

## **Cover Sheet Autism Programme Board Papers**

### **Date of meeting**

22 October 2013

### **Attachment number**

APB(13)17

### **Title of paper**

Other Government Department Updates

### **Summary**

Updates from:

1. Ministry of Justice
2. Department for Transport
3. Department for Education
4. Department for Work and Pensions

### **Action required / recommendation**

Updates for information and Board members to ask questions.

## Other Government Department Updates

### 1. Ministry of Justice Update

#### Raising Awareness and Training

HMCTS - have a guidance document (produced in 2009) entitled “Young people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties in the criminal courts: A guide for HMCS staff” to assist court staff in recognising learning disabilities or difficulties including autism in a young person. Although this guidance is written with the young defendant in mind it is also relevant to adult defendants and other court users, such as victims and witnesses.

It provides an overview of the conditions that court staff may encounter. It also defines learning disability and difficulty and how this impacts on everyday tasks which means that for some this may make the court process strange, overwhelming and confusing. Real life examples are used to illustrate this. The guidance also includes examples of how the court process may be adapted to assist the young person with a learning disability or difficulty to understand and participate in those proceedings.

The MoJ's Witness Intermediary Scheme provides Registered Intermediaries (RIs) who are communications specialists and come from a wide background of professional roles and occupations including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, psychology, social work, teaching and nursing, and bring the skills and experience gained in these roles to their work as RIs. Many of those roles and occupations will have included training in autism during the initial and subsequent qualifying courses, i.e. Speech and Language Therapists. In addition, many of those professions require membership of professional organisations for which a mandatory requirement is submission of a Continuing Professional Development log for which evidence will be required of on-going training in their chosen / specific field such as autism or other developmental disorders within the autistic spectrum.

National Offender Management Service - Autism was included as part of the Mental Health Awareness Training for Prison Officers to support the ACCT programme. Training for entry level prison officers on understanding the signs of learning disabilities in the prison environment, includes reference to, autism and Asperger syndrome is included in the POELT (Prison Officer Entry Level Training) programme.

The Judicial College – the Judicial College training website diversity information area includes links to the National Autistic Society website CJS guidance pages, for legal advisers and trainers of magistrates. The Equal Treatment Bench Book (ETBB), which provides guidance to the judiciary, is in the process of being updated and links will be included to the National Autistic Society guides for those involved with the CJS.

## Other Progress

More broadly, The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) commissioned 3SC, who are working with the National Autistic Society, to deliver a literature review on 'Improving Services for Offenders with Learning Disabilities and Difficulties', including those on the Autism spectrum. This literature review is the first stage in an on-going project to assist NOMS with meeting its commitment to improve provision for offenders with learning disabilities and difficulties. It will look at the journey through the criminal justice system from point of arrest to sentencing and beyond, and will include consideration of measures to enhance staff awareness and understanding of learning disabilities and difficulties and appropriate reasonable adjustments aimed at improving outcomes for offenders with learning disabilities and difficulties. The term learning disabilities and difficulties is used in the report in a broad sense to encompass the range of (hidden and otherwise) disabilities and difficulties associated with learning, cognition and communication, including autism spectrum disorders.

MoJ, as well as its agencies are supporting the Autism and Criminal Justice System project, and have contributed to workshops and conferences, and continue to be closely engaged.

## 2. Department for Transport Update

The Department for Transport is committed to ensuring that disabled people have the same access to transport services and opportunities to travel as other members of society and therefore aims to work to overcome barriers such as the availability and physical accessibility of transport, perceptions of safety and security, information provision, and attitudes and behaviour towards disabled passengers.

The Department's Accessibility Action Plan published in December 2012 builds on the success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and sets out our policies and actions over the next three years and beyond. Although the Plan does not refer to specific impairments such as autism, it has been developed in partnership with disabled people and their organisations to ensure the most effective steps are being taken to address the remaining barriers to accessing public transport.

At the heart of the Plan is the importance of improving door to door journeys by working with transport operators on staff training and best practice regarding support for disabled passengers, by raising awareness of the needs of disabled passengers, while ensuring buses and trains comply with accessibility regulations by January 2020. In seeking improvements for disabled people, it is recognised that there will be benefits for all travellers.

On rail, the £370m 'Access for All' ring fenced funding programme of station accessibility enhancements at national rail stations across the country will provide an obstacle free route at 153 priority rail stations by 2015, which will benefit all disabled people. An additional £100m of funding has recently been announced to extend the funding until 2019.

### Travel Training Schemes

The Department has signed up to the 2010 'Fulfilling and rewarding lives: the strategy for adults with autism in England' and published in 2011 a [travel training good practice guide](#) to provide advice, case studies and best practice to all those involved in the design, planning and operation of travel training schemes. The guidance was developed in consultation with representatives from the Department for Work & Pensions, Department for Education and Department of Health. It reflected the important role travel training has in delivering wider policy initiatives to ensure social inclusion and independence. The Department has not carried out an evaluation of existing schemes.

However, as part of the implementation of the Accessibility Action Plan we are currently in discussions on the feasibility of establishing a national association for Travel Training that would offer a consistent approach to professionals involved in Travel Training who wished to benefit from its activities.

