



Good practice in supporting adults with autism: guidance for commissioners and statutory services

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Summary

Many adults with autism are unable to access the support they need, which leaves them isolated and vulnerable. This lack of timely appropriate support can result in unnecessary mental health deterioration and reliance on high-cost acute services. The right support at the right time can have a significant positive impact on quality of life, outcomes and value for money.

Current national initiatives such as the National Audit Office (NAO) survey¹, the Autism Bill and the cross-government autism strategy present a significant opportunity for local areas to address the difficulties experienced by adults with autism. Local areas have a responsibility to seize this opportunity to achieve better outcomes for adults with autism. To facilitate this, it is crucial that all local areas start by developing an autism planning group (APG) to enable effective and integrated planning of appropriate support services for adults with autism across health and social care. This document, and the progression pathway below, provides guidance to support APGs to improve the lives of adults with autism.

PROGRESSION PATHWAY FOR LOCAL AREAS TO DEVELOP SUPPORT FOR ADULTS WITH AUTISM (linked to the Strategic Health Authority learning disability self assessment framework)		
Level 1 (joint working between LA & NHS)	Level 2 (strategic planning)	Level 3 (appropriate support)
<p>Autism-specific planning group (APG), including mental health and learning disability commissioners, meets every quarter to facilitate integrated and effective strategic planning of local autism services across health and social care</p> <p>Clear pathway so that adults with suspected autism can access diagnostic services and community care assessment</p>	<p>Level 1 +</p> <p>Strategic planning tools, such as Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and those linked to Public Service Agreement (PSA) 16, are inclusive of the needs of adults with autism</p> <p>Training programme in place to improve competency of community professionals and mainstream services across health, social care, employment and housing</p>	<p>Level 2 +</p> <p>Specialist autism team appointed. This would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide training and support to facilitate good mainstream practice • focus on preventative interventions, such as low-cost services and intensive support where placement at risk of breakdown • include, for example, a social worker, psychologist, therapist.

1 The National Audit Office (2009). *Supporting people with autism through adulthood*. London: Stationery Office

Purpose

Autism has been identified in *Valuing people now*² as one of four priority groups that need better support services. In addition, autism is high on the national agenda as a result of the recently published NAO³ report and the forthcoming cross-government autism strategy. Whilst it is recognised that some areas are beginning to develop better autism provision, more needs to be done to improve provision across the spectrum of need in every area. These initiatives give not only an opportunity but also a responsibility to do so.

This guide provides commissioners with examples of good local practice that has overcome some of the challenges experienced when trying to develop support services to meet the needs of adults with autism. It offers a range of solutions that may provide useful templates for local areas to use when developing their own provision. The guide may also provide a framework for local areas to map their current provision and develop an autism action plan to ensure better support for adults with autism.

The South West Valuing People Now Programme Board has commissioned Ben Higgins of The National Autistic Society to develop this guide and the accompanying conference. Ben Higgins has a Masters in autism and over a decade of experience in supporting people with autism. He advises statutory bodies across the south west to develop better support for people with autism. The project is overseen by a steering group that includes representation from Valuing People, the Strategic Health Authority and Government Office South West.

2 Department of Health (2009). *Valuing people now*. London: Department of Health

3 The National Audit Office (2009). *Supporting people with autism through adulthood*. London: Stationery Office

What is autism?

Over half a million people in the UK have autism. That is one in 100. It is a lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates with, and relates to, people around them.

People with autism share three areas of difficulty:

- social communication (eg problems using and understanding verbal and non-verbal language, such as gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice)
- social interaction (eg difficulties with recognising and understanding other people's feelings and managing their own)
- social imagination (eg problems in understanding and predicting other people's intentions and behaviour and coping with new or unfamiliar situations).

In addition, many people with autism have sensory difficulties, such as being hypersensitive to certain sounds.

Autism is a spectrum condition, which means that while some people can lead relatively independent lives, others will require significant support. Although some people with autism have an accompanying learning disability, the needs of people with autism are often very different to those with a learning disability or mental health condition.



Over half a million people in the UK have autism. That is one in 100.

The average lifetime cost of supporting a person with autism is £4 million. The total cost of supporting adults with autism in the UK is £25 billion per year⁴.

This report uses the term autism to describe all autism spectrum disorders and is inclusive of both Kanner autism and Asperger syndrome.

4 Knapp M, Romeo R. and Beecham J. (2007). *The economic consequences of autism in the UK*. London: Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities.

Multi-agency planning

It is widely recognised by both the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)⁵, now the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and the Department of Health (DH)⁶ that services are often organised in a way that prevents people with autism from being able to access the support they need. Furthermore, adults with autism have traditionally been neglected in service planning. Many adults with autism experience a poor quality of life as a result of being unable to access the support and services they need⁷.

Health and social care services have customarily been arranged to provide care via specific teams, categorised by client group. Very few local authorities have an autism-specific team. Most services that offer support to adults with autism stem from learning disability or mental health services that rarely have sufficient understanding of autism to provide appropriate support to meet people's needs. Autism is a developmental disability and many adults with autism will not have an accompanying learning disability or mental health condition. Many, therefore, fall between the gaps created by traditional service boundaries as they are not considered eligible to access support. As a result, many adults with autism receive no support at all and are left isolated and vulnerable.

Due to the lack of clarity over whose responsibility it is to provide support for adults with autism, all agencies need to meet to plan how to develop local services that better support adults with autism. The development of an autism planning group (APG) is essential to facilitate integrated planning across health and social care in order to address the inequalities experienced by adults with autism as a result of boundary management issues⁸.

Effective APGs need to be both multi-agency and strategic. The chair should be a joint commissioner across health and social care with designated responsibility for implementing the autism strategy. These groups must include:

- family/carers
- learning disability and mental health commissioners
- relevant local authority and NHS managers
- voluntary sector representatives
- children and young people's (CYP) services representative.

Adults with autism need support from agencies outside health and social services, such as housing and employment services. Where appropriate, it is beneficial to invite all such agencies to be represented on the group. Achieving better outcomes for adults with autism will require improved joint working between agencies and commissioners⁹.

