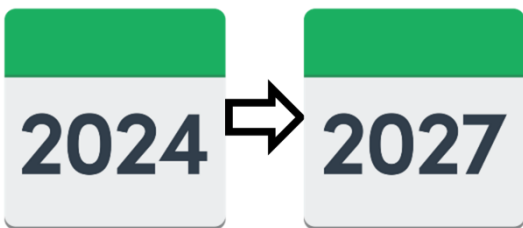




AUTISM

a North Yorkshire Strategy



**North Yorkshire All Age Autism
Strategy 2024 -2027 Easy Read**



In this document, difficult words are in **bold**. You can find an explanation of what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.

Some words are [blue and underlined](#). These are links which will go to a website which has more information.

This document is about the North Yorkshire Autism **Strategy**.

A **strategy** is a plan of how we will do things over a long time.

This document is an easy read version of the [North Yorkshire All Age Autism Strategy](#).

This document is about what North Yorkshire Council, the NHS and other organisations will do to support:

- Autistic children
- Young people
- Adults who live, go to school and work in North Yorkshire.



What is autism?

Autism can affect things like:

- **Communication**
- mixing with other people
- how you think and feel about things.

Communication is the way people share information. It includes speaking and writing.

Autism can affect people very differently. This means autistic people need different types of help and support.

Autism is something you're born with. Signs of autism might be noticed when you are very young, or not until you're older.

A lot of people say being autistic is really important to how they feel about themselves.

Working together to make this plan happen

We talked to lots of people who live and work in North Yorkshire, including:









- Autistic people
- Family and carers
- Advocates
- North Yorkshire Council
- The NHS
- Voluntary services



We asked them for their views, ideas and experiences of autism services in North Yorkshire and what mattered to them. We worked together to look at what people said and to make the action plan for this plan.

There are 8 key themes

Key Themes are important topics and issues.

	
<p>Education</p>	<p>Employment</p>
	
<p>Housing</p>	<p>Carers</p>
	
<p>Assessment, diagnosis and support</p>	<p>Health and care</p>
	
<p>Criminal and youth justice</p>	<p>Inclusive communities</p>

Education

It is important children and young people have the right support in schools and colleges.

This helps them to be successful in what they want to do and helps them to get ready for being an adult.



What people told us

People said there were good and bad things about how schools and colleges support autistic children and their families.

People said their experiences were better if staff who work in schools and colleges have training in understanding autism and how to support people.



Going to school or college near to where they lived was very important to people.



It is important that schools work with autistic children and young people to think about what they might want to do when they leave school, such as getting a job or going on to college or university.

What we are going to do

- We will continue to work with autistic children and young people to help them understand what being autistic means to them
- We will make sure people who work in schools and colleges have the right information and training to support autistic children and young people.
- We want to make sure there are places for autistic children in local schools and make sure there is a pathway for children who are unable to go to school.





Employment

We want more autistic people to have the same work opportunities as everyone else.

What people told us

Some people said they had good support to get a job. But a lot of people said they do not know where to get information or support to get a job.



Young people and their families said there was not enough information about how to get a job when they leave school.



Autistic people often feel stressed and overwhelmed when trying to find a job. They would like support to apply for a job, with interviews and when they are at work.

People said they had poor experiences at work due to lack of understanding by employers and the people they work with.



Employers did not always know about making **reasonable adjustments** for autistic staff.

Reasonable adjustments are changes that public services, buildings and employers have to make, to make it possible for people with disabilities to use a service or do a job. Such as making appointments longer, having accessible information and accessible environments.

What we are going to do



- We will work together with autistic people and employers to develop training and information about supporting autistic people to get a job and do well in work.
- We will work with different organisations who help people find a job to help them work better together and make it easier for autistic people to get a job.
- We will work with schools to make sure young people and their families have the right information about what support and opportunities are available for them when they leave school.





Housing

Everyone needs a safe place to call home. Autistic people should be able to get a home that meets their needs.

What people told us

It is not always easy to find the right home.



The different ways of getting a home can be confusing and there is a lack of suitable homes for autistic people.

When someone loses their home, it is not always easy to find another home that meets their needs.



People can wait a long time for a home that meets their needs and autistic people are more likely to become homeless.

Housing providers and their staff do not always have a good understanding of autism.

What we are going to do



- We are looking at the housing needs of autistic people which will help us plan what supported housing and supported living needs autistic people will have over the next 5 years.
- We will make it easier for people to know how to get a home.
- We will make sure autistic people and their families have the right information to help them choose a home to meet their needs.
- We will work with housing providers to help them understand autism, what **reasonable adjustments** they may need to make and be autistic inclusive.

Carers



A **carer** is a person who does not get paid and helps a family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help

Carers are so important to the people they care for and are usually happy to support the person, but their caring role can be bad for their own health and well-being.

What people told us

Some carers are worried about money and how being a carer can affect their ability to work.

