

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 March 2025

Update on Adult Autism and ADHD Pathway Development and Procurement

Report from: Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive

Author: Teri Reynolds, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Summary

This report seeks to provide an update to Members on the progress made on the health commissioned care pathway for adult Autism and ADHD services in Medway, the revised commissioning processes that have been undertaken, the governance arrangements for this, engagement with people with lived experience and future actions planned to address challenges within this clinical area. This report follows a previous report to Members in October 2024, where the Committee decided that the proposals were a substantial variation.

1. Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to note the update.

2. Budget and policy framework

2.1 Under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 the Council may review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision, and operation of the health service in Medway. In carrying out health scrutiny a local authority must invite interested parties to comment and take account of any relevant information available to it, and, in particular, relevant information provided to it by a local Healthwatch. The Council has delegated responsibility for discharging this function to this Committee and to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the Council's Constitution.

3. Background

3.1 Services for neurodivergent (autistic and ADHD) adults are limited when compared with services for other population groups e.g., mental health,

learning disability. It is important to achieve maximum efficiency from the comparatively limited funding available for autism and ADHD services through the development of a streamlined, seamless care pathway that addresses the needs of this population at several levels.

- 3.2 Work commenced on the redesign of adult autism and ADHD pathways in September 2023. The plan was to have a new combined pathway in place from April 2025. KCHFT issued notice on the adult neurodivergent (ND) diagnostic and post-diagnostic service in November 2023 indicating that they would hand the service contract back early. KCHFT and the ICB have worked together since then to take actions to mitigate the risks associated with the continued high demand in this clinical area. KCHFT agreed in principle to withdrawing the notice and to continue with the contract until the original end date of 31 March 2025.
- 3.3 The proposed new adult autism and ADHD care pathway aims to bring all elements of the existing provision together and to progress the development of a community autism support pathway at different levels to work with existing provision within health and social care to meet gaps in current services.
- 3.4 The submission from the Kent and Medway Partnership for Neurodiversity, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, provides an update on this work.
- 3.5 At its meeting in October, the Committee agreed that the change, although positive and welcomed, was a substantial variation as patients would experience change even if that were improved. It noted that this was a difficult area with challenges and there was a desire for the Committee to be a part of that journey. It was suggested that the Committee and the ICB consider it to be a 'light touch' SV, enabling the much needed improvements and developments to continue at pace.
- 3.6 Where the Committee has been consulted on substantial developments or variations, it has the power to make comments on the proposals. Where the Committee makes a recommendation and the consulting organisation disagrees with that recommendation, that organisation must notify the Committee of the disagreement. Both the consulting organisation and the Committee must take such steps as are reasonably practicable to try to reach agreement.

4. Risk management

- 4.1 There are no significant risks to the Council arising directly from this report.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications to Medway Council arising directly from the recommendations of this report. However, there may be some indirect financial impact as an increase in the rate of diagnosis could lead to an increase in demand for commissioned services.

6. Legal implications

6.1 The legal implications are set out in the report.

Lead officer contact

Marie Hackshall, System Programme Lead Kent and Medway – Learning Disability, Autism and ADHD

Learning Disability and Autism Programme Delivery Unit

Kent and Medway Partnership for Neurodiversity

(on behalf of NHS Kent & Medway ICB, Kent and Medway Councils)

Tel: 03000 411161 or 07852 540177

Email: marie.hackshall@kent.gov.uk or mariehackshall@nhs.net

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Update from the Kent and Medway Partnership for Neurodiversity on the proposals

Appendix 2 – ADHD Review

Background Papers

None