5 Commission for Social Care Inspection (2008). *Cutting the cake fairly*. London: Commission for Social Care Inspection

6 Department of Health (2006), *Better services for people with an autistic spectrum disorder*. London: Department of Health

7 Commission for Social Care Inspection (2008). *op. cit.*

8 Department of Health (2006). *op. cit.*

9 The National Audit Office (2009). *Supporting people with autism through adulthood*. London: Stationery Office

Gloucestershire ASD Partnership Board

This Board was set up in 2006 following a needs identification conference, and is made up of commissioning managers, frontline workers and parents, with representatives from disability employment services, Connexions, further education and housing services. It has also developed good links with CYP services which have representation on the Board. Its focus is on unlocking mainstream agencies in order to develop better support for adults with autism. The Board's achievements include implementing a training programme at a local level, developing a clear pathway to assessment, and identifying a joint social care/primary care trust (PCT) lead commissioner responsible for developing diagnostic services for adults with autism.

Contact: David Grocott
Head of Lifelong Learning
Gloucestershire County Council

Leicestershire & Rutland ASD Planning Group

This multi-agency forum includes representatives from the primary care trust, local authority, learning disability services, mental health services, CYP services, and family/carers. The group focuses on strategic planning to enable fair access to services for adults with autism. The group feeds into other relevant boards including the Learning Disability Partnership Board and Transitions service. Achievements include developing a clear pathway for people to access community care assessments, and developing a training framework for community professionals.

Contact: Carin Davies
Planning Officer for Adult Mental Health,
Leicestershire County Council

Mapping and commissioning

Autism presents a significant challenge for commissioners. Not only are more and more people with autism being identified, but autism is a spectrum condition presenting a wide range of needs. At the same time local areas need to commission more preventative, local and personalised models that maximise independence and reduce reliance on traditional service models such as residential care¹⁰.

‘World-class commissioning’ is about reducing inequalities and relies on an analysis of the needs of the population¹¹. Many local authorities lack robust data about numbers of adults with autism who live within their authority. This lack of comprehensive data makes it extremely difficult to plan and deliver services effectively. Mapping and intelligence are essential in order to plan and commission future services appropriately. The current lack of information leads to the exclusion of people with autism from the planning and commissioning process. 86% of local authorities believe better data about adults with autism would help them plan more strategically¹².

Local authorities’ disability registers should identify the number of adults with autism living in the area. Local authorities and PCTs therefore need to develop effective systems to record the number of adults with autism in their area and include the needs of adults with autism in their strategic planning tools such as JSNA¹³.



Autism is a spectrum condition presenting a wide range of needs

Commissioners need to conduct regular audits of services in order to determine whether current services are appropriate and have sufficient capacity to meet growing demand and the personalisation agenda. It is beneficial to consult with providers and specialists at an early stage to be clearer about what services to commission rather than just involving providers at the tendering stage.

It is best practice to appoint a lead commissioner who has a good understanding of the needs of adults with autism and who is responsible for developing an autism-specific commissioning strategy that takes account of current and future demand for services.

10 Department of Health (2006). *Better services for people with an autistic spectrum disorder*. London: Department of Health

11 Department of Health (2007). *World class commissioning*. London: Department of Health

12 National Autistic Society (2007). *I exist*. London: The National Autistic Society

13 Department of Health (2009). *Services for adults with adults with autistic spectrum conditions*. London: Department of Health

Providers of services for people with autism need to consider whether it is appropriate, in terms of equality, to set arbitrary cut offs, such as an IQ level, to determine which people with autism they will support. There are clear benefits to services of being inclusive and supporting people across the spectrum.

Better outcomes for people across the whole autism spectrum could be achieved by greater awareness in strategic planning and commissioning and better knowledge among those responsible for assessing and meeting the needs of people with autism¹⁴.

Cumbria mapping

Cumbria conducted two mapping exercises (in 2003 and 2006) which highlighted the growing numbers of people with autism known to adult services and due to leave school in the near future. In 2007 Cumbria produced the *Are we ready?* report which recognised that ‘appropriate services need to be developed to be able to cope with the demand of this increase and that all policies and procedures are inclusive of ASD.’ As a result, in April 2009 it introduced a method of recording autism on the social care register. With this improved data and intelligence the local authority and PCT will be more effective in the planning of future services. Cumbria is in the process of developing an adult autism strategy. A survey of adults with autism has helped identify local priorities for service development, including training and social support, and a draft strategy document identifies existing services in Cumbria and the gaps in those services. The area is currently working to set out specific actions to improve these services, and to promote the independence and inclusion of people with autism.

Contact: Marion Jones
Autism Planning Officer
Cumbria County Council

14 The National Audit Office (2009). *Supporting people with autism through adulthood*. London: Stationery Office

Wokingham

Wokingham Learning Disability Partnership Board set up an autism sub-group in 2006. The group identified that local services were both inadequate and inappropriate for meeting the needs of adults with autism: this resulted in reliance on out-of-area placements, often some distance away and at considerable expense. The autism sub-group secured funding to support a 30-month project to identify needs and work with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to develop a borough autism strategy to develop better and more appropriate local arrangements that result in better outcomes for adults with autism. The strategy was published in May 2009.

Key findings include:

- a widespread lack of understanding of autism
- significant gaps in employment, health and social care support services

Key recommendations include;

- establish an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) team
- improve the availability of preventative services
- develop and deliver an ASD training programme
- improved housing provision and employment support.

Contact: Robert Pasterfield
Autism Project Worker
Wokingham Mencap

Lewisham

Lewisham local authority has conducted a detailed needs analysis of adults with autism, including those who are currently not eligible for services or have unmet needs. Data was pulled together from statutory and voluntary partners. The process highlighted that the majority of people with autism in the borough were not known to services, and the data was used to predict future service capacity and inform commissioning priorities. The process pointed to the need for clearer care pathways, including accessing community care assessments. The process also highlighted other key needs, including life skills training, social opportunities, employment support and housing. This analysis will feed into the JSNA. Lewisham adult social care has developed a clear referral pathway for adults with autism who do not have a learning disability.

Contact: Sadie King
Community Services Officer
Lewisham Council

Diagnosis and assessment

Many adults with autism struggle to get a diagnosis: without a diagnosis it is very hard for them to get the support they need. Although access to support services should be based on need not dependent on a diagnosis, in practice this is often not the case. Having a formal diagnosis can also help people understand their difficulties and where they need support. In the absence of effective local diagnostic pathways, many people are forced to travel long distances and often pay considerable sums to get a diagnosis. Diagnostic provision needs to improve considerably so that people can access the support they need. General practitioners (GPs) need a better understanding of autism to enable them to screen people for the condition and know when to refer to a specialist for diagnosis. Commissioners should ensure that adults with suspected autism can access local diagnostic services in line with Royal College of Psychiatrists recommendations.

