

Towards "Fulfilling and rewarding lives"

The first year delivery plan for adults with autism in England



Prepared by

Department of Health

© Crown copyright 2010

First published 2nd April 2010

Published to DH website, in electronic PDF format only.

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/publications>

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

DH INFORMATION READER BOX

Policy	Estates Commissioning IM & T Finance Social Care / Partnership Working
HR / Workforce Management Planning / Clinical	
Document Purpose	For Information
Gateway Reference	14087
Title	Towards fulfilling and rewarding lives
Author	Department of Health
Publication Date	02 Apr 2010
Target Audience	PCT CEs, NHS Trust CEs, SHA CEs, Care Trust CEs, Foundation Trust CEs , Local Authority CEs, Directors of Adult SSs
Circulation List	Medical Directors, Directors of PH, Directors of Nursing, PCT PEC Chairs, PCT Chairs, NHS Trust Board Chairs, Directors of HR, Directors of Finance, Allied Health Professionals, GPs, Voluntary Organisations/NDPBs
Description	Towards fulfilling and rewarding lives: the first-year delivery plan sets out the governance structure and the actions, with timescales and responsibilities, that will be taken in the first year to support the implementation of 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives': The strategy for adults with autism in England (2010)
Cross Ref	Fulfilling and rewarding lives': The strategy for adults with autism in England (2010)
Superseded Docs	N/A
Action Required	N/A
Timing	N/A
Contact Details	Social Care Policy and Innovation Department of Health Unit 124, Wellington House 133-155 Waterloo Road London SE1 8UG
For Recipient's Use	

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

Contents

Towards “Fulfilling and rewarding lives”.....	5
Brief overview of the strategy for adults with autism in England.....	6
Progress so far.....	7
Delivering the strategy	9
Increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals.....	13
Developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area	17
Improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need	18
Helping adults with autism into work.....	20
Enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism.....	23
Key dates 2010/11	27

Towards “Fulfilling and rewarding lives”

This is the first year delivery plan for the strategy for adults with autism in England. It follows the publication of the strategy, *Fulfilling and rewarding lives*, on 3 March 2010. The aim of this delivery plan is to show:

- how the strategy is being taken forward over the next twelve months
- the priorities for action in this first twelve months
- timelines and milestones associated with these priorities.

As the strategy made clear, change will be a long-term process. The primary focus in this first year is on setting up the governance arrangements and structures needed to drive future change, and the development of the statutory guidance and longer-term delivery plan, which will both be published by the end of 2010.

However, some specific actions are already being taken forward. This delivery plan identifies these and shows the considerable progress being made towards the end goal of fulfilling and rewarding lives for adults with autism. Some of these were initiatives that preceded the publication of the strategy – set out in the section Progress so far. Others indicate how we are moving forward, in particular:

- improving training around autism for frontline staff in health, social care and employment support – which the consultation for the strategy identified as a vital first step
- helping adults with autism into work – an essential priority, given the low numbers of adults with autism in employment.

This delivery plan is published on World Autism Awareness Day (2 April 2010), which this year is focusing on poverty. By giving adults with autism the right support into employment, we can make significant strides towards social, as well as economic, inclusion.

This first year delivery plan will be followed by statutory guidance for health and social care, and a three-year delivery plan, with milestones, timings and measures of success, by December 2010.

Brief overview of the strategy for adults with autism in England

The Government's vision is that:

'All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents.'

The Autism Act 2009 underlined the Government's commitment to achieving this vision. It was the first ever piece of legislation designed to address the needs of one specific impairment group – adults with autism. It was followed in March 2010 with the strategy for adults with autism in England.

Towards fulfilling and rewarding lives: a strategy for adults with autism in England sets a direction for long-term change to realise our vision but also identifies specific areas for action over the next three years. These are:

- increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals
- developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment
- improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need to live independently within the community
- helping adults with autism into work, and
- enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities.

The approach taken in the strategy is to make existing policies work better for adults with autism. This approach reflects the fact that there is already a wealth of government policy and initiatives that should support adults with autism. Therefore the emphasis of the strategy is to avoid placing additional statutory requirements or financial burdens on frontline staff delivering public services, on businesses or on local planners.

