

Market Position Statement – Autistic Adults

March 2024



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About Autism

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition affecting the way some people communicate and experience the world around them. Autism can be diagnosed at any age and people of any gender can be autistic.

No two autistic people are the same, and not every autistic person will relate to all the characteristics listed below. Someone who is autistic might:

- **Have a strong preference for routine, sameness, or certainty.** They might experience anxiety during times of change or uncertainty.
- **Experience sensory differences.** They could be over or under-sensitive to sound, touch, taste, smell, or light. It may also take longer for an autistic person to process what you are saying.
- **Enjoy focused, more intense interests.** They may be passionate and knowledgeable about certain topics. They may have fewer, but more specific interests. These interests can be anything, from microbiology to vintage clothing. An autistic person might find it more challenging to focus on areas that aren't their preferred topics.
- **Have support needs.** Every autistic person will have different strengths and areas where they could benefit from additional support.
- **Communicate differently to non-autistic people.** This could include differences with eye contact, or having a direct communication style, which some non-autistic people may interpret as blunt. Many autistic people can struggle to connect with non-autistic people, which can negatively affect their wellbeing.
- **Have delayed or absent speech.** Around one in four autistic people speak few or no words. Some autistic people may stop speaking during times of stress or anxiety.
- **Stim to express emotion.** The term stimming derives from 'self-stimulation' and may be described in medical terms as 'restrictive and repetitive behaviour'. Some autistic people stim to help manage feelings of anxiety or express emotions such as happiness or excitement. Examples of stimming include hand flapping, twirling, or rocking.

(Autistica Website)

About this Market Position Statement

What is a Market Position Statement (MPS)?

A Market Position Statement (MPS) is a vital part of what Surrey County Council must do to ensure that there is a choice of different types of service and support

available to residents. This MPS focuses specifically on Adult Social Care support for autistic people.

The MPS outlines:

- The numbers of autistic people supported by Adult Social Care
- The strategic direction for SCC
- How support will need to change to deliver this direction
- An overview of work underway to address the challenges for autistic people to have more independence, choice and control

We want this MPS to encourage commissioners, people who use services, carers, and provider organisations to work together towards the strategic direction that has been coproduced and jointly established.

This document is aimed at existing and potential providers of adult social care who support autistic adults. It continues the dialogue between the Council, people who use services, professionals, providers and others that was established in the development and implementation of the Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy 2021-2026.

The Autism MPS should be read in conjunction with all published Surrey County Council MPS's as at different times in their lives, autistic people may need to access any type of service commissioned by ASC, and autism can co-occur with every other type of need that Adult Social Care can support. The MPS for Learning Disability and the one for Mental Health are particularly relevant.

This document is designed to signal Surrey's commissioning intentions and direction of travel for support for autistic people to the care market. It is an iterative document, which will be refreshed on a regular basis to ensure the inclusion of future plans and developments.

How has this MPS been developed?

This MPS reflects the direction of the work of the Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy 2021-26.

Methods of engagement included:

- ✓ Workshops with autistic people, family carers, providers and professionals
- ✓ Discussion at the Autism Partnership Board
- ✓ Establishment of a Reference Group of autistic adults
- ✓ Engagement with parent carer organisations including Family Voice and NAS Surrey Branch
- ✓ An online survey that received over 2,000 responses
- ✓ Further workshops to review the emerging themes
- ✓ Involvement of experts by experience in co-leading the groups tasked with implementing the strategy

This activity culminated in a co-produced All-Age Autism Strategy and shaped this MPS.

The Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy

The [Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy](#) supports the [Community vision for Surrey in 2030](#), where Surrey County Council has outlined its ambitions for all residents.

These include:

- Everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed.
- Everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives, and makes good choices about their wellbeing.
- Everyone gets the health and social care support and information they need at the right time and place.
- Communities are welcoming and supportive, especially of those most in need, and people feel able to contribute to community life.

To support delivery of this vision, in Adult Social Care we will:

“Promote people’s independence and wellbeing, through personalised care and support that focuses upon their strengths, the outcomes they want to achieve and enables choice and control”

Autistic people have identified significant barriers to access to universal and specialist services, and wider community facilities.

Ensuring Access to the Right Support

Autistic people experience poor accessibility and report falling through gaps between Mental Health, Learning Disability and other services. Some services’ lack of understanding of autism and neurodiversity have excluded some autistic people from support that they need. Autistic people have reported services setting up eligibility criteria that exclude autistic people rather than making adjustments to include them. We know that autistic people need to access all types of universal and specialist services.