Because autism is so complex, specialist diagnostic services are required to diagnose it. Local diagnostic teams need specialist training in the use of diagnostic tools such as DISCO (Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders), ADOS (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule) or ADI-R (Autism Diagnostic Interview – Revised). Further information is available at: www.autismresearchcentre.com. It is best practice to be trained in a variety of diagnostic tools to facilitate an eclectic approach. Post-diagnostic support rarely exists – there is an urgent need to develop a clear pathway to this as well as diagnosis.



It is essential that professionals carrying out community care assessments have a good understanding of the wide range, and often hidden, needs of adults with autism.

Community care services are provided to vulnerable members of society to help them live as independently as possible. All vulnerable adults have the right to a community care assessment from their local authority. Despite this, less than a quarter of adults with high-functioning autism have received a community care assessment. Whether autism is considered a developmental condition, learning disability or mental health problem is not relevant to being able to access an assessment of need. Local authorities urgently need to clearly identify which team is responsible for ensuring assessments of need are carried out in a timely manner.

Evidence from the CSCI¹⁷ review of eligibility criteria showed that adults with autism are at risk from being excluded from accessing community care under the *Fair access to care services* (FACS)¹⁸ guidance. As a result, the Department of Health and CQC are reviewing this guidance.

Many professionals carrying out community care assessments lack an understanding of the wide range, and often hidden, needs of people with autism. People with autism find it hard to communicate effectively. They can appear independent, yet in reality require significant support in many aspects of their daily lives. It is essential that professionals have received suitable training in order to understand the needs of adults with autism before carrying out FACS assessments. It is vital that family/carer needs are assessed as well as the person with autism.

Liverpool

The Liverpool autism team was established in 2003 and is a highly regarded specialist diagnostic, assessment and intervention service funded by Mersey Care NHS trust. The team has eight 'core' members and works with a wide range of other professionals. It is run by a speech and language therapist and includes a social worker, clinical psychologist and nurse. The team has assessed over 300 people in the last five years, and over 250 met the criteria for diagnosis. Only 33 already had a diagnosis. The wider network includes a specialist service for people involved in the criminal justice system. The team also delivers a significant amount of training to other services and professionals.

Contact: Chris Austin
Head Speech & Language Therapist
Mersey Care NHS Trust

Somerset Partnership Trust

The Somerset Partnership Trust set up a consultancy service in 2005 to provide a diagnostic service, consultancy, training and preventative support. The county-wide team includes social workers, a clinical psychologist, community psychiatric nurse and occupational therapist. The local community mental health team refers eligible people to the service, which has received over 300 referrals in the first four years.

Contact: Pat O'Connell
Team Manager
Somerset Partnership Trust

17 Commission for Social Care Inspection (2008). *Cutting the cake fairly*. London: Commission for Social Care Inspection

18 Department of Health (2003). *Fair access to care services*. London: Department of Health

Training and awareness

Many of the difficulties that adults with autism experience are the result of poor understanding of autism within local services. Community professionals and front line staff require good quality training appropriate to the amount of interaction they have with people with autism. All those who come in contact with people with autism should have received at the very least basic awareness training. Those who work primarily with or champion the needs of people with autism require more specialist input.

There is a need to develop the understanding and competency of community professionals working in a range of agencies so that they can respond appropriately to the needs of people with autism. They include:

- health service practitioners (eg GPs, community psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists)
- social care (eg social workers, managers, community teams, assessors)
- further education (eg lecturers, learning support staff)
- employment (eg disability employment advisors, Connexions staff, employers)
- the criminal justice system (eg police officers, prison officers).



It is essential that good quality training is available to relevant community professionals.

Currently, GPs lack the competency to screen for autism in order to refer people for a diagnosis accordingly. Many FACS and community care assessors lack understanding of the needs of adults with autism and the type of support they may require. Few disability employment advisors have adequate understanding of the skills and needs of adults with autism. Many criminal justice professionals fail to make reasonable adjustments when engaging with people with autism.

It is essential that good quality autism training is available to relevant community professionals. Some areas are developing local hubs of expertise which can provide training to community professionals from mainstream universal services. Others are pooling funds to develop a framework and the capacity to provide training. Wherever possible, the training should be accredited by an independent third party or university.

Training providers include:

- ASpire, Sussex**
- Asset, Devon**
- Autism West Midlands**
- Bath University**
- Birmingham University**
- The National Autistic Society**
- Open University**
- Prime Performance Solutions**
- Priors Court**
- Sheffield Hallam University**

Cornwall training coordinator

As a result of a consultation event with families and individuals affected by autism, Cornwall commissioned a consultant from The National Autistic Society to make recommendations to develop provision for adults with autism. Cornwall has started to implement these recommendations by developing an autism planning group and pooling funding from health and social care to fund a training post. This post is responsible for delivering training to a whole range of community professionals including health, education, social care, employment and the criminal justice system, so that they can respond more appropriately to the needs of people with autism.

Contact: Nick Fripp
Head of Transformation of Learning
Disability Services
Cornwall County Council

Surrey autism project

The local authority in Surrey developed a county autism group with representatives from social care and health services for children and adults, independent sector providers and family carers of people on the autism spectrum. This group has used learning disability development funding to carry out a detailed consultation and gathered data about adults on the autism spectrum known to statutory services, and has used this to project future demand for services. This has enabled Surrey County Council to develop a commissioning strategy for adults with autism.

Surrey has developed an autism training pathway for health and social care staff, starting with basic awareness, and leading through to more specialist courses. Surrey has also developed a network of autism champions in services in all sectors in the county. Champions receive six months of mentoring and training, then cascade the training to their teams. There are currently over 60 champions in services across the county.

Contact: Tom Moore
Project Manager
Surrey County Council

Oldham

As a result of a high level of commitment from directors, Oldham is now regarded as a leading authority for autism provision. The way forward group is a multi-agency planning group made up of mainstream services that support people with autism, including education, employment and housing. The group, which feeds into the Greater Manchester Consortium, has been instrumental in developing better support for people with autism.

There has been significant investment in a multi-tier training framework. Training is provided not only to those who support people with autism but also those carrying out assessments and other professionals who may come into contact with people who have autism. Many of Oldham's services, including supported tenancy, have gained autism accreditation. The authority runs national conferences to promote good practice.

Contact: Wendy Atkinson
Autism Development Worker
Oldham

Transition

People with autism can find change very difficult and are often unable to visualise what life might be like in the future. Transition from children's to adult services is a particularly traumatic time for young people with autism and is often associated with high levels of anxiety.

The Transition Information Network (TIN)¹⁹ has identified five underlying principles of good practice in facilitating effective transitions:

- full participation of young people and their families
- comprehensive multi-agency engagement
- provision of high quality information
- effective transition planning
- an array of opportunities for living life.

