Trust arrangements.

### **3 Conclusion and Recommendations**

3.1 The Committee is asked to note the update on the implementation plan and the substantial progress made.

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Local Members: all

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Annex 1: ASD Strategy

Annex 2: ASD Strategy Implementation Plan Update February 2009

## Annex 1

## ASD Strategy 2007-2012

### Background

This strategy has been developed as a result of the review of SEN provision which was undertaken in East Sussex in 2005. The review identified the increasing population of children and young people with autism and the need to develop a range of support services and provision to meet their needs and those of their families.

More recently the County Council has established a Children's Services Department to address to key aims of Every Child Matters and to work with other key partners to set up a Children's Trust which will provide integrated services to children.

The National Autistic Society's 'Make School Make Sense' campaign has highlighted the range of issues faced in school by children with ASD.

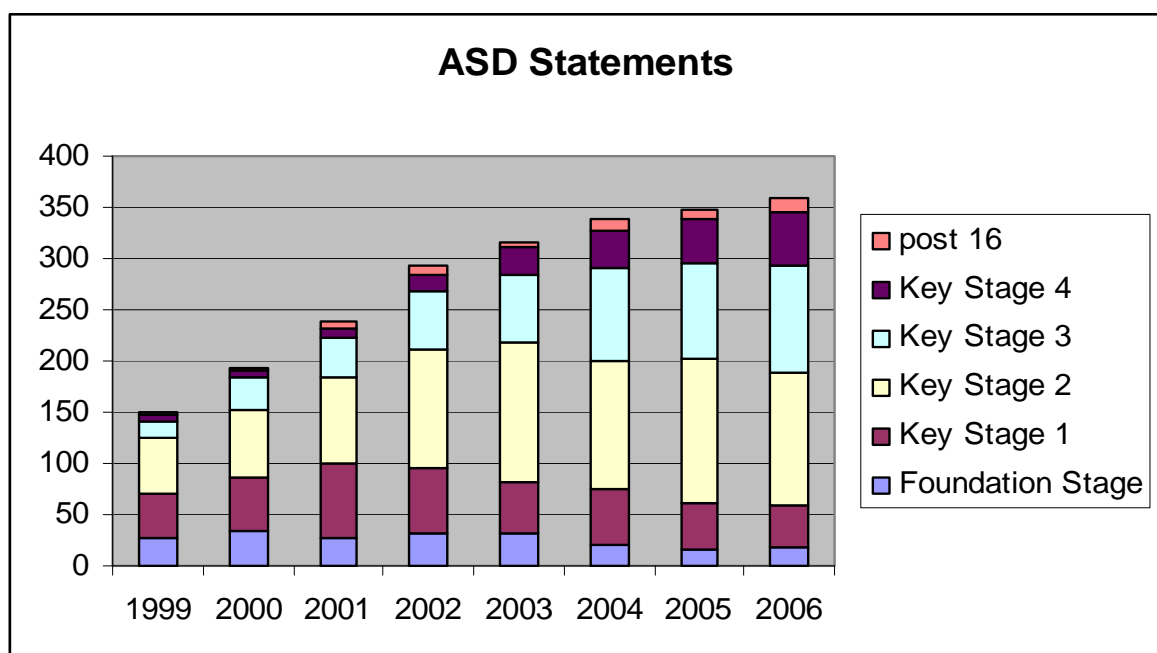
This strategy supports the aim of the East Sussex ASD Policy which sets out the Council's aim that all services and educational settings should become ASD friendly.

### The Current Position

#### a. Data

The National Autistic Society currently believes that about 1 in 100 children have an ASD. This would mean that there could be about 1200 children living in East Sussex who have an ASD.

There are 360 children with statements of special educational need for ASD. This figure has more than doubled since 1999.

