

**Autism in Surrey**

# **You Said, We Did.**

**All Age Autism Strategy 2021 – 2026**

**November 2024**

# You Said. We Did.

## All Age Autism Strategy 2021 – 2026

The [Surrey All Age Autism Strategy 2021 - 2026](#) was co-produced by a wide range of partners who set out an autism friendly vision for Surrey, where autistic people can lead healthy, safe and fulfilling lives.

Through consultation in 2020, Autistic people and family carers in Surrey told us about some serious, system-wide problems with support for autistic people. Work to improve this is being delivered by a partnership of people with lived experience and people from across the service system. In this document, when we talk about what “we” have done, we are talking about the achievements of this broad partnership.

This document is a snapshot in time. It shows the progress that we have made in the first three years. Not everything we aimed for has been possible. We knew the strategy was aspirational, and by working on the key issues, sometimes we have also been able to take other opportunities that have become available.

We have been working hard on the big issues that were raised in the strategy. We will not have solved all the problems by 2026, but we will certainly have made progress and are proud that we have established a positive direction of travel. We know that there is still much more to do to improve the lives of autistic people living in Surrey.

# Glossary of Terms

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| AAAS            | All Age Autism Strategy                              |
| AbyE            | Autism by Experience Community Interest Company      |
| AND             | Additional Needs and Disabilities                    |
| ARFID           | Avoidant / Restrictive Food Intake Disorder          |
| ASC             | Adult Social Care                                    |
| ATLAS           | Autism Participation group for autistic young people |
| ATTAIN          | A health advisory organisation                       |
| D&B's           | Districts & Boroughs                                 |
| DPS             | Dynamic Purchasing System                            |
| FHFT            | Frimley Health Foundation Trust                      |
| GRT Communities | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities                |
| ICB             | Integrated Care Board                                |
| NAS             | National Autistic Society                            |
| OMMT            | Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training                    |
| PDA             | Pathological Demand Avoidance                        |
| SaBP            | Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust  |
| SCC             | Surrey County Council                                |
| SEND            | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities           |
| UVP             | User Voice and Participation Team                    |

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## Information, Awareness and Understanding

*'Nothing About Us Without Us'  
– experts by experience will  
be involved in all aspects of  
implementing the strategy.*

*"Family carers will be able to access  
training at the right time, to enhance  
their understanding of how autism af-  
fects their family member and  
explore practical ways to support  
them" – AAAS, 2021*

*"Establish a Children's Autism  
Partnership Board to support  
involvement of autistic children  
and young people'. – AAAS*

| We Did: 2021 – 2024  | We Will: 2025 and beyond   |
|--|--|
| <p>We established a Children and Young People's partnership board which is co-chaired by young people and Family Voice Surrey.</p> <p>We developed an Autism Reference Group made up of autistic adults who feed their views into the Adult Autism Partnership Board.</p> <p>We developed a coproduction forum to ensure that coproduction remains at the heart of the strategy.</p> <p>We created a PDA Parent Carer Reference Group to inform activity and offer expert lived experience.</p> <p>We worked with autistic people to support development of a Community Interest Company. Autism by Experience (AbyE) employ autistic people to develop and deliver autism training and information for a range of audiences including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autistic people</li> <li>• Parents and Carers</li> <li>• Professionals</li> </ul> | <p>Strengthen partnership working with autistic children and young people, with parent carers and with people with lived experience.</p> <p>Meet termly with the PDA Parent Carer Reference Group to ensure the voice of people with lived experience is heard and influences activities.</p> <p>Provide training to co-chairs to support skill development and increase confidence levels.</p> <p>Produce advice and guidance resources about important topics that autistic people have selected, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• autistic girls and masking</li> <li>• masking in boys</li> <li>• smooth transitions</li> <li>• sleep</li> <li>• accessing support</li> </ul> <p>Seek further funding to secure sustainable Autism Suicide Prevention Training.</p> |

