



# Tell us what you think

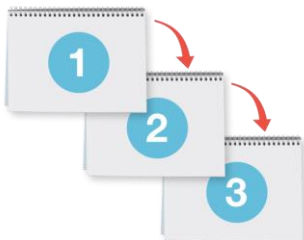
## Autism Strategy 2023 – 2028

What will help make the lives of autistic people, their families and carers better?



**Autism** means your brain works in a different way. You have autism all your life.

People who are autistic may find some things difficult. Like communication, being with other people, or how they think and feel about things.



Everyone who is autistic is different. Some autistic people need more support than others.

A **strategy** is a plan to make things happen.



# Information



Our plan aims to make the lives of autistic people and their families and carers better.



We asked people what they thought was most important to have in our plan. We called these **priorities**.



We have 10 priorities. We now want to know what you think about them.



**Please answer our questions so we know what you think.**

We want to hear from

- people who are autistic
- their families, friends and carers
- and people supporting those who are autistic.



Your answers should be **anonymous**. This means no one should know who you are or who you are talking about.

You do not have to answer all our questions.



Please email your answers to [Autism.Strategy@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Autism.Strategy@health-ni.gov.uk).

**Email us before the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2023.**



# Part 1. About you



**Do you have autism?**

Trained medical professional have said you are autistic. This is a **diagnosis**.



Yes

No



**Are you waiting for an autism assessment?**

Autism assessments are done by medical professionals. They ask questions to see if you are autistic.



Yes

No



**Are you answering questions for someone who is autistic?**



Yes

No



**Are you a parent, carer, relative or friend of someone who is autistic?**



Yes

No



**Are you a medical professional or social care professional?**

For example, a doctor, Social Worker or Psychologist.



Yes

No

Please tell us more.



**Are you an education professional?**

For example, a School Principal, Teacher or SEN Co-ordinator.



Yes

No

Please tell us more.



**Are you answering for an organisation?**



Yes

No

Please tell us more.



**Other.**



Yes

No

Please tell us more.



Carers, parents, relatives or friends of someone who is autistic should answer our questions using what you know about that person.



## Part 2. More information

Please answer these questions if you are autistic or are waiting for an autism assessment.



How old are you?

Under 18

18 - 25

26 - 50

51 - 65

Over 65



What gender are you?




Male


Female


Other





# Who do you live with?


 I live on my own.

 I live with my family.

 I live with my friends.

 I live in a residential home.  
**Residential homes** are where you live with others and staff are always there.

 I live in supported living.  
**Supported living** means you live in your own house but have staff to support you.

 Somewhere else.  
Tell us where.....



**Do you have other learning needs?**

Learning needs make it harder to learn. For example, ADHD, Dyslexia or a learning disability.



Yes



Not Sure



No



**Are you in education?**

For example, school, college or university.



Yes



No

Full time

Part time

Other

Please tell us more.



**Are you looking for work?**



Yes



No



**Are you paid to work?**



Yes

No

I work full time - around 35hrs a week

I work part time - less than 35hrs a week

Other

Please tell us more.



**Do you volunteer?**  
This means you are not paid for the work you do.



Yes

No

I volunteer full time - around 35hrs a week

I volunteer part time - less than 35hrs a week

Other

Please tell us more.





# Our Questions



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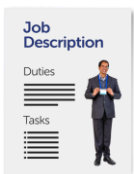
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# Priority 1 Waiting lists for autism assessments



**Autism assessments** are done by medical professionals. They ask questions to see if you are autistic.

Waiting times for autism assessments and support need to be better.

We want to know what kind of support is helpful and when.



**1. Have you or someone you know been referred for an autism assessment?**

**Referred** means medical professionals have asked for you to be assessed.



Yes



No



**If you answered yes to question 1.**

**1a. Was support or assessment given before being referred?**



Yes



No

Please tell us more.



If you answered yes to question 1.

1b. Was support given when waiting for an autism assessment?



Yes

No

Please tell us about the support you got.



1c. If you got support was it helpful?



Yes

Not Sure

No



2. Do you or someone you know have an autism diagnosis?

An **autism diagnosis** means a medical professional says you are autistic.



Yes

No



Understand

2a. Has an autism diagnosis helped you or someone you know?

For example, understanding your needs and feelings.



Yes

Not Sure

No



**3. What support would be helpful before being referred for an autism assessment?**

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**4. What support would be helpful when waiting for an autism assessment?**

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## Priority 2 Adult Autism Services



**Adult Autism Services** are for adults aged 18 and over. They help people

- find out if they are autistic
- understand difficulties they face
- and help with these difficulties.

Family support is also given.

We want to make Adult Autism Services and support better.

We want people getting an autism assessment to get the support they need. They should get the same support wherever they live.