- We want providers we commission to identify gaps in community accessibility that impact people they support, and work proactively with community partners to address them.

We need all providers to have a strong, up to date understanding of autism and neurodiversity, and to make reasonable adjustments to include autistic people.

- The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training should help providers to develop the required expertise.

We know that autistic people are at higher risk from suicide.

- We want providers to understand the risks, and how to respond. The free Zero Suicide Alliance training in [Autism and Suicide Awareness](#) is a useful resource for this.

Social care services for people with a learning disability should expect 42% of the people they support to be autistic (More in settings for people with higher needs). Supported living services for people with mental health needs should expect 15% of people they support to be autistic (More in settings for people with higher needs). This are likely to be underestimates because of the low level of diagnosis in the adult population.

- These services need to have the necessary understanding and skills to support their autistic customers.

We know that there are people for whom the current NHS structure does not work well, in particular autistic people with significant needs but no learning disability.

- We want providers to work in conjunction with us and our NHS partners, such as the CTPLD, ISS, CMHRS, to understand and address these gaps.

Direct Payments can facilitate autistic people taking more control of their support.

- We want autism specialist providers to offer support through DPs wherever possible. Providers should also refer to the separate [Direct Payments Market Position Statement](#).

Specialist Support

In addition to the whole market being accessible to autistic people, we need some providers who can deliver specialist support to people with the most complex needs as local as possible to where people live. This is needed to avoid unnecessary out of County placements and hospital admissions, to facilitate timely and safe discharge, and to support people who are on Surrey's Dynamic Support Register.

- We need providers to develop their workforce to ensure they have skilled staff with a good understanding of autism, and approaches such as PBS (for those who also have a learning disability), Person Centred Active Support, Trauma-informed and neuro-inclusive approaches.
- Providers are encouraged to link with the Surrey Positive Behaviour Support Network to access more training and helpful resources.

Prevention

SCC is committed to approaches that will prevent and delay development of social care needs. Providers can helpfully engage with the Council's work building community resilience and accessibility.

- [Inclusive communities](#) – Autistic people require reasonable adjustments in universal services and community settings, and we need social care

providers to share their knowledge of autism and support autism inclusion in community settings wherever they are working. This is a key element in supporting autistic people to remain independent and as such is one focus of the Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy. *Autism Friendly Surrey* is a series of place-based partnerships with local experts by experience, voluntary sector partners and businesses. This work seeks to improve accessibility, awareness and understanding of autism in the wider community. Providers could help build inclusive communities by engaging with their local *Autism Friendly Surrey* groups and supporting their work.

- The Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy has also supported a number of other small projects to improve autism accessibility for people in the wider community who are not open to our services, and funded through the Better Care Fund
 - Co-produced training and information to understand autism for mainstream community audiences
 - Peer support groups, including mental health support
 - Supporting mental and physical health and wellbeing
 - Engaging with marginalised communities
 - Development of awareness-raising materials
 - Support for parents and carers
 - Engagement with employers to increase employment opportunities for autistic people

There is a limited amount of funding for these projects. We would welcome proposals from providers with a creative idea that could make a difference to communities. Please contact allageautismstrategy@surreycc.gov.uk who will put you in touch with the right workstream lead to discuss your proposal.

- Employment can be key for developing and retaining independence yet some autistic people face unnecessary barriers.
 - We will develop the support we offer to providers to work with their own workforce and with the people they support to improve accessibility in recruitment and retention processes and workplace environments.
 - We will also develop the support we offer to other employers to improve accessibility in recruitment and retention processes and workplace environments.

At time of publication, the five-year strategy is in its third year of implementation, with specific work underway to address:

- Information, Awareness and Understanding
- Education and Preparation for Adulthood
- Health and Social Care Support
- Employment
- Housing and Independent Living

The strategy is deliberately aspirational. That key objectives are being delivered within other programmes, as outlined in this MPS, demonstrates the need to ensure that all environments where services are delivered should be autism-accessible, and that staff will need the skills and understanding to make reasonable adjustments to their practice so as to be able to support the very broad range of needs encompassed by the autism spectrum.

Where we are now - March 2024

According to Autistica, 1-2% of the UK population is autistic. Surrey's adult population is approximately 950,000, so we would expect there to be around 14,250 autistic adults in Surrey.