The strategy can be found at:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_113369

Progress so far

Rewarding and fulfilling lives underlined that the strategy itself is just one part of a wider process of change across government to improve the lives of adults with autism. It highlighted a number of actions which the government had already initiated to improve support for adults with autism. Progress against those actions since the publication of the strategy – as well as actions from the strategy -- is set out below.

- As announced in the strategy, a new Adult Autism Strategy Programme Board is being established. **The Board met for the first time on 31 March 2010.**
- The Department of Health (DH) is funding a study to explore rates of autism in a representative sample of adults in England. **The contract was awarded by the NHS Information Centre on 26 March 2010 to a consortium led by the University of Leicester. The other members of the consortium are the University of Glasgow, Kings College London and the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen).** Findings are expected in early 2011.
- As promised in *Valuing People Now* DH has launched a new Public Health Observatory (PHO) in relation to people with learning disabilities. **On 23 March 2010 the contract was awarded to the North East Public Health Observatory (NEPHO) at the Wolfson Research Institute at Durham University, in partnership with the Centre for Disability Research at Lancaster University.** This will collate existing information on the health and care needs of people with learning disabilities, what services they access, and the quality of those services, with the aim of improving health outcomes. This PHO will also collate information relating to adults with autism across the spectrum
- To improve processes around diagnosis, referral and management of autism, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is developing two new clinical guidelines – one covering adults, and one covering children and young people. **The NICE guideline for children and young people is due for publication by September 2011. The guideline for adults will be published by June 2012.**
- To help drive forward the personalisation agenda in social care for adults with autism, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has worked with the National Autistic Society (NAS) to produce an *At a glance Personalisation Briefing on Autism*. **This was published on 18 February 2010 and can be found on the SCIE website, www.scie.org.uk.**

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

- As part of ongoing measures to inform good practice in services at transition, DH and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) is funding a study on transition from children's to adult services, which will report in January 2012.
By the end of the financial year 2010/2011, DCSF will have given some £200,000 from its Transition Support Programme under *Aiming High for Disabled Children* to DH to support this research.

Delivering the strategy

The most important immediate steps for delivering the strategy are setting up the governance structures which will set direction, oversee delivery and monitor progress. There are three key tiers of governance for the strategy:

1. The Adult Autism Strategy Programme Board, providing overall programme governance
2. The Delivery Group, reporting to the Programme Board
3. DH Deputy Regional Directors of Social Care and Partnerships, who will oversee progress on a regional level, working closely with local leads.

The governance arrangements will operate within the context of the Planning and Performance Frameworks.

The roles and responsibilities of these different groups are outlined below.

The Adult Autism Strategy Programme Board

The Adult Autism Strategy Programme Board will be responsible for overseeing progress against the Adult Autism Strategy, and providing overall direction and governance. The board will be accountable to the Minister for Care Services and the Director General of Adult Social Care, who are joint chairs of the board.

The board has now been established and consists of representatives from across central and local government and the voluntary sector as well as leading academics in the field of autism. DH will, through an open recruitment process, seek to include on the board an adult with autism, and a representative of family carers.

A full list of members can be found on the DH website at www.dh.gov.uk along with terms of reference for the board. These terms of reference include compliance with equalities duties. Papers for board meetings will in due course be published on the same website.

To help the board monitor progress against the strategy, a database/information system to monitor progress is being established.

The board will produce an Annual Report on the implementation of the strategy. The first of these will be published by 1 April 2011.

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

One of the Programme Board's key activities for this year is to work with DH to develop a programme of activities and communication to raise awareness of the strategy. The programme will be complete by 31 November 2011.

The role of the Delivery Group and National Implementation Manager

To lead the delivery of the strategy, DH has appointed a National Implementation Manager and established a Delivery Group, to which the National Implementation Manager will report.

The Delivery Group will be accountable and report to the Adult Autism Strategy Programme Board. It consists of senior policy leads and the lead Deputy Regional Director for adults with autism. This group will:

- agree the programme plan and monitor progress
- oversee the use of budgets
- agree work to be commissioned to secure implementation
- quality assure work to be published through the programme
- analyse regional board progress reports and prepare papers for the Programme Board, and
- oversee the performance management for delivery, including the production of regional development plans.