**1. Have you or someone you know been referred to Adult Autism Services for an autism assessment?**

These should be Health and Social Care services.



Yes



No



If you answered no to question 1.

**1a. Have you or someone you know tried to get a referral but not got one?**



Yes



No



**1b. Have you or someone you know tried to get a private diagnosis for autism?**

A **private diagnosis** is one you have to pay for.



Yes

No

Please tell us why



**2. Have you or someone you know used Adult Autism Services?**



Yes

No



If you answered no to question 2.

**2a. Was this because you or someone you know was not able to get these services?**



Yes

No

Please tell us more



If you answered yes to question 2.

**2b. What type of support did you get?**



If you answered yes question 2.

**2c. Was the support you got helpful?**



Yes

Not  
Sure

No



**3. What support from Adult Autism Services would be most helpful?**



## Priority 3 Wellbeing and Mental health



**Wellbeing** means a person is happy and healthy.

**Mental health** is how someone is feeling in their mind.

Our wellbeing and mental health is important. We need to get the right support at the right time and in the right place.



1. Have you or someone you know ever needed support with your wellbeing and mental health?



Yes



No



2. Do you know about services you can use to get support for your wellbeing and mental health?



Yes



Not Sure



No





**3. Have you or someone you know used mental health and wellbeing services?**



Yes

No

Please tell us about the services you used.



If you answered yes to question 3.

**3a. How long did you have to wait to get support from services?**



0-6 months

6-12 months

More than 12 months



If you answered yes to question 3.

**3b. Was the support you got helpful?**



Yes

Not Sure

No



**4. Has anything got in the way of you getting support from mental health and wellbeing services?**



Yes



Not Sure



No

Please tell us more.



**5. What support would most help people with their mental health?**



# Priority 4 Short breaks and respite



**Short breaks and respite** are planned or emergency care of a child or adult for a short time.

They give the child or adult who is autistic a chance to do new things and meet new people. They give families and other unpaid carers a rest.



1. Do you or someone you know use respite services?



Yes

No



2. How often should people be able to get short breaks or respite?



Every week

Once every 2 weeks

Once a month

Other

Please tell us more.



### 3. What type of respite care is most useful?

Overnight

Daytime

Regular activities. For example, groups, music, social activity

Other

Please tell us more.



## Priority 5 Transitions



Transitions are times of big changes in our lives. For example, moving to a new place to live. Change can be difficult.

We want to understand how you have been supported through big changes. How can we make this better?



1. Tick any of these changes that you or someone you know has found hard.



A. Moving from primary to secondary school.



B. Moving from school to college or university.



C. Moving to a new or different place to live.



D. Changing jobs or changes at work.



E. Changes in health and social care services.



F. Getting used to a new community.



## 2. How can transitions in education be made better?

For example, moving from primary school to secondary school.

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## 3. How can transitions in Health and Social Care be made better?

For example, changing your social worker.

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#### 4. How can transitions in employment be made better?

For example, starting a new job or being given a new project at work.

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#### 5. How can transitions in independent or supported living be made better?

For example, staff changes or moving home.

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## Priority 6 Educational Environment



Educational environments include

- School
- College
- and University.

Understanding the needs of autistic people in these places is important.

Support must meet the needs of pupils and students.



**1. Do schools have all they need to support autistic pupils?**



Yes



No



**2. Has anything stopped you or someone you know from getting educational support?**



Yes



No

Please tell us more.





If you answered yes to question 2.

### 2a. Could reasonable adjustments have helped?

**Reasonable adjustments** are changes that help everyone use a service. For example, at school this might mean having a quiet space.



Yes



No



If you answered yes to question 2.

### 2b. If staff had a better understanding of autism would it have helped?



Yes



No



### 3. What would better support pupils who are autistic?



**4. Have you or someone you know used technology or equipment to get more support in school?**



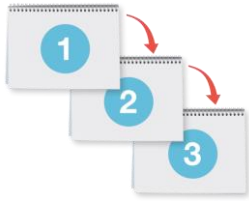
Yes

No

Please tell us what it was used for.



**5. What technology or equipment would be helpful?**



6. Do you know about the new Special Educational Needs Framework?

**Special Educational Needs Framework** says how support is given to children with special educational needs.



Yes



No



If you answered yes to question 6.

6a. Do you know about the changes the Framework will make?



Yes



No



**Middletown Centre for Autism** wants really good education for autistic children and young people. It does this in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.



7. Do you know what Middletown Centre for Autism does?



Yes



No



8. Have you used Middletown Autism Centre services?



Yes



No



9. Have you or someone you know gone to college or university?



Yes

No

College

University



If you answered no to question 9.

9a. Is there anything stopping you or someone you know from going to college or university?



