

Commissioning Services for Autistic People

Introduction

This document provides examples of the different services that are commissioned to support people with autism in England. Please note the following:

1. The headings and groups in which individual items are placed is arbitrary and could easily be changed. One of the challenges of UK policy is that there have been several different ways of categorising the work, and frequent changes have hindered development.
2. These projects were funded at the time that they were reported but may have since closed. Due to the rapid pace of change, strategies and reports published before 2016 have not been included.
3. The best projects often have several linked activities and impact a suite of outcomes so may be broader than they appear to be in this account.
4. The terms 'autistic people', and 'people with autism' are used interchangeably in this list, in recognition of the disputed terminology in the field.
5. There is no attempt here to evaluate the merits of specific interventions, but simply to catalogue what is commissioned. For example, real jobs may be preferred over daycare and sheltered workshops, but everything remains on the list.

Creating inclusive communities

1. Support for family, friends and colleagues, not just the person, including Carer's Assessments, parenting programmes¹, peer support and access to community facilities². Support for friendships³ and sexual relationships.
2. Information is accurate, relevant and accessible (Easy-Read, community languages, online and alternative media⁴), co-authored by autistic people⁵.
3. Awareness raising and reasonable adjustments to create an autism-friendly community for all⁶. Targeted at specific sectors including elected members of the local authority⁷, library staff⁸, staff in the criminal justice system⁹, bus drivers¹⁰, housing staff¹¹, care home staff¹², advocates¹³, employers¹⁴, frontline Council staff¹⁵). Negative experiences (prejudice, hate crime, exclusion and complaints) are identified and acted upon.
4. Training is widely available, layered¹⁶ and codesigned and co-delivered by experts by experience¹⁷ (such as NAS accredited training). Breadth and depth of expertise. Training is free¹⁸, mandatory¹⁹, planned²⁰ and reviewed²¹.
5. Safeguarding²² and a Safe Places scheme²³, as well as information and on hate crime, radicalisation, grooming and abuse to keep autistic people safe²⁴. Knowing what to do when a vulnerable person goes missing²⁵. Help when an autistic person becomes a victim of crime²⁶.

Services for assessment

1. A diagnostic service is provided²⁷.
2. The mechanism for referral and assessment is accessible to the people who need to use it (easy read referral forms etc)
3. A layered assessment system that includes recognition of the need, screening and full assessment.
4. Assessment for young people detained in the criminal justice system²⁸.
5. Eligibility will treat people fairly by avoiding arbitrary exclusions²⁹, such as people with mild symptoms, Asperger's, LD³⁰, or people who have been previously diagnosed³¹. Initiatives to reach underrepresented groups – women³², older people³³, BAME groups³⁴ and rural communities³⁵.
6. Option of self-referral³⁶.
7. Multidisciplinary and holistic rather than medical approach and including access to other assessments³⁷ as indicated.
8. Assessment is timely without undue delay³⁸ (NICE says within 3 months).
9. Diagnosis is accurate³⁹ and benchmarked, leading to neither overdiagnosis⁴⁰, underdiagnosis nor misdiagnosis.
10. A follow up appointment (within 6 weeks) is offered to discuss support.
11. Education, Health and Care plan⁴¹ produced by social services for children and young people who need one.

Services for people diagnosed with autism

Provided in response to need, not diagnosis

1. Information, advice, guidance and advocacy⁴².
2. Short-term, bridging support⁴³, including help with understanding and coming to terms with the diagnosis.
3. Self-management and life skills⁴⁴ including travel training⁴⁵, help to manage money or apply for benefits⁴⁶. Personal budgets/direct payments⁴⁷.
4. Counselling, psychological support⁴⁸ psychoeducation⁴⁹ and other specific therapies⁵⁰.
5. Social Prescribing⁵¹, signposting and support to take up positive social roles in the ordinary community where you can make a contribution to community life.
6. Befriending services and Peer support⁵².

