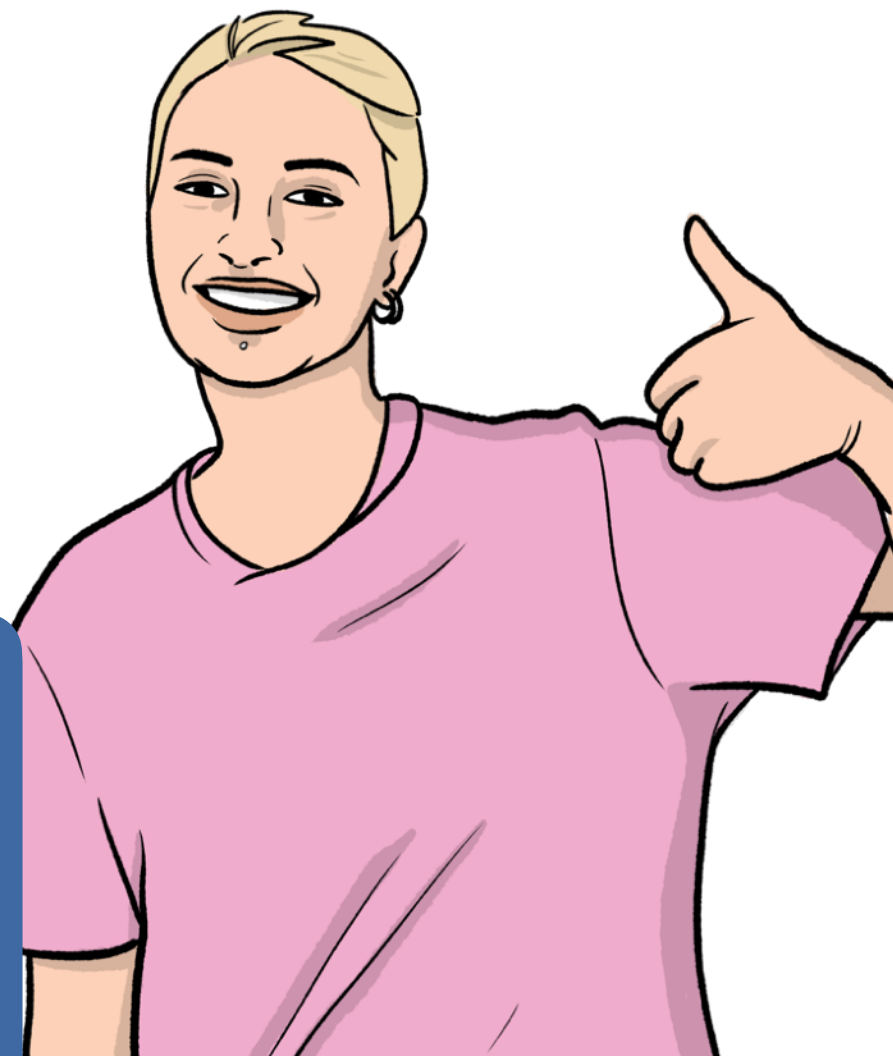


This is an Easy Read version of
Lewisham's All-age Autism
Strategy for children, young
people and adults



Our plan to improve the lives of autistic people in Lewisham

2023 to 2028



Easy
Read

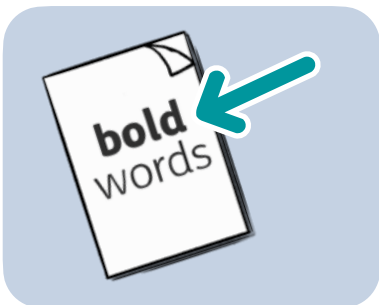
Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some hard information. It may not include all of the information but will tell you about the important parts.



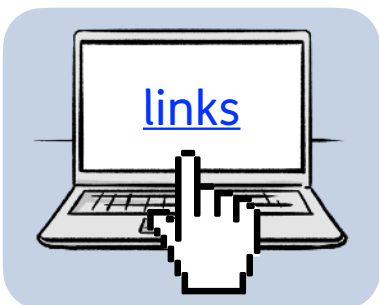
This Easy Read information uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker.



These are words that some people will find hard. When you see a bold word, we will explain it in the next sentence.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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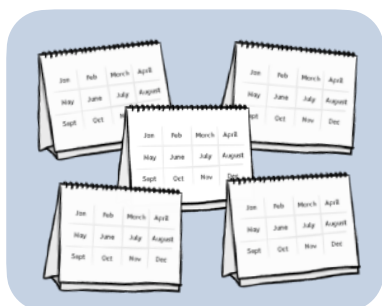
Introduction



Lewisham Council wants every autistic person to feel included and able to make the most of their lives.