Yes

No

Please tell us more.



9b. What support would help you or someone you know to go to college or university?



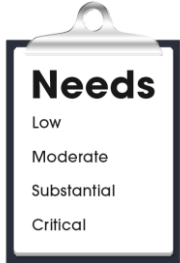
If you answered yes to question 9.

**9c. Have you or someone you know got support for autism at college or university?**



Yes

No



If you answered yes to question 9.

**9d. Did support from college or university meet the needs of you or someone you know?**



Yes

No

If yes, please tell us why.

If no, please tell us why.



**10. What support should there be for autistic people in education?**

Empty response box for question 10.



**11. Did you know autistic students can get Disabled Students Allowance to help pay for their course?**



Yes

No



**12. Have you been given a Disabled Student Allowance?**



Yes

No



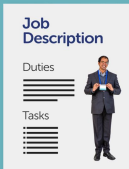
If you answered yes to question 12.

**2a. Did you find it easy to get your Disabled Student Allowance?**

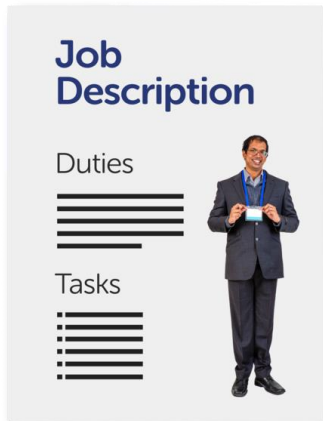


Yes

No



## Priority 7 Careers



A **career** is the type of job you choose.

Good advice is important for making career choices. People who are autistic may like getting career advice and information in different ways.

We want to know how we can make career advice better.



1. **Do autistic young people get the right information and support about careers?**



Yes

No

If you have answered yes, please tell us why.

If you have answered no, please tell us why.



**2. Is careers information and advice given in a helpful way?**



Yes

No

If you have answered yes, please tell us why.

If you have answered no, please tell us why.



**3. Would online career support help autistic people?**



Yes

No





**5. What careers support would be helpful for autistic people?**

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## Priority 8 Employment



Working can be difficult for autistic people.

It is important that employers understand the needs of autistic people. **Reasonable adjustments** should be used to make a good work environment.

**Reasonable adjustments** are changes that help everyone use a service.



1. **Have you or someone you know had problems getting a job because they are autistic?**



Yes



No

Please tell us more.



**2. What support would help an autistic person get a job?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the respondent to write their answer to question 2.



**3. Have you or someone you know had problems in the workplace because they are autistic?**



Yes



No



**3. What support would help an autistic person in the workplace?**

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## Priority 9 Housing



Housing choices are important.  
Different people have different needs.

Finding the right home with the right support can be difficult for people who are autistic.



1. Do you know about the housing choices autistic people have?



Yes



No



2. Do you know where to get information about housing choices?



Yes



No



3. What would make housing choices better?

Empty response box for question 3.



4. Do you know what supported living is?



Yes

No



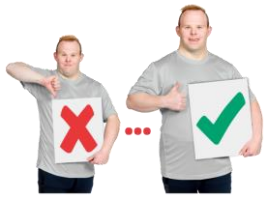
5. Some autistic people need support to look after themselves.



Yes

No

Do you know who would help them with housing and supported living choices?



**6. What changes to supported living would make experiences for people who are autistic better?**

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## Priority 10 Our community



A **community** is a group of people living in the same area or who are interested in the same thing.

We want everyone to feel like they are part of their community.

We want people who are autistic to feel happy and confident taking part in community groups and activities.



1. Do you or someone you know take part in arts or cultural activities?

**Culture** means the ideas, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people.

For example, music, art, drama, dance or faith groups.



Yes



No



2. Does anything stop you or someone you know taking part in arts or cultural activities?



Yes



No

Please tell us more.





3. What support would help people who are autistic take part in arts or cultural activities?

Empty response box for question 3.



4. Do you or someone you know take part in sporting or physical activities?

For example, yoga, swimming, football, badminton and tennis.



Yes

No



5. Does anything stop you or someone you know taking part in sporting or physical activities?



Yes

No

Please tell us more.

Empty response box for question 5.



6. What support would help people who are autistic take part in sporting or physical activities?

Blank response area for question 6.



7. Do you or someone you know take part in activities or groups within your community?

For example, a social club.



Yes

No



8. Does anything stop you or someone you know taking part in activities or groups within your community?



Yes

No

Please tell us more.

Blank response area for question 8.



**9. What support would help people who are autistic to take part in activities or groups within your community?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above.



**Do you have anything else you would like to tell us?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for users to provide additional feedback or comments.



**Thank you for answering our questions.  
Please e-mail or post your answers before  
8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 to**

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