7. Signposting to other statutory services
8. Signposting to local mainstream or voluntary sector activities⁵³.
9. Supported Employment opportunities⁵⁴, with support for both employee and employer (such as Project Search⁵⁵ and the Government's Disability Confident scheme) with public sector organisations leading by example⁵⁶ and support for job retention and skills for self-employment and business start-up⁵⁷. Employment training opportunities including employer training⁵⁸, workskills assessment⁵⁹, work preparation⁶⁰, work experience⁶¹, jobfinding⁶² and supported internships⁶³ and apprenticeships⁶⁴.
10. Daycare⁶⁵.
11. Support for education including skilled learning support staff, training for tutors⁶⁶ and initiatives to reduce dropout⁶⁷.
12. Housing and accommodation⁶⁸: Support to live independently and remain local, even when needing specialist provision and assistive technology⁶⁹. Support with specialist housing or fulltime support in a residential home. Short breaks⁷⁰, Shared Lives⁷¹ and Supported Living provision⁷².
13. Mental health services⁷³
14. Physical health services⁷⁴.
15. Promotion of well-being⁷⁵
16. Social and physical environments⁷⁶ that support the person⁷⁷.
17. Prevention/delay of development of needs
18. Help with challenging behaviour⁷⁸, the criminal justice system⁷⁹, police matters, diversion schemes, and probation services. Access to clear information⁸⁰, appropriate adults, low stimulation environments and trained staff, including victim support.
19. Crisis support⁸¹.

Enabling staff and systems to work effectively

1. Core values – strengths⁸², rights, contribution, empowerment⁸³.
2. Consultation with families and people with autism⁸⁴
3. Research into autism and the services that support autistic people.
4. Provision based on evidence, such as a joint strategic needs assessment⁸⁵.
5. Sufficient funds devoted to autism with pooled budgets⁸⁶
6. Compliance with legal and procedural obligations⁸⁷ to support human rights.
7. Inter-agency collaboration, across all sectors⁸⁸.

8. Networking with national⁸⁹ and international allies and experts.
9. Identify and close gaps⁹⁰
10. Strategic plan and evidence-based review with SMART targets.
11. Effective commissioning for both specialist and universal services⁹¹ with a healthy balance between them and a jointly held strategy to build the capacity of universal services⁹².
12. Market development⁹³.
13. Focus on transitions – from children to adult services⁹⁴ (e.g. Preparing for Adulthood), from working age to older adult services.
14. Aligned with neighbouring strategies and plans such as Care and Treatment Reviews, the Sustainability and Transformation Plan, Transforming Care programme, Health and Wellbeing Board, Making Every Contact Count, Positive and Proactive Care, STOMP-LD, and Think Local Act Personal.
15. Autism is recognised and tracked by universal and specialist services, especially where there is evidence of inequality, such as mental health and physical health or need for inter-agency collaboration and data-sharing⁹⁵.
16. Universal design is adopted wherever possible and reasonable adjustments are made, tracked and evaluated for effectiveness. As a result, more people use mainstream services⁹⁶.
17. Identified ‘autism champions’ to support colleagues⁹⁷ and build system capacity, including experts by experience⁹⁸.
18. Funding and support for third sector responses and initiatives⁹⁹.
19. Quality assurance – the following elements are checked to ensure that they are autism friendly: service specifications¹⁰⁰, mental health and learning disability services¹⁰¹.

¹ Such as the NAS ‘Early Bird Plus’ programme, available in the LB of Merton. Merton also uses ‘Triple P Stepping Stones’ programme and general programmes aimed at parents of children with communication or behavioural difficulties, such as ‘Social Butterflies’ and ‘Incredible Years’. These are all for parents of children with autism, not parents with autism. Halton’s SEN Service provides on at least an annual basis the *York Intervention* for parents and carers of young people on the autism spectrum. Sibling training and support is provided by the Halton SEN Service through Halton Young Carers. Tower Hamlets is planning to develop a Carer Academy.

² In Warrington, the Carer Leisure Pass provides a complimentary 12 month leisure pass and is available for carers aged 16 and over to access gym, swimming or exercise classes at the local Livewire facilities. Lincolnshire aims to influence supermarkets, heritage and leisure services amongst others. The Living with Autism project facilitated a group of adults with autism to organise and access leisure activities in North Yorkshire.

³ Luv2MeetU Bradford has evaluated their programme of 40 social events per month. Focus on Autism is an Autism Friends programme run by the City of York.

