**Audiology Services: Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities and Autistic People**

**Please complete these questions if your audiology service provides diagnostic hearing assessments AND hearing aid provision for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people.** This provision may be delivered through a specialist service or as part of your mainstream service.

For the purpose of this request the following terms have been used:

**Intellectual Disabilities:** People who have an intellectual or learning disability identified in their medical records.

**Autistic People:** People who have autism spectrum disorder and whose autism is known to audiology services.

**Co-occurrence of intellectual disabilities and autism:** Autism spectrum disorder is not an intellectual disability, but these conditions may co-occur. For the purposes of these questions, questions which ask for information regarding autistic people refer to autistic people without an intellectual disability. Where autism co-occurs with an intellectual disability, please include these people in the information regarding intellectual disabilities.

Clinical definitions of intellectual disabilities and autism are included in the footnote.

**Scope:** This information request **does not** include services for people with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, or later acquired cognitive deficits, such as dementia.

Please base your answers on your service provision between 1st May 2021 and 31st July 2021.

**The vast majority of these questions can be answered with a “Select all that apply” or yes/no choice**

**Section 1: Your service**

**Please answer the questions below based on the situation as of July 2021.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your name: | Rory Smith |
| Your role: | Head of Department |
| Your email address: | [Rory.smith10@nhs.net](mailto:Rory.smith10@nhs.net) |
| Your telephone number: | 01722 429335 ext 4335 |

Please give the name of your audiology service/s. If you provide services on behalf of another Trust/s please provide details of all the Trusts that you provide services for below. **Please write names in full and expand acronyms:**

|  |
| --- |
| N/A |

**Section 2: Your caseload of people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people**

2.1 Does your hospital or audiology service have a mechanism for identifying and flagging people with intellectual disabilities who use the service?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes |  |  | No | X |

If yes, please specify how you store and use this information?

|  |
| --- |
| There is a system used for flagging patients however this system is used for any patients who may have additional needs, and as such is not limited to those with intellectual disabilities and/or autism and can include patients with memory problems or who have special requirements i.e those who prefer a certain gender of clinician or can only attend on certain days of the week. |

2.2 Does your hospital or audiology service have a mechanism for identifying and flagging autistic people who use the service?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes |  |  | No | X |

If yes, please specify how you store and use this information?

|  |
| --- |
| As above. |

Please include the following information for your service. **We understand that you may not record all these numbers**. Please only fill in the numbers your service records or provide an estimate if possible (noting with an E). If you do not record these numbers and cannot make a reasonable estimate, please state ‘not recorded’:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total population of the area that your service covers | 940,000 |
| The geographical boundaries your service covers | Bath, North East Somerset, Swindon, Wiltshire, parts of Hampshire |
| Age group your service covers (e.g., 0 – 18 years, 18+ years) | 0-18+ years |
| Total number of adults with intellectual disabilities who were seen between 1st May and 31st July 2021. | - |
| Total number of children (<18 years) with intellectual disabilities who were seen between 1st May and 31st July 2021. | - |
| Total number of autistic adults who were seen between 1st May and 31st July 2021. | - |
| Total number of autistic children (<18 years) who were seen between 1st May and 31st July 2021. | - |

**Section 3: Transition to adult services**

3.1 How do you prepare young people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic young people for transition to adult services? Please select all that apply.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Not applicable: adult only service |  |
| Provide easy read information on the adult service for young people |  |
| Professional liaison arranged between adult and paediatric services prior to transition |  |
| Offer an appointment with the adult service before being discharged from the children’s service |  |
| Hold joint appointments with both paediatric and adult audiologist present |  |
| Visit local schools to offer sessions to share information with young people about deafness, independence and transition etc. |  |
| Discuss reasonable adjustments that can be offered in the adult service |  |
| None of the above |  |

Other please state:

|  |
| --- |
| Specialised transition clinic which is overseen by a paediatric audiologist (who also does adult work) and if the patient requires specialised testing they will usually remain under the care of specialised dual role clinicians who are both adult and paediatric audiologists. |

**Section 4: Reasonable Adjustments**

**Reasonable adjustments:** According to The Equality Act 2010, service providers should make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to their provision, to allow disabled people to access the same services as non-disabled people. These adjustments will be different for different services. What is reasonable for one provider may not be possible or relevant for another provider.