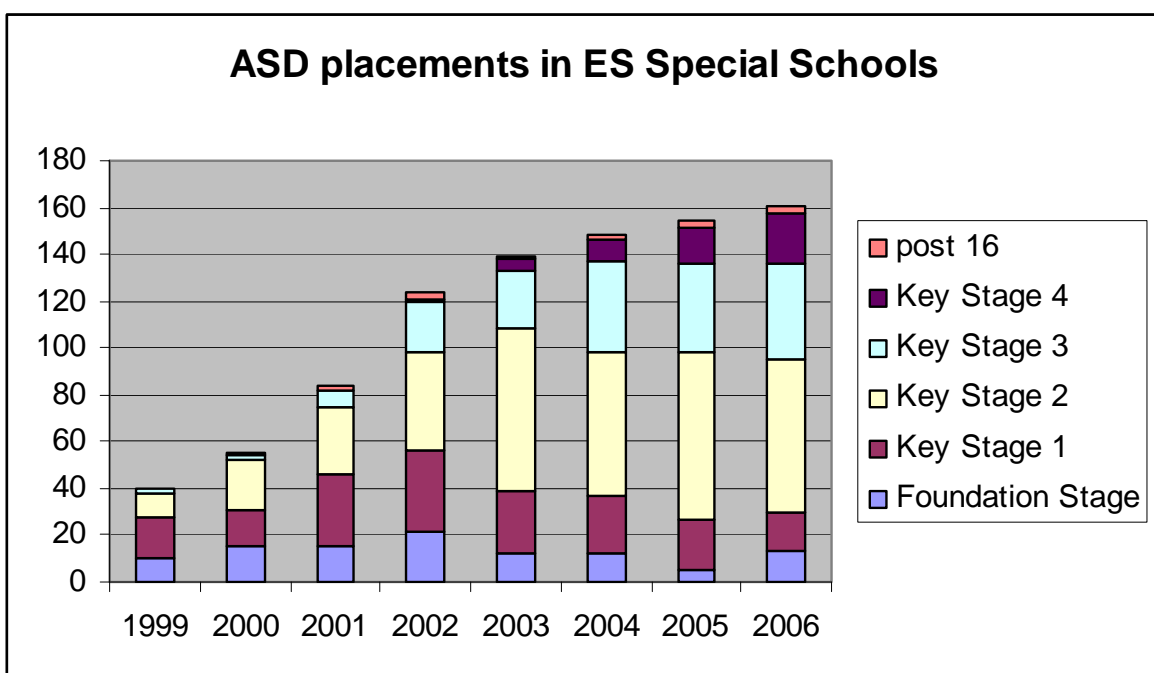


Annex 1

The number of statements in the 0-11 age range has broadly stabilised since 2002 at around 200. However the number of statements in the 11-19 age range continues to increase and is likely to be around 230 in the next couple of years. Therefore it seems likely that the total number of statements for ASD will stabilise at around 430 in the near future.

However not all children with ASD require a statement of SEN and the number of children supported at school action or school action plus was 142 in January 2006. This has increased from 84 in January 2004. The greatest increase has been in the 11-19 age range. The proportion of children with ASD out of all children supported at school action or school action plus has increased over the last two years.

There are 161 children with ASD attending East Sussex maintained special schools. This has increased more than four fold since 1999.



In a similar way to the overall number of statements the number of placements in East Sussex special schools in the 0-11 age range has broadly stabilised since 2002 at around 100. However the number of statements in the 11-19 age range continues to increase and is likely to be around 90 in the next couple of years. Therefore it seems likely that the total number of East Sussex special school placements for ASD will stabilise at around 190 in the near future.

A similar pattern exists for placements in independent and non-maintained special schools. There has been a steady increase in placements in the secondary age range. It is likely this is due to the lack of local provision for young people with high functioning autism who require a mainstream curriculum. The data shows that there is likely to be a demand for 40-50 additional local placements that cater for young people with high functioning autism.

The data reveals that the rate of increase in the number of statements for ASD is nearly twice as high in the east of the county as in the west. The greatest increase has been in the Hastings and St Leonard's area where the numbers have nearly

## Annex 1

doubled since 2001. This rate of increase far outstrips the other areas which have only had about a 50% increase over that period.

## b. Issues

- o Early identification, assessment, intervention and support

There are clear benefits to the identification of ASD at an early stage as it allows support to families and educational settings to be provided in a more timely fashion. By the time there is a request for statutory assessment of SEN it is often the case that things have started to go wrong and it would be more effective for the support to have been provided earlier and more speedily.

The NAS report that 40% of children wait more than 3 years for a clear diagnosis and that 21% of children with ASD have been excluded from school at least once.

- o Information for families

Parents have indicated that they would welcome opportunities to meet with other parents in similar situation and have greater access to training, support, advice and guidance.

- o Equality of access

The pattern of specialist educational provision for ASDs in East Sussex and the pattern of outreach support to mainstream schools is not even over the county. It will be important to ensure that there is equality of access to provision as far as possible from all areas of East Sussex.

- o Continuum of provision

The quality of educational provision for children with ASDs and learning difficulties is very high in East Sussex. However, there is a lack of specialist provision for young people with high functioning autism. There is also a need to ensure that there are appropriate post 16 education and training opportunities for young people with ASD and to ensure that the transition at all stages of education is well managed.

- o Increasing skills and expertise

School and service staff require high quality and targeted on-going training in meeting the needs of children with ASD and their families. There is already a substantial programme of training for school staff especially in the primary sector to which parents are also invited but there is a need to extend the availability to other staff groups.

- o Out of School and Leisure Activities

Children and young people with ASDs are often not able to take part in out of school activities and other local leisure opportunities because of their disability. There is a need to develop skills in the sector and to encourage and support local settings to include children with autism. This will support the mental and emotional well-being and development of the children and support their families to have a greater degree of normality in their everyday lives and in the community.