⁴ The Rural Media Company and the Herefordshire Autism Partnership Board have worked together to produce an awareness raising film about autism that has been shown to many audiences around the county.

⁵ Tower Hamlets has promised to co-create information resources. Derbyshire will develop and publish information booklets and support packs.

⁶ Tower Hamlets use "World Autism Awareness Week" each year to raise awareness of autism by running a public awareness-raising campaign at this time to help combat stigma and discrimination around autism. Kent have adopted the NAS SPELL framework as a definition of an autism-friendly society. Hertfordshire University Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Specialist Autism Team also acts as a support network and training provider for mainstream services dealing with people with autism. They additionally provide a good model of support to those referred. An advocate is allocated to each individual and they assist the client from referral through to post-diagnosis support. This helps facilitate and tailor the diagnostic process and ensure that it is adapted to the needs of the client. Advocates also assist after diagnosis with benefits, peer support and employment, as well as providing training in the SPELL framework. Oldham intends to be recognised as an Autism-Friendly Town and Havering wants to be an Autism-Friendly Borough. Capacity building can help mainstream organisations offer a respectful and appropriate service to people with autism. [STARS](#) offers capacity-building training to schools.

⁷ Merton has provided autism awareness training.

⁸ Merton has provided training

⁹ Provided in Warrington for 'staff in the criminal justice system'. Lincolnshire Police have implemented significant levels of autism training across their workforce and also introduced Autism Champions.

¹⁰ Disability awareness training for bus drivers in Warrington's own bus services. The Department of Transport was to produce a report on bus driver disability awareness training by 2015.

¹¹ The Welsh assembly government has published a guide to help housing staff recognise autism and respond appropriately to challenging behaviour - https://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/resource/e_1_110324asdhousingen.pdf

¹² Harrow Council in-house residential services have dedicated staff members to deliver autism training to other residential homes.

¹³ Advonet in Leeds runs AIM, a specialist advocacy service for autistic people.

¹⁴ Tower Hamlets commit to offer training on autism to staff at the Council, Housing Associations, the Police, the Probation Service, other local organisations and advocates in adult social care.

¹⁵ Derby City Council will provide access to role specific training for all our staff providing frontline services.

¹⁶ Lincolnshire has developed a local intermediate level autism training presentation, as well as reviewing other training packages and compiling a list of training resources that services/individuals can access. Halton has a contract with the LD Training Alliance to provide a two-day autism awareness training. It is suitable for carers, support staff or professionals who require a basic understanding of autism or professionals who have limited prior knowledge of autism. All staff within Adult Social Care have access to this course. The British Psychological Society (BPS) have autism modules via e-learning. Levels 1 and 2 are free, level 3 has a cost. The modules are at: <https://beta.bps.org.uk/psychologists/professional-development/find-cpd>. Harrow provides the TEACH programme to staff who support people with autism.

¹⁷ Autism Training Works is a social enterprise in Nottingham that enables people with autism to gain skills around training and presenting, create employment opportunities and enable autism awareness training to reach a wider audience.

¹⁸ Merton Local Authority offers free autism awareness training to all its own education, health and social care employees. In Warrington, this is delivered through e-learning.

¹⁹ Basic autism awareness is now part of mandatory training provided to staff at LPFT. Derbyshire will ensure that all organisations are aware of their duties to provide autism awareness training to all staff.

