



## London Borough of Enfield

<b>Report Title</b>	Enfield's Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2025-2030
<b>Report to</b>	Members of Thriving Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel and Healthy and Safe Communities Scrutiny Panel
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Alev Cazimoglu, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care  Cllr Abdul Abdullahi, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
<b>Executive Director / Director</b>	Tony Theodoulou, Executive Director of People
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<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	All
<b>Classification</b>	Part 1 Public
<b>Reason for exemption</b>	N/A

### Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an overview of the draft Enfield's Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2025-2030.
2. Additionally, the purpose of this report is to seek feedback from Members of Thriving Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel and Healthy and Safe Communities Scrutiny Panel on the draft, ahead of formal agreement by the

Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

### **Main Considerations for the Panel**

3. Autistic people have neurological differences resulting in different ways of experiencing the world. Enfield Council and our partners recognise this type of neurodiversity as a difference and not a disease or due to brain damage.
4. The draft Enfield's Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2025-2030 sets out our vision and 7 priorities to improve the lives of autistic individuals of all ages and their families in Enfield.
5. The strategy has been developed with the extensive involvement of partners and as a collaborative process. It emphasises the importance of understanding and valuing neurodiversity, providing needs-based support, ensuring fair access to education, and promoting inclusive mental health and wellbeing support. The strategy aims to create an autism-friendly borough through collaborative efforts with various partners in education, health, social care, and the voluntary sector.

### **Priorities**

- Celebrate autistic people - Promote awareness and acceptance of autism