The role of DH Deputy Regional Directors

DH Deputy Regional Directors of Social Care and Partnerships are based in the 9 Government Offices of the Regions, and have close links with Strategic Health Authorities. Their key role is to support at regional level the transformation of adult social care, as laid out in *Putting People First* and specific national strategies including *Fulfilling and rewarding lives*. In particular, they will lead regional planning and governance by:

- working with Directors of Adult Social Services and Directors of Children's Services, Government Offices, Strategic Health Authorities and third sector groups to ensure that there are strategic planning mechanisms/processes with meaningful representation from adults with autism and their carers. This should not specifically require the creation of new regional planning mechanisms or boards.
- producing regional delivery plans that demonstrate how the region will respond to the national delivery plan (see page 22 for more information on regional and local delivery plans).
- providing leadership and support for networks and other stakeholders and for building capacity in localities to support delivery of the strategy.

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

- producing a regional action plan, agreed with key partners, by 31 March 2011, showing key milestones and deliverables, based on the findings of an analysis/scoping exercise.

The strategy encourages local authorities to follow DH guidance which states that the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) should ensure there is a joint commissioner/senior manager who has in his/her portfolio a clear commissioning responsibility for adults with autism¹. Local leads will have a key role to play in supporting and working with Deputy Regional Directors in developing and delivering regional plans. More detail on the role of local government and local leads is set out later in this document.

Deputy Regional Directors will report and be accountable to, the Programme Board.

Working with stakeholders

The strategy was developed using the core principles of inclusivity and co-production, with extensive public consultation and the involvement of an External Reference Group on autism. In particular, it sought the views of adults with autism themselves, their families and informal carers, representative organisations and professionals working in any field who come into contact with adults with autism. It is essential that this approach continues during the implementation of the strategy and that clear processes are put in place for regular communication and consultation with adults with autism and their representatives.

Organisations that represent adults with autism have been invited to join the national Adult Autism Strategy Programme Board, and informal networks set up during the creation of the strategy will continue to be used to gather the input from stakeholders. There will also be formal consultation around the statutory guidance.

At both regional and local levels, we will encourage processes to be put in place to ensure that the views of adults with autism and their carers are sought and taken into account in the development and delivery of services locally. We will identify, in consultation with key stakeholders including adults with autism and carers, examples of best practice and promulgate these by March 2011.

¹ DH (2008) *Services for adults with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC): Good practice advice for primary care trust and local authority commissioners*

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

This is in line with the duty to involve set out in *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities*. This duty came into force on 1 April 2009 and is set out in section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and takes the form of an addition to the best value provisions of the Local Government Act 1999. The duty to involve seeks to ensure people have greater opportunities to have their say. The aspiration for the new duty is to embed a culture of engagement and empowerment. This means that authorities consider, as a matter of course, the possibilities for provision of information to, consultation with and involvement of *representatives of local persons* across all authority functions. Such consultation should involve groups which represent all equality strands.

Increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals

The strategy placed a clear emphasis on autism awareness training for frontline professionals across the public sector. During this year, the focus is on the development of new materials in health and social care, and the reinforcement of existing training initiatives within Jobcentre Plus.

Increasing awareness and understanding of autism within health and social care

- As was announced at the launch of the strategy, DH has committed £500,000² to the development of training for health and social care staff. DH will work with Skills for Health, Skills for Care, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the British Psychological Society, the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Royal College of Nursing to develop training materials by 1 December 2010. This includes the further development of online resources including the Skills for Health and Skills for Care toolkits, which will be particularly important for those already employed in the sectors. All training materials will take into account specific challenges in regard to various equalities duties.
- DH will work with SCIE, the Learning and Skills Council and relevant social and health care training bodies to ensure that autism awareness training can be incorporated into new and existing training portfolios.
- DH is working through the DH National Learning Disability Offender Steering Group to roll out autism awareness training to all staff in the criminal justice sector.
- Examples of best practice for providing training within health and social care will be included as part of the statutory guidance for health and social care, which will be published by end December 2010.

² £500,000 is centrally held and not part of allocations for local government or the NHS.

The statutory guidance will also include:

- best practice examples of effective local services for adults with autism
- examples of personalisation working successfully to give adults with autism more control over the social care they receive
- details of what information adults with autism and their family or carers are likely to need after diagnosis.

In producing the statutory guidance, DH will take account of all equality duties.

