



An Introduction to Herefordshire & Worcestershire's local autism strategy

Our plan 2024 to 2029

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Introduction

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Introduction



This introduction tells you what is in our Autism Strategy. Some details have been left out to make this document easier to read.



Complicated words are written in **bold** and there is a list of them at the end of this document.

You may need some help with this document.



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

To learn more about the strategy, please visit: [All-Age Autism Strategy | Worcestershire County Council](#).

About our plan

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Information



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

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

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Information about **autism**



There are about 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK.

There are 3 million family members and **carers** of autistic people in the UK.

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



Autism can affect people's behaviour, feelings, communication, and experience of the world.

It is different for everyone.



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



Many autistic people also have other health conditions. This might be things like:

- mental ill health
- a learning disability
- anxiety
- depression

The Big Things we want to work on

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Information

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. Help people to understand and accept autistic people.
2. Support autistic young people in their early years, at school and into their adult life.
3. Support autistic people with work.
4. Make sure autistic people have the best health and care.
5. Support autistic people to get the help they need in their communities.
6. Improve understanding and support for autistic people in the **criminal justice system**.
7. Keeping safe.



The next part of this plan tells you how we are going to make these 7 things happen.

1. Help people to understand and accept autistic people

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We want to:



Make sure there are resources to help people understand autism better.



Make sure training is in place for services and organisations.

Help public buildings and shops check that they are autism friendly.



Agree a way of working together with businesses and transport services.

Help transport services check that they are autism friendly.

2. Support autistic young people in their early years, at school and into their adult life

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In Herefordshire we want to:



Work with schools and colleges to plan workforce support and to share good practice.



Make sure there are enough educational placements for children with specialist needs.



Improve planning to support children moving forward into adulthood.



Make support available for young people about puberty and relationships.

Image

In Worcestershire we want to:



Support schools to achieve an “Autism Friendly School” award.

Open a new school in Malvern.



Make sure there is support for early diagnosis.

Improve early access to services and support.



Help families to get information and support from Early Help services.

3. Support autistic people with work

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We want to:



Improve employer’s understanding of autism and the benefits of employing autistic people.



Tell autistic young adults about the “Access to Work” project and how it can help them.

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



Raise awareness of **reasonable adjustments** to support autistic employees.

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

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We want to:



Make sure all health and care organisations get training called **Oliver McGowan mandatory training**.

This training teaches staff about learning disabilities and autism.

It helps them to understand people’s needs.



Make sure all health and social care providers record a digital flag explaining the **reasonable adjustments** people need ([Reasonable Adjustment Flag case study \(based on pilot version of the flag\) - NHS England Digital](#)).



Make sure autistic people can get an annual health check.



Encourage all health settings to have a **sensory friendly assessment**.



Improve the assessment process for autistic children.



Review the support children get before and after an autism diagnosis.

5. Support autistic people to get the help they need in their communities

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We want to:



Make sure information about local services is available to autistic people.



This includes where they can go to:

- meet other autistic people.
- take part in activities.
- get practical support and information and advice.

Make sure more people know where carers of autistic people can go for support.



Develop an Autism **Social Work Team** in Worcestershire.



Help housing services and providers make the right **reasonable adjustments** for autistic people and their families.

Make sure there is the right support in the community to:

- avoid autistic people having to go to hospital.
- support discharge from hospital.

6. Improve understanding and support for autistic people in the criminal justice system

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We want to:

Make sure everyone in the **Criminal Justice System** to understand and support autistic people.



Support

To offer more training for police, lawyers, judges and others.

To make sure staff understand the **reasonable adjustment** guidance.



Make sure victim support organisations have specialised services for autistic people.

To support autistic people who are at risk of carrying out a crime.

7. Keeping safe

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We want to:

Make sure organisations know about “keep safe.”



Make help better for autistic people when they feel in crisis.

Help to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness for autistic people.



Share good practice within services.

Make sure autistic people are involved in decisions about services that affect them.

Making sure our plan is working

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Information

There is an Autism Strategy Oversight Group that looks at what progress has been made.

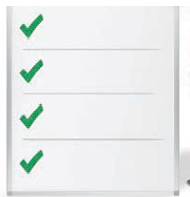


The progress is reported up to The **Learning Disability and Autism Programme Board**, and **Health and Wellbeing Boards**.

Lots of people from different groups and organisations attend these meetings.

We all work together.

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



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

Together, they will:

- Read reports and check we are doing what we said we would.
- Make sure that we are working on the right things.
- Check that we are getting things done on time.



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

Complicated words

Complicated word	What it means
Autism	<p>Autism is the short name for Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). When people have autism we say they are autistic.</p> <p>Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people.</p> <p>Everyone who is autistic is different. Some people need more support. Some people need less support.</p>
Autism Partnership Boards	Meetings that discuss services and support for autistic people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
Carer/s	<p>A carer is anyone, including children and adults who look after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support.</p> <p>The care they give is unpaid.</p>
Criminal Justice System	<p>The Criminal Justice System includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Police The Courts and Prisons The Probation Service
Diagnosis	The tests and assessments that are carried out by people working in health care to help them decide if someone has a specific condition or illness
Health and Wellbeing Board	Bring together organisations responsible for improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
Learning Disability and Autism Programme Board	Meetings that discuss services and support for people with a learning disability and autistic people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
Needs	The needs a person has for care and support.
Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT) Programme	The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training was set up to make sure health and social care staff have the right training to provide safe, compassionate care to autistic people and people with a learning disability.
Reasonable adjustments	Changes that places and services can make to make sure everyone can use them.

	For example, having a quiet area in a G.P surgery for autistic people to wait. Or giving information in easy read.
Sensory Friendly assessment	An assessment to understand the adjustments that could be made to make health settings more sensory friendly.
Social Work Team	A team of qualified workers who complete needs assessments and organise any care. They support people to live the life they want to.