Carer assessments can be very helpful for some carers and they help them to get the support they need.

Some carers said that after their child had been **diagnosed** as autistic, they then either realised they were autistic and were then diagnosed as being autistic.

Some carers said they found it hard to get an assessment because they have to wait, or they may not be able to get an assessment at a time that suits them.

Older carers are often worried about the future when they can no longer support the person they care for.

A **diagnosis** is finding out you have a specific illness or condition





What we are going to do

- North Yorkshire Council are working with carers to refresh the plan to support carers.
- We will make sure carers have the support and information they need.
- We will look at the way carers assessments are done to reduce the waiting time for assessments and develop an online assessment.
- We will make sure social care staff have training to help them understand how autism may affect carers and their families.
- We will work with carers to help them understand different ways of supporting autistic people.





Assessment, Diagnosis & Support

It is important that autistic people have the right support when they need it. We want people to get support as early as possible and to help those who need it most first.

What people told us

People are waiting too long to have an **assessment** to find out if they are autistic.

An **assessment** is when you meet with a professional to work out what you are good at and what you need help with.

People do not have the right information to help them choose to have an assessment done by a different organisation.

For some people knowing they are autistic is very important to them.

Having a **diagnosis** of autism can help people get some services or **reasonable adjustments** that are not available to people who are not autistic.



What we are going to do



- We are going to improve the support children, young people and adults get before and after they are diagnosed as autistic.

- We will look at ways to reduce the waiting times for an assessment including looking at different resources.



- We will work with other organisations to make sure people can get support and **reasonable adjustments** while they are waiting for an assessment.

- We will look at how we can make it easier and fairer for people to get an assessment.



Health & Care

Autistic people of all ages should live healthier and longer lives, supported by autism-inclusive health and care services

What people told us



Where people have been supported by staff who understand autism or have received training on autism, they have had really good support.

Some people said they have had a bad experience because of services not communicating well or services have not made reasonable adjustments such as longer appointments.



Environments that are not designed for autistic people can make it difficult due to sensory overload. Where they have been designed to be autism inclusive this has made it easier for autistic people.

What we are going to do



- We will work together with autistic people, their families and carers, and health and social care staff to design and deliver information and training on:

- Understanding autism
- Reasonable adjustments
- Communication
- Autism inclusive services
- **Oliver McGowan mandatory training**



The **Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training** was set up after Oliver McGowan died in a hospital. Oliver was an autistic person with a learning disability. His death might have been stopped from happening if the doctors and nurses had a better understanding of autism and learning disability, they could have cared for Oliver in a different way.

- We will improve environments to make them more accessible to autistic people.
- We will think about the needs of autistic people in our suicide prevention work.
- We will share what we have learned from the **National Autistic Society Autism Accreditation** of North Yorkshire Councils provider services with others.



The **National Autistic Society Autism Accreditation** checks that organisations are committed to understanding autism and setting the standard for autism practice. It is a way for organisations to show they offer excellent support to autistic children and adults.



Adult and Youth Justice

Autistic children, young people and adults should have good support in the adult and youth justice systems.

What people told us

The justice service can make it hard for autistic people to have good support.

There is a lack of information for autistic people and their families.

Services do not always work together or share information.

If a person does not have a diagnosis of autism this can mean they do not get the right support.



What we are going to do



- The justice services will follow the recommendations of the Ministry of Justice report on **neurodiversity**, [Neurodiversity in the criminal justice system easy read](#), this includes:
 - Making the physical environments better for autistic people
 - Training staff to understand autism and **neurodiversity**
 - Getting better at sharing information with other services

Neurodiversity means all the different ways in which people's brains work. This can include people who are autistic, have learning difficulties or disabilities, ADHD, speech and language difficulties, tic disorders or brain injuries.

- **The Office for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner** will employ someone who will work with the police, fire and rescue services, to help them understand the needs of autistic people and how the services can work better with people.



The Office for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner works with people and communities to improve police and fire services.



Inclusive communities

We want everyone who is autistic to feel safe, be accepted in their community and not to feel lonely or isolated.

What people told us

Autistic people and their families said people do not understand autism and autistic people might be treated differently because of this. They said this can happen:

- In their communities
- At school
- At their doctors or when going to hospital
- Speaking to the police



If people know about autism or know someone who is autistic this helps to have a better understanding.

What we are going to do

- We will work together to make our communities autism inclusive.
- We will work with local communities, businesses, and organisations to help them understand autism and how they can make their environments easier for autistic people to use.



How will we make this plan work?

We have worked with lots of different people to make this plan and we will continue to work with them and check how things are working.



The **North Yorkshire Autism Group** is a group of people from North Yorkshire Council, the NHS, education, justice, community voluntary services and a family carer. This group will check if the things we have said we will do are happening.

The **Health and Wellbeing Board** will be checking to make sure this plan is working. They will make sure we are doing all the things we said we would do in this plan.