| <b>We Did: 2021 – 2024</b>   | <b>We Will: 2025 and beyond</b>   |
|--|---|
| <p>We are working with Surrey Heartlands NHS Trust to support planning for the rollout of Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT).</p> <p>We worked with a range of enthusiastic partners to coproduce Behind the Mask training.</p> <p>We commissioned bespoke coproduced Autism Suicide Prevention training for professionals, parent carers and families. This is co-delivered by Autism Oxford and Making Families Count and with people with lived experience.</p> <p>Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) training has been delivered in response to a lack of awareness throughout the service system.</p> <p>We commissioned Cygnet training; a 6-week parenthood support programme for parent carers of autistic children and young people aged 5-18.</p> <p>Through Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF) we have provided advice, guidance and support to Surrey's minority ethnic populations.</p> <p>We have begun forging relationships with GRT communities to understand what information and support people would like in relation to autism.</p> <p>We set up an Autism Friendly Community group in East Surrey.</p> | <p>Deliver a coproduced PDA event for social workers and other social care professionals.</p> <p>Deliver the Cygnet Programme</p> <p>Expand the parenthood support offer to include specific support for parent carers who have a child under 5 or in their teens.</p> <p>Launch a bespoke training offer for parent carers whose children display distressed behaviours at home.</p> <p>Oversee changes to training for Adult Social Care Teams as we roll out the OMMT, ensuring we keep elements of the current coproduced training offer that are tailored specifically to social care roles.</p> <p>Work with training providers to deliver OMMT. to as wide an audience as possible</p> <p>Consider development of OMMT tier three training for specific health roles and social care teams.</p> <p>Further develop our relationship with the GRT communities and support people with lived experience to develop short videos on a range of topics.</p> <p>We have committed to setting up Autism Friendly Community groups across Surrey.</p> |

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## Education and Preparation for Adulthood

*"Inclusive educational provision which enables children and young people to be taught within their local community" – AAAS 2021*

| We Did: 2021 – 2024  | We Will: 2025 and beyond  |
|--|---|
| <p>Developed the School Autism Friendly Review (SAFR) programme to support schools in creating environments and adopting practices that are autism friendly.</p> <p>Expanded the Autism Outreach support for schools and Supporting Inclusion for Autism offers.</p> <p>Begun the PDA Position Statement review.</p> <p>The Autism Gender &amp; Sexuality project is collating stories from young people with lived experience, working closely with the Twister project.</p> <p>Young people from ATLAS Autism shared that their experiences of eating and drinking was difficult. We are coproducing advice and guidance on sensory eating differences for schools.</p> <p>Provided advice and expertise to a schools led programme focusing on Inclusion and Innovation. This programme is supporting 3 projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ND Inclusive Education Settings</li> <li>• Accessing Education</li> <li>• Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health</li> </ul> <p>The Inclusion and Innovation programme has developed 10 Top Actions to support inclusive approaches.</p> | <p>Expand the SAFR offer to empower more schools to become more Autism friendly.</p> <p>Complete the SCC PDA Position Statement Review and publish a revised, coproduced PDA Position Statement in 2025.</p> <p>Launch the Autism Gender &amp; Sexuality outcomes in the summer term of 2025.</p> <p>Publish the Autism Sensory Eating and Drinking Differences work in January 2025.</p> <p>A range of training and events will be delivered to schools across Surrey participating in the Inclusion and Innovation programme.</p> <p>Engage with young people and parent carers to understand what support people need when transitioning into adulthood.</p> <p>Work with commissioners to improve the transition to adulthood pathways offer.</p> <p>Improve the information offer, so that young people can make informed decisions about their futures.</p> |

## 3

## Health and Social Care Support

*"Support when autistic people struggle with their mental health" – AAAS, 2021*

*"We want autistic people to be able to get assessments of their needs and know how to access support. We want diagnosis to happen at the time appropriate for the individual, so that wait times are shorter. We want people to be able to get support before and after a diagnosis."*

*"The criminal justice system, including the courts and court liaison, and prisons recognise the needs of autistic people whether they are victims, witnesses, suspects or perpetrators of crime, and make reasonable adjustments" – AAAS, 2021"*

