

Support for autistic people...

in Newcastle

What is the National Autism Strategy ?

In July 2021 the Government published a new national strategy for autistic children, young people, and adults. For the first time, this included children and young people.

To read the strategy or an 'easy read' version, visit www.gov.uk and search for 'autism strategy'.

Here in Newcastle, we want to listen to autistic people, and improve the services and support we provide. We also want our work to support other neurodivergent people, including people with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) and Tourette's.

What does the strategy say?

The strategy has six main areas where the government want to make things better for autistic people:

- 1 Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society
- 2 Improving autistic children and young people's access to education and supporting positive transitions into adulthood
- 3 Supporting more autistic people into employment
- 4 Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people
- 5 Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
- 6 Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems



What is autism?

Autism affects people in different ways. Like anyone else, autistic people each have their own strengths and weaknesses.

More than one in 100 people are autistic, and this number is increasing. In Newcastle there are more than 2,500 autistic adults and more than 1,000 autistic children and young people.

Being autistic does not mean you have an illness or disease. It means your brain works in a different way to other people's.

Being autistic can affect the way we mix with people, how we think and feel about things, and how we communicate. Many autistic people have intense and highly focused interests or hobbies, and may have difficulties with extreme anxiety.

Some autistic people need little or no help in their everyday lives, while others may need help all the time. This may include help with making friends, coping at school or getting out and about.

To find out more about autism, visit:

- ∞ The NHS website: www.nhs.uk
- ∞ The North East Autism Society: www.ne-as.org.uk
- ∞ National Autistic Society: www.autism.org.uk

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Listening to you

The best way to improve services is to find out more about what is important to autistic people and their families. These are some of the things people have said are important to them.

- ∞ Getting a diagnosis
- ∞ Getting help before and after diagnosis
- ∞ Being accepted and understood
- ∞ Support to keep healthy
- ∞ Help with mental health
- ∞ Friends and relationships
- ∞ Help to stop loneliness and isolation
- ∞ Being able to meet people
- ∞ Information and advice
- ∞ Help with education and training
- ∞ Organisations changing how they work, to make it easier for people
- ∞ Getting and keeping a job

We are working to transform and improve services for autistic people. That includes offering flexible and personalised community services, as well as improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities in health in our region.

**North East and North Cumbria
Integrated Care Board**



What happens next?

Local organisations have come together as Collaborative Newcastle, and agreed some steps to take:

- ∞ **Co-production:** This means making sure that autistic people and their families play a leading role in making changes
- ∞ **Autism audit:** We will check what services and support are currently available. This would show what's working well, and highlight any gaps
- ∞ **Public events:** We want to hold two events – one for adults, and one for children and young people – to discuss the strategy and hear your views
- ∞ **Leadership:** This means making sure that we have senior leaders in public bodies who support our work to improve autism services
- ∞ **Oliver McGowan training:** Making sure that health and care staff are trained to provide safe, compassionate and informed care to autistic people, and people with a learning disability
- ∞ **'Task and finish' groups:** Set up small groups to do the work to make our strategy happen in Newcastle

Get involved

If you'd like to get involved or just want to find out more, please contact us at:

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