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## **Autism Information - Adults**

### **Strategy Update**

Following the Warwickshire County Council Cabinet meeting, the Warwickshire All Age Autism Strategy (2014-2017) was, at long last, approved on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014. This is accompanied by an implementation plan and a stark warning that there are limited financial resources and *'any future commission of services will need to be carried out more creatively within a restricted financial envelope'* (p4, Warwickshire All Age Autism Strategy).

A copy of the strategy and plans can be viewed at: <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/allageautismstrategy>

The emphasis of the strategy is, as widely expected, on implementing an appropriate referral pathway, training and awareness raising for staff and enabling employment opportunities.

There are also plans to improve the support available to adults with ASD. We look forward to finding out more about how the Autism Partnership Board will work with mainstream services to improve accessibility. We also welcome the plans to establish a framework of service providers who can deliver support to those considered on the borderline of the Local Authority criteria. As the criteria for accessing services has become more restrictive, many adults with ASD are failing to have access to prompt and effective support and we have grave concerns that the proposals in the forthcoming Care Bill will further restrict access.

The legislation and related guidance provides a positive framework, but holding authorities to account is proving to be an uphill struggle. It is widely acknowledged that there is a scarcity of appropriate services for adults with ASD and the current funding cuts are cited as implicit justification for this. We will be closely scrutinising the delivery

*PTO*

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of the implementation plan in order to monitor and if necessary, challenge how the strategy is rolled out.

We note that Healthwatch Warwickshire, in partnership with Public Health, will be commissioning research in the coming year on the long term effects of austerity on the more vulnerable and seldom heard communities across Warwickshire and we hope that adults with ASD and carers are involved in this work.

It is more important than ever for individuals to be aware of their own rights and the duties of health and social care providers, but this is a daunting, confusing and time consuming task.



**Debbie Anderson**  
Head of the Mental Capacity and  
Community Care Department



**Louise Courtney**  
Legal Assistant

If you need support or want to talk through the legal aspects of autism, please contact Debbie Anderson or Louise Courtney for free initial advice.

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