1,834 people open to Adult Social Care are identified as autistic, suggesting that 19% of autistic adults in Surrey access adult social care support, with the remaining 81% using the same universal offer as the rest of the population.

In Surrey, we know that 42% of people open to Transition and the Learning Disability and Autism Team are identified as autistic.

About 29% of people with a learning disability are also autistic (Autistica), and the National Autistic Society (NAS) says that a third of autistic people have a learning disability. For this reason, this Market Position statement should be read alongside the Learning Disability MPS and support for people with a learning disability needs to ensure it is autism accessible.

70% of autistic people have a mental health condition, and 40% have two or more. ([Parliament Post Note 2020](#)). A 2017 SCC piece of work identified 15% of people using mental health supported living services were also autistic. This is likely to be an underestimate because of underdiagnosis in the adult population. All support services for people with mental health needs should ensure they are fully autism accessible, and this Market Position Statement should be read alongside the Mental Health MPS.

There is national work to prevent inappropriate inpatient stays for people with a learning disability or autism, which grew out of the national Transforming Care programme. Most of the people now identified as inappropriately inpatient are autistic. This means we need more specialist support for autistic people in the community to facilitate discharge and deal with crises, and more preventative support that can avert crises that would otherwise lead to inpatient stays.

A JSNA chapter on Neurodiversity – including autism – is planned for 2025/6.

How do we know what makes good support for autistic people?

The Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy 2021-26 was coproduced with autistic people and family carers, and widely consulted on. People told us what was important for them when they want to access support, and identified things that need to change in terms of attitudes, understanding and the commissioning and delivery of services. Key themes and challenges for health and social care providers include:

- Autistic people find many services inaccessible.
- Awareness and understanding of autism is key to making reasonable adjustments
- Autistic people's voices have historically not been prominent in development of services – We need to support autistic people to have their say in decisions around how they are supported
- Autistic people who are open to Adult Social Care can present with widely varying support needs. We need providers that are similarly varied in their approaches.
 - Autistic people with a learning disability may need staff skilled in a range of communication approaches and working in a strengths-based way
 - Autistic people with no learning disability may need different skilled approaches to communication and strengths-based work. Some will not want to be supported alongside people with a learning disability so will need separate environments
 - Autistic people with a demand-avoidant profile will need staff teams who can respond in a skilled and nuanced way when they are too anxious to accept support.
 - Autistic people whose behaviour presents significant risks will need support to manage the risks in a positive way.
 - Autistic people with forensic histories will need skilled and understanding support to keep them and others safe
 - Autistic people with mental health needs, or who experience severe anxiety will need support that is skilled in preventing mental health crises, and unnecessary hospital admissions
- Accessibility of buildings where people live or access support is key. Autism-friendly building design needs to be taken into account by support providers.

Environments where services are delivered should be autism-accessible, and staff will need the skills and understanding to make reasonable adjustments to their practice so as to be able to support the very broad range of needs encompassed by the autism spectrum.

Preventative Approaches

We know that 19% of autistic people are open to ASC, and 81% are not. We also know of situations - when something has gone wrong for an autistic individual - where individuals who have previously been quite independent have hit crisis and presented unexpectedly with very high needs at different parts of the support system.

We know that autistic people are overrepresented in mental health inpatient settings, the criminal justice system (both as victims and perpetrators of crime), homelessness services and elsewhere.

This is a population where the need for preventative approaches is particularly acute. The County Council, Districts and Boroughs and the ICB are all involved in work at place to strengthen community resilience and accessibility. We need providers who have expertise in autism to share their knowledge and support this work to make Surrey a more autism-friendly place.

Transition to Adulthood: Increasing Demand

Our Surrey adult autism diagnostic pathway was established in 2013. Demand for their service has increased steeply, and despite streamlining processes and some increased resource, demand is such that the waiting time for a diagnosis is now over 4 years, with demand running at roughly three times the team's capacity. This means that, despite a significant increase in the number of autistic people recognised and diagnosed in Surrey, a large proportion of the adult autistic population remain undiagnosed and the data we have for autistic adults in Surrey is generally likely to be an underestimate. The Surrey All-Age Autism strategy recognised that data collection and analysis has been poor, and highlights improvements in data as an important underpinning piece of work. Poor autism data is a known national issue, and we are working to improve this.