Autism impacts across a range of agencies and therefore effective multi-agency working is central to the smooth transition of young people with the condition. Local authorities need to develop clear protocols identifying the responsibilities of each agency in their transition process. Transition plans must identify their future needs across different agencies, including employment, housing and social care.

Significant problems have often been caused by poor information-sharing between children's and adult services. Local authorities need to know how many young people with autism are leaving school over the next five years and the type of support they are likely to need in order to plan and commission accordingly. This data should be included in the JSNA.

The young people with autism and their families must be fully involved in the planning process for this transition. It is good practice to develop a person-centred transition plan that identifies the young person's aspirations, and to provide support to help them achieve those aspirations. However, people with autism may find it hard to either visualise or express their aspirations and may require the support of a skilled advocate. It is also essential that Connexions' advisors have sufficient training to provide appropriate support to young people with autism. At transition there are often several agencies from both CYP and Adult services involved. Commissioners should ensure each young person has a lead professional responsible for liaising with services and guiding them through the transition process.

¹⁹ Transition Information Network (2009). *TransMap: from theory into practice*. London: Council for Disabled Children. Available to download from www.transitionsupportprogramme.org.uk/resources/toolkits.aspx [Accessed 20/08/2009]

Learners with autism often experience significant barriers in accessing further education (FE) provision. Within a busy mainstream college learners with autism will require quiet areas they can access when anxious. Support staff require a good understanding of autism to respond appropriately to the needs of learners. It is good practice for colleges to employ an autism specialist support worker who is based in feeder schools for the final phase of the students' school education and who then supports their transition to college during the following academic year.

College placements should involve meaningful progression, improving the young person's opportunities to move towards independent living and gain paid employment in line with *Learning for living and work*²⁰. This may mean setting up a house or suitably equipped rooms within the college where young people can learn independent living skills, or providing specific courses on social skills, communication skills or emotional regulation. It is essential, too, that young people have the opportunity to gain work experience through their college in order to be better prepared for work²¹.

Whilst many young people with autism benefit from attending college, it is important not to make assumptions about what may seem to be a logical next step for them. At transition the young person should have a genuine choice of options available. Local areas need to provide a range of opportunities for young people with autism including support into employment, supported living schemes and appropriate FE provision. The provision of good quality and accessible information about the options available is an essential part of empowering the person to have choice and control over their future.

20 Learning Skills Council (2006). *Learning for living and work*. Coventry: Learning and Skills Council

21 Department of Health (2009). *Valuing employment now*. London: Department of Health

Northamptonshire transition liaison team

Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Trust funds a transition liaison team to support individuals who may otherwise struggle to access support when transitioning from CYP services to adult services. The team works closely with other services including learning disability, mental health, housing, employment, social care, health, Connexions, further education and the voluntary sector. The team reduces inequalities and increases opportunities available to young people with autism.

Contact: Anthony Day
SEN Coordinator, Connexions

RUG room, City College Norwich

The Rug room is a Beacon Award winning resource for students with autism at City College, Norwich. It is a quiet safe haven from hectic college life that includes a small kitchen, IT facilities, and specialist support staff. The centre offers programmes and support which will help them to reach their potential and to contribute to the community in which they live. The centre, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), reduces reliance on out-of-area placements. rugroom.net offers a learner-based website for young people with autism to communicate with on another.

Contact: Dr Danusia Latosinski
Programme Manager, Foundation Studies
City College Norwich

Bath & North East Somerset (BaNES)

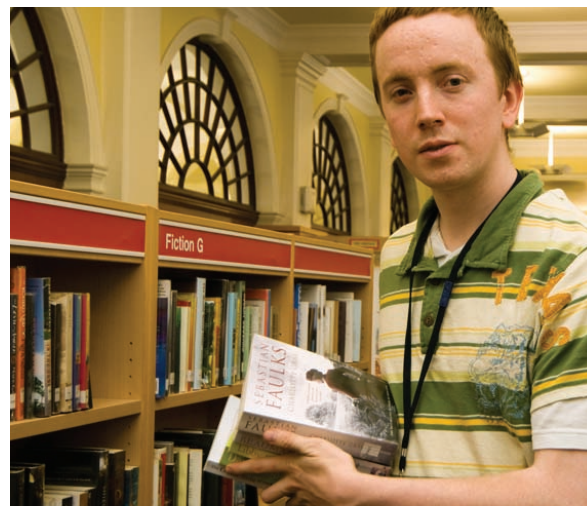
BaNES local authority has developed supported living options and a pathway to gain employment for young people with autism leaving FosseWay School and Norton Radstock College. BaNES commissioned a housing provider and The National Autistic Society to develop appropriate housing and support respectively so that the young people with autism leaving Fosseway school could choose to live locally rather than relying on placements far from the family home. BaNES has also developed employment opportunities for young people with disabilities. As a result FosseWay School is using Project Search to help secure jobs for young people with autism leaving the school. Project Search is an example of a school-to-work programme that is very inclusive of people with autism. The scheme provides work-based learning through internships for 12 students. It is business led (benefits include reduced recruitment costs and increased retention rates). One in three go on to secure long-term paid employment with the host business.

Contact: Mike MacCallam
Joint Commissioning Manager
Bath & North East Somerset

Employment

People with autism are an undiscovered workforce. They have skills that are keenly sought after and, with the right support, they can make a valuable contribution in the workplace. For example people with autism are generally honest, conscientious, and reliable with excellent rote memory and attention to detail. Many are highly competent at repetitive and logical tasks including data entry and IT support. Furthermore, people with autism may have special interests that can easily be developed into an employable skill. Employment helps people with autism feel valued by society and results in significant psychological and social benefits.

However, only 15% of adults with autism are in paid employment compared to 48% of people with general disabilities²². A much greater number of people with autism want to work and could do so if able to access appropriate support. Autism specialist supported employment schemes result in significantly higher rates of employment as well as employer and employee satisfaction, compared to generic disability employment services²³. There are clear benefits of working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to develop a sub-regional autism coordinator, working in a similar way to mental health coordinators, within Jobcentre Plus.



People with autism have skills that are keenly sought after and, with the right support, they can make a valuable contribution to the workplace.

Although support to find and sustain work should be available to all people who require it, some people with disabilities are not able to access appropriate support. For example, very few government-funded schemes benefit people with autism seeking employment. Government priority PSA 16 aims to increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in employment, including those with learning disabilities or mental health conditions. Although people with autism are often both socially excluded and keen to secure employment, there is a risk that such strategies will again neglect them. Local multi-agency employment strategies, linked to PSA 16, must start to be more inclusive of people with autism.