*"Mainstream health services to be more accessible for autistic people"*

| We Did: 2021 – 2024   | We Will: 2025 and beyond   |
|---|--|
| <p>We worked with AbyE to coproduce and deliver autism training for Adult Social Care Teams in line with Skills for Care guidance and focussed on the social work role. We made this mandatory in advance of the OMMT rollout.</p> <p>The Surrey and Borders NHS Trust's Neurodevelopmental Team has provided expertise, support and training to other health colleagues, including the Mental Health Teams.</p> <p>Prepare primary care to support the start of annual health checks for autistic people without learning disabilities.</p> <p>The Surrey Heartlands Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT) implementation and delivery plan was established, and rollout has begun, providing employment for up to 100 autistic people and people with a learning disability in the first year.</p> | <p>Develop a range of pre and post diagnostic information that is available in one place, so that autistic people, their families and carers can access reliable information whenever they need it.</p> <p>Review the structure of <a href="#">Surrey and Borders NHS Trust</a> teams and how they support autistic people. This will include the diagnostic offer and mental health support for autistic people who do not have a learning disability. This will include reasonable adjustments to current mental health services and a specialist offer.</p> <p>Develop and implement an action plan arising from the ATAIN proposals for autism diagnosis, risk stratification and development of support for autistic people without a learning disability including liaison support at acute hospitals.</p> |



| We Did: 2021 – 2024  | We Will: 2025 and beyond  |
|--|---|
| <p>The Autism Champions programme has provided some key health and social care staff with more in-depth training.</p> <p>Surrey Police have collaborated with autistic people and multi-agency colleagues to develop a training package for frontline Police officers called “Autism: Learning – Improving – Adapting”. This training offer is mandatory in Surrey Police’s CPD programme.</p> <p>The All-Age Autism Strategy has supported continued use of Surrey Police’s Pegasus card scheme, which allows autistic people to share some detail of the ways they need Police to engage with them.</p> <p>We have brought together prisons in Surrey with experts by experience to develop a training programme for Prison Officers. Good practice adjustments that can be made in prisons have been identified.</p> <p>Frimley ICB have developed a pilot training programme which is being tested through November and December 2024.</p> | <p>We will manage the transition of training for Adult Social Care teams to Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT) to ensure continuity, and that we do not lose the role-specific elements of the current training.</p> <p>Support the recruitment of the workforce of autistic people and people with a learning disability and the rollout of the OMMT for Health and social care staff, including an offer for the providers they contract with.</p> <p>We will work with colleagues in Surrey’s prisons to develop and deliver neurodiversity training, to help with development of approaches to support neurodivergent prisoners, and to gather information to develop the system’s understanding of best practice.</p> <p>Continue to support primary care ahead of the 2025/26 launch of annual health checks for autistic people including coding on patient records and immunisation pathway support to practices.</p> |



## 4

## Housing

*“District and Borough Housing staff to understand Autism and make reasonable adjustments so that housing processes are autism accessible” – AAAS, 2021*

| We Did: 2021 – 2024  | We Will: 2025 and beyond  |
|--|---|
| <p>Planning has been approved and building works have begun for 44 supported independent living units to be built across 3 Surrey locations.</p> <p>A new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) has been implemented to support contract management.</p> <p>Attended the Surrey Chief Housing Officers meetings to offer bespoke Autism training to Housing staff across the 11 District &amp; Boroughs in Surrey. We have provided Autism Training to 50 Housing staff in Runnymede Borough Council.</p> <p>Developed accessible housing forms in partnership with Waverley Borough Council</p> <p>Autistic people and professionals across Surrey were part of the consultation process for the British Standard Institute's, national guidelines covering how to design buildings for neurodiverse occupants and key principles for neurodiverse design. <a href="#">Neurodiversity &amp; the Built Environment - PAS 6463:2022   BSI (bsigroup.com).</a></p> | <p>The first 16 independent living units will be available in Autumn 2025</p> <p>ASC Commissioning will work more widely with the independent sector to encourage investment in and development of supported independent living.</p> <p>Work with districts and boroughs to improve their understanding of Autism</p> <p>Creation of an accessible tenant's handbook in Runnymede Borough Council</p> <p>Deliver bespoke Autism training to staff across Waverley &amp; Guildford Housing Departments</p> <p>We are currently working with colleagues on the 'Right Home, Right Support' programmes to adapt the current Mental Health Housing protocol to create a disabilities housing protocol which includes how to support Autistic individuals.</p> |