We have worked with NHS health services and other organisations to look at how we can improve our services for autistic people.



Together we have written a plan for the next 5 years - 2023 to 2028.



The plan is called the 'All-age Autism Strategy for children, young people, and adults'.



To help us write the plan, we spoke to lots of people in Lewisham, including autistic people, their families and carers.

Autism and Autistic people



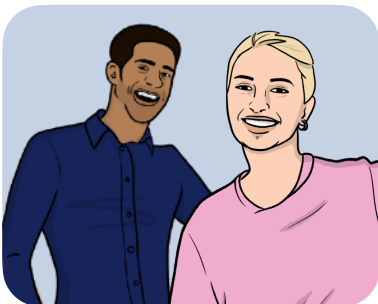
Autism affects people in different ways.

It can affect things like communication, being with other people, or how you think and feel about things.



Autistic people are people who have autism.

Some autistic people don't need much support in their everyday lives.



Other autistic people may need lots of support.

The amount of support they need can change during their life.



Autistic people come from all different backgrounds.

Autistic people in Lewisham



About 4,000 autistic people live in Lewisham.



About half of the autistic people in Lewisham are under age 18, and half are adults.

The way we will work



There are 5 main ways we will work towards making this plan happen.

1. Nothing about us without us



We will work together with autistic people, their families and their carers.



We will listen to autistic people and make decisions together.

2. It's good to be different



We will treat every person as an individual.



We will help each person to get the right support that they need.



We will help people to speak up for themselves and say what they want.



We will help local people to understand more about autism and autistic people.

3. Working together

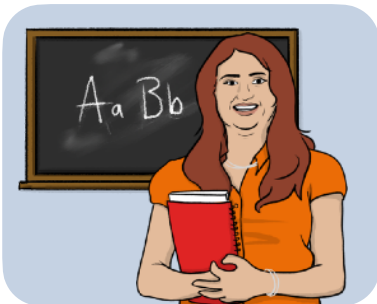
All the organisations and service providers involved in this plan will work together. This includes:



- Local council services.



- Health services.



- Schools and colleges.

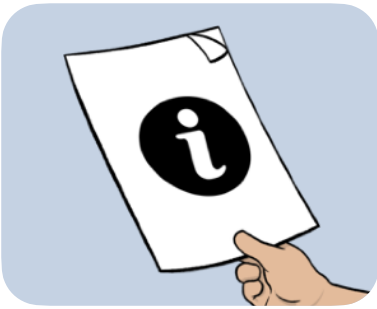


- Community organisations.

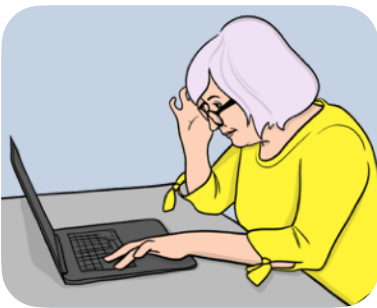


- Companies that support and care for people.

4. Providing information



People need more information, so they can get the right support at the right time.



We will make sure everyone can:

- Find the information they need.



- Get information in a way that they can understand.

5. Close to home



We will work to make sure autistic people can get support close to where they live.

Lewisham Autism Partnership Board



We are setting up the Lewisham Autism Partnership Board.



The Board will check that the plan is working and look at what else needs to be improved for autistic people in Lewisham.



The Board will be a group of people from:

- Lewisham Council.
- NHS services.
- Organisations that work with autistic people.



The Board will also include autistic people, their families and carers.

Our priorities



Our priorities are the most important things that we want to do first.

Our plan has 8 priorities:



Priority 1: Helping people understand autism



We want Lewisham to be a good place for autistic people to live.



We want local people and organisations to know how to help and support autistic people.



We will give training about autism to many organisations and companies in Lewisham.

Priority 2: Helping autistic children at school

We will:



- Make sure school staff understand more about autism, so they can provide better support.



- Make sure there is enough support for autistic children in schools.



- Help autistic young people to find a good job when they leave school or college.