Increasing awareness and understanding of autism around benefits and employment advice

- As part of its response to both the autism strategy and its ongoing response to the points raised in the NAS campaign *Don't Write Me Off* (DWMO), Jobcentre Plus will ensure that autism awareness training is provided to all Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) who have not yet received it by 1 January 2011. Since 2005/06, full training for DEAs has included autism awareness, and Jobcentre Plus policy has been that all new DEAs should receive this part of their training. The training includes
 - a discussion around the needs of adults with autism, and
 - advice and good practice in helping adults with autism (for example, at Work Focused Interviews, in setting job goals, during job search, and when entering employment).

A reminder about the training requirement was made at the telephone tutorial for DEAs and their line managers held on 31 March 2010.

- Jobcentre Plus is also seeking to improve awareness and understanding of autism across its whole workforce. The information given to DEAs on autism is also available to all staff; and Jobcentre Plus will be bringing this awareness information to everyone's attention during 2010/11 through existing internal communications channels and Staff Diversity Network Groups.
- Jobcentre Plus will also run specialist programmes, such as the Professionalism in Decision Making and Appeals programme for managers. This covers case-based assessment, considering what spectrums mean, and autism as a subject for coaching team colleagues as an assignment in the higher-level programme for Decision Makers. More than 250 staff have been on the programme so far and a

further 30 have just joined. The programme is currently running at the Disability and Carers Processing Unit in Blackpool and will shortly be delivered in the Midlands, Cardiff and Bristol. Further training will be rolled out across the regions during the summer.

- Awareness training about the implications of autism has been given, in parallel, to Customer Liaison Managers in Local Service. Around 400 Customer Liaison Managers in Local Service have now received this training with the particular aim of assisting them at appointee visits to Disability Living Allowance customers at age 16.
- In terms of assessing eligibility for benefits – and in particular, for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – all healthcare professionals working for Atos Healthcare who carry out medical assessments are now required to read evidence-based protocols on mental health conditions, which include information on autism, as part of their induction training. In addition, all healthcare professionals are required to engage in a programme of continuing medical education. Atos, in conjunction with DWP, has developed a number of training modules in autism to support this programme. These include:
 - a “learning set” on ADHD and Asperger syndrome for employed healthcare professionals
 - a distance learning module with accompanying DVD on Asperger syndrome for sessional doctors, and
 - a presentation on autism at a medical conference attended by all employed healthcare professionals in 2008.
- Atos is also developing a further distance learning module for sessional doctors called “*Life with Autism – seeing the individual*”. It is anticipated that a draft will be ready by the end of April 2010, and that this will be shared with NAS for comment, with the aim of making it widely available by the end of the year.

Increasing awareness and understanding of autism within government departments

- The strategy recommended that autism awareness training should be included within general equality and diversity training programmes across all public services. All public services and government departments have now been made aware of this and are currently evaluating how to act upon it. For example:

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

- DWP is committed to reviewing its Disability Equality Scheme by spring 2011 in line with the Disability Equality Duty.
- During 2009, DCSF published DVD-based and online in-service autism training materials for early years providers and schools under its Inclusion Development Programme. These materials are currently being evaluated by the University of Warwick: a full report will be provided during 2011, with interim reports in the meantime. This, like the NICE guideline for children and young people with autism, is not directly part of the adult autism strategy but should be recognised as an integral element in realising the goals of the strategy – and the wider process of change for the adults of the future.

Increasing awareness and understanding of autism within businesses and the public

- One of the keys to achieving the Government's long-term vision for adults with autism is increasing awareness and understanding of autism within the wider community. The Programme Board will investigate the possibility of a nationwide communications campaign, delivered through stakeholders, that seeks to tackle the stigma often attached to autism, and will bring forward firm proposals by Autumn 2010. It will also examine the possibility of creating a network of "Autism Ambassadors" – local volunteers who actively represent and promote the needs of adults with autism in their area. The Board will consider how such a network could operate and what resources it would need.
- To specifically address the issue of lack of understanding of diversity at work, DWP has begun to review its campaigns and programmes, such as Employ Ability. The review will be completed by 1 January 2011 and it will aim to identify where more successful examples of adults with autism can be included.

Developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment

DH is committed to improving access to diagnosis and developing a consistent care pathway for adults with autism. However, this will take some time and require local partners to develop the right pathways in each area. This year, the focus is on the forthcoming NICE clinical guideline for adults with autism, which will include a model care pathway.