As understanding of autism and neurodiversity has improved, the numbers of young people with Additional Needs and Disabilities identified with autism as their primary need has increased steeply. Autism is now by some way the largest identified primary need in Surrey, and this reflects the picture nationally. Surrey's SEND Sufficiency data and projections 2021-2031 show that numbers of children and young people identified with autism as their primary need in secondary education will continue to rise throughout this period, despite the general population numbers for this age group levelling off. We expect that this will mean increasing numbers of autistic young people eligible for Adult Social Care services year on year.

We are currently working up transition data, in particular relating to the additional demand for Supported Living and Community Opportunities for Everyday Living. This data will continue to improve, but in the interim gives a broad-brush indication of likely demand for additional services for transition-aged people across the County and in each local District or Borough area. It is particularly important to get local support right for young people coming through transition to adulthood so that they do not get diverted into less positive models of support. We want providers to use this data to plan provision that can respond to future need in each local area alongside current demand.

All of this means that we recognise a greater need for autism understanding, accessibility and specialism in learning disability services, as well as an increased

offer for autistic people without a learning disability who are eligible for Adult Social Care support, and better mental health support for autistic people.

Accommodation with Care and Support services, including Supported Independent Living, Residential and Nursing Care and Shared Lives

Supported Independent Living (SIL)

Where we are now

Supported Independent Living is where individuals are supported in their own home by one or more providers to enable them to live as independently as possible, participate in society and have an active life. The accommodation is domestic in nature and individuals have tenancy rights enabling them to change their care provider without moving home should they wish to. Accommodation can be self-contained or shared and individuals have access to relevant welfare benefits which can be used to cover their rental and other living costs.

SCC have a strategic ambition to increase the number of supported independent living places for autistic people and people with a learning disability. This ambition includes the development of new schemes and helping providers to de-register residential care homes into supported living units. This programme of work is further outlined in our 'Right Homes, Right Support' Market Position Statement.

We need services accessible to people across the whole autism spectrum, which can present particular challenges. These include:

- Autistic people with a learning disability are likely to need a range of approaches to support structure and communication in their everyday lives. They will need staff with a good understanding of autism to implement this.
- Autistic people who are eligible for supported living services and do not have a learning disability often do not want to share with learning disabled people. We need some schemes designated for this group, that have staff with a good understanding of autism.
- Autistic people with a demand-avoidant profile need skilled staff who understand this and know how to respond. This requires a nuanced approach to choice and control that supports people to actively engage within the framework of the Mental Capacity Act.
- Autistic people who may show distressed behaviour that puts themselves or others at risk need skilled staff with a good understanding of autism, and approaches such as PBS (for those who also have a learning disability), Person Centred Active Support, Trauma-informed and neuro-inclusive approaches.
- For people with the highest levels of need in terms of behaviour or with forensic profiles, we have made provision for new services in the Supported Living DPS – Ghost Lots 12 and 13 – please see below

The majority of Supported living is delivered by independent sector care providers under contract, with a small proportion being delivered by Surrey County Council (SCC) In-House services.

Moves from residential care into supported independent living will be actively encouraged where appropriate through our programme of 'strategic shift'. We have a target for a reduction in residential care placements for those with a learning disability and/or autism by between 40-50% from 2019, this equates to between 433 and 541 individuals from a baseline of 1082 people. As of February 2024 there are 790 individuals in residential care which equates to a reduction of 27% from the baseline.

Current market opportunities

A new community accommodation with care and support Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) was launched in September 2023 and has been active since April 2024. It is a joint DPS with Surrey Heartlands and Frimley ICBs and was developed over two years, with nearly two dozen market engagement events and smaller task and finish group meetings. The DPS runs for five years with a facility for two extensions, each of 12 months. The DPS can be accessed by signing up to [proactis](#), then searching for:

- **Project Name:** SCC IC Care and Support with Community Accommodation DPS
- **Project Reference:** RFX1000432

Providers can bid for two lots for people with a learning disability and/or autism; there are also lots for people whose primary needs relate to physical or sensory disability and mental health.

Lot 1: Level one Learning Disability and/or autism – Care and Support with Community Accommodation for people whose primary need relates to learning disability and/or autism.

Lot 2: Level two Learning Disability and/or autism – Care and Support with Community Accommodation for people whose primary need relates to learning disability and/or autism and who meet the additional requirements for Lot 2 Level 2 support.

The DPS assesses both quality and commercial parameters. The Council will prioritise working with providers who are successful in bidding for a place on the DPS. The independent sector plays a critical role in delivering supported independent living and the DPS provides a structured and equitable approach through which the sector can contribute to and benefit from the Council's transformation agenda.