In addition, the Department's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF), launched in January 2011, enables local authorities to fund bespoke projects that create local economic growth whilst helping to deliver wider social and economic benefits (e.g. accessibility and social inclusion) for the community and improve safety. Among the range of projects being implemented across

the country there is a significant number of travel training schemes. For example, Gloucestershire County Council's LiftTraining (Learning independence for travel) provides free travel training for adults with physical and/or learning disabilities to encourage confidence and independence when using public transport. Training is delivered in person, on the actual routes the learner wishes to use and is delivered on a 1:1 basis. The LSTF covers the costs of monitoring and evaluation so we hope to have more information on the success of these schemes in the future.

### **Transport Select Committee**

The Transport Select Committee has recently published its report on 'Access to Transport for Disabled People' following its inquiry earlier in the year. The Department welcomes the Committee's recommendations and will formally respond on the report by 15 November.

### **Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee**

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) had been identified as one of the organisations to be abolished through the Public Bodies review. Following consultation however, a Written Ministerial Statement on 12 June announced that it would be retained as the Department's expert advisory panel on accessibility. The statement explained that there was scope for restructuring DPTAC to ensure that it was able to be more efficient and effective. The Department is currently carrying out a review of DPTAC's remit and future role and has developed proposals that will enable the Committee to continue to offer high quality, independent, pan-disability advice to DfT and to the transport sector.

### 3. Department for Education Update

1. Between March and June this year DfE consulted on a Green Paper *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*. This set out a number of proposals, prominent among which were proposals to replace special educational needs (SEN) statements with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans which will run from ages 0-25 and to give parents and young people with Plans the opportunity of a personal budget. In September DfE announced 20 pathfinders, involving 31 local authorities and their health service partners to test the Green Paper proposals. DfE will be publishing a policy document in response to the consultation by the end of the year.
2. Of those children and young people identified with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) through the SEN system, 70% have SEN statements. A fundamental aim of the EHC Plans will be to put greater emphasis on long-term outcomes for young people and support better transitions to adulthood.
3. Local authorities should already be providing better support to young people with SEN in transition to adulthood. The Transition Support Programme, part of Aiming High for Disabled Children, which ended earlier this year saw all bar one local authority achieve minimum standards in transition support. In the last year of the programme 139 local authorities carried out projects, ten of which involved young people with ASDs.
4. The Green Paper said that DfE would make available free training materials developed by the Training and Development Agency on a number of types of SEN, including autism. The Green Paper also highlighted the opportunity for local authority special schools, including autism specific special schools, to become special Academies and use the freedoms that status offers to develop their provision, and for parents, charities and others to establish free special schools. It also explained that outstanding special schools, including those which focus on autism, could apply to become "Teaching Schools", developing their staff alongside schools throughout their network and sharing their expertise.
5. Under a Voluntary and Community Sector grants programme DfE is funding the Autism Education Trust over the next two years to develop a competency framework for professionals working with autistic children, to deliver basic autism training through 10 autism exemplar schools to 200 schools and at least 5,000 teachers, and to support enhanced training for teachers working regularly with autistic children and specialist training for school SEN Coordinators. DfE is also funding the National Autistic Society through this programme to produce a training package outlining rights and entitlements for parents/carers of children with ASD for volunteers who work with the Society's Education Rights Service. Training will be developed by NAS's education specialists and Education Rights Project Manager and delivered nationally by volunteers to 1500 families via 100 family days.
6. The DH/DfE funded research into transitions for young people with autism will be reporting in 2012.

## **4. Department for Work and Pensions Update**

### **Update on the Disability Employment Strategy**

The Disability Employment Strategy is being developed alongside the new disability strategy, Fulfilling Potential. The Government remains convinced of the need to maximise the opportunities available to disabled people to realise their employment aspirations. The principle objective of the strategy is to maximise the opportunity for disabled people to realise their employment aspirations, and through this achieve greater economic independence.

The initial stage of developing the strategy involved an in-depth review of the analytical evidence. Over the course of the Summer we have been engaging widely with stakeholders, both across government and externally, to look at how Government can improve the position of disabled people in the labour market.

The Department recognises that the Specialist Disability Employment Programmes should perform better, achieving better outcomes to enable more disabled people to work and fulfil their potential, and to achieve better value for money for the taxpayer. We will be looking at this as part of the strategy, building on the valuable work of the Sayce review.

As well as looking at our employment programmes, the strategy will also look more broadly at what can be done to enable more disabled people and those with health conditions to move into or remain in work. The strategy will also focus on employers as well as individuals by providing employers with the tools needed to employ and support disabled people. On 18<sup>th</sup> July, at the Disability Employment Conference, the Minister for Disabled People launched the two year Disability Confident campaign, working together with businesses to increase the employment of disabled people.

A key focus of the strategy will be how to support young disabled people realise their aspirations and assist their transitions at key points between education and employment at 16, 18 and on leaving further or higher education.

We would like to hear from people and organisations with views on the strategy. Please email us at the address below:

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