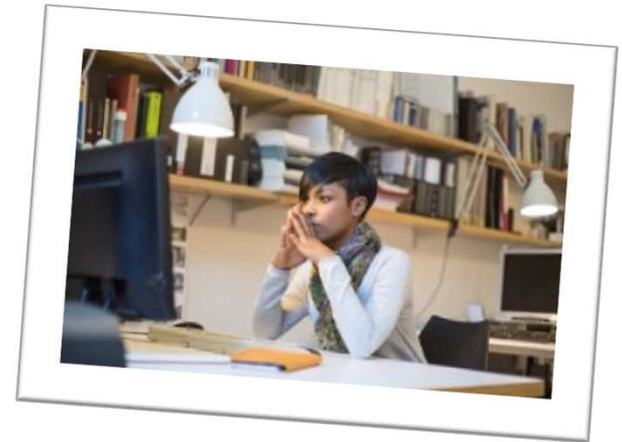


# Rotherham's All Age Autism Strategy

Progress and update  
January 2020

# Our vision

To work towards making Rotherham an autism friendly place to live. This means a place where you can get a timely diagnosis with support, meet professionals with a good understanding of autism, find services, organisations and employers that make reasonable adjustments when required, where people can feel safe, have aspirations and fulfil their potential, and become a full members of the local community.



# Guiding principles

- All autistic children, young people, adults and their families are at the centre of everything we do
- Focus on individual's strengths to overcome barriers
- Guidance, information and support are easily available
- Supporting individuals to live the life they choose
- The right support at the right time and making every contact count
- Increasing awareness of autism across Rotherham
- Ensuring a Person Centred Approach for autistic people living in Rotherham



# Diagnosis in Rotherham

Nationally and in Rotherham there has been a increase in requests for Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) assessments for both children and adults.

The increase is because of increased awareness both by individuals themselves, their carers/family members and by the health, education and social care system.

More men than women are diagnosed with autism. This is changing with increases in the number of women being diagnosed



# Key Activity– Children and Young People

- Working with partners, our voluntary organisations and community groups we have identified five priority areas on which to focus our implementation plan. Some examples of the operational activity that is underway are:
  - A digital diagnostic pathway has been commissioned from Healios who will support local CAMHS service.
  - Planning is underway to re-design our C&YP pathway in 20-21
  - Education settings have engaged in training, licensed by Autism Education Trust
  - New specialist education places have been created, at primary and secondary, for children with Autism
  - Rotherham Opportunities College offers local post-19 education provision
  - Project Search offers supported internships
  - Rotherham Parent Carers Forum are commissioned by Rotherham CCG to offer regular drop-in sessions to support families on the diagnostic pathway



# Key Activity Area's– Adults

- Planning to introduce a Rotherham based adult diagnostic and post diagnostic service from Q1 2020/21
- Will maintain existing capacity in Sheffield service for one year to ensure waiting list is managed.
- Launched Autism Alert Card – this was done in partnership between SYP, Police and Crime Commissioner, the Council, NHS and Rotherham NAS.
- Parent Carer Forum and VOICE co-char the Autism Partnership Board





# Priority 1: Starting well

All Rotherham's autistic children and young people are healthy and safe from harm.



# Priority 2: Developing well

All Rotherham's autistic children and young people start school ready to learn for life.





# Priority 3: Moving on well to independence



All Rotherham's autistic children and young people are ready for the world of work.



# Priority 4: Living well

Autistic adults living in Rotherham will get the right support when needed.



# Priority 5: Ageing well



Autistic adults living in Rotherham will be better supported as they grow old.



# Transforming Care

- Since 2015, Rotherham has been working on a national programme with Sheffield, Doncaster and North Lincolnshire to reduce the numbers of people with a learning disability who are detained in specialist hospitals – Transforming Care.
- Rotherham currently has **8** people detained in specialist hospitals - 4 people in hospital beds commissioned by Rotherham CCG and 4 people in hospital beds commissioned by NHS England.
- Rotherham has successfully discharged 5 people back into the community over the last 2 years.
- Rotherham will discharge a further 4 people in 2020/21. The population has changed in that 3 people have autism and not a learning disability. A specialised housing and care support offer is required and this has taken time to develop.



# Success stories

Scott is a 46-year-old man with autism who had been attending a day centre and is now following his passion for cooking, working in the kitchen at a local play centre.