22 Department of Health (2009). *Valuing employment now*. London: Department of Health

23 The National Audit Office (2009). *Supporting people with autism through adulthood*. London: Stationery Office

The *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)*²⁴ protects people with disabilities from discrimination in employment. It requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the disadvantages suffered by people with disabilities. The recruitment process, however, often discriminates against people with autism. It is important for both employers and disability employment advisors (DEAs) at Jobcentre Plus to know that people with autism would benefit from being offered an alternative to a traditional interview, such as a work trial. DEAs unfortunately have rarely received sufficient training to know how to support adults with autism. It is vital that government supported employment programmes aimed at helping disabled people to overcome the barriers to gaining and maintaining employment, have the expertise to support people with autism.

Supported employment often involves not only supporting the individual, but also supporting the employer to make reasonable adjustments in recruitment and in the workplace, as well as raising awareness among work colleagues. A better understanding of autism will help employers to recognise how people with autism can make a valuable contribution in the workplace and challenge the traditional perspective based on individual limitations. This helps raise the profile of people with autism within local businesses as well as match individuals to suitable roles. Job descriptions, too can be customised to match parts of different jobs to suit the skills of a person with autism and in order to provide a cost effective solution for the employer. Ultimately, this would improve access to employment and enable many individuals with autism to become more economically independent.

Surrey autism project

Surrey's autism planning group has used learning disability development funding to facilitate the development for a commissioning strategy for adults with autism (see also p15, Training and awareness section).

Surrey's EmployAbility supported employment service has developed expertise and specialism in supporting people on the autism spectrum.

It is working towards Autism Accreditation, and has established a project combining autism specialist social skills training with work trials and supported employment. At the time of a recent spot check, EmployAbility was actively working with 89 people on the autism spectrum. Of these, 35 had been supported to find paid work and 17 were in unpaid work.

Contact: Tom Moore
Surrey County Council

24 *The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (c.13)*. London: HMSO

Goldman Sachs transitions project

Over the last six years the investment bank Goldman Sachs has been working in partnership with The National Autistic Society's Prospects employment service to offer paid placements to adults with high-functioning autism. The firm's mission statement asserts: 'we CAN make a difference... The aim of the Asperger syndrome initiative at Goldman Sachs is to make a positive impact on the lives of people who have little or no experience in the workplace. We can help them to achieve their highest potential, as they interact with colleagues and grow to become more confident and competent in their abilities, through a programme of interaction, communication and personal experiences.' The programme has given 26 people so far the chance to acquire extended work experience of whom five secured permanent employment via the programme. All the others went on to secure full-time jobs elsewhere, largely on the basis of the experience gained there with support from the autism specialist supported employment service. There are currently 12 interns working in the London office. It has also, according to Richard Bremer, a knowledge manager at Goldman Sachs who champions the programme, enabled the firm to gain very capable and effective employees, raised the company's awareness of diversity and enabled managers to learn how to communicate more effectively and adapt their communication style to meet the needs of others. Goldman Sachs is a gold card member of the Employers Forum on Disability.

Contact: Richard Bremner
Knowledge Manager
Goldham Sachs

Aspire, Autism West Midlands

ASpire is a specialist service for people with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), typically those with a diagnosis of high-functioning autism. ASpire was established in 2001 in response to a gap between services and need identified by stakeholders in the West Midlands, including people with autism, parents and carers, DEAs and work psychologists. It aims to break down the significant barriers facing people with autism in accessing work and sustaining a job. Support programmes are tailored to individual need and are based on good practice approaches to ASDs. The service has a Department for Work and Pensions work preparation contract, supporting people to access a range of route maps to employability through practical support, advice and guidance; develop employability skills and gain practical experience; and find a job and sustain employment.

Contact: Claire Fennel
Aspire Coordinator
Autism West Midlands

Supported living options

Almost half of adults with autism over 25 continue to live in the family home and over half are dependent on their parents for financial support. This is a cause of considerable concern for family carers as they grow older as they worry about who will look after their dependents in the future. Too many adults with autism are unable to access the specialist support appropriate to their needs that would enable them to live more independently. Very few adults with autism have sufficient choice and control over where they live, the type of housing or the support they receive.

As it is a spectrum disorder, adults with autism require a range of different housing options from fully independent (with some support), to clusters of bedsits with communal areas, to small group homes. Unfortunately, many adults with autism continue to be placed in traditional, large residential services due to lack of alternative provision. Often these are people with severely debilitating sensory, perceptual and social difficulties for whom such an environment is highly inappropriate. Out-of-area placements result in lack of investment in local services, which in turn results in further reliance on out-of-area placements.

Housing Options, a charity which gives housing advice to people with a learning disability, estimate that the current shortage of housing for adults with autism in the UK is in excess of 10,000 homes. The Supporting People programme offers vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing high quality and strategically planned housing-related services which enable greater independence. Local housing strategies therefore need to be more inclusive of the future housing needs of people with autism.



This cartoon by an adult with autism demonstrates the importance of meeting an individual's sensory needs.

When people with autism are placed in the wrong environment it can cause them extreme anxiety and result in increased support needs. It is essential that the location of a person's home reflects their individual needs and preferences. The house itself is likely to require adaptation to meet their needs. Homes for people with autism often require consideration of sensory sensitivity to certain sounds, lights, colours and smells.

As well as sympathetically designed housing, adults with autism will require varying levels of support. Supported living involves housing and support being offered by separate providers so that the person with autism will not need to move house even if there has to be a change in support provider. All staff providing the support should have good understanding of the often hidden needs of adults with autism. Appropriate support for an adult with autism from a skilled personal assistant may only be needed for a few hours a week. The kind of help required often involves tasks such as tidying the home, form-filling, phone calls and regular financial management.

Kingwood Trust

The Kingwood Trust is a charity set up in 1994 by the parents of a young man with autism. It is a specialist support provider working with 50 people with autism, particularly those with complex needs, who mostly live in their own homes in Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties.

Kingwood recognises that all people, regardless of ability or background, can be active and contributing members of the community. The Trust aims to help people with autism to live the lives they choose. This means finding ways of learning what matters to them; what they want to do, and then helping them to make this happen. Well-trained support staff ensure that the people they support have access to the broadest range of choices, and help in overcoming the barriers associated with their condition.

Kingwood also undertakes action research, and pioneers best practice in response to the changing and complex needs of people with autism which it then disseminates nationally to assist others working in the field.

