



All Age Autism Strategy

Our plan 2022 to 2026





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About our plan

We want to make sure autistic people and their families in Reading are:

- supported
- included
- healthy
- able to live their best lives



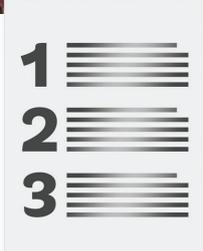
To do this, we have written a plan.

Our plan says what we will do to make life better for autistic people in Reading.



We have listened to lots of people and organisations to help make our plan.

They have helped us decide what work we need to do.



About autism

About 1 thousand 7 hundred people in Reading have autism.

Autism means your brain works in a different way to people who don't have autism.



Autism can affect people's behaviour, feelings, communication, and experience of the world. It is different for everyone.



Autism is not a health condition, and it is not a learning disability.

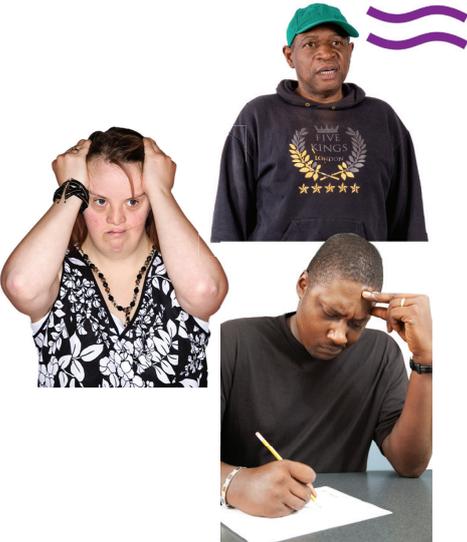


All autistic people have things they are good at as well as things they find hard.



Many people with autism also have other conditions. This might be things like:

- mental ill health
- a learning disability
- dyslexia
- epilepsy



Big things we want to work on

There are 7 big things we want to work on in our plan. This is what we want to do over the next 4 years:



1. Understand autism and support autistic people



2. Support autistic children and young people at nursery, school or college



3. Support autistic people with work or training



4. Make sure autistic people have the best health and care



5. Support autistic people with housing and living independently

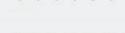


6. Keep autistic people safe from crime



7. Support families and carers

How

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The next part of this plan tells you how we are going to make these things happen.

1. Understanding autism

We want all autistic people to be understood and supported wherever they go.

To make this happen, we will:

- include a good mix of people on our Autism Board. This includes:

- autistic people

- staff that support autistic people

- people from local community and voluntary groups





- hold coffee mornings or other events where we can hear more about people's experiences



- offer training to lots of different organisations to help them understand and support autistic people



- write guidelines about autism for organisations. This will help them to employ more autistic people



- help members of the public to understand autism. We will work with autistic people to do this in the best way



- make sure people get enough information and support when they find out they have autism.

The information must be given in a way that people can understand.

2. Education

We want:



- all staff and pupils to understand and respect autistic people

and



- autistic people to have the same chances in life as everyone else



To make this happen, we will:

- work with schools and colleges to try to stop bullying by:



- raising awareness of autism



**Autism
Champion**

- having Autism Champions to speak out for fairness for autistic pupils



- supporting pupils to talk about autism at school or college



- make sure that schools understand and support their autistic pupils



- make sure that autistic young people and schools get the support they need from other services



- make sure that schools and parents know about what help and support they can get



- give autism training to drivers and people who work on school buses



- support young people who are leaving school or college.

This might be to get a job or use adult services.

3. Work and training



We want to make sure autistic people are equal members of society. They can work, volunteer, and live the life they want to live.



To make this happen, we will:

- make sure there are lots of chances for autistic people to volunteer



- support people to work out what skills they have and things they are good at



- tell autistic young adults about the **Elevate** project.

Elevate gives advice and support to people aged 16 to 18 about work, education and training.