## Annex 1

- Supporting Family Life

Families of children with disabilities are much more likely to have low incomes than the general population. They find it difficult to access childcare and to maintain employment. The stresses and strains on families of having a child with ASD are well documented.

### Key Priorities

In order to address the issues highlighted above East Sussex Children's Services Authority, in consultation with key partners and parents of children with ASD, has identified the following key priorities:

- Multi-disciplinary integrated early identification, assessment and support
- Support, training and development
- Developing educational provision
- Co-ordinating specialist services
- Increasing family support
- Increasing opportunities for leisure and out of school activities
- Improving transition – (RCE)
- Increasing the consultation and participation of children and young people with ASD and their families – (person centred reviews, parent focus groups, parent participation strategy, children's participation strategy)

We are working together with partners to have:

1. Multi-disciplinary assessment of ASD
2. Clear and effective information for parents from the point of diagnosis
3. An integrated response to early identification providing a co-ordinated approach to the provision of specialist services through the ASD Monitoring and Support Groups
4. A range of educational provision which provides a wider choice for parents including developing 7-8 specialist facilities attached to mainstream secondary schools and 10-12 attached to mainstream primary schools and a wider range of opportunities for post 16 education, training and employment
5. A comprehensive training, support and development programme for professionals and parents including outreach from specialist provision.
6. A network of outreach/partnership support to mainstream services from specialist services.
7. All specialist educational provision and central services accredited by the National Autistic Society
8. A range of family support services including specialist social care teams, parent focus/support groups and improved access to respite, child care and out of school activities
9. Improved transition pathways at all stages including to adult services where appropriate, and involving children and young people in decisions about their future and the services they receive
10. Effective partnerships with parents including building on the Early Support Programme to have a lead professional where appropriate

**East Sussex Children's Services ASD Strategy Implementation Plan 2008-2012**

Area	Baseline assessment	Actions	Responsibility	timescale
<b>Priority: Multi disciplinary integrated early identification, assessment and support</b>				
Review of care pathways	Complete  green	Recruit external consultant to review the current pathways and make recommendations for future development  Implement the recommendations from the review	Alison Smith	December 2008  April 2009 onwards
Diagnosis and assessment	complete	To trial monthly multi disciplinary assessment clinics in the East of the County  Feedback on progress to secondary autism reference group	Consultant Paediatrician/Denise Ford	December 2008
Continue to develop and maintain area based multi-disciplinary ASD monitoring and support groups to facilitate early identification and support of children with autism spectrum disorders.	Green	Evaluation of the function and impact of the groups undertaken	Heather Sharp and Anna Read	August 2009

Annex 2

Area	Baseline assessment	Actions	Responsibility	timescale
<b>Priority: Support, training and development</b>				
Specialist training for new ASD service - Spectrum	Amber	Prioritise individual team members developmental needs Identify appropriate training opportunities	Alison Borland Antony Julyan Rupert Franklin Lester	Mar 2009
Establishment of an Accredited training Course for practitioners through establishment of links with Brighton University	complete	Training materials and speakers identified Links with Brighton University established	Joy Beaney Torfield School and Katrina Miller Brighton University	January 2009
Extend existing comprehensive training programme to social care and health practitioners	green	Adapt materials where appropriate to meet the needs of a wider audience.  Target key staff groups i.e. those from short break residential facilities	Heather Sharp	December 2008
Organise major conference to meet the identified continuing professional development needs of practitioners within East Sussex Special Schools working with children and young people with an autism spectrum disorder.	complete	Identified common CPD development amongst Headteacher group  Organised conference event on TEACCH led by international speaker Gary Mesibov.	Heather Sharp	June 2008



Annex 2

<b>Area</b>	<b>Baseline assessment</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>timescale</b>
Agree a workforce development strategy to support the implementation of the Aiming High for Disabled children short breaks plan	green	Work with partners to establish clear workforce development approaches in relation to short breaks provision by independent providers for children with ASD	Bernadette Dawes	April 2009
Positive handling and risk assessments	Green	Develop positive handling strategy  Continue positive handling awareness training  Increase range of accredited trainers in East Sussex	Jenny Clench	June 2008   April 2010
Autism Accreditation	Green	Continue to support schools in achieving accredited status	Heather Sharp	September 2010