“It’s more enjoyable because I can choose what I do”

## A NEW DOOR OPENS...

‘Everyone has got something to give’

**D**EXX in Wath is a bustling centre of activity with a trampoline park alongside an undulating, challenging skateboard and scooter complex.

It’s also one of a range of employment options for people with learning disabilities who previously spent much of their time at Oaks Day Centre in the village.

Rotherham Council’s decision to shut the day centre in favour of a model of self-community caused an outcry last year but the council said those concerns had evaporated.

“We’ve not had a single call from anyone saying: ‘Please reopen the Oaks,’” said Ian Spicer, the council’s assistant director of adult social care and inclusion.

“There have been examples of people going and trying something out and not liking it and that’s fine. We want them to try something else that’s more successful.

“There is always going to be anxiety when a change is proposed. Rotherham was probably a bit behind in getting round to this as in other areas it’s been going on for some years.”

The emphasis of My Front Door, which gives its customers the chance to have taster sessions and activity centres or workplaces before deciding how many days a week to spend there, is heavily placed on choice.

That’s reflected in the experiences of two former Oaks users, Scott (46) and Michael (59), who are both working at Dexx and training for professional qualifications, Scott in food hygiene and Michael in first aid.

Scott, who had been going to Oaks for about 22 years and is autistic, works in the kitchen and is on track for a food hygiene certificate.

He admitted the prospect of changing how he spent his days had been daunting but he was glad he had made the switch.

“I was probably a bit worried,” said Scott, of North Anston. “It’s better here — it’s more lively. It’s more enjoyable because I can choose what I do.”

Scott’s mum Ann said: “When Oaks was ready for closing, he said they were just watching videos all day.

“We were worried about the effect it would have as autistic people don’t like change.

“Scott came here a few times on a taster session and had a go on the trampolines which he thought was wonderful.

“He then got a placement to come every week.

“He’s a lot happier here.”

Dad Peter said: “Everyone here has taken him under their wing.

“When we knew Oaks was closing, we were concerned he was just going to sit at home all day or that carers would take him to Meadowhall.

“We wanted him to be able to mix with people and get some stimulation.

“You can see how much he’s enjoying himself.”

Michael, who has learning disabilities, had been going to the Oaks for 43 years.

He used to go five days a week and spent his time helping the staff.

After five months at Dexx, his first aid training has already come in useful.

In one recent incident, he earned the gratitude of one boy’s mum after raising the alarm and giving first aid when her son fell on the trampoline park.

“The people here are nice and I like it here,” he said.

“I still see some of my friends from Oaks at the community centre. I like music, especially playing the drums.”

Tony Wood, development worker at Dexx, said: “This is not going to replace the Oaks but it gives people more experience of the real world.

“It’s been really positive for us, too.”

Lee McKeith, who runs the youth centre, said: “After three months, we’re getting to know Scott more now and found he has a real passion for cooking.

“He has got more confidence and he’s talking more, too.

“All the staff have welcomed Scott and Michael and want them to do well.

“It (My Front Door) is about choice. What we offer here is not for everyone but there are some amazing offers in Rotherham in general and everyone should have the choice of what they can do.

“My belief is everyone has got something to give — you just have to find out what it is.”

**HELPING HANDS:** Dexx owner Lee McKeith (right) and colleague Tony Wood (left) with Michael and Scott. Michael (centre left) is being trained in First Aid and Scott is training in the cafe’s kitchen 191175-1





# Autism Alert Card

Rotherham Council, South Yorkshire Police and Rotherham CCG have worked together to develop the Autism Alert Card.

This will ensure the needs of autistic people are known by the police and criminal justice system. Previously a significant gap.





# Ongoing challenges

- Supporting services and the community to be open to support people with autism: for the community to celebrate neurodiversity.
- Diagnosis and post diagnostic offer for Children and Young People and Adults.
- Rotherham CCG and RDaSH are working to create 'all age' solutions to address the diagnosis waiting list issues and develop a local post diagnostic offer for adults.
- Ensuring that the right support is available and is cost effective.



# Autism Strategy progress and timeline

- The Autism Partnership Board has supported the proposed implementation plan.
- The strategy will be online and will be built around people's stories.
- The strategy will be agreed by partners by April 2020 and presented to Cabinet in June 2020
- It is planned that the strategy will be formally launched in July 2020.

