

David J Rowlands AM
Chair, National Assembly for Wales Petition Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

21 March 2018

Dear David

Petition P-05-761 Demand Funding from the Welsh Government to Support Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru

Further to your letter of 23rd February 2018, I am writing on behalf of the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board to update you on our Integrated Autism Service (IAS).

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan were identified by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) as one of the four early implementation areas for the Welsh Government's Integrated Autism Service in 2016/17.

At this time Cardiff and Vale University Health Board had an existing service – the Cardiff and Vale Autism Spectrum Service (CAVASS) – which was hosted within Mental Health Services and provided diagnostic assessment to adults presenting with suspected Autism. In addition, CAVASS also delivered a range of post-diagnostic support groups to individuals following diagnosis. This was delivered in partnership with the local third sector service and led by a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Autism.

Alongside this, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan local authorities were providing information, advice and assistance to individuals presenting at first point of contact pre-and post-diagnosis. In addition, the Councils were running informal groups and supporting other services working with individuals with Autism spectrum disorder.

The proposals for the new service delivery were informed by the guidance produced by Welsh Government on implementing a National IAS. This included staffing the service with the key professionals identified, in addition to securing staff with an appropriate skill mix to support delivery of the service as set out within the guidance. The Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan proposal was subsequently approved in October 2016 and enabled local service managers to begin recruitment to key posts within the service.

It was also agreed at this time that the two existing services would merge into the IAS to create one service. Therefore Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan have an enhanced version of the IAS which includes wider information, advice and assistance services to individuals,

with information and signposting for individuals presenting pre-diagnosis, and existing diagnostic links to mental health services and diagnosing psychiatrists.

The service has been operational in part from April 2017 (using existing services to maintain delivery) and was then launched in September 2017. All practitioners are now in post as of March 2018 and the service is currently operational, although still developing.

On-going activity to support full operational delivery includes training the IAS team in diagnostic assessments and developing further links with other ASD services to enhance the local offer. A review of the current post-diagnostic training has taken place, led by the clinical lead within the IAS and in partnership with Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru (ASCC). The intention is to maintain the existing arrangement in delivery of this post diagnostic training in partnership between the IAS and the ASCC practitioners.

More recently in 2018, the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan IAS Programme Board identified opportunities to work more closely with the third sector through reallocation of slippage within the IAS budget, as a direct result of staffing delays. This was facilitated by Cardiff Third Sector Council and supported four voluntary sector organisations to deliver additional benefits to individuals with ASD between January and March 2018. It is unlikely that this opportunity can be revisited into the next financial year, as all resources within the IAS have been allocated to the staffing team required, as set out within the original IAS guidance.

We hope this provides you with an update on how the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Integrated Autism Service is working locally, but if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Well-being, Cardiff Council; and
Chair of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board