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- ²⁰ Lincolnshire intends to create a multi-agency autism training plan.
- ²¹ A report has been produced on the autism awareness training being provided in Lincolnshire, which is based on responses from organisations across multi-agency services.
- ²² Warrington has made sure that people with Autism who have been through the safeguarding process have been supported by a suitably trained advocate.
- ²³ Warrington has made sure that people with autism know how to use the Safe Places scheme. Solihull has ensured that its Safe Places Scheme includes a consideration of the specific needs of people with autism.
- ²⁴ Herefordshire are working on information regarding hate crime, radicalisation, grooming and abuse.
- ²⁵ Herefordshire are encouraging carers to adopt the Herbert protocol – a plan for what to do.
- ²⁶ Tower Hamlets cite a report that suggests that autistic people are seven times more likely to be a victim of crime than other citizens.
- ²⁷ [West Midlands](#) have established an ASD diagnostic service. [Oxfordshire](#) have changed their provider, leaving a transitional period when the service is curtailed
- ²⁸ People with autism are overrepresented here. SWLStG screens all young people who receive a youth court order. The Bedfordshire CJS incorporate autism friendly ways of working, including training frontline staff in AQ10 testing.
- ²⁹ The diagnostic service in [Eastern Cheshire](#) is only available for people up to the age of 19, but there is a separate service for adults in [Cheshire](#). In [West Suffolk](#), there is a specialist diagnostic service for young adults and [another](#) for people over the age of 18. The diagnostic services in [North Staffordshire](#) and [Derbyshire](#) are not open to people with a learning disability.
- ³⁰ Warrington says that people with LD are already receiving appropriate care, so a formal diagnosis will not change their support package. The strategy for Kent only considers adults with high functioning autism so two other documents should be consulted as well – the Integrated Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy, and the Strategy for Children with Autism. Kent plan to develop an all-age strategy for people with neurodevelopmental conditions in the future. Similarly, the strategy for Havering only considers adults with High Functioning Autism as others are covered by the learning disability strategy.
- ³¹ Tower Hamlets Autism Diagnosis and Intervention Service offers post-diagnosis support to people it diagnoses but historically has denied this support to people who have been previously diagnosed, and arrangement it has committed to change.
- ³² For insights into the experiences of women with autism, see <http://help4aspergers.com/>
- ³³ See https://www.asdinfoales.co.uk/resource/e_n_110127asdolderadultsen.pdf
- ³⁴ Tower Hamlets have committed to encourage more women, older people and people with English as a second language who suspect they have autism to come forward for an assessment. We will do this through awareness raising and training. NAS published a report *Getting on? Growing older with autism*. Independence Support, run by the BME Carer's Support Service, London offers culturally appropriate, ethnically sensitive and flexible support to meet the needs of people with autism towards increasing life skills and being independent. Solihull is checking that assessment tools are sensitive to the needs of autistic people from BAME communities, such as the Social Responsiveness Scale.
- ³⁵ Reaching Communities is a South Gloucestershire Council project to extend the reach of an existing autism advice and information service by taking it into the semi-rural community, including through the use of mobile libraries.
- ³⁶ Halton offers carer referral and self-referral to the screening stage provided by its Autism Diagnostic Services. As part of the application, the Autism-Spectrum Quotient – 10 items (AQ-10) screening self-assessment tool must be completed. The MDT then decide if there are sufficient grounds for a full assessment. DISCO might be used.
- ³⁷ Derby City Council will work with our partners within health and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to support people with autism understanding their Autism Act rights to receive a Care Act assessment and ensure the referral process is inclusive for people living with autism.

³⁸ When reported, the The [Leeds](#) diagnostic service had a waiting list.

³⁹ Halton uses tools including Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) and Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) as recommended in the NICE guidance. As per NICE guidance on diagnosis, where possible a family member or carer is engaged to inform both current presentation and developmental history.

⁴⁰ Lincolnshire population prevalence suggests there should be 1570 autistic people under 18, but CCGs have found 2750. Kent believes that half of the people with autism have a co-occurring learning disability and perhaps three quarters are male. Leeds believes that approximately 30% of people with learning disabilities have autism. Oldham asserts that 71% of autistic people may have a mental health issue.

⁴¹ In LB of Merton, the majority of CYP with an EHCP and autism will have needs that do not reach the threshold for adult social care, albeit some not reaching that threshold, including Care Leavers, will have significant support needs as young adults in achieving independence.

⁴² Tower Hamlets Autism Diagnosis and Intervention Service offers post-diagnosis support. **Service Directory** - such as the [Calderdale Directory](#) or this one from [Surrey](#).

⁴³ Nottingham has a service for people with Asperger's that does assessment and then provides short term, bridging support. [Sheffield](#) and [Wakefield](#) provide both diagnosis and interventions.

⁴⁴ Derby City Council will signpost people with autism (direct payments or self funding) to a self-management education programme to support people living with autism; and their immediate support network, to understand their condition better. Spectrum: personal development courses in East Sussex run a series of 12 six-week skill-building programmes that enable young people with autism to explore, discuss, prepare for and practice life skills.

