

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 15 June 2023

'Living my Best Life': Report on the Joint Strategy for Disabled and Neurodivergent people in Staffordshire 2023-2028

Recommendation

- a. That the Committee consider and comment on the proposed 'Living my Best Life': Joint Strategy for Disabled and Neurodivergent people in Staffordshire 2023-2028

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of Councillors Julia Jessel, Mark Sutton and Jonathan Price

Summary

1. Staffordshire County Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) have jointly developed a final draft of a new 'Living my Best Life': Joint Strategy for Disabled and Neurodivergent people in Staffordshire 2023-2028. This replaces the Whole Life Disability Strategy 2018-2023. The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will inform preparation of the final report to Cabinet on the 19 July 2023.

Background

2. There are around 21,000 adults with a learning disability living in Staffordshire, of whom 3,400 have a moderate or severe disability, and 7,000 adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. 26,000 Staffordshire residents aged 18-65 have a disability that makes personal care difficult; 35,000 aged over 65 are unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own, such as going to the toilet or getting in and out of bed. 6,200 adults have registrable eye conditions or are severely visually impaired; 18,200 experience severe hearing loss (Source: Poppi and Pansi Data, Oxford Brookes). Currently, national prevalence data for children and young people is limited. There is no national repository of quality reviewed data for individuals under 18.
3. The majority of people with disabilities and neurodivergences manage with help and support from their family, friends and communities, and assistance from technologies. It is important that universal services such as education, shops, leisure and cultural activities, and health services

are inclusive, accessible and adapted to their needs. Also, that there are appropriate housing options that enable them to live independently. A small number of people with disabilities and neurodivergences are eligible for dedicated care and support from the County Council and/or the NHS and need a reasonable choice of good quality, sustainable services that can achieve their outcomes.

4. Staffordshire County Council and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) have agreed to jointly develop a new 'Living my Best Life': Joint Strategy for Disabled and Neurodivergent people in Staffordshire 2023-2028, replacing the current [Whole Life Disability Strategy 2018-2023](#). It aspires to support all disabled and neurodivergent individuals to live the best lives possible.
5. The new Staffordshire Disability Partnership Board will co-ordinate development and oversee implementation of the Strategy, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Strategy will complement the [Staffordshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy](#) and the [SEND Strategy for Special Provision - Staffordshire County Council](#).

Strategy development

6. The Strategy has been co-produced through a two-stage process:
 - a. Stage One. A survey exploring quality of life and factors considered most important by disabled and neurodivergent people for them to live their best lives. This was carried out during December 2022. The findings are summarised in the next section and have been used to develop a draft vision and priorities for the Strategy.
 - b. Stage Two. The draft vision and priorities for the Strategy have been discussed with disabled and neurodivergent people, politicians, carers and professionals face-to-face in each district/borough during January and February 2023 to seek their views.
7. The Strategy has also been co-produced with commissioners and senior managers across care Commissioning, Children and Families and the Integrated Care Board. This is to ensure we can be honest about what is possible within the resources available and develop a vision, priorities and outcomes that work towards the aspirations of disabled and neurodivergent people whilst remaining realistic and deliverable.

The learning so far

8. Over 500 individuals responded to the survey across all eight Staffordshire Districts, including 265 disabled and neurodivergent people. Responses were provided from all gender, sexual orientation and ethnic

groups identified in the survey. 146 carers and 97 professionals and organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors also responded to the survey.

9. Views on disabled and neurodivergent people's quality of life suggest:

- a. Disabled and neurodivergent people have good contact with friends and family; where they live feels like home and a place where they can do what they want; and the people who support them are listening to their needs.
- b. Disabled and neurodivergent people do not have as many opportunities as they would like to learn and develop and do not know enough about activities and services in their communities. Disabled and neurodivergent people are not getting as much help as they would like when needed or as much choice and control as they would like – carers of disabled and neurodivergent children and young people felt this particularly strongly.