* 1. Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate accessibility to audiology services? Select all that apply:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | For people with intellectual disabilities | For autistic people | For anyone who needs them |
| Test room of sufficient size to accommodate client, up to 2 carers and up to 2 testers |  |  | X |
| Wheelchair access |  |  | X |
| Directions to your service written in an accessible format and clear signage displayed *in situ* |  |  |  |
| A quiet waiting area |  |  |  |
| An appropriate alternative to a soundproof room for patients who find this unpleasant |  |  | X\* |
| Range of testing position options within test room |  |  | X\*\* |
| Home visit |  |  |  |
| Appointments at Day Services or Day Centres |  |  |  |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
| \*Depending on room capacity if notified at the time of appointment. Can usually accommodate if notified in advance. |
| \*\*dependent on the clinician running the clinic – if referral is clear re: autism/intellectual disability then there can be a variety of tests to perform. |

* 1. Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate appointment flexibility? Select all that apply:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | For people with intellectual disabilities | For autistic people | For anyone who needs them |
| Longer appointment times |  |  | X |
| Providing breaks during appointments or offering multiple appointments |  |  | X |
| Option of different times |  |  | X |
| Extended opening times (before 9 am and/or after 5pm) |  |  | X\* |
| Saturday appointments |  |  | X\*\* |
| Telephone or video appointments |  |  | X |
| We offer extra appointments in school holidays |  |  |  |
| We deliver some services in schools and/or community settings |  |  |  |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
| \*Dependent on staffing levels as not all staff work extended hours. |
| \*\*Dependent on staffing levels, typically the department is open one Saturday per month |

* 1. Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to testing procedures? Select all that apply:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Soundfield behavioural testing in addition to ear-specific testing | X |
| Visual reinforcement audiometry or behavioural observation audiometry for adults | X\* |
| Electrophysiological assessment in an outpatient setting | X |
| Electrophysiological assessment under sedation or general anaesthetic | X |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
| \*Will need to be arranged via professional liaison between adult and paediatric services but this does occur on occasion. |

* 1. What attempts are made to find out what the individual’s needs are prior to the appointment (e.g., communication, physical, behavioural needs)?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Check referral letter | X |
| Check hospital records |  |
| Contact patient |  |
| Contact family/key workers (as appropriate) |  |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

* 1. Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to facilitate communication? Select all that apply:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ability to book communication support professionals where necessary (e.g., interpreters, speech-to-text reporters, lipspeakers) | X |
| Range of options for contacting the service (e.g., email, mobile number with text option) | X\* |
| Easy read versions of appointment letters |  |
| Easy read versions of patient letters and reports of findings |  |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
| \*Email and telephone number – no text option. |

* 1. Do you make any of the following reasonable adjustments to providing patient information? Select all that apply:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Easy read patient information |  |
| Pictorial resources explaining processes in clinic e.g., audiometry |  |
| Video information about the department, staff and appointment |  |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

* 1. Do you currently provide a choice of coloured moulds to people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people at no extra charge? Please select one answer:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes, always |  |  | No, never |  |

Yes, with limitations– please specify:

|  |
| --- |
| Only with patients from the paediatric service |

Does your service offer any of the following adaptions people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | For people with intellectual disabilities | For autistic people | For anyone who needs them |
| Hearing aid fittings with 2 members of staff |  |  |  |
| Speech testing to evaluate outcome |  |  | X\* |
| Soundfield Aided thresholds |  |  | X\*\* |
| RECD |  |  | X |
| Additional follow-up review appointments to support acclimatisation / adaptation to amplification |  |  | X |
| Training for carers and families on hearing aid use |  |  |  |
| Training for carers and families on communication |  |  |  |
| Easy read care plans |  |  |  |
| Easy read information on hearing aid use |  |  |  |
| Home visits to evaluate hearing aid use in a domestic setting |  |  |  |
| \*For adults, only in patients who are deemed to have insufficient benefiting from their hearing aid solution. For paediatrics this is done routinely  \*\* Routinely in paediatrics, only for adults who are not deriving benefit from their hearing aids. | | | |

**Section 5: Wax management**

* 1. How is problematic wax managed in people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people in your service? Select all that apply:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Advice issued re drops | X |
| Referral to GP surgery | X |
| Referral to mainstream ENT services | X |
| Referral to ENT services with specialist skills re. people with intellectual disabilities |  |
| Removal within Audiology clinic by Audiology staff |  |
| Information about ear wax (risks, side effects, management etc.) offered in a range of formats (e.g., Easy Read). |  |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Section 6: Specialist Services**

**Specialist Services:** By specialist services, we mean audiological services which are provided separately from your mainstream provision, specialised for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people. This might mean an entirely separate service for these groups, or the opportunity to be seen by professionals who specialise in working with these groups, in a mainstream setting.