⁴⁵ Merton provides travel training to school and college pupils with LD. Herefordshire plans to develop specialist travel training for people with autism and build autism training into contracts for transport providers. Slough Autism Connect provide travel training for autistic people.

⁴⁶ The College Without Walls project run by New Ideas Advocacy Project in Warwickshire offers courses on helping people with autism to be life resilient and manage their own money.

⁴⁷ LB of Merton has 52 people with autism receiving a direct payment. The National Brokerage Project is based in Plymouth, Northants, Leicestershire, Newcastle, Greater Manchester and their surrounding areas. Support brokerage is about making sure that people with autism and their families get support to plan and make choices. It enables people to get the life they choose and get good support to meet their assessed needs. Support brokers develop plans with the person, help in negotiations with local authorities and assist in the implementation of the plan. Support brokers can also support the reviewing process. Asperger London Area Group (ALAG) has trained six people with Asperger's to work as Peer Support Brokers.

⁴⁸ Tower Hamlets Autism Diagnosis and Intervention Service offers psychological interventions, support with speech and language, or interventions from an Occupational Therapist or Social Worker. The service can also help with things like housing, benefits, social communication skills and independent travel training. The Bristol Autism Spectrum Service, provided by Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust is well-recognised across the country as a best practice model for diagnostic and post-diagnostic services. BASS is a multidisciplinary, specialist autism team jointly commissioned between health and social care. The team offer a diagnostic service, a comprehensive package of post diagnostic support including one to one sessions with specialist autism professionals and a range of groups (for example post diagnostic psycho-education, social skills/confidence, problem solving) They also offer supervision and training to professionals in mainstream services. More information on the Bristol Autism Spectrum Service can be found at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg142/resources/the-bristol-autism-spectrum-service-bass2>.

⁴⁹ Post-diagnostic psychoeducational courses and therapeutic support for people with autism is offered by the Care & Support Partnership Community Interest Company trading as SEQOL in Swindon.

⁵⁰ The Pan Dorset Sensory Integration Therapy project at Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust increased the Trust's ability to recognise and treat all service users with sensory

processing disorder and autism, through the development of an integrated care pathway, sensory therapy room and increased provision of sensory integration therapy.

⁵¹ Merton offers this to people with autism.

⁵² In 2018 Warrington Disability Partnership (A CIL) established a new service of a 'peer support job club' to support people with autism and learning disabilities. Lincolnshire has a Autism Lived Experience Forum. Tower Hamlets is exploring the potential of peer mentors and will encourage autistic people to form user-led peer support groups. 'Speaking up Groups' providing peer support for people with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome have been commissioned from Advocacy for All and are now established in all districts in Kent. The Autism Peer Advocacy project run by Autism Plus in Sheffield supports people with autism through a programme of peer advocacy to give them skills to support their peers. The Autism Peer project in Lancashire developed a peer and mentor support network within central Support Lancashire.

⁵³ Merton Voluntary Service Council provides supported volunteering for young people, including those with autism. Taunton CAB has a specialist service 'Enabling Autism' that bridges the gap between specialist and mainstream provision.

⁵⁴ Warrington offer Walton Lea Walled Garden as an example of Supported Employment! Can we ask for inclusive rather than segregated employment opportunities? The Tower Hamlets Jobs, Enterprise and Training (JET) service is commissioned by the Tower Hamlets Autism Diagnostic and Intervention Service. KCC commission Kent Supported Employment (KSE) to provide supported employment to people with a learning disability, physical disability, sensory disability and autism. They currently report that approximately half their caseload is people with autism. They work with individuals and potential employers to help them prepare for, find and maintain employment. St Helens Council provides supported employment to assist people with autism to secure work placements through job coaching.

⁵⁵ Project SEARCH, an initiative originally developed in the USA, is provided in Merton, led by Cricket Green School. This programme provides practical work experience and prepares a cohort of young people with learning disabilities, including those with autism, for the world of work. The programme places roughly 6 students per year within an organisation where they gain on-the-job training and additional employment support. The current host organisation is St Georges Hospital.