10. The factors mentioned most as being important by disabled and neurodivergent people to live their best lives were as follows:

- a. Adults: 1 - Family, friends and relationships; 2 - Access to health and social care, shops and other services, 3 - Appropriate and safe home, 4 – Social life, social skills and getting out and about, and 5 – Learning and education.
- b. Children and young people: 1- Positive educational experience; 2 - Social life, social skills, getting out and about, and 3 - Family, friends and relationships, 4 – Adjustments made to support me, and 5 – Personal safety.

11. A vision for the Strategy and key priorities were drafted in response to the feedback received from the Stage One engagement process. The Stage Two engagement process (to engage on the emerging vision and priorities) has involved face to face conversations. In total, this has involved 22 disabled and neurodivergent people, 29 carers, 36 professionals and 16 independent organisations. Within these figures, some individuals were able to reflect more than one perspective (for example a carer and a person with a disability themselves).

12. Further face to face engagement involved forums (Day Opportunities and Supported Living) attended by at least 50 providers, the Learning Disability and Autism Carers Forum working group (attended by 10 carers with close family ties to someone with a learning disability and / or autism) and the Staffordshire Autism Joint Implementation Group (attended by 9 professionals, carers and people with lived experience) and a number of established, district based voluntary organisations

supporting people with various disabilities and/or neurodivergences, facilitated by an independent Advocacy provider.

13. A summary of the feedback that has been received in the Stage Two engagement process and associated actions are outlined in table 1:

Table 1: Stage two feedback and actions taken in response to that.

Feedback received	Actions taken
Most of the changes to the vision focussed on improvements to the wording, not the intention within it, and regarding its deliverability.	The vision statement has been shortened and simplified. Embedding the Disability Partnership Board arrangements are seen as key to oversee Strategy delivery.
A small number of individuals (mostly from the Learning Disability and Adult Social Care Carers Forum) have had slightly different ideas about how we worded our emerging priorities for the Strategy.	The suggestions given for rewording were very action orientated. This approach led to a rewording of emerging priorities into clearer strategic outcome statements to drive positive change.
People identified a number of issues and potential actions that they felt the Strategy needed to address.	Suggestions people gave were captured in relation to individual strategic outcomes and we found a good connect between these. They have been used to create key priority actions in the Strategy and will also inform the action plan.
A small number of individuals indicated that they were not comfortable with our 'Living my Best Life' title and some recommended that Autism should not be mentioned separately within the title of the Strategy. There has also been some debate over the best terminology to use for neurodivergences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will retain the Strategy title 'Living my Best Life' agreed by most people we have engaged with. Autism has however been removed from the title. • Some individuals suggested we used terms such as 'neurodiversity' instead of 'neurodivergence' or 'deaf' instead of 'hearing impaired'. We have sought advice from communications colleagues to support wording used in the final draft Strategy.

14. In addition to using stages one and two engagement feedback, the draft Strategy (Appendix One) has subsequently been informed by:

- a. Summary feedback collated from previous engagement processes.
- b. A review of best practice for disabilities and neurodivergences.
- c. Considering the Community Impact Assessment outcomes.

Steps towards approval and implementation

15. An overview of the learning from the engagement processes was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 2 March 2023.
16. The draft strategy will be presented and reviewed at the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 June 2023 and any potential amendments will be made accordingly following this meeting.
17. The Strategy will be reviewed at the ICB Quality and Safety Committee on 14 June 2023 and considered for final approval by the ICB board on 20 July 2023.
18. The Strategy will be considered for final approval by Cabinet on 19 July 2023.
19. An associated action plan will be co-produced by the end of December 2023. Delivery of the action plan will be overseen by the new Disability Partnership Board and ultimately, the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Link to Strategic Plan

20. The Strategy will support the Council's Strategic Plan (2022-2026) including people having access to more good jobs and sharing the benefit of economic growth; living in thriving and sustainable communities; and people being healthier and independent for longer.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity:

21. Matters relating to disabilities and neurodivergences are also relevant to the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Community Impact:

22. A Community Impact Assessment has been completed.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – 'Living my Best Life': Joint Strategy for Disabled and Neurodivergent people in Staffordshire 2023-2028. *Draft Strategy*

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