

Appendix 5: Our Consultation Phase: summary of response

Introduction

Following on from our Engagement Phase (April 2022- September 2022), we analysed all the responses, feedback and data which helped us to identify the following 7 Key Themes in which the Strategy and Action Plan will prioritise and deliver on:

- **Key Theme 1: Whole Lifespan** - Meeting the needs of autistic people from birth to death by supporting them to access appropriate support and services from our organisations, third sector and from the wider community.
- **Key Theme 2: Diagnostic Pathways (Children, Young Persons, Adults and Older Adults)** - Supporting the delivery of a clear autistic assessment pathway and transitions process.
- **Key Theme 3: Training** - Supporting training, learning and development to improve knowledge and understanding for those who work in Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children's Services (ECS) and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) who support autistic people.
- **Key Theme 4: Lifelong Learning** - Delivering inclusive support wherever learning takes place
- **Key Theme 5: Employment** - Enhancing employment opportunities and pathways to enhance the skills and experiences of autistic people.
- **Key Theme 6: Connecting** - Keeping autistic people and their families connected to information and their communities.
- **Key Theme 7: Community** - Building a community that is inclusive, accepting and knowledgeable

Please see main Autism Strategy Report and Action Plan for detailed information on the 7 Key Themes – Aims, Outcomes and Actions.

Our Next Steps

A Draft Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy Report was written and we took the document to the following:

February – April 2023

- Sought feedback and comments from **Governance Bodies** – Aberdeenshire Council GIRFEC Strategic Group, Aberdeenshire Council’s Education and Children’s Service Leadership Team and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership’s Strategic Planning Group. These groups gave us permission to take the Draft Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy Report for Public Consultation.

While we launched our **Public Consultation** phase, we also met with **Area Committees (Councillors)**

May - July 2023

- Approval sought from Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Joint Board and Aberdeenshire Council’s Education and Children’s Services Committee

Delivery of our Consultation Phase – February- April 2023

As part of our public consultation phase, we delivered the following:

- 7 face to face public drop-in sessions within Aberdeenshire – approximately a total of 45 attendees
- 3 online sessions via MS teams – 42 people requested to attend; 13 attended.
- An online-based survey (easy read format and paper surveys were also made available) - 29 responses
- Postal surveys – 5 were requested and sent out; 2 returns

Sessions were facilitated by some members of the Autism Planning Group, project support staff, professionals from Social Work, Speech and Language Therapy Team and Clinical Psychology. We were also supported by autistic adults and adults who self-identify as neurodivergent. The online based sessions were recorded for note taking purposes. During these online sessions, participants were given the opportunity to communicate via Google Jamboard.

We used social media and our autism strategy webpage to advertise our events. People who had previously engaged with us were also contacted by email. Email notifications were cascaded to all Aberdeenshire schools which were then sent on to parents/carers asking for their feedback and response on the draft report.

Our aim from delivering public consultation was to seek feedback on the Draft Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy Report and the 7 Key Themes identified. To summarise, we asked the following questions:

Section 1: The Draft Strategy Report

From the Draft Strategy Report, please answer the following questions:

1. Is there anything about this report which you like? If so, please can you tell us what you like about it?
2. Is there anything about this report which you dislike? If so, please can you tell us what you dislike about it?
3. Is there anything missing/any gaps in the Strategy report?
4. Is the report clear and easy to understand?

Section 2: The 7 Key Themes

From the 7 Key Themes, please answer the following questions:

1. Do the strategy's key themes address challenges experienced by autistic people?
2. Please rank the 7 Key themes in order of importance? (1 most important, 7 least important)
3. For each key theme, please tell us why is it important to you?

Section 3: Other additional questions:

1. If there is anything else you would like to tell us about the strategy?
2. How will we know the strategy has worked?

What we heard - the following are a summary of views made towards the Draft Autism Strategy Report

- Autistic-led – further knowledge and learning should come from autistic people
- Transitioning across the whole lifespan – this needs to be addressed
- Extend collaborative working with the third sector and the autistic community
- More thoughts given towards collaborative and multi-agency working, such as Criminal Justice, Housing and Advocacy
- More support for teaching staff
- Other points to explore and learn more about are complex care, public awareness, rurality, bi-lingual autistic people, autistic carers, home-educated children and families and autistic women and girls

What We Did and Next Steps

Following on from analysing the feedback and responses given, to the best of our ability, we incorporated them into the final draft version of the Strategy report.

It is acknowledged that we are not able to act on all the feedback and response given from the consultation phase.

Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2023-2028

More detailed results of the consultation will be made available to the Aberdeenshire Autism Strategic Monitoring Group for further consideration once this group is established.



Photo taken from the Public Consultation Drop-In session held on Thursday 2nd March at Community Room, Tesco Supermarket, Inverurie