- The model pathway set out in the NICE guideline will form the foundation for local commissioners to develop referral and care pathways in their areas, supported by their strategic health authority where necessary. In turn, this will help make diagnosis more accessible and consistent. The publication date of the NICE guideline will be confirmed shortly.
- However, even while the guideline is in development, it is important to reiterate the strategy recommendation that local areas appoint a lead professional to develop diagnostic and assessment services for adults with autism. This lead professional will then be in position to act on the model pathway set out in the NICE guideline, having had an opportunity first to examine existing services in the area.
- As set out in the strategy, there should be a clear pathway to diagnosis in every area by 2013.

From diagnosis to assessments

- As the strategy made clear, under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, local authorities have a duty to assess a person who it appears to them may be in need of community care services – either at the individual's request, or in certain situations where the local authority believes care services may be necessary. DH would always have expected a diagnosis of autism to alert the local authority to a potential need for community care services and hence trigger the duty to assess under the 1990 Act, but the strategy makes this explicit. This message will be reiterated through a variety of communication channels, including the training for health and social care staff. Similarly, the fact that diagnosis of autism can also be a catalyst for a carer's assessment will be reiterated in the same way. Adults with suspected autism do not need to wait for diagnosis to request a community care assessment.

Improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need to live independently within the community

Improving access to services and support is a long-term goal and will require a cultural change within public services. This year, therefore, the focus will be on providing services with guidance to help them take important steps in the right direction – from making reasonable adjustments to the way services are delivered to finding ways to increase choice and control for adults with autism.

Making reasonable adjustments to services

- As the strategy made clear, adults with autism are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), which means that services are required to make reasonable adjustments to meet identified needs.
- By 1 January 2011, DH will publish guidance to indicate some of the kinds of adjustments that might usefully be made to better meet the needs of adults with autism – from physical adjustments to premises to improved communication. This guidance will be produced in partnership with the Office for Disability Issues and will be suitable for the whole range of public services, from mental health and learning disability services to colleges, GP surgeries to transport and leisure facilities. It will also be useful for – and applicable to – many private sector services too, such as banks. In developing the guidance, DH will work with adults with autism and autism representative groups.
- The guidance will also need to be supported by ongoing training for staff across public services.
- Jobcentre Plus is committed to providing support required by customers with autism using Jobcentre Plus services, and will make any required reasonable adjustments, such as finding the most suitable environment or premises for conducting work focussed interviews. Through its awareness training, Jobcentre Plus will ensure that advisers are aware of the need to make – and offer – such adjustments.
- DWMO identified that some adults with autism can encounter specific difficulties with completing their claims for benefits over the telephone. Customer service agents within the Jobcentre Plus Contact Centre Directorate (CCD) are therefore being trained to identify vulnerable customers who are having such difficulties, and to offer

them the opportunity to have their claim taken by a face-to-face First Contact Officer if necessary. It is also possible for a third party or advocate to complete the claim over the telephone on behalf of the customer and callers should be told that this is possible. Jobcentre Plus will continue to remind customer service agents of these responsibilities, and a reminder is planned to be issued within the CCD's Weekly Update on 2 April 2010.

Giving adults with autism more say in their care and support

- As the strategy underlined, the goal of social care today is to deliver personalised services that give each individual the right support to live a more fulfilling life. In many areas, adults with autism are now eligible for personal budgets and direct payments, in line with the assessment of their needs. However, because adults with autism will need additional support to make choices about their care, and having choice is only of value when there are suitable services and support available to choose from within the local area, it will take some time for personalisation to be of benefit to all adults with autism that are eligible for social care.

 - One of the key developments for adults with autism is the Right to Control. This is a wider programme for disabled people which will apply to many adults with autism. The Right to Control is about giving disabled people greater choice and control over how public money is spent to meet their individual needs and ambitions. It gives disabled people a legal right to:
 - be told how much support they are eligible to receive
 - decide and agree, with the public body, the outcomes they want to achieve, based on the objectives of the funding streams they access
 - have choice and control over the support they receive, and
 - be able to choose how they receive the support.

 - The ODI announced on 25 February 2010 the selection of eight trailblazing public authorities in England to test the Right to Control from late 2010. These can be found at www.officefordisability.gov.uk/working/right-to-control.php
- . Draft regulations for these Trailblazer sites were published at the same time and consultation will continue until 19 May 2010.