Contact: Sue Osborn
Chief Executive Officer
Kingwood Trust

Surrey autism project

Surrey’s autism planning group has used learning disability development funding to facilitate the development for a commissioning strategy for adults with autism (see also p15, Training and awareness section).

The commissioning strategy includes developing new autism spectrum specialist supported living services each year from 2008 to 2016. In 2008, the process developed services for 16 people. Feedback from people living in the services and their family carers has been very positive. Significant numbers of adults with autism funded by Surrey County Council and Primary Care Trust (PCT) had been placed out of county in order to find a service that could meet their needs. Surrey is now successfully developing local services which aim to improve outcomes for people with autism.

Contact: Tom Moore
Surrey County Council

REACH supported living

REACH is a not-for-profit organisation that supports people in their own homes, so that they can lead the lives they choose as independently as possible. It recognises that people with autism require specialist support by staff who understand the implications of autism and the challenges it may bring, and believes that people are often able to live in ordinary housing, provided they have appropriate support. The organisation aims for a person-centred approach that focuses on how a person wants to live their life. REACH currently provides supported living to people with autism in Swindon.

Contact: Judith North
Chief Executive Officer
REACH

Preventative services and social inclusion

It is widely recognised that people with autism are often unable to access the support they need and specialised services for adults with autism are few and far between. Many adults with autism fall through a gap between learning disability and mental health services, and only access the latter in the form of costly and acute interventions if they subsequently develop mental health problems, which may be brought on by depression and social isolation associated with their autism²⁵. High levels of secondary mental health difficulties are indicative of a lack of preventative support. Without the support to cope in a society that fails to understand their needs, adults with autism experience high levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and the risk of psychiatric breakdown. A lack of timely support can often lead to greater support needs and more intensive intervention in the longer term, and is therefore poor practice and very expensive. Appropriate, timely support can have a profound impact on quality of life.

Better outcomes can be achieved by investing in carefully targeted, low-cost, early intervention services. Such services are designed to reduce the levels of stress and alleviate social isolation commonly experienced by adults with autism. By intervening when service users have a low level of need it is possible to reduce the chances of mental health deterioration or even unnecessarily entering the criminal justice system.



With appropriate circles of support, many adults with autism are able to live relatively independently in the community, requiring only low-intensity services.

Low-cost early intervention and prevention services aim to reduce the need for high-cost acute support associated with crisis management services in the longer term. With appropriate circles of support, many adults with autism are able to live relatively independently in the community, requiring only low-intensity services. Without such support, there is increased risk of social exclusion and of mental illness²⁶. Three quarters of local authorities report preventative services having a positive impact on outcomes (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, 2008). The development of better preventative services and joint working between health and social care is in line with *Our health, our say* Green Paper²⁷. Commissioners need to start investing in preventative services and reducing reliance on crisis management in order to achieve better value for money and better outcomes for adults with autism.

25 The National Audit Office (2009). *Supporting people with autism through adulthood*. London: Stationery Office

26 Ibid.

27 Department of Health (2006). *Our health, our say*. London: Department of Health

Many adults with autism are socially isolated. Local authorities should invest in services that aim to tackle the social exclusion among people with autism. For minimal cost, it is possible to provide weekly social opportunities based around common interests and structured activities, such as a pub quiz. This can help reduce social isolation and may also help to reduce risk of depression commonly associated with autism. Local authorities also need to fund social skills training courses for adults with autism. Social skills training, social groups, and buddy schemes are all cost-effective preventative services that can prevent the needs of people with autism escalating to a point where more serious intervention is required.

Research by Luke Beardon²⁸ identifies that the services most requested by adults with high-functioning autism are (in order):

- support in employment
- support getting appropriate accommodation
- accessing social skills training
- counselling (eg CBT)
- accessing diagnostic services
- social groups.

Oldham

The work of the Oldham multi-agency group has resulted in Oldham now being regarded as a leading authority on autism provision (see also p15, Training and awareness section) Oldham has invested in a range of low-cost preventative services such as buddy schemes and several social groups, and has developed a vulnerable adults team to support those that do not fit the remit of other teams such as mental health or learning disability teams. Many of Oldham's services, including supported tenancy, have gained autism accreditation.

Contact: Wendy Atkinson
Autism Development Worker
Oldham

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM)

RBWM developed a specialist post to conduct a data collection and needs analysis. There was particular focus on determining the number of adults with autism in the area who were not receiving appropriate support services. Serious gaps were identified in employment and housing. The survey also identified the need for a specialist service. As a result, RBWM developed a specialist team to work with people on the autism spectrum, guided by a steering group. The team runs drop-ins, social groups, and training and support for those who had previously not been eligible for services, as well as working with commissioners to ensure appropriate services are developed. RBWM is now one of a small number of authorities to have detailed data on adults with autism in their area. This has had a significant and positive impact on services for adults with autism in the borough.

Contact: Allan Brown
Director of Adult Services
RBWM

28 Beardon L and Edmonds G. (2007). *ASPECT* consultancy report. Sheffield : Autism Centre, Sheffield Hallam University

Specialist autism teams and centres of excellence

An increasing number of areas are developing specialist autism teams (SATs) that provide local specialist expertise to mainstream services. The NAO recognises that in addition to improving outcomes for people with autism, SATs are often cost-neutral and may result in significant cost savings by preventing the need for more acute services²⁹. Furthermore, those supported by a specialist service are often able to live in more independent and cost-effective housing³⁰. The national cost to primary care trusts (PCTs) and local authorities (LAs) of developing specialist health and social care services would be £40m. However, this could result in improved outcomes and savings of over £150m, based on evidence from the Liverpool Autism Team³¹.

Best practice involves joint funding by the PCT/NHS and the LA. For example, the local authority funds a registered social worker, training coordinator, and autism employment advisor and the PCT funds a clinical psychologist, therapist and community psychiatric nurse. It is estimated that both the LA and the PCT would need to invest about £120k each to develop a SAT to support a population of half a million. Many areas, including Liverpool, Somerset, Bristol, Nottingham, Kingston, Dorset and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, are developing specialist teams.

Those with the most complex needs are currently often placed furthest from their family home. This may contribute to their emotional trauma and be detrimental to their well-being. It is possible to prevent significant numbers of high-cost out-of-area placements by developing more appropriate and specialist provision within the authority. Out-of-area placements result in lack of investment in local services and in increasing future reliance on out-of-area placements. Commissioning is not only about funding services but also about investing in the local community. Professor Mansell's report³² highlights the need to develop specialist services locally that can directly serve a small number of people with the most challenging needs as well as support good mainstream practice. There is a need to integrate multi-agency services in order to provide more local, flexible and coherent packages of support for those with the most complex needs.

