

Cover Sheet Autism Programme Board Papers

Date of meeting

24 April 2013

Attachment number

APB (13)02

Title of paper

Update on recent Parliamentary meetings on Autism.

Summary

A brief summary of recent meetings, which should be of interest to Autism Programme Board members.

Action required / recommendation

For information.

Update on recent Parliamentary meetings on Autism

1. There have been three meetings on Autism since the last meeting of the Programme Board:

- (i) A Hearing by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Progress in implementing the 2010 Adult Autism Strategy on 27 February;
- (ii) A meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism on 13 March;
- (iii) A briefing session for the Autism and Ageing Commission on 19 March.

2. Issues covered at the meetings.

(i) Public Accounts Committee

Una O'Brien, the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health (DH) and Shaun Gallagher, the then Acting Director General for Social Care at DH gave evidence. The Hearing was called to discuss the National Audit Office's Memorandum to the PAC of July 2012 on progress in implementing the Autism Strategy.

Discussion focused on monitoring local performance against the commitments of the Autism Strategy, DH's revised responsibilities to set national policy and legislation and the directions in the statutory guidance to LAs, NHS bodies and NHS Foundation Trusts on what actions they should be taking to meet the needs of people with autism living in their areas. Specific issues covered included staff training, the collection and use of local autism data and the need for the Autism Review to provide assurance on progress.

(ii) All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism

Robert Buckland MP chaired this meeting which was also attended by the Care and Support Minister Norman Lamb MP and Mark Lever the Chief Executive of the National Autistic Society (NAS). The meeting featured presentations from two mothers who had grown up children who had autism. Issues discussed included the need for more low level preventative and advocacy services, more autism awareness by employers, the importance of the Review in helping changes take place on the ground, more joined up thinking between LAs and health services, and between Clinical Commissioning Groups and the benefits of highlighting good practice.

(iii) Autism and Ageing Commission

DH officials including Michael Swaffield, gave evidence to this House of Lords Commission on the role of DH and the Review of the Autism Strategy. The Commission has been formed with NAS support to look at the challenges facing people with autism as they move into older age and how these challenges can be met. Their findings will feed into the NAS Autism and Ageing Report to be published in June. We also hope to look at this issue during the Review.

3. Michael Swaffield will be happy to answer any questions about these meetings at the Autism Programme Board meeting.

Autism Programme Board Secretariat
April 2013