Helping adults with autism into work

Given that adults with autism are significantly under-represented in the labour market, it is clear that more needs to be done to help adults with autism into work. As the strategy indicated, there are a number of existing initiatives and programmes that will better support adults with autism and progress on these is scheduled for this year.

- The Government announced in the White Paper *Building Britain's Recovery* that it would review employment support for all disabled customers and those with health conditions. As part of the review, DWP recognised the importance of engaging with customers themselves to learn about their experiences of the benefit system and Pathways to Work support. At a number of stages throughout the review, DWP spoke with adults with autism and their representatives, seeking their views on what future employment support should look like. Proposals for reform of employment support for all disabled customers and those with health conditions will be published shortly, along with a timetable for delivery.
- In response to comments made during the strategy consultation and the concerns raised in *DWMO*, Jobcentre Plus will explore ways to improve the way that people with autism are supported. The Jobcentre Plus Head of Disability Service Development, other Jobcentre Plus policy representatives, and others will meet during the first quarter of 2010/11 to look at how to translate commitments into action and ensure better levels of awareness and disability confidence around autism.
- One specific concern raised in *DWMO* was around the need for adults with autism to provide sick notes from doctors to be eligible for benefits or programmes, or to explain absence from work. DWP has now revised the sick note procedure, following extensive consultation, and is due to launch the new "fit note" on 6 April 2010. The fit note will outline what work an individual or employee can do and is intended to help more people secure, and stay in, work rather than drift into long-term worklessness.

Reforming existing provision

- As outlined in the strategy, DWP's existing specialist disability provision will be replaced by a new programme – Work Choice – from 1 October 2010. Award of contracts will take place during spring 2010. Work Choice is a pan-disability

programme, and will provide specialist support for adults with autism where DWP mainstream provision may not be appropriate or does not meet the particular needs of the individual. More details about Work Choice can be found on the DWP website at www.dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/specialist-disability-employment. There will be a full evaluation of Work Choice during 2010/11, culminating with an evaluation report being produced by 3 September 2012.

- The strategy also reiterated that Jobcentre Plus has now changed Access to Work to improve support services for customers with autism. The changes described in the strategy are currently being implemented through a series of Jobcentre Plus pilots, and national implementation will begin from April 2010. Through Access to Work, Jobcentre Plus customers can now benefit from an Access to Work funded Job Coach as and when they require one. Previously, this support was only available for the first six months of the individual's employment. This change has already been introduced and adults with autism who move into employment will therefore have access to more flexible support during this year.

Building on *Valuing Employment Now*

- The autism strategy referred to *Valuing Employment Now* (VEN), the government strategy to radically increase employment for people with learning disabilities. Approximately 50% of people with autism will also have a learning disability, so VEN will be of benefit to many adults with autism. To maximise links with VEN and ensure that lessons learnt from its implementation – which is already underway – feed into the delivery of the autism strategy, the VEN delivery team leader will be part of the Autism Strategy Project Steering Group.
- VEN included a commitment to setting clear standards for supported employment. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is working with awarding organisations to explore how to accredit standards and develop qualifications for job coaching. A draft definition of supported employment has now been published on the VEN resource hub, www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/venresources, for consultation and draft standards will follow. Once stakeholders have had an opportunity to comment, the Government will then develop national standards and explore how to accredit these and/or job coaches. This is so that all people in supported employment and

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

who use job coaches can be confident of getting quality support, and funders can have confidence in outcomes.

- Project Search is a new internships programme for people with learning disabilities, based on a US model which has proven to work well for adults with autism. Project Search will be extended from September 2010 with several new sites, in addition to those already operating at the Bath Royal United Hospital, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and Leicester.

Third sector approaches

- Government services and programmes are not alone in aiming to move people with autism into work. The NAS employment service, Prospects, is a specialist service supporting people who have autism into mainstream jobs. Prospects provide student support, work preparation programmes, job-finding support and employment support for people with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). They also help employers with the recruitment, training and retention of staff with an ASD. NAS evaluations shows that between 1995 and 2003, 67% of the clients they supported found work. Furthermore, 70% of the pilot scheme's beneficiaries from 1995-97 were still in employment in 2003. NAS estimate the total saving to the Government was just under half a million pounds in less than three years.