6.1 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how many were seen by a specialist service as opposed to your mainstream service (please give a number for all that apply)? **We understand that you may not record these numbers**. If you do not record these numbers and cannot make a reasonable estimate, please state ‘not recorded’:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | For people with intellectual disabilities | For autistic people |
| Specialist audiology service for people with complex needs | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Mainstream audiology services | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Mixture of mainstream and specialist service | Not recorded | Not recorded |

6.2 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, what review processes were available (please select all that apply)?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | For people with intellectual disabilities | For autistic people |
| Normal hearing – discharge, self-referral to return | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Normal hearing – routine review | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Hearing Loss – same review as mainstream service | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Hearing Loss – additional review appointments | Not recorded | Not recorded |

6.3 Of the people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how many were offered the following services (please give a number for all that apply). **We understand that you may not record these numbers**. If you do not record these numbers and cannot make a reasonable estimate, please state ‘not recorded’:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | For people with intellectual disabilities | For autistic people |
| Hearing Therapy | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Vestibular assessment or rehabilitation | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| ENT | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Cochlear Implant Services | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Tinnitus assessment or rehabilitation | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Sensory teams | Not recorded | Not recorded |
| Other Implantable Devices | Not recorded | Not recorded |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Section 7: Meeting Relevant Guidance**

7.1 How closely do you work to the following relevant guidance?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Awareness | Implement in part | Implement in full | Not heard of |
| Learning Disabilities Improvement Standards for NHS Trusts  <https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/2926/v1.17_Improvement_Standards_added_note.pdf> |  |  |  | X |
| PMLD Service Standards:  <http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/PMLD-service-standards> |  |  |  | X |
| The Accessible Information Standard  <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/> | X |  |  |  |
| British Society of Audiology Practice Guidance for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities  <https://www.thebsa.org.uk/resources/access-to-audiology-services-for-adults-with-intellectual-disabilities/> |  | X |  |  |

**Section 8: Your policies**

8.1 What documentation do you currently have specific to people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people? Select all that apply and indicate whether ‘in place’ or ‘in progress’. These documents may be trust/hospital-specific or may be specific to your department/service.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | In place | In progress |
| Patient Pathway(s) |  |  |
| Audiology-specific SOPs that refer to working with people with intellectual disabilities |  | **X** |
| Audiology-specific SOPs that refer to working with autistic people |  | **X** |
| Training logs relevant to staff skills on working with people with intellectual disabilities |  |  |
| Training logs relevant to staff skills on working with autistic people |  |  |
| Risk Assessments (detail in question 9.2) |  |  |
| Transition SOPs or policy |  | **X** |

Other – please specify:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

8.2 Do you carry out the following risk assessments? Select all that apply:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Formal risk assessment | Informal risk assessment (risk identified and recorded in medical notes) |
| Challenging Behaviour |  | X |
| Risks of inaccuracy of behavioural assessment |  | X |
| Risk associated with communication barriers |  | X |
| Discharging without ear-specific information |  | - |
| Lack of sufficient support with hearing aid use |  | x |
| Lack of equal access to services for people with intellectual disabilities |  | x |

Other, please specify:

|  |
| --- |
| \*We are currently consulting in regards to best practice regarding this and as such a SOP is in progress. At present it is not encouraged to discharge those with additional needs without ear specific information. |

8.3 How does your ‘Did Not Attend’ policy differ for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people to that of the wider patient population?

|  |
| --- |
| We do not discharge those with additional difficulties after one missed appointment and we would contact relevant agencies in addition to the referrer if there was a pattern of non-attendance. |

**Section 9: Referral Routes**

9.1 Of the new referrals of people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people, that you received between 1st May and 31st July 2021, where did the referrals originate from? Please select all that apply.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| GP | **X** |
| Community Learning Disabilities Team | **X** |
| ENT | **X** |
| Paediatric Audiology Services | **X** |
| Newborn Hearing Screen | **X** |
| Out-of-area Audiology Service | **X** |
| Speech and Language Therapy | **X** |
| School nursing team | **X** |
| Community Paediatric team | **X** |
| Hearing screening pathway for adults or children with intellectual disabilities |  |
| Annual Health Check |  |
| Other |  |

Other: (please specify)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Section 10: Multidisciplinary Working**

10.1 Of the people with intellectual disabilities that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how often did you make referrals to the following professionals when they are required. Please select all that apply and indicate estimate of frequency of referral.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
| Speech and Language Therapy |  |  | X |  |  |
| Community Learning Disabilities Team |  |  |  | X |  |
| Teacher of the Deaf | X |  |  |  |  |
| Ear, Nose and Throat |  |  | X |  |  |
| Occupational Therapy |  |  |  |  | X |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |
| Most of these categories are dependent on the professionals already involved in the patients care. There are no established pathways for referral for many of these sub-specialities and audiology will often write to the GP requesting onward referrals. | | | | | |

10.2 Of the autistic people that you saw between 1st May and 31st July 2021, how often did you make referrals to the following professionals when they are required. Please select all that apply

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
| Speech and Language Therapy |  |  | X |  |  |
| Community Learning Disabilities Team |  |  |  | X |  |
| Teacher of the Deaf | X |  |  |  |  |
| Ear, Nose and Throat |  |  | X |  |  |
| Occupational Therapy |  |  |  |  | X |
| Other |  |  |  |  |  |