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## Employment

*"More job opportunities  
for autistic people"*  
– AAAS, 2021

| We Did: 2021 – 2024  | We Will: 2025 and beyond  |
|--|---|
| <p>Identified funding to ensure all neurodivergent adults in Surrey would be eligible for support to find or sustain paid work in 2024/25.</p> <p>Promoted employment to young people in education: 73% of young adults with additional needs and disabilities now choose vocational pathways.</p> <p>Introduced a new quality framework for Surrey's Alternative Education Provision to ensure providers are offering person centred skills building towards paid work for young people not in mainstream education.</p> <p>Participated in the National Pilot for Supported Internships for young people who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)</p> <p>Offered the gateway programme PREP to encourage inclusion in local communities for young people aged 16-24 not engaging in education and distanced from the workplace.</p> <p>Vocational education pathways extended to raise aspirations for work, health, wellbeing and social inclusion.</p> <p>Over 45% of autistic people supported through Employment Works for Autism achieved paid work.</p> | <p>Continue to work with employers by offering support and advice on reasonable adjustments for autistic people.</p> <p>Promote and highlight good news stories around employment to give confidence to employers and autistic people around how to utilise untapped talent.</p> <p>Strengthen relationships with employers to ensure that young people gain the skills they need for fulfilling and sustainable careers.</p> <p>Work in collaboration with Surrey Heartlands and partners to lead by example and offer more work experience, apprenticeships, supported internships and paid work for neurodivergent people.</p> <p>Find and support resources for quality checked supported employment services that are suitable for neurodiverse people across Surrey to ensure autistic people who aspire paid work can get the support they need.</p> <p>Aim to double the number of supported Internships for young people with an EHCP.</p> |

| We Did: 2021 – 2024  | We Will: 2025 and beyond   |
|--|--|
| <p>Work Wise is a new national pilot for anyone with a health condition or disability, including mental health conditions and neurodiversity, who wants to find or sustain work and are struggling due to ill health. Get Set UK, Richmond Fellowship and Surrey Choices work in partnership to deliver Work Wise</p> <p>Surrey Chambers of Commerce run “Untapped Talent” events aimed at employers to encourage employment of neurodiverse people</p> <p>Surrey Heartlands Partners project promotes employment of people with LD &amp; Autism - 100 work placements found to help people gain skills for future employment</p> <p>Established the Job Centre Work and Health Programme - available through Job Coaches.</p> <p>Disability Confident status promoted to employers to encourage recruitment of disabled and neurodivergent employees and support employers to make reasonable adjustments</p> | <p>Evaluate the Supported Internship pilot and review how to extend vocational opportunities for those who are not in employment, education or training.</p> <p>Develop a broad range of vocational opportunities for autistic young people.</p> |

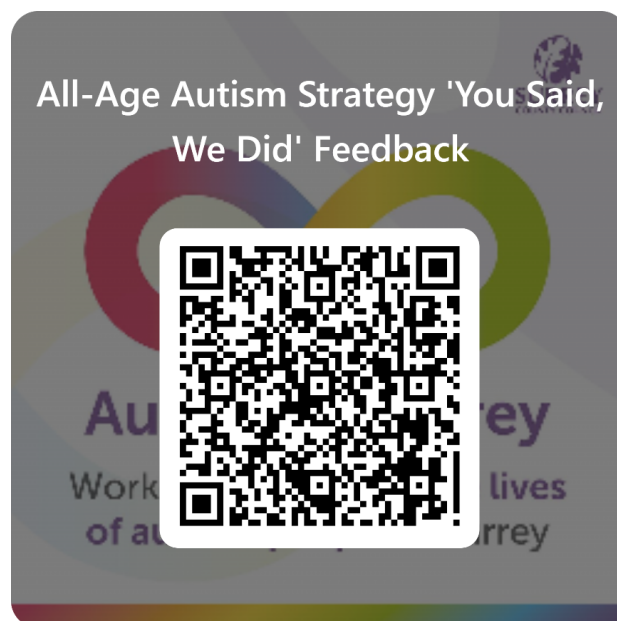
# Please give us your feedback

Your opinion matters! Once you have read this document we would like to hear from you.

Please scan the QR code or [follow this link](#) to share your views on the All Age Autism Strategy 2021 - 2026.

Your views will be used to shape the future priorities of the All Age Autism Strategy.

This consultation will be open for 12 weeks, closing at **23:59pm on Friday 31st January 2025**



## Contact Us

The strategy was developed by a partnership of autistic people, their families and carers, and professionals from across Surrey's service system. We continue to work closer with these partners.

If you would like to get involved or have any questions, please contact us by email:

[allageautismstrategy@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:allageautismstrategy@surreycc.gov.uk)

You can find out more about the All-Age Autism Strategy on the [Surrey County Council website](#).