⁵⁶ Derby City Council will ensure our recruitment processes are autism friendly and ensure that reasonable adjustments are made. It will also provide support for our staff members living with autism to ensure their work environment is reasonably adjusted and provide support to managers and immediate work colleagues to increase understanding of autism.

⁵⁷ Trafford Housing User-led by a person who has autism, with professional support, to offer creative sessions and business startup advice at easily accessible community centres in Greater Manchester on a rotating basis.

⁵⁸ The Derbyshire Autism Services Group run a project called Employment and Autism that helps employers to adapt their recruiting process in order to make them more autism friendly. The Autism Employment Challenge in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead secured 10 employers as Autism Employment Champions and 10 young people with autism securing apprenticeships.

⁵⁹ the Autism Centre for Employment (ACE) works in partnership with Portsmouth, Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight Councils. They have developed a suite of vocational assessment tools that generate a report for both jobseeker and potential employer defining employable skills and reasonable adjustments. This drives personalised training for the employer about how to mentor and support the unique jobseeker.

⁶⁰ Surrey Employability is a partnership project run under the auspices of the Jobcentre Plus, the National Autistic Society, and Employability (Surrey Choices Limited). The project selected adults with autism on the basis of their employment status and determination to find work. Fifteen individuals were chosen and invited to attend an Employability Support Employment training course for two days which provided job seeking methods, CV preparation, confidence building, interview tips and techniques, culminating in a mock interview for a specific job. Some were work ready but some needed to gain confidence and were offered voluntary experience. The aim was for each individual to

experience two work placements over the six months of the project. As a result five have found work and a further five have had work experience.

⁶¹ Tower Hamlets will offer work experience in the Council and NHS. Autism East Midlands runs Enterprise for Autism in Nottinghamshire that offered a vocational assessment, work experience in a not-for-profit and then a work placement in open employment with a buddy provided by the employer and trained by Autism East Midlands. The Daisy Chain Project in Teesside provides a wide range of employment opportunities and work experience and volunteering for up to 30 people with autism in the charity's superstore.

⁶² DWP has worked in close partnership with the Hidden Impairment National Group ([HING](#)) to produce an 'Uncovering Hidden Impairments' toolkit, which helps employers recruit and retain.

⁶³ Herefordshire intends to offer supported internships to people with autism. Halton is doing so. Kent Supported Employment is currently working with East Kent Further Education College and Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary hospital to provide 12 week internships at the hospital. They are also working with four special schools in Kent to develop a similar scheme with local hotels.

⁶⁴ Caretrade Charitable Trust in London helped young people with autism gain paid employment or an apprenticeship.

⁶⁵ Tower Hamlets will modernise day service provision for people with autism who have social care Needs.

⁶⁶ The Aurora Centre is Merton College's specialist, non-residential centre for young adults aged 16-25 with autism and complex needs. It runs courses focusing on three key areas: living, work and community. Students are also able to take part in supervised work experience. Understanding

Autism is a project at Bury College that provides accredited training for staff, more tailored classes for people with autism and awareness work.

⁶⁷ Knowsley Autism Innovation Programme provides an intensive music programme for six autistic people with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, with the opportunity to gain an arts award qualification.

⁶⁸ Tower Hamlets aim to have at least one staff member trained in autism in each housing office.

⁶⁹ Herefordshire intends to use assistive technology to support autistic people to live independently. The Living with Autism project has developed the 'Coach in My Pocket' software application for daily use by people with autism. NAS HelpTech project uses cloud-based services to allow real-time users and mentors to track and understand situations, issues and anxiety levels for each day using smartphones and tablets. Harrow is exploring telecare options for people with autism.

⁷⁰ Merton carers looking after an adult could be entitled to a grant (of up to £100 per annum) to support their caring role, which they could use for a short break. Somerset Adult Autism Respite Service run by the NAS provides an alternative respite service for adults with autism in Somerset, based around two yurts.

⁷¹ Merton has a Shared Lives scheme.

⁷² Warrington have leased two of its older person's bungalows to SDD for rent to people with LD/ASD who need a live in carer.