- train autistic people to help each other. This is called **peer mentoring**



- support people to find out if they can get benefits or Universal Credit



- help autistic people to find and keep jobs



- help employers to understand autism



Organisations who are members of the Autism Board will employ people with autism or disabilities.

4. Health and care



We want autistic people to get the healthcare and support they need.



To make this happen, we will:

- find out if people get an autism **diagnosis** at the right time and place.



A **diagnosis** is when a doctor and other health staff decide if a person has autism or not.



- try to make sure people get a diagnosis quicker



- make sure people with an autism diagnosis know what help and support they can get



- make sure that all autistic people get regular health checks



- make sure all health and care organisations get training called **Oliver McGowan training**.

This training teaches staff about learning disability and autism. It helps them to understand people's needs.



- make sure that all autistic people can get the care and support they need. They will be understood and well supported



- fund more services to help autistic people. For example:



- advice and information



- getting together and meeting other people



- having someone to talk to for support



- holiday clubs



People who run these services must know how to support autistic people.



- try to stop young autistic people from needing to stay in hospital for their mental health

5. Housing



Autistic people are part of the community in Reading. We want everyone to have a safe place they can call home.



To make this happen, we will:

- find out how many homes we need for autistic people in Reading



- support people to find a home that is right for them



- include the needs of autistic people when we plan housing in our area



- support people to live the lives they want at home



- give care workers the training they need to support autistic people well

6. Safety and crime



We want everyone in the **Criminal Justice System** to understand and support autistic people.

The **Criminal Justice System** includes:



- the police
- the courts and prisons
- probation service



To make this happen, we will:

- help Autism Berkshire to give out the Thames Valley Autism Alert Card.

This card helps police officers to understand and support people.



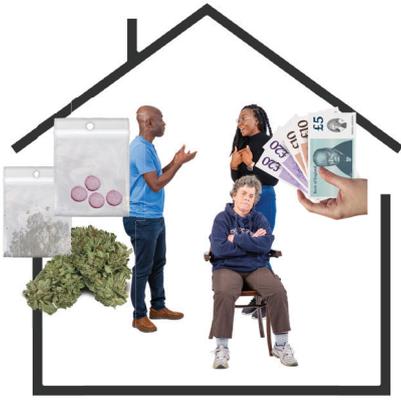
- help autistic people to understand **county lines, mate crime** and **cuckooing**.



- **County lines:** Drug dealers in cities force young or vulnerable people to sell drugs in towns and the countryside



- **Mate crime:** Someone pretends to be your friend, then hurts you or steals money from you



- **Cuckooing:** Criminals take over a vulnerable person's home, and then use it as a place to sell drugs from



- teach autistic people how to keep themselves safe. This will help to stop them being a **victim** of crime.



A **victim** is someone who has had a crime happen to them



- local organisations will work with **Prevent and Channel**. This is an organisation that stops people becoming a **terrorist**.



A **terrorist** is someone who uses force or violence to scare people.

7. Families and carers



We want autistic people and their families to lead full, healthy lives.

To make this happen, we will:



- start a new service for carers. This service will help carers to get information and **respite** more easily.



Respite means having a short break or holiday.



- find out more about the short breaks that people get now. We will check they are offering what people want and need



- tell parents or carers about the Autism and ADHD Service.

This service helps people to find out about support that is available.



Local organisations and websites also tell people about support for families and carers.

Making sure our plan is working

The Autism Board and Health and Wellbeing Board

These boards will make sure that the things in this plan happen.





Together, they will:

- read reports and check we are doing all the things we said we would



- make sure that we are working on the right things



- check that we are getting things done on time



The Autism Partnership Board

Lots of people from different groups and organisations are on this Board. We all work together.



Each organisation helps with the parts of the plan that they know most about.



Autistic Board members will share their experience and stories.



Thank you to all the people and organisations who helped us to write this plan.



Thank you to members of CLASP. This is a group for people with learning disabilities. They helped us to check this easy read plan.