Priorities for autism-friendly supported independent living accommodation

In addition to the priorities set out in the LDA MPS, there are particular considerations when designing accommodation that can significantly improve autistic people's experience and accessibility. These include, but are not limited to:

- Lighting
- Acoustics
- Indoor and outdoor space and layout
- Separate quiet spaces
- Furniture, fixtures and fittings

For more detail, see the British Standards Institute's guidance, shared by the housing LIN.

[Design-for-the-mind-Neurodiversity-and-the-built-environment-Guide.pdf \(housinglin.org.uk\)](https://housinglin.org.uk/Design-for-the-mind-Neurodiversity-and-the-built-environment-Guide.pdf)

Future market opportunities

SCC direct delivery of Supported Independent Living Accommodation

Alongside working with the independent sector, the Council has committed to the funding and development of specialist accommodation. Capital funding has been allocated within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy to support this and the Council has undertaken a review of its own estates portfolio to identify potential sites for use.

In 2023 planning permission was granted in respect of three developments on Council owned land that will deliver 44 units of Supported Independent Living. This accommodation will comprise a mix of shared and self-contained housing. We know that there is demand for single-person accommodation for autistic people, and these schemes have considered the need for generous indoor space standards combined with some outdoor space. The accommodation will be located in Horley (Reigate & Banstead), Cobham (Elmbridge) and Byfleet (Woking). Construction is due to commence in spring/summer of 2024 with expected completion/handover in spring/summer 2025. All accommodation within the schemes will be fully accessible, built to M4(2) and M4(3) standard. Further details can be found here:

<https://horleysil.communityuk.site/>

<https://covehamsil.communityuk.site/>

<https://byfleetsil.communityuk.site/>

The video link provides a description of proposed layout of properties.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/adults/care-and-support/disability/supported-living>

AHWP intend to commission independent sector provider(s) to deliver the care and support at the settings on the three developments. These services will be commissioned as mini competitions under the DPS for Community Accommodation using Lots 1 and 2, during the financial year 2024-2025. Market engagement will commence in late spring 2024 and the tender opportunities are currently scheduled to go live in late summer 2024.

DPS Ghost Lots

There are 'ghost lots' within the DPS, which signal additional areas of support where our intention is to procure in the near future. These are:

Lot 9: Shared Lives

Shared Lives is a form of Supported Independent living where an individual lives within another family's home environment and receives care and support from a carer within that family. This can be a permanent arrangement or it can take the form of regular daytime or overnight visits.

Currently AHWP commissions Surrey Choices, the Council's wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company, to manage most of the Shared Lives support. There are also schemes operated by a small number of other providers.

Shared Lives may suit some autistic people where their own family home is not sustainable but sharing with other disabled people or fully independent living would not work.

SCC recognises the benefits of shared lives as an alternative to both traditional residential care and SIL. AHWP have an ambition to grow the Shared Lives offer as part of the wider move to enabling individuals to live more independently within their communities. A target for growth was set in 2019, this target was to achieve a 130% increase in the number of people receiving shared lives services over 6 years. This target has not been reached and AHWP will continue to work with partners to consider how best to develop shared lives services in Surrey.

Part of this will be to determine market appetite and, should it transpire that Shared Lives schemes are considered a viable option, a timeline to operationalise this lot, developing relevant specifications and qualification criteria and undertake appropriate market engagement, will be established.

Lot 11: Independent Living from age 16 years

We will be working closely with our colleagues in Children Families Lifelong Learning (CFL) as well as in Surrey Heartlands and Frimley ICBs to explore with

the market how best to procure support for young people who, once 18 years old, will be eligible for Adult Social Care and who require supported living accommodation while aged 17.

Lot 12: Multi-Disciplinary bespoke packages

We will be working closely with our colleagues in Surrey Heartlands and Frimley ICBs to explore with the market how best to procure support for individuals who require complex packages of support. The focus will be on people at risk of living in restrictive environments such as hospital or criminal justice settings, and a high proportion of people in this category are autistic. This is in part because of a historical lack of community support for autistic people, which has meant that more autistic people have reached a crisis point that has resulted in hospital admission or involvement in the criminal justice system. Providers will need skills and understanding that reflect autism, high levels of behaviour support needs and managing risks to the person and others, including forensic risks. Relevant specifications and qualification criteria will be developed as part of this process.