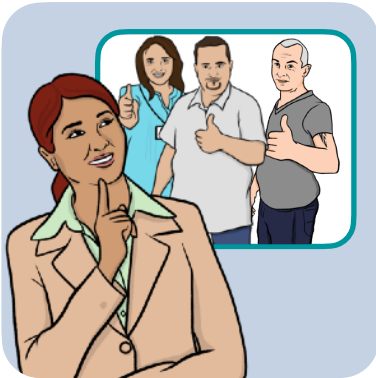
- Work more with the families of autistic children who find it harder to get the services they need.

Priority 3: Finding out if people are autistic or not



People have had to wait too long before they find out if they are autistic or not.

We will work with organisations to:



- Give people information to help us find out if they are autistic or not.
- Give people the support they may need.

Priority 4: Health and care

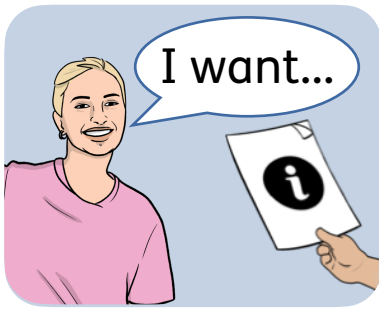


Autistic people have worse health and mental health than other people.



It is harder for autistic people to get the health and care services that they need.

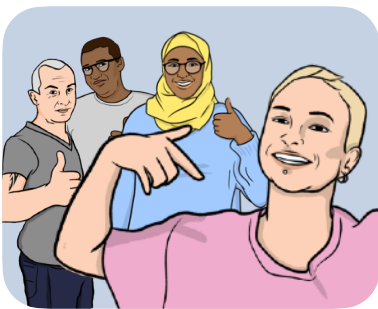
We want to make it easier for autistic people to get the health and care services that they need by:



- Providing information that helps autistic people to find out about and ask for the services they need.



- Helping health services to get better at working with autistic people.



- Helping local communities to support autistic people in better ways.



- Training health and care staff about autism.



- Giving a free, yearly health check to autistic people.



We also want to make sure services understand how to work with autistic people from different backgrounds.

Priority 5: Helping people get a good job

We want to help more autistic people to get a good job by:



- Giving autistic people a chance to try out work in leisure and sports services.



- Giving autistic people support and training to get a job.



- Giving money to companies where autistic people work, so they can have extra support at work.



- Helping autistic people to get a voluntary job.

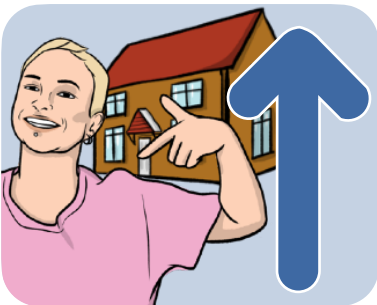
Priority 6: Better mental health services



Many autistic people have a mental health condition.



We want to have better mental health support for people in their local area, so they don't have to go into hospital.



We will improve the housing and the support that autistic people need for daily living.



We will improve the way we work with autistic people who do have to go into hospital with a mental health condition.



We will help autistic people to move back home, out of hospital as soon as possible.

Priority 7: Police and the courts



Many autistic people don't get the right support from services in the justice system. Like when they deal with the police or the courts.



We want staff in the justice system to get training on autism and how to work with autistic people.

Priority 8: More support for carers



Carers that look after autistic people are often members of the autistic person's family.

Carers told us that they need:



- More support.



- More information about services that they could have.



- More short breaks for autistic children

We plan to:



- Set up more groups where carers can support each other.



- Create more activities for autistic people so that carers can have a break from caring.



- Give carers more help in their caring work.



- Give more information to carers about the services that they could have.



- Set up more local activity groups for autistic children.

At the end of the plan

At the end of the plan in 5 years' time, we want:



- More information to be available in Lewisham, like leaflets and posters that tell people about:
 - Autism.
 - What services are available for them.



- More staff from services in Lewisham to be trained to work with autistic people.



- Better support for autistic people before and after they find out if they have autism or not.



- More autistic people to have their free annual health check, to find any health problems early before they get worse.

We also want:



- Health and care organisations to make changes that help autistic people to use their services like everyone else.



- More autistic children and young people to feel included at school.



- More autistic people to have the chance to work and find a job.

For more information

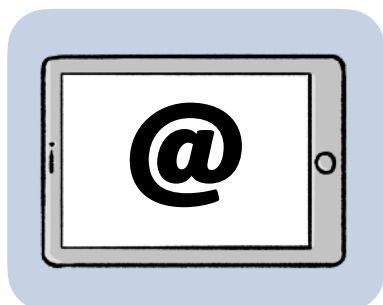


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