

14 June 2013

Dear Practice

Suffolk Adult Autism Service

Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group are delighted to announce a new service for adults with suspected and/or undiagnosed autistic spectrum disorder in Suffolk.

Funded by the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Suffolk and Suffolk County Council, the service will be managed by Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust and include assessment and diagnosis for adults over the age of 18. People accessing the service will receive diagnosis and will be supported to access provision within mental health services and/or other health and social care providers in order to enable them to live a fulfilling life.

This service is part of a process by health commissioners to review the whole life pathway of people with autism and it forms part of the integrated delivery pathway of autism assessment, diagnosis and support.

Autism is a lifelong condition that has a great impact on adults and their families or carers. Diagnosis and needs assessment can offer an understanding of why an adult is different from their peers and can open doors to support services in education, health services, social care and a route into voluntary organisation and contact with others with similar experiences. All this can improve the lives of adults and their families.

The need for this service is based on the rising prevalence of autism that has increased demand for diagnostic services and evidence suggesting that adults with an autism spectrum disorder are more likely to experience episodes of mental ill health than the general population. The very nature of autism, the features of the condition and the increased vulnerability of those living with the condition has, in combination with other factors, resulted in people on the autistic spectrum having a higher than usual involvement with the criminal justice system than the wider community.

The roll out of this service to all practices covered by Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and West Suffolk CCG will commence on the 1st July and will be hosted in the Suffolk Wellbeing Services in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds.

As this is a new service feedback from referrers on the effectiveness of the service is helpful and the team would be happy to arrange visits to surgery meetings to introduce the service on request.

I would like to thank you again for participating and your ongoing support. Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Commissioning Implementation Team if you require any further assistance or have any improvement suggestions.

Yours sincerely

Dr John Hague

New Service Briefing **Suffolk Adult Autism Service**

What is it?

- A multi-disciplinary assessment and diagnostic service for adults with suspected autism.
- The aim of the service is to improve the lives of people with autism, help them and their carers understand their condition and improve access to wellbeing and mental health services available to them.

Referral process

- Adults aged 18 years and over who the GP suspects may be on the autistic spectrum but have not had a previous diagnosis or assessment for this condition can be referred via the NSFT Access and Assessment Service.
- Patients will be triaged by the team and then, if appropriate for the Adult Autism service, will be referred to receive pre-diagnosis counselling before undergoing a full multi-disciplinary assessment from an expert team.
- The expert team consists of psychologists, nursing/allied health professionals and social workers.
- The GP completes a referral letter with information about why the patient is suspected of having undiagnosed autism and should include the following information:
 - Brief History of social and communication difficulties
 - Existing and co-morbid conditions
 - Previous contact with services
 - Current difficulties
 - Current medication
 - Patients consent to referral

Please send referral letters to:
NSFT Suffolk Autism Assessment and Diagnosis Service,
4th floor,
Mariner House,
Handford Road,
Ipswich,
IP1 2GA

- After diagnosis patients will be supported to access any other services they need, which may include access to the Suffolk Wellbeing service, Mental Health services for adults and/or any other third sector services within the community.
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Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clinics will be provided from centres in Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich and the objectives of the new service are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Service will take a multidisciplinary approach to assessment, diagnosis and post diagnostic support ○ Will recognise that people with autism should be able to live as full and rewarding life as possible ○ Will be accessible, expert and responsive to individual need ○ Able to offer high quality both pre and post-diagnostic support for people with autism and their carers/family ○ Will be adaptable to the social, communication, intellectual, and sensory needs of people with ASDs ○ Able to meet the needs of people with a range of complexities of presentation ○ Inclusive of carer/family need Well-being focussed
Benefits	<p>To improve the lives of people with autism, to help them and their carers to understand their condition and improve access to wellbeing and mental health services for this group of service users</p> <p>In addition to this, the service will be mindful of other possible co-existing conditions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ● Anxiety disorders and phobias ● Mood disorders ● Oppositional Defiant Behaviour ● Tics or Tourette's syndromes ● Obsessive Compulsive Disorder ● Self-injuries behaviour ● Global delay or intellectual disability ● Speech and language problems ● Academic; learning problems for example in numeracy or literacy ● Motor co-ordination problems ● And will seek to provide advice and referral on to other suitable services able to provide the necessary support if these conditions are recognised.
Launch details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The service will open for referrals form GPs on the 1st July 2013, initially as part of a 2 year pilot. ● This will be followed will follow a public launch and communications in October 2013.
Contact details	<p>NSFT Suffolk Autism Assessment and Diagnosis Service 4th floor Mariner House Handford Road Ipswich IP1 2GA</p>