Improving information about employment support and benefits for adults with autism

- DWP is conducting a customer-information review which will identify the best ways of communicating with its broad customer base – including adults with autism and their carers and representatives. Once the overall approach has been agreed, DWP will determine which publications need to be produced in easy-read format. It is anticipated that this will be done during the first half of the 2010/11 operational year.

Enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities.

Much of the long-term responsibility for delivery of the strategy sits locally – in terms of developing relevant services, and extending existing ones, to enable adults with autism to be included in society. Clearly, this must reflect the needs and priorities of the local area, and given existing planning cycles and available resources, some areas will accelerate change further than others in the first year. However across the board, the focus is on putting in place regional delivery plans and structures to support local delivery, as well as developing resources and guidance for local partners to use.

Setting out the role of local government

- The strategy provided the opportunity for central government to strengthen and clarify the role of local government regarding the delivery of services to adults with autism and in placing local government at the heart of providing innovative and better service provision. In particular, it re-emphasized the importance of a joint commissioner/senior manager who has in his/her portfolio a clear commissioning responsibility for adults with autism.

- The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) will continue to work across Government to identify ways in which programmes aimed at improving care and transforming services can better address the needs of adults with autism. In particular, CLG will build on the work of the Total Place pilots to ensure services are joined up and tailored to the specific needs of local communities. This means involving a wide range of providers including local authorities, the NHS, community based organisations and the third sector.

- To support local government in adapting its ways of working, the Smarter Government White Paper and the recent consultation on Strengthening Local Democracy set out how people can drive service improvement themselves and have the necessary tools to hold Government to account. Government is supporting this by:
 - streamlining the national performance framework, to better enable local areas to set their own priorities and guide resources

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

- reducing the number of revenue streams to local government. Budget 2010 recently announced specific proposals to reduce the level of ring-fencing for local authorities
- publishing guidance on aligning and pooling local-level budgets to frontline services. For example, in February 2010, it set out guidance on effective use of joint ventures by local authorities and their partners
- reducing centrally imposed burdens on the frontline from reporting, inspection and assessment. Timings of all assessments, inspections and reporting arrangements which focus on similar outcomes will be co-ordinated from 2010-11, and the development of a new cross government data gateway is under consideration.

Regional planning and local planning

- This year will see the development of regional delivery plans for adults with autism in each government region. These will demonstrate how the region will respond to the national delivery plan. The planning process will be led by DH Deputy Regional Directors of Social Care and Partnerships, and will be inputted into by local authorities and strategic health authorities. Deputy Regional Directors are also responsible for ensuring that from June 2010 there are strategic planning mechanisms/processes in place, with meaningful representation from adults with autism and their carers.
- Deputy Regional Directors of Social Care and Partnerships will need to consider how they work with partners, including NHS organisations in how they ensure implementation of the national delivery plan.
- Local areas will be encouraged to develop their own commissioning plans around services for adults with autism. Clearly, the first task is for local areas to gather the necessary data. To support them in doing this, DH will develop an organisation self-assessment tool for local areas to evaluate/measure progress. This will be available by end December 2010.
- The strategy highlighted the value of local autism teams in the areas where they had been developed. To support other local areas to build on this best practice and develop teams in their local areas, DH will provide sample business cases local

partners can use to support the setting up of specialist teams. These will be published by end December 2010.

- In addition, DH has already committed to leading the development of a protocol for what information should be recorded about adults with autism and how it should be shared with other services. The protocol will be complete by end December 2010.
- When implementing the strategy's recommendations health and social care bodies will need to bear in mind their responsibilities towards equalities. Health and social care bodies are expected to assure themselves that they are meeting all their equalities duties in relation to adults with autism, especially those duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Developing local governance structures

- The strategy underlines the value of establishing a local autism partnership board that brings together different organisations, services and stakeholders locally and sets a clear direction for improved services. Below are four examples of structures for local autism partnership boards that have made a significant difference to the services available in their areas. While the structures are different, the principles are the same: they bring together representatives from local authorities, PCTs and providers, along with adults with autism and their carers, to help develop services locally.
 - **Cornwall Autism Partnership**

The Cornwall Autism Partnership (CAP) was set up to develop better support for people with autism across Cornwall. The CAP enables more effective joint planning of services for people with autism through collaboration between the local Department of Adult Social Care, Cornwall PCT, and Cornwall Children, Schools and Families Directorate. The CAP also links in with other trusts and partnership boards including those focusing on learning disabilities, mental health, children and young people, carers and transitions. The joint commissioner with responsibility for autism chairs planning meetings at least every quarter. Attendees include leads from mental health, learning disability, children and young people, Connexions, and housing.