Lot 13: 100% health funded / Continuing Health Care

This lot provides a facility for support commissioned by NHS Partners. We will work with them to explore with the market how best to proceed. Relevant specifications and qualification criteria will be developed as part of this process.

Residential Care and Nursing Care

Where we are now

Residential care is where individuals live in shared accommodation with 24-hour care and support. In residential care settings both the accommodation and care are regulated and intrinsically linked. Some residential care services are also registered to provide nursing care. In residential care individuals can't change their care provider and remain living in the home.

All residential care services for autistic individuals are provided by independent sector care providers. We work with providers to ensure individuals are as independent as possible.

Because of our focus on Supported Independent Living and 'strategic shift' activity, residential care provision will become increasingly focused on individuals with more complex care and support needs where these cannot be met in Supported Independent Living settings.

Where individuals live in residential placements outside of Surrey we want to offer them the opportunity to move back closer to home.

Anecdotally we know that many care homes operating across Surrey are commissioned by other authorities and NHS partners.

Market opportunities

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a need for more specialist residential and nursing care for autistic people. Autistic people are sometimes placed in residential care outside Surrey because there are no services with accessible environments and suitable staff skills in Surrey. This means that we need more services in County – both residential care and Supported Independent Living – that are geared to autistic needs. This challenge is evident both within Surrey and nationally.

Likewise, where nursing care organisations focus on generic older persons needs, we need more that have the additional training and skill set needed to offer quality services to autistic people.

In July 2022, the Older Persons' Commissioning Team launched the Residential and Nursing Care DPS. This is to procure support for people whose primary need relates to their age, however there is a relevant ghost lot:

- Lot 5: Residential Care with or without Nursing (Placeholder, Learning Disability for ASC and CHC only): This is for long- and short-term placements (with or without FNC funding in place – ASC placements only) for people with a learning disability and/or autism (with or without behaviour that challenges) with needs eligible for either Surrey Continuing Healthcare funding or Adult Social Care.

We will work closely with our colleagues in Surrey Heartlands and Frimley ICBs to explore with the market how best to procure support for autistic individuals who require packages of support within residential and/or nursing care homes. Relevant specifications and qualification criteria will be developed as part of this process. Work is underway to enable tenders against this lot from early 25/26. The DPS can be accessed by signing up to [proactis](#), then searching for:

- **Project Reference:** RFX1000114.

Short Breaks

Current Position

Short Breaks promote the wellbeing of informal Carers, enabling them to have a break from their caring responsibilities, and sustain their ability to support the individuals to live at home.

Short Breaks also give autistic people an opportunity to share experiences and socialise in their community outside of their family home.

Building Based Short Breaks (Respite)

Currently there are 6 registered bed-based Short Breaks services in Surrey, providing a total of 33 beds per night. AHWP spot purchase Short Breaks for people with a learning disability and / or autism from:

- SCC's in-house Service Delivery provision
- Surrey Choices, the Council's wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company
- Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust
- Providers in the Independent Sector

We do not currently have any short breaks services that focus on autistic people without a learning disability, which is a gap.

Flexi breaks

AHWP commission Surrey Choices (the Council's wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company), to provide non-residential breaks at weekends and evenings in the community.

Market Opportunities

In March 2023, as part of the Accommodation with Care and Support Programme, Cabinet approved a proposal to re-model the Council's Short Breaks offer. The purpose was to ensure a greater diversity in the options available and greater equity of access.

The approved re-model included the reprovision of the residential short breaks offer procured from Surrey Choices, developing modern fit for purpose overnight accommodation at the following sites:

- Lakers, Denton Way, Goldsworth Park, Woking, GU21 3LG
- The Squirrels, The Horseshoe, Banstead, SM7 2BQ, to replace the current facility.

[Short Breaks Strategy Cabinet Report March 2023.pdf \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/short-breaks-strategy-cabinet-report-march-2023.pdf)

Community Opportunities including Outreach, Day Activities and Employment Support

Community Support for Everyday Living

Surrey residents with eligible care and support needs can live their best lives if they have access to a variety of community opportunities for everyday living that is personalised and focused on prevention and early intervention. This requires a move away from support being unnecessarily tied to specific locations and/or buildings, which can lead to people being segregated from their community, in favour of support that promotes community inclusion. It aligns with the 'Place shaping' agenda and with 'Right homes, right support', recognising people should be supported to interact with their local community – people and parks, facilities and services - to live 'gloriously ordinary lives'. The ambition is as set out in the Surrey 2030 Vision, Health and Wellbeing Board priorities, and All-Age Autism Strategy.