10.3 Do you have access to any of the following? Select all that apply:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Employer policies on working with people with intellectual disabilities | X |
| Employer policies on working with autistic people | X |
| Employer-provided training on working with people with intellectual disabilities | X |
| Employer-provided training on working with autistic people | X |
| Employer involvement in the Mencap Treat Me Well Campaign | Not aware of |
| Effective links to other professionals with specialisms in working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people | X – for TOD, ENT services only. |

**Section 11: Staffing and Training**

11.1 Are the staff (e.g., audiologists, receptionists) in your service able to access the CPD necessary for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| All staff |  |
| Some staff | X |
| None |  |

If CPD is not available for all staff in your service, necessary for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people, please indicate why not (select all that apply):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Financial constraints |  |
| Training expenses are not covered e.g., travel to training |  |
| No cover for clinical duties |  |

Other: please specify

|  |
| --- |
|  |

11.2 If you offer a specialist service for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people, how many full-time equivalent staff were routinely involved on 31st July 2021? (Please select all that apply). Specialist provision can include an entirely separate service for these groups, or the opportunity to be seen by professionals who specialise in working with these groups, in a mainstream setting. Please express part-time roles as a fraction of a full-time role e.g., 1 full-time role and a part-time role of 3 days would be 1.6 FTE.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Permanent posts | Locum/ temporary posts | Trainees |
| Band 1 |  |  |  |
| Band 2 |  |  |  |
| Band 3 |  |  |  |
| Band 4 |  |  |  |
| Band 5 |  |  |  |
| Band 6 |  |  |  |
| Band 7 |  |  |  |
| Band 8 a |  |  |  |
| Band 8b |  |  |  |
| Band 8 c |  |  |  |
| Band 8 d |  |  |  |
| Band 9 |  |  |  |
| Doctor specialising in audiology (paediatrician, audio vestibular physician etc) |  |  |  |
| Other staff e.g., Volunteers and students |  |  |  |

11.3 What training have the staff in your service been offered for working with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people? (Please select all that apply)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Clinical staff working in a specialist audiology service for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people | Clinical staff who work with people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people in a mainstream audiology service | Non-clinical staff who work in the audiology service (e.g., receptionist, porter) |
| Mental Capacity Act training |  |  |  |
| Communication training (relevant to those with intellectual disabilities e.g., Makaton etc) |  |  |  |
| Learning Disability Awareness |  |  |  |
| Autism Awareness |  |  |  |
| Shadowing specialist clinics |  |  |  |
| Accessible Information Standard Training |  |  |  |
| Generic Violence and Aggression Training |  |  |  |
| Challenging Behaviour |  |  |  |

Other, please detail:

|  |
| --- |
| Staff training is not uniform, depending on qualification/banding therefore some may have had training/shadowing whilst others have not. |

**Section 12: Patient engagement and service evaluation**

**Please answer the questions in this section based on the situation as of 31st July 2021.**

12.1 What patient feedback mechanisms do you have in place for services for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

|  |
| --- |
| N/A |

What have been the most recent outcomes of patient feedback regarding services for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people?

|  |
| --- |
| N/A |

12.2 Do you audit/evaluate your service practices for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic people? Please give a brief explanation (1 or 2 sentences).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes (please specify how) |  |
| No (please specify why) | There has been a relatively recent transition of head of department, previous leadership did not have an audit pathway in place for patients with autism/intellectual disabilities. Service improvement is on the horizon however there is a backdrop of significant operational pressures due to staffing crisis in audiology and performance targets for COVID recovery. |

12.3 Are there any aspects of service delivery that you adapted during the Coronavirus pandemic, which you intend to retain beyond the end of restrictions (e.g., tele-audiology, telephone reviews)? Please give brief details and an explanation of why.

|  |
| --- |
| Telephone triage service for certain specialities or when staff are isolating – able to utilise staff in a non face to face role and to accommodate patients who may not wish to come to clinic given the pandemic. Also useful for follow-ups where there are largely no problems and as such saves the patient a journey into clinic – particularly pertinent given the wide geographical boundaries we cover. |

12.6 Are there plans to develop your service for people with intellectual disabilities and autistic people in the near future? Please give a brief description of any planned changes.

|  |
| --- |
| We plan to more accurately document patients who have autism/intellectual disabilities and implement some easy-read literature prior to appointments. We also plan to set up a dedicated service/sub-speciality for patients in this criteria as current practice is that we run ad-hoc clinics arranged by paediatric and specialist adult audiology as and when required. We would aim to formalise this clinic and develop a robust set of SOPs to ensure we deliver high quality are for this subgroup. |

**Many thanks for your time.**