⁷³ Autism is sometimes accompanied by learning disability, seizure disorders, other neurodevelopmental disorders such as Tourette's Syndrome, dyspraxia and ADHD; and mental health needs such as anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder. Halton runs a risk register (they call it a dynamic support database) of those people at risk of admission to a mental health inpatient setting, which helps to reduce admissions. This is recommended within the CTR protocol. Derbyshire will work with the providers of community mental health support (including IAPT services) to ensure the interventions provided are adapted and that reasonable adjustments are made to the physical environment and communication methods.

⁷⁴ Autism can increase the risk of physical health issues (bowel, skin, allergies) as well as make it harder for people to ask for, obtain and comply with healthcare. Tower Hamlets will encourage the use of "annual health checks" with GPs for autistic adults.

⁷⁵ Good Food for the Soul is a project run by Asperger Syndrome Access to Provision in Harrow offering Two 3-hour sessions per month for 10 clients per session over six months teaching basic nutrition, budgeting, menu planning and the effects of poor diet on health.

⁷⁶ Tower Hamlets will encourage organisations to be “autism-friendly”, where quiet spaces with limited sensory distractions will be provided along with clear information in GP surgeries and elsewhere. Solihull will ensure that Council employees who have input into designing the public realm receive autism-specific design training regarding lighting, noise, colours, and amount of personal space.

⁷⁷ Halton have trained staff to offer Active Support in all their services as recommended by LGA and NHS England.

⁷⁸ Halton has a Positive Behaviour Support Service which also trains other staff groups. Circles South East in Didcot offer training to professionals/ families of individuals with autism in Hampshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire who display sexually harmful behaviour. Harrow CCG commission an independent counsellor for specific cases whose approach to the challenging behaviour is non-judgemental and who works together with the client to analyse considering the consequences and bigger picture in relation to the challenging behaviour. This allow them to address all the information, both the counsellor and the client can set choices and together attempt to develop the strategy to change the maladaptive behaviour.

⁷⁹ A Cross-Criminal Justice System Government Group, chaired by the MoJ, was set up in spring 2014 and now meets quarterly to discuss work across the criminal justice system to improve services for people with autism, including progress with commitments under the autism strategy. NAS has been working with Feltham Young Offenders Institute to develop Autism Accreditation standards for prisons. This includes standards for the education provider, the primary care and mental health providers and the prison itself. Feltham is aiming to achieve accreditation in the first quarter of 2016.

⁸⁰ Hampshire Constabulary is looking to expand the use of widget sheets, which are a set of Easy Read forms designed to provide an explanation of the legal paperwork used in custody.

⁸¹ Derbyshire will work with our crisis response services to develop specialist skills to support people with ASD and ensure that rapid access to appropriate environments for assessment and treatment is provided. Rainbow Autism CIC provides support in the Worcestershire area and has developed a ‘spectrum hub’ model that responds to the fluctuating and complex needs of those with autism.

We have worked with many people in crisis, some feeling suicidal, self-harming and/or at imminent risk of homelessness or unemployment or at risk of harm from others and feeling socially isolated.

⁸² Merton notes that ‘People with autism may be better able to understand numbers and patterns than others, giving them an advantage in problem-solving (Enhanced Perceptual Functioning in Autism: an update and eight principles of autistic perception. Mottron L, et al. s.l. : *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 2006, Vol. 36). Some studies suggest, compared to the average person, those with autism think more creatively and have better memories (Khazan, Olga. [Autism's Hidden Gifts](#). *The Atlantic*. [Online] 23 September 2015. Kent notes that autistic people may have strengths in processing visual information, in systemising and working with logic, their ability to focus in repetitive tasks, to identify patterns, their desire for accuracy, precision and perfection and often good rote memory. Due to the rigid way many people with ASD keep to rules and regulations, they are usually more law-abiding than the general population. qualities of people with ASD such as attention to detail, honesty, persistence and reliability (Howlin P (1997) *Autism: Preparing for Adulthood*. London: Routledge.),

⁸³ Tower Hamlets will develop Autism Alert cards (like those produced by NAS and used in Wiltshire). The alert card was developed in consultation with adults who have autism is designed to be carried by the autistic person and used to tell people about the condition and ask others to show respect and tolerance. They set out the kinds of things that professionals and members of the public need to be aware of when they are dealing with the person.

