

Report

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| Report to: | Social Work Resources Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 2 June 2021 |
| Report by: | Director, Health and Social Care |

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| Subject: | Autism Resources Co-ordination Hub (ARCH) Update |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise Committee of the background and current progress of the development of ARCH since the last update to committee
- ◆ advise re: development of the South Lanarkshire Local Autism Action Plan to sit within the Scottish Strategy for Autism
- ◆ outline ARCH's role in supporting the Autism community during the COVID-19 Pandemic: March 2020-March 2021

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that they note the progress made as highlighted in the present report; and
- (2) that they note the Resource Plan to develop the revised and updated Local Autism Action Plan outcomes during the post-COVID-19 recovery and transformation period post COVID-19.

3. Brief Background (Recap)

- 3.1. Following the closure of the pan-Lanarkshire One Stop Shop based in Motherwell, which was managed by Scottish Autism in May 2016, interim arrangements were put in place to deliver an alternative South Lanarkshire autism-specific support service.
- 3.2. Following the school summer holidays in 2016 the ARCH service moved to its own premises in Burnbank, Hamilton where it remains.
- 3.3. The model of service delivery adopted in ARCH continues to promote and embody the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach which seeks to engage and mobilise the capacities of all autism partners in the Private, Statutory, Voluntary and Parent Led sectors within South Lanarkshire.

When the ARCH was established it was the intention as noted in the Executive Committee Report dated March 2017 that 'the aim is to establish the ARCH as a South Lanarkshire resource that reaches out to all parts of the local authority through existing groups and to work towards supporting the Autism community to assume the running of the resource on behalf of the community.'

- 3.4. The ARCH remains the flagship of South Lanarkshire's commitment to promoting and implementing the four strategic outcomes outlined in the revised Scottish Strategy for Autism – Outcomes Approach (2015) and Revised Outcomes and

Priorities 2018-2021 as well as the five overarching themes in the South Lanarkshire Local Autism Action Plan 2018-2023.

- 3.5. ARCH has remained pro-active in facilitating the development of services within the community; many of which are designed and delivered in partnership with the community itself alongside partners in the statutory, private and third sectors. Parent Carer support groups are arranged and delivered collaboratively between parent carer volunteers in two autism charities working from ARCH; COAST (Champions of Autism Spectrum Together) and SAIL (Supporting Autism In Lanarkshire) alongside ARCH staff who deliver guidance, signposting and support to autistic children, young people and adults as well as their parent carers. Pre-COVID lockdown restrictions, Lanarkshire Carers was commissioned to provide a staff member to co-work/facilitate one of the weekly parent carer support groups held in the centre.
- 3.6. A range of autism stakeholders remain actively involved in collaborating on designing and delivering supports based within ARCH.

4. Development of the ARCH Service – March 2020-March 2021

- 4.1. The implementation of the strategic themes outlined in the South Lanarkshire Local Autism Action Plan 2018-2023 have continued to be progressed throughout the Pandemic and subsequent lockdown restrictions via regular meetings between ARCH and autism stakeholders in the third, statutory and private sectors.
- 4.2. ARCH has also represented the South Lanarkshire Autism voice within an unprecedented number of vitally important national developments relating to The Post-Scottish Strategy for Autism (2011-2021) proposals published by the National Autism Implementation Team (NAIT) (Appendix 1 outlines the graphic produced following the ARCH consultation event), the Scottish Government post COVID-19 Transformation and Recovery plans, publication of the Cross Party Group on Autism report; 'The Accountability Gap' (link to report in background papers) , publication of the review into Scotland's ASN Education provision chaired by Angela Morgan, including the Scottish Government's unanimous acceptance of the recommendations therein, and the proposed Disabled Children and Young People (transition to adulthood) (Scotland) bill by Johann Lamont MSP.
- 4.3. At the same time, ARCH has continued to be guided by the South Lanarkshire Autism community's vision statement encapsulated by the phrase; "Think National - Act Local" by ensuring that the autism-informed supports and services offered within South Lanarkshire continue to meet the needs identified by our community throughout the Pandemic period.
- 4.4. ARCH has also been instrumental in furthering the primary strategic objective of raising autism awareness and informed practice throughout the South Lanarkshire workforce and community via public events including flag raising outside Headquarters for Autism Pride day in 2020 and Autism Awareness Week 29 March-04 April 2021 as well as online training and development sessions with, amongst others a wide range of stakeholders in; Health, Scottish Ambulance Service, Education, Further Education, Money Matters, Housing and Social Work Resources (Adult, Justice, Children's Houses and Children and Families).