Sub-regional centres of excellence can provide a collaborative approach by pulling together services and expertise across local statutory agencies and the voluntary sector.

29 The National Audit Office (2009). *Supporting people with autism through adulthood*. London: Stationery Office

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Department of Health (2007). *Services for people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour or mental health needs*. London: Department of Health

They involve developing a hub of expertise, based in community/non-clinical environments, central to which are the SATs, and which can offer:

- training to facilitate good mainstream practice
- diagnostic and assessment services for those with complex needs
- specialist consultancy and intensive outreach support where placement is at risk of breakdown (to prevent out-of-area placements)
- delivery of a range of low-level preventative services (such as social opportunities to reduce risk of mental health deterioration associated with social isolation)
- courses specifically for adults with autism, such as social skills and independent living
- drop-in advice, signposting and brokerage support to adults with autism.

Larger authorities will need to develop their own teams and centres of expertise, whereas clusters of smaller authorities would benefit from working together for economies of scale.

Nottinghamshire

Nottinghamshire PCT and LA recognised the needs of people with autism in their adult health and social care commissioning strategy. Both Nottinghamshire healthcare NHS trust and Nottinghamshire adult social care departments have established specialist teams to support adults with autism. The health team includes a clinical psychologist, occupational therapist and speech and language therapist. It focuses on multi-disciplinary diagnostic assessment and post-diagnostic support. The social care team, made up of five social care staff, provides specialist assessment, care management and short-term interventions. The team also provides social and emotional support and assistance with employment and accommodation. The team is able to offer community care assessments by assessors who have a good understanding of autism.

Contact: Chris Mitchell
Team Manager
Nottingham County Council

Greater Manchester Consortium

The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium is the country's best example of strategic regional working. It enables the ten LAs in Greater Manchester to share knowledge in order to better inform the strategic planning and commissioning process. Each LA in the consortium has set up its own autism services development group. Each LA pays a tenth of the overall costs which fund a project officer, a part-time information officer, and an administrator who provide family support, information and a signposting service. The team also supports each LA to develop better support services for all people with autism in their area through the development of groups, training programmes, diagnostic pathways and low-cost preventative services.

Contact: Debbie Waters
Project Officer
The National Autistic Society

Personalisation and self-directed support

*Putting people first*³³ aims to transform adult social care through the personalisation agenda. Personalisation aims to improve people's quality of life by empowering them, so that they have greater choice and control over their lives and the support that they receive. It is about tailoring support to meet individual needs and aspirations as opposed to matching individuals to services on the basis of availability. The current process of reforming health and social care provision, with greater emphasis on personalisation, presents a good opportunity to help people with autism obtain more appropriate services. The development of effective personalised support has the potential to help address many of the issues highlighted in previous chapters.

More transparent allocation of resources, in the form of individual budgets, is at the heart of personalising support. Self-directed support enables individuals to design their own support and the services they need. By April 2011 authorities are required to offer individual budgets to at least one third of people, with many authorities targeting a majority of people eligible for support by 2011. However, so far very few people with complex needs (including autism) are receiving individual budgets.



People with autism often find it hard to articulate their aspirations and therefore may require brokerage to assist them in developing a support plan and procuring the services to implement it.

The amount of money allocated must be sufficient to meet eligible needs. There are significant concerns that specific groups of vulnerable people do not meet the eligibility criteria to access adequate funding to fulfil their potential and maximise quality of life. Local authorities must ensure their Resource Allocation System (RAS) adequately recognises the needs of adults with autism.

There are several cases where self-directed support had been working effectively until, unfortunately, individual budgets were decreased. This reduction in funding available is clearly unacceptable: individual budgets must be sufficient to purchase good quality and good value support as opposed to the cheapest available which may well not be appropriate to meet individual needs.

33 Department of Health (2007). *Putting people first*. London: Department of Health

If personalisation is to achieve its core aims, it is essential that those being offered direct payments are aware of alternatives, such as trust funds, and can access advice and support. People with autism often find it hard to articulate their aspirations and therefore may require a broker who can assist them in developing a support plan and then procuring services to implement it. Supporting people to take control of their funding through brokerage is central to the success of self-directed support. Local authorities need to consider how brokerage will be funded and how to ensure people with autism can access this support directly or through a social worker. Brokers must be registered and independent of the responsibility of rationing or allocating resources. Agencies that historically provide localised information, advice and advocacy are well placed to develop brokerage.

There are further concerns that people are changing over to direct payments not as a positive choice, but because traditional services are failing to meet their needs. Direct payments only work when there is a sufficient range of support options for people to choose from. Local authorities must stimulate the market to ensure there is a range of appropriate support services for people with autism to choose to purchase. Whilst individual budgets represent a significant opportunity for the third sector, it also involves vulnerability in the transition from block contracts to spot purchasing in a competitive market place. Local authorities will need to ensure that personal assistants, employed directly by the individual, are both available and have received adequate training in autism.

Doncaster community adult autism team (CAAT)

Doncaster's CAAT is helping people on the autism spectrum to be independent by reducing reliance on home care support. The team was set up as part of Doncaster Council's implementation of individual budgets, whereby service users receive funding following an assessment of their needs. Through the CAAT, service users are in control of developing their own unique support packages. By intervening when service users have a low level of need, the CAAT hopes to use creative responses to reduce the chances of adults with autism unnecessarily entering mental health services or the criminal justice system.

Contact: Joan Beck
Head of Disability Services
Doncaster City Council

Bury

The Metropolitan Borough of Bury has commissioned The National Autistic Society to develop a brokerage service to support adults with autism to negotiate funding and manage their own support. This will include support to recruit and manage personal assistants (PAs).

Brokers will identify the changes people with autism want to make to their lives in order to contribute to the development of support plans and facilitate the implementation of person-centred plans. They will also identify the support services and community opportunities that individuals require. It is envisaged that levels of support will be negotiated on an individual basis. Other objectives include mapping the range of support services accessible by people with autism available in the Bury area.

The objective of the project is to ensure that a minimum of 40 people with autism will be using individual budgets and that 80% of people report that their lives have changed for the better. The brokerage service aims to benefit people with autism living in Bury in a variety of ways including providing people with more choice and control, helping to develop local services for local people and by encouraging more community involvement.