⁸⁴ Experts by experience were panellists for the recruitment and selection of staff who formed the Kent ASC Team.

⁸⁵ Lincolnshire has an autism JSNA. Oldham use age-band related prevalence data taken from PANSI and POPPI, published by the Institute of Public Care which estimates numbers for each year up to 2030.

⁸⁶ Surrey committed to a pooled commissioning budget for people with autism.

⁸⁷ Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives (2010) set out 5 quality outcomes. *Think Autism* set out 15 Priority Challenges for Action grouped around 3 themes. The NICE 2014 Quality Standard had 8 standards, while the Refresh centres on 19 overarching strategic objectives grouped into 5 domains.

⁸⁸ Warrington has a Joint Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Board. Lincolnshire has an Autism Partnership Board, as does Herefordshire and Tower Hamlets. In Kent it is called the Autism Collaborative (but this group formed in the absence of experts by experience and now points to advice on involvement [here](#)).

⁸⁹ Jo Minchin from Lincolnshire is part of the Westminster Commission on Autism, the National Autistic Society and a selected member of the Advisory Group for the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism. See the [Calderdale Autism Network](#) and the [Surrey Autism Partnership Board](#). The [Norfolk Autism Partnership Board](#).

⁹⁰ The London Borough of Merton is supported by an Adult Autism team provided by SWLStG for people without a learning disability with referral by the GP and the team for people with LD which is provided by the LA with referral by health or social care professionals. One hopes the interface is unproblematic.

⁹¹ All services that are commissioned in Lincolnshire are expected to identify a local autism champion. An Autism Champions Information Pack has been developed and a network of autism champions is being rolled out across various services and organisations, including schools, health and social care.

⁹² See <http://peterbates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/dowsonanbatesontrianglesofsupport.pdf>

⁹³ Kent aims to do this.

⁹⁴ Greater Manchester Autism Consortium Transition Project undertook research into what was happening for people on the autistic spectrum during the transition from childhood to adulthood in Greater Manchester. The report made three recommendations: (i) Better access to information for parents (ii) Better information about what adulthood means for young people (iii) Better understanding of needs from services within the community. The project has developed workshop materials for parents and is developing resources to help young adults with autism prepare for adulthood.

⁹⁵ Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland have worked on data-sharing protocols between NHS and LA services.

⁹⁶ Merton aims for two thirds of people with autism are supported by universal services. Halton aims for an increase in the proportion of people using universal services and employment settings rather than segregated provision.

⁹⁷ Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust have appointed to a new role of Autism Lead, as well as creating new Autism Liaison Nurse roles. They intend to form an Autism Champions Network and seek Autism Champions in businesses, supermarkets and community settings. Surrey's Autism Champions Surrey has brought together staff from health, social care, education, voluntary and private services onto a training scheme to develop Autism Champions. The staff involved perform a wide variety of roles in different settings. They receive autism training based on the National Autistic Society's SPELL framework which they are expected to cascade down to colleagues. Each champion is given a mentor who supports them with their ongoing learning and who they can contact for advice and guidance. Staff are expected to incorporate their learning into direct work with people with autism and in making reasonable adjustments to local services. The scheme has been evaluated by the Tizard Centre, University of Kent and found to be very effective in raising knowledge and understanding and improving attitudes and practice.

⁹⁸ Jo Minchin is an Expert by Experience who occupies a strategic commissioning role to promote autism issues and raise understanding within Lincolnshire

⁹⁹ Lincolnshire plans to provide better support from key organisations to help promote and sustain local peer groups – A Business Case for a Community Autism Fund is currently being developed and officers will be seeking approval from LCC Adult Care to identify funding during 2018/19.

¹⁰⁰ In Lincolnshire, service specifications for Adult Learning Disability and Mental Health Services commissioned by the NHS have been reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose for autistic people.

¹⁰¹ An *Autism Reasonable Adjustments Mark (RAM)* has been developed to review how accessible services are for autistic people – this has been piloted by Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and 36 teams from their Learning Disability and Mental Health Services have achieved the Mark. The next target groups are SALT, OT, GPs and housing offices. Surrey has committed to using the Green Light Toolkit each year.