- 4.5. ARCH continues to facilitate ongoing workforce development via nominations onto the SVQ Level 2 and 3 in Understanding Autism offered by the West of Scotland College. This has resulted in over 300 professionals in all services obtaining the award. ARCH has also contributed to revised Child Protection documents and is currently collaborating with Housing colleagues on a focus group to inform revised Housing policy.

5. Further Developments

- 5.1. ARCH has developed an innovative Autism profiling tool specifically designed for ease of use by the autism community itself, as well as informing professionals engaged in supporting autistic people in all sectors. This is called the 'My Autism Profile' tool, and has been approved by the Senior Management Team within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), as well as being incorporated into the newly constructed South Lanarkshire Autism Internet page developed and produced by ARCH in partnership with Planning and Communications Team colleagues (link to report in background papers).
- 5.2. Throughout the Pandemic, from the initial announcement of lockdown in March 2020, ARCH immediately set about collaborating with centre user charities to obtain access to online platforms which allowed the support offered to our community to remain unbroken. This has allowed many online groups and workshops to being hosted via ZOOM and Microsoft (MS)Teams. This provision has been described by many as 'a real lifeline' throughout what has otherwise been a very isolating experience for the community as a whole and autistic people specifically.
- 5.3. ARCH also continues to undertake staff development session via these online platforms.
- 5.4. In a very real sense ARCH adapted in response to the COVID reactive needs of the South Lanarkshire autism community by also offering our phone and email advice and support lines, throughout. Alongside the ZOOM and MS Teams Social Media platforms, ARCH has received an unprecedented number of 'crisis calls' from autistic people and their parent carers struggling with the implications of lockdown restrictions. Whilst never intended to be or established as a crisis intervention service, ARCH has supported autism families through very difficult situations which would have otherwise been referred on to statutory, targeted services who by their own acknowledgement, would have undoubtedly struggled to provide autism-informed responses. The 2019-2020 statistics reflect this ongoing work and support. (Appendix 2).
- 5.5. The ARCH mailing list has continued to steadily increase during lockdown and now totals 1,549 recipients.
- 5.6. ARCH continues to collaborate with Education Inclusion Services in ensuring the ongoing provision of the National Autistic Society's 'Early Bird' programme throughout South Lanarkshire during lockdown.
- 5.7. ARCH is currently involved in participating as a Pathfinder authority in a pilot programme using the Development and Wellbeing Assessment tool (DAWBA). The implications of the pilot will potentially transform current professional assessment, identification and support of neurodivergent conditions including Autism, as well as other mental health issues in children and young people aged 11-23 years. The early identification of these issues will allow interventions to be much more specific and targeted in accordance with assessed support needs. The DAWBA was used

by the NHS in their survey of mental health in school children in England and Wales in 2017, and is highly recommended by NIMH in the U.S. It is also the preferred diagnostic tool currently used in Denmark and has over 4500 academic citations having been successfully used for millions of children worldwide since its creation in 1995.

6. The Post COVID Recovery Plan

- 6.1. ARCH is already in detailed discussion with centre user charities about the resumption of face-to-face groups and services, once current lockdown restrictions are eased. These plans will be consistent with the CoSLA approved 'Towards Transformation' plan (link to report in background papers).

Further to 3.4 above and in recognition of a change in the delivery of supports provided by the ARCH and its Third Sector partner; the Resource over the coming months will actively engage with our autism community and partners to determine how we can realise the vision of the ARCH becoming a truly community lead resource.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. There are no implications for Climate Change associated with this report.
- 9.2. There are no sustainable development issues associated with this report.
- 9.3. There are no Environment Implications associated with this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. There are no other implications associated with this report.
- 10.2. There are no sustainable development issues associated with this report.
- 10.3. There are no other issues associated with this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy, or recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

Val de Souza
Director, Health and Social Care

13 April 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve health, care and well being
- ◆ Get it right for children and young people
- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities

Previous References

- ◆ Executive Committee Report 2017

List of Background Papers

The **Towards Transformation** Document:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/learning-intellectual-disability-autism-towards-transformation/#:~:text=The%20Scottish%20Government's%20'Towards%20Transformation,their%20lives%2C%20the%20same%20as>

The Cross Party Group on Autism report; '**The Accountability Gap**':

<https://s3.chorus-mk.thirdlight.com/file/1573224908/63654983914/width=-1/height=-1/format=-1/fit=scale/t=445041/e=never/k=2910a506/CPG%20on%20Autism%20report%20-%20The%20Accountability%20Gap%2006.10.2020.pdf>

My Autism Profile Tool:

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/13763/my_autism_profile

Appendix 1



South Lanarkshire -
local views of autism :

Appendix 2



Arch Statistics.xls

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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