Contact: Sara Crookdake
Brokerage Service
Bury

Coventry individual budgets pilot

As part of their individual budgets pilot, and now central to their approach to delivering personalisation, Coventry has adopted an outcome-focused approach to conducting assessments in place of self assessment questionnaires. Instead of starting with needs and risks it starts with outcomes people want from their lives. The approach is possibility-focused, looking at people's aspirations, rather than being problem-focused. Their local evaluation suggests personalised and outcome-focused procurement (not RAS) is more likely to promote independence as it focuses on goals people hope to achieve. The assessment process is more labour-intensive but improves outcomes for the individual, and the improved relationships with the people who use their services and their carers make reviews simpler.

Contact: Andrew Reece
Physical Disability Service Manager
Coventry City Council

Conclusion

This guidance highlights the key issues that prevent adults with autism from accessing the support they need. It also identifies examples of good practice from across England that successfully provide solutions to many of these issues. The South West Valuing People Now Programme Board has commissioned this piece of work in order that local authorities and PCTs can use these examples as templates to develop their own provision.

It is essential that all local areas develop an autism planning group, which is necessary to enable effective planning of local autism services across health and social care.

Local autism planning groups must prioritise the development of an autism training programme. This will improve the competency of community professionals so that mainstream services across health, social care, employment and housing can respond appropriately to the needs of adults with autism.

Specialist autism teams improve outcomes for adults with autism and reduce costs associated with reliance on more acute services. They provide a range of support services, including diagnosis and assessment, training to improve mainstream practice, specialist support to prevent placement breakdown, low-level early intervention services and drop-in support, and brokerage. It is essential that such teams are funded jointly by PCTs and local authorities in order to address both health and social care needs.

The National Audit Office survey³⁴ identified not only the poor quality of life experienced by many adults with autism but also the inefficient use of public money. National initiatives (such as the current Autism Bill and cross-government autism strategy) have been developed in response to the injustice experienced by many adults with autism. Local authorities and PCTs now have a responsibility to seize this opportunity to make better use of public money in order to achieve better outcomes for adults with autism.

34 The National Audit Office (2009). *Supporting people with autism through adulthood*. London: Stationery Office

Brief review of relevant government initiatives

Valuing people White Paper (DH, 2001)

- Focus on rights, independence, choice and inclusion
- Particular focus on increasing housing options and employment opportunities

Fair access to care services (DH, 2003)

- Decisions regarding eligibility to services should be based on presenting needs
- DH & CQC are reviewing this guidance as specific groups, such as those with autism, are currently falling through the net and not accessing the support they need

Disability Discrimination Act (2005)

- Public authorities to promote equality of opportunity
- All services to make reasonable adjustments to include people with disabilities

Independence, wellbeing and choice Green Paper (Stationery Office, 2005)

- Sets out way forward for adult social care
- Aim to maintain independence and give people greater choice and control over the support they receive in order to improve quality of life

Improving the life chances of people with disabilities (Cabinet Office, 2005)

- For disabled people to have more choices that improve quality of life and be included as equal members of society
- Focus on increasing numbers of people with disabilities who live independently and are in employment
- Any disabled person who wants a job and needs support to get a job should be able to do so by 2025

National Service Framework for long term conditions (DH, 2005)

- Need for prompt diagnosis
- Support in the community to maximise independence

Better services for people with ASD (DH, 2006)

- States that it is unacceptable that some people with autism fall between services (eg between LD & MH services)
- Promotes pooled resources, joint working protocols, joint training to help address boundary management issues
- Specialist employment services should have the competence to support people with ASD into paid work

Putting people first (DH, 2006)

- Transforming adult social care through personalisation to ensure best possible quality of life
- Promotes person-centred planning and personal budgets

Our health, our say White Paper (2007)

- Focus on more preventative services, improving joint working between health and social services, better support for those with long-term conditions, and increased focus on tackling inequalities

The economic consequences of autism in the UK (Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, 2007)

- Total cost of supporting adults with autism in UK is £25 billion per year
- The lifetime cost of supporting an individual with autism is £4 million
- Costs impact across all areas of public sector expenditure

Services for people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour or mental health needs (Mansell, DH, 2007)

- Need to develop specialist services locally that can support good mainstream practice as well as directly serve a small number of people with most challenging needs

World class commissioning (DH, 2007)

- Adopt a more strategic approach to commissioning aimed at improving outcomes and reducing inequalities

Independent living: a cross-government strategy about independent living for disabled people (Office for Disabilities, 2008)

- Ensure disabled people have the chance to fulfil their potential
- Cross-government strategy to ensure disabled people experience equal access to housing and employment
- Improve employment support for people with disabilities

Commissioning person-centred, cost effective, local support for people with learning disabilities (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2008)

- Highlights the need for more competent local services to reduce reliance on out-of-area placements

Cutting the cake fairly (CSCI, 2008)

- Recognises the poor quality of life for people, such as those with autism, who are often deemed ineligible for support services

Valuing people now (DH, 2009)

- Aims to include everyone and identifies that commissioners need to address needs of four priority groups including people with autism
- Recognises that people with autism need support from staff with understanding and experience of working with them

TransMap (TIN, 2009)

- Comprehensive multi-agency engagement
- Full participation of young people and their families
- Provision of high quality information
- Effective transition planning
- Array of opportunities for living life

Service for adults with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC) (DH, 2009)

- Aimed at commissioner in PCTs and LAs
- Recognises that services can exclude people with autism resulting in many adults with autism being unable to access the support they need
- Highlights the need to considering including the needs of adults with autism in JSNA

Commissioning services and support for people with learning disabilities and complex needs (CSCI, 2009)

- LAs & PCTs have a responsibility to work together to ensure these people are being supported to live full and independent lives
- JSNA weak on coverage of people with LD or complex needs
- Very few of these people are receiving individual budgets

Valuing employment now (DH, 2009)

- Ensure young people have the opportunity to gain work experience at school and college (eg FLT) in order to be better prepared for work
- Personal budgets provide an opportunity to support people into work

Supporting people with autism through adulthood (NAO, 2009)

- People with autism are highly vulnerable due to the lack of appropriate support services
- Investment in specialised services results in improved outcomes and cost savings
- Based on evidence from Liverpool Aspergers Team, developing specialist services in each area would cost £40m but save the public purse over £150m a year.

Shaping the future of care together: consultation (DH, 2009)

- Aim to develop a national care service that is fair, simple and affordable
- State will pay for one third of care costs with remainder paid through insurance

A better future (DH, 2009)

- Consultation for future cross-government autism strategy
- Social Inclusion, Health, Choice & Control, Training, and Employment