Autism Partnership Board – Gloucestershire

- The Gloucestershire Autism Partnership Board was set up in 2006. It meets quarterly to discuss and identify the needs of people with autism in the area, and to help plan the development of local services. The group consists of senior commissioners, housing representatives, Connexions and other professionals as well as adults with autism, their families and carers and local voluntary groups. A key focus of the Board is to work with mainstream agencies in order to develop better support for adults with autism. The Board is also looking to develop autism specific services.

- **Autism Services Development Groups and the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium**

The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium has been running for over ten years. It is based on a very localised model: every local authority in the consortium has set up a multi-agency Autism Services Development Group (ASDG) consisting of representatives from all statutory agencies, parents and carers, and, in some cases, adults with autism. The chair of each local group is on the consortium steering group. The individual groups look at what can be achieved in the local area by improving current provision within resources, and by better informing the commissioning process. The consortium also funds the NAS's Family Services Development Project, which provides information, advice and support to families across Greater Manchester. Data from this project is then fed back to inform the commissioning process.

- **North East Autism Consortium (NEAC)**

The North East Autism Consortium was established in 2006 to develop a regional approach to addressing the planning and service needs of adults with autism. In particular, it is working towards the development of a regional commissioning strategy and addresses the lack of integration with service provision across health and social care. Four service development groups have been established in the region, each tackling a specific area of services.

Key dates 2010/11

WHEN	WHAT	WHO
31 March 2010	Programme Board meets for first time	Programme Board
2 April 2010	First year delivery plan published	DH
6 April 2010	Sick note procedure replaced by "fit note", meaning adults with autism no longer have to go to their GP to be signed off from work to claim benefits	DWP
April 2010	Nationwide implementation of changes to Access to Work begins	DWP
May 2010	Indicative date for publication of draft statutory guidance for health and social care to be published for consultation	DH
from June 2010	Strategic planning mechanisms/boards should be in place in each region	DH Deputy Regional Directors
June 2010	Programme Board meets	Programme Board
June-July 2010	Public consultation events for statutory guidance take place	DH
September 2010	Consultation period ends for statutory guidance	DH
September 2010	Programme Board meets	Programme Board
1 October 2010	Work Choice, DWP's new specialist disability provision, goes live	DWP
Autumn 2010	Programme Board to bring forward proposals for a nationwide communications campaign, delivered in conjunction with stakeholders, that seeks to tackle the stigma often attached to autism	Programme Board
December 2010	New training materials for health and social care staff produced by DH, working with Skills for Health, Skills for Care, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the British Psychological Society, the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Royal College of Nursing	DH

Towards 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives' the first year delivery plan

December 2010	Programme Board meets	Programme Board
End December 2010	Self-assessment tool for local areas to evaluate progress in developing services for adults with autism made available	DH
End December 2010	Protocol for what information should be recorded about adults with autism and how it should be shared with other services to be completed	DH
End December 2010	Three-year delivery plan for strategy to be published	DH
End December 2010	Statutory guidance for health and social care to be published	DH
1 January 2011	Regional delivery plans to be complete	DH Deputy Regional Directors
1 January 2011	All Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) to have received autism awareness training	Jobcentre Plus
1 January 2011	DWP review of campaigns to promote diversity at work (such as Employ Ability) to identify if and where more examples of adults with autism can be included to be completed.	DWP
1 January 2011	Guidance to indicate some of the kinds of adjustments that might usefully be made to better meet the needs of adults with autism to be published	DH
31 March 2011	Regional action plans, agreed with key partners, to be published showing key milestones and deliverables	DH Deputy Regional Directors
1 April 2011	First Annual Report on the implementation of the strategy to be published	Programme Board
Early 2011	Findings of prevalence study being conducted by consortium led by the University of Leicester to be published.	
September 2011	NICE guideline for children and young people to be published	NICE
June 2012	NICE guideline for adults with autism to be published	NICE