

**To: Directors of Adult Social Services**

**Copy: PCT Chief Executives**

**PCT Cluster Chief Executives**

**DRDs for Social Care**

**Date: 20 December 2011**

**Gateway Reference number: 17031**

Dear Colleague

**The Adult Autism Strategy *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives*: Evaluating Progress - next steps in the national self assessment framework exercise.**

This letter is to seek your assistance in taking forward the self assessment framework exercise linked to the Adult Autism Strategy.

**Background**

On 1 April 2011, the Department of Health launched a new self assessment framework to support localities with the delivery of the Adult Autism Strategy and the statutory guidance for health and social care which accompanied the strategy. The guidance envisaged that the Learning Disabilities Public Health Observatory would collate information based on this framework nationally.

Many local authorities have already undertaken a local self-assessment using the Department of Health template and this process has helped to develop local and Regional action plans.

The Autism Strategy Programme Board discussed next steps for the self assessment framework at its meeting on 9 November. The Programme Board is chaired by the Minister for Care Services, Paul Burstow MP, and is responsible for overseeing progress against the Adult Autism Strategy. The Programme Board decided to take forward this first data gathering exercise and to ask Local Authorities to send to the Public Health Observatory their answers to the questions in the self assessment framework. A short list of additional questions are also being asked but the answers to most of these are drawn from information sources already in wide use, for example for National indicators, and were already suggested as local self-audit questions in the Department of Health guidance. The Public Health Observatory will collate the information received and do some thematic analysis. Examples of best practice will also be recorded.

A list of the additional questions is set out at **Annex A** along with information on how the exercise can be completed.

### **Why the data is being collected**

There is currently a lack of data nationally on autism. We are working with the Public Health Observatory to improve the data over time, and improve local understanding. There will be benefits to using a consistent tool as it will facilitate thematic analysis and help to get a better understanding of good innovation examples and areas of challenge for localities so that local and national partners can work on those areas. Some areas may not have available the information to answer all the parts of the self evaluation tool and it should be stressed this is not a performance management exercise but a bench marking process for the future.

The existing tool does have some points of repetition and the aim for the future is to have agreed key priorities that Health and Social Care will commit to achieving through the implementation of the Autism strategy. The Autism Programme Board recognised that outcomes are the priority in supporting people to have a fulfilling and rewarding life as possible by applying the *Think Local Act Personal Agenda* whilst enabling equal access to support and opportunities through reasonable adjustments, training and awareness raising. This work is broader than social care services and it links with existing agendas, thus making it more achievable and reducing duplication.

### **Action needed**

I would be grateful if you could discuss this letter with the person who is either responsible for adult autism or who has already worked on the self assessment framework within your authority. The timescale for completion of this part of the exercise is **Friday 10 February 2012**. This letter has been prepared with the support of Rachel Holynska (the lead Department of Health Deputy Regional Director for autism) and Zandrea Stewart (the Directors of Adult Social Services lead for autism).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A.B. Calderwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

**Director of Mental Health and Disability**

## Annex A

### Collecting the Data

The Public Health Observatory has set up a project webpage for the self-assessment framework exercise for services for people with autism (including Asperger syndrome).

This is found at [www.ihal.org.uk/projects/autsaf2011](http://www.ihal.org.uk/projects/autsaf2011)

The webpage provides instructions and answers to frequently asked questions. Local Authorities can download a customised spreadsheet from this site which reproduces the questions asked in the framework in a near identical format. A number of the question boxes from the original template have been split where they included more than one question to aid completion. A copy of the spreadsheet with answers, should be e-mailed to the Observatory where they will be collated. Use e-mail address [AutismSAF@ihal.org.uk](mailto:AutismSAF@ihal.org.uk) to do this.

### Additional questions

There is a small number of additional questions to be answered. Please read the questions below.

1. Are you in a position to use or separate out data available to you to answer some or all of questions 3 to 12 below? If your answer is yes, then answer as many questions 2 to 12 as you can. If your answer is no, answer question 2 to complete your input to this section.
2. Has a new or re-established Diagnostic Pathway been developed in the last 12 months
3. How and where is this data recorded?
4. What is the number of people (of any age) who have been assessed in the past 12 months using the diagnostic pathway?
5. What is the number of adults (aged 18 and over) with autism (including Asperger syndrome) currently known to the local authority?
6. What is the number of these in paid work (include both full time and part time work?)
7. What is the number of these living in their own home or with their family?

What are the numbers of these living in residential or nursing care establishments –

8. Within the Local Authority area?
9. Outside the local authority area?
10. Total living in residential or nursing care establishments?
11. What is the number of adults (aged 18 and over) with autism (including Asperger syndrome) who currently (at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012) receive support from the Local Authority in the form of a Personal Budget?
12. What is the number of adults (aged 18 and over) with autism (including Asperger syndrome) who currently (at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012) receive care from specialist mental health services.

The Observatory will produce printed versions in PDF format for each local authority submitting a response, and will collate the findings for presentations in tables and maps, and a wider thematic analysis. The Observatory aim to publish the detailed responses themselves and an initial tally of the response rate by the end of February. Table and map presentations will follow by the end of March. Thematic analysis is more complex and it is anticipated publishing this report by the end of July 2012.

If you have any technical questions about this exercise that can not be answered by the frequently asked questions on the Observatory's website, e-mail [AutismSAF@ihal.org.uk](mailto:AutismSAF@ihal.org.uk)

If you have any questions about the Adult Autism Strategy, e-mail [Michael.swaffield@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.swaffield@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

A copy of the original guidelines to help complete the self assessment framework can be accessed at:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_125703](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_125703)

on the DH website.