## Annex 2

Area	Baseline assessment	Actions	Responsibility	timescale
<b>Priority: Developing educational provision</b>				
To identify resourced provision within secondary schools	Complete	Provision at Filsham Valley School operational from September 2008	Jean Haigh/Denise Ford/Heather Sharp	September 2008
	Green	Provision at Bexhill High operational from 2010.		September 2010
	Green	Two additional secondary facilities		September 2009
To identify resourced provision within primary schools	complete	Resourced provision within Manor Primary School operational from September 2007.	Jean Haigh/Denise Ford/Heather Sharp	September 2007
		Additional primary facility in the east of the county		September 2009
<b>Priority: Co-ordinating specialist services</b>				
ASD Team Manager to be appointed for specialist team to promote access to community leisure facilities	complete	Recruit and interview	Alison Borland Antony Julyan	April 2008
Recruit and appoint ASD Team members	complete	Recruit and interview	Antony Julyan Rupert Franklin Lester	September 2009
Review therapy services	complete	Undertake multi agency and multi disciplinary review of therapy provision	Alison Smith/Jean Haigh	January 2009
Develop commissioning plan for integrated therapy services	Green	Establish joint commissioning plan and processes	Alison Smith/Jean Haigh	April 2009

<b>Priority: Increasing Family Support</b>				
Build on existing services for young people with ASD in East Sussex on a multi-agency basis	Amber	Review existing services Develop Strategy for extending services	Alison Borland	Mar 2011
To provide a flexible range of training and support opportunities to families utilising the resources of the ASD Monitoring and Support Groups.	green	Fathers Group established  Extended Family Group Established  Parent Pack in development  Practical sessions offered to parents and carers:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in making visual support materials for use at home.</li> <li>• In writing social stories.</li> </ul> Problem Solving Groups for Parents now offered in each of the area locations.	Heather Sharp	September 2009
Key working	Green	Extend key working to children aged up to 7 where appropriate	Alison Borland/Julie Moorhead	April 2009

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Area	Baseline assessment	Actions	Responsibility	timescale
<b>Priority: Increasing opportunities for leisure and out of school activities</b>				
Review and evaluate impact of Spectrum Team	green	Identify data in relation to young people and families receiving service, no. of activities, organisations worked with etc Evaluate experience through questionnaires focus groups etc Report to Access and Disability Senior Management Team	Alison Borland Antony Julyan Rupert Franklin Lester	November 2009
Aiming High for Disabled Children Short Breaks agenda	Green	Submit plan to DCSF	Bernadette Dawes	March 2009
Implement plan	Green	Use grant funding to transform the availability of short breaks to children with ASD plus other impairments including challenging behaviour	Bernadette Dawes	March 2011
Contract for out of school activities in special schools	Green	Commission provider for continued after school and holiday activities in special schools	Jean Haigh	March 2009

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Area	Baseline assessment	Actions	Responsibility	timescale
<b>Priority: Improving Transition</b>				
Recruit Transition Co-ordinator	Red	Recruit and interview Develop brief for young people with ASD in Transition	Alison Borland Debbie Endersby	April 2008
Transition consultant	Green	Further contract with transition consultant to cover key tasks	Debbie Endersby	January 2009
Integrated Transition Team	Green	Scope development of integrated transition team for 14-25	Kathy Taylor Alison Borland Debbie Endersby	April 2009
DCSF/DH Transition Support Programme	complete	Complete and submit self evaluation questionnaire	Jean Haigh	January 2009
Transition Strategy	Green	Strategy agreed by multi-agency transition steering group	Kathy Taylor	February 2009
To produce pilot and disseminate transition materials	green	Establish focus group for development of materials  Produce and trial materials  Identify distribution source	Heather Sharp	October 2008 (materials now on C-zone)
Improve Information, Advice and Guidance	Green	Review allocation of specialist Connexions IAG	Fiona Wright	April 2009
Increase allocation of intensive personal adviser time to special schools	Green	Review and revise allocation	Mark Preston/Mac Heath	April 2009
Improve Connexions service delivery	Green	Implement action plan through secondment of specialist Connexions adviser	Mark Preston/Lynne Bayes	April 2009
Develop multi-agency transition pathways and protocols	Green	Review, revise and develop pathways and protocols	Kathy Taylor	April 2009

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Area	Baseline assessment	Actions	Responsibility	timescale
<b>Priority: Increasing the consultation and participation of children and young people with ASD and their families</b>				
Appointment of Participation Worker	complete	Recruit and interview	Alistair Lee	January 09
Develop participation of young people to key decision making fora	Green	Ensure participation of young people in the DCDG	Nicola Bryson	June 2009
		Increase the involvement of young people in the transition strategy		September 2009
		Plan for the increased involvement of disabled children in other decision making fora		September 2009
Development and enhanced use of visual materials to elicit the views of children.  Number of key contacts allocated to families increased by 30%	green	Produce materials and trial with individual children and families.  Parent views and feedback sought and recorded on a minimum three monthly basis through the identification of a key contact.	Heather Sharp	September 2009
Parents' information and participation event	Green	To provide information to parents and feedback on their input to the short breaks plan	Viv Oliver	February 2009