Technology plays an important part in all our lives. Support to engage with the technology that is increasingly informing daily interactions with community facilities needs to be part of many packages of care. Similarly, technology enabled care (TEC) can offer greater independence and a degree of risk management in independence that would otherwise not be possible. Most people with care and support needs can benefit from innovative approaches to TEC and it will be integral to future procurement activity in respect of Community Support for Everyday Living. AWP's TEC strategy is currently being refreshed, led by Dan Stoneman, Head of Commissioning.

Current position

Community Support for Everyday Living refers to these types of service:

- **Outreach:** supports people to access community facilities and activities, and to build local networks. As part of this, outreach services may also support people in their own home with planning, benefits, bills, budgeting and meal planning. Although outreach services sometimes support people with personal care, this is not the main purpose. As of February 2024, Surrey County Council commission services for 550 people that have a learning disability and/or autism, with around 56 'day centres' across the county. These vary in capacity and will offer a range of activities and support levels.
- **Day and evening activity:** currently, support for people in the community that use a building as a base are referred to as day services. People may get their support within the building, within the community but starting out from the building, or a combination of both. As of February 2024 there are

22 providers across Surrey that provide Outreach support and 260 people with a learning disability and/or autism that receive an outreach service.

- **Employment**

Supporting people with a learning disability or autism into employment, whether paid or voluntary, is an important part of AWHP's vision and the wider [Community vision for Surrey in 2030](#).

The target set out within the national Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework is for 19% of people with a learning disability, who are of working age (between the ages of 18 and 64), to be in employment or volunteering.

In 2022/23, 11.8% of autistic or learning disabled people being supported by adult social care were in paid employment. This is higher than the National average of 4.8% and the South-East average of 6.6%. Surrey has seen improvement in this area. In 2014/15 the figure was 7.7%, although it has decreased from a pre-covid peak of 13.4% in 2019/20.

The current employment offer consists of the following:

- Supported Employment: available to all eligible adults aged 18+ and comprising career advice, job searching, links with employers and job carving, interview support, job coaching, in-work support and job maintenance.
- Supported Internships with employers: targeted at those aged between 16 and 24 years of age, linked to skills and interests and offered in the last year of education.
- Work experience and volunteering opportunities: offered to those aged between 16 and 24 years of age and ideal for those not in education

Further detail can be found in the Learning Disability JSNA within the Employment chapter.

Roughly half of Surrey's Community support for Everyday Living is purchased through spot contract arrangements. There is an ambition to commission this type of service differently to ensure that support is responsive to what people want and need, is strength-based and promotes progression. Commissioners have started to engage with people that use these models of support and with providers to develop a shared vision for the range of support required and identify the right approach to procurement.

The other half of Surrey's Community support for Everyday Living is currently purchased from Surrey Choices (the Council's wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company). This includes the large majority of supported employment services. More about their offer can be found here: [Learn about the vocational & employment opportunities Surrey Choices provides](#)

In addition, there is an expectation that Supported independent Living providers will work with the individuals they support to encourage and enable people, where appropriate, to access employment. This can either take the form of direct support, with some supported living providers developing their own employment offer, or through relevant signposting and partnership with supported employment services such as that delivered by Surrey Choices. The revised specification for Supported Independent Living issued as part of the Community Accommodation DPS formalises our expectations in relation to employment and the role that supported independent living providers should play.

Market Opportunities

Day Activities, Outreach & Employment

We are developing commissioning intentions for Community Support for Everyday Living. These will be co-produced with individuals, family carers and providers, and include outreach, activities, and employment. It is envisaged that this will cover all adults eligible for adult social care. We welcome micro-providers and peer-led organisations. We want funded support to interface with local community assets that are used by the whole community. Headlines from the work so far include:

- The variety of offers is valuable - one size does not fit all
- People want a more community-focussed approach
 - Making more use of universal offers, communication and collaboration. Links with libraries, transport hubs, businesses...
 - More focus on employment
 - Moving away from traditional based day services, although some building-based hubs will continue to be required
 - Need to influence public understanding to build inclusive communities - Safe Spaces schemes, quiet times, transport, green space, accessible environments
 - Community Accessibility – how to collaborate and influence other services and infrastructure e.g., sensory rooms in libraries, community hubs, more accessible toilets and Changing Places etc.
- Location is important – people want support close to home, but currently it is not evenly distributed
- Some support needs to be aimed at autistic people without a learning disability as well as support for people with a learning disability.
- Support is addressing increasing complexity of demand (physical and mental health / distressed behaviour)

Current opportunities for providers include:

- Outreach: unmet demand across the county

- Day activity: people would like to see more choice, and opportunities that focus on developing independence and skills that lead to outcomes, rather than just activities.

It is important that individuals who elect to use a direct payment or those that fund their own support can access and are aware of the available offers and that costing information is transparent.

Care within the Home

Current Position

Care within the Home (CwH) is the term used to cover Domiciliary Care and Live-in care arrangements. Domiciliary care is put in place to support an individual in their own home and is usually delivered at designated times during the day or week as defined by the individuals support plan. Support will usually include personal care tasks and may involve meal preparation, medication prompting and tasks relating to the wellbeing of the person.

The Care Within the Home Dynamic Purchasing System went live on 30 September 2021 for an initial period of 2 years and with a maximum length of 6 years and is a joint contract between Surrey County Council and NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) in Surrey.

As of February 2024, there were 112 agencies who had successfully been awarded a place on the Care within the Home DPS. Of these agencies, 60 can provide services to people with a learning disability or autism. There are approximately 243 people with a learning disability and/or autism that receive support via the CwH DPS.

The DPS includes the provision of the following services:

- Home Based Care(HBC) - this includes services for people with additional needs such as learning disability or autism
- High Needs-(CHC)
- Live-in care

Market Opportunities

The specialist care within the home services will continue to be commissioned via the current DPS, although as of April 2024 this is currently closed as the demand is covered by existing providers.

Working together

LDA Provider Forums are held quarterly, and Market engagement sessions provide an opportunity for provider market to work with Adult Social Care in co design of new services. To sign up to ensure you hear the latest news and get notifications of events, please contact: ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk

The **Autism Strategy Implementation Board** is held quarterly. It takes regular reports from the 5 All-Age Autism Strategy workstreams, and from the Autism Partnership Board which has representation from providers from Surrey's LD&A sector.

Its purpose is:

- To deliver the objectives set out in the All-Age Autism Strategy over 5 years.
- To secure and manage the resources required to deliver the outcomes set out in the strategy.
- Assign work to relevant individuals to deliver the targeted outcomes set out in the Strategy
- Ensure ongoing communication and engagement with all key stakeholders to inform, test and steer the work required and the changes on the ground
- Support Surrey-wide input to the joint commissioning for autism across the life cycle.
- To baseline, map and track the outcomes and galvanise action if progress isn't being made

The **Joint LDA Programme Delivery Board** is held quarterly and has representation from providers from Surrey Care Association LD&A sector. This takes regular report from the Autism Strategy Implementation Board.

Surrey has an **Autism Partnership Board** which is co-chaired by an autistic individual, and takes input from the Autism Reference Group, made up of autistic adults. The Autism Partnership Board is made up of people who are committed to working together to make the lives of autistic adults in Surrey better, including autistic people, family carers and professionals with an interest from different parts of the service system.

The purpose of the Board, decided by its members is:

- To have input to plans and developments related to the Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy so that we get the right services and support for autistic people, and we understand where things need to change to work properly

- To support and share information about progress against autism strategies, locally and nationally so that people know what is happening and what they must do.
- As part of this, the Board will share updates from the Autism Strategy's workstreams, and key pieces of work underway in the County. The Board will also update on key changes to policy and legislation.
- To work together to share information between organisations and groups that members represent and wider networks.
- To support the use of grant funding money, where available, to develop services and help make change happen.

We have established an **Autism Reference Group** for autistic adults to have input into the All-Age Autism Strategy's direction and implementation. This group has direct input into the Autism Partnership Board

In conjunction with these forums, we have an [Autism in Surrey](#) web page for the All-Age Autism Strategy, and the [Autism Partnership Board Website](#) as part of Surrey's Learning Disability and Autism Information Hub to ensure information is available to all.

[Surrey People's Group: having a voice](#) - is a Surrey wide group of people with a learning disability and / or autism who want to work together to campaign and make change happen through their collective voice and experience. It is supported by the Learning Disability and Autism Engagement Team. Providers work with the engagement team to enable individuals they support to attend and share their views.