

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

26th March 2024

Report Title	Northamptonshire All Age Autism Strategy
Report Author	Louise Kirby, Helen Gregson-Holmes, David Loyd-Hearn

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Northamptonshire All Age Autism Strategy

Appendix B – All Age Autism Strategy Action Plan

Appendix C – All Age Autism Strategy ppt

Appendix D – Autism JSNA

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The Northamptonshire All Age Autism Strategy is a co-produced strategy across the Northamptonshire Integrated Care System and has been endorsed by our Autism Champions, our Autism Advisory Panel, the Young Autistic Advisory Project, the Children and Young People’s Transformation Partnership Board and the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Programme Board.
- 1.2. The All Age Autism Strategy dovetails with the West Northamptonshire SEND strategy, the West Northamptonshire Co-Production Charter and the Northamptonshire ICB Long Term Plan with a focus on our population needs and intersectionality through the autistic lens.
- 1.3. The Autism Strategy was enabled by the development our first Autism Joint Strategy Needs Assessment (JSNA), a significant undertaking we believe is largely unique in the UK.
- 1.4. There is an Action Plan that is proposed to be used as a framework across our children and young people and adult governance.
- 1.5. This strategy and supporting documentation are being presented to the West Northants Health and Wellbeing Board for endorsement and assent to commit to improve the lives of our Autistic Community and to ensure there is “no decision about us, without us”

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Northamptonshire all age autism strategy builds on the preceding local autism strategy published in 2018 and will be reviewed again in 2026 in line with the National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026. It explains the main things we want to work on over the next two years towards the vision for Autistic people to be recognised, heard, valued, able to thrive and reach their full potential in our county.
- 2.2. The focus of the strategy has been informed by national government themes and co-produced in partnership with the local autistic community, both adults and children. The development of the strategy was also supported by colleagues from partner organisations.
- 2.3. This strategy aims to address the diverse and complex needs of autistic individuals and their families in Northamptonshire. The focus on a life-course approach underscores the commitment to supporting autistic people at every stage of their lives. It recognises autism affects people differently and touches many aspects of their lives.
- 2.4. The three-year timeframe aligns with the government's national strategy and emphasises the importance of continuous review and evaluation, ensuring that the strategy remains responsive to evolving needs and challenges. The involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders, including the autistic community, in the development and review process is a key strength that promotes inclusivity and ensures that the strategy remains person-centred.
- 2.5. The emphasis on joint ownership and leadership across multiple organisations underscores the collaborative nature of the strategy, recognising that addressing the needs of autistic individuals requires a unified and concerted effort from various sectors. Furthermore, the strategy's co-production with the Autism Advisory Panel, Young Person Autism Advisory Panel, Autism Enabler Group, and Autism Champions underscores the commitment to the principle of "Nothing About Us Without Us," ensuring that the voices and perspectives of the autistic community are at the forefront of decision-making processes.
- 2.6. There is an emphasis on collaboration and partnership with various organisations and stakeholders demonstrating a concerted effort to ensure comprehensive support and inclusivity. The holistic approach outlined in the strategy, encompassing various aspects such as health services, education, employment, independent living, and the criminal justice system, reflects a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by autistic individuals. This approach is poised to create a more supportive and inclusive environment that fosters the well-being and empowerment of the autistic community in Northamptonshire
- 2.7. The West Northamptonshire Wellbeing Board are being asked to sign off the Autism Strategy and promote the work across the partnership ensuring inclusive practice that makes our communities and services within, more accessible to our autistic people.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Request sign off and endorsement of the Northamptonshire All Age Autism Strategy

4. Report Background

4.1 Please refer to the appendices for supplementary information

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 This suite of documents have been produced as a partnership undertaking throughout 2022/23 and 2023/24

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

6.1.1. Endorsement requires officer capacity to ensure the strategy is embedded in our work through the agencies across the local authority area.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1. The Autism Act 2009 and the 2021 National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults recommends local strategies and plans.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There are still bodies of evidence nationally and locally that services are not inclusive and accessible, the All Age Autism Strategy and Action Plan are mechanisms to improve inclusion. If the strategy is not endorsed, this would represent a risk for inclusion.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 This Strategy is the culmination of 2 years worth of work to co-produce with our Autistic community across the Northamptonshire.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 No.

6.6 Climate Impact

6.6.1 N/A

6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 This will improve inclusion for the autistic community of West Northamptonshire, though the inclusive practice is also likely to be beneficial to people with a learning disabilities, dementia, English as a second language and people with communication, emotional wellbeing and social needs.

7. Background Papers

All Age Autism Strategy

All Age Autism Strategy Action Plan

All Age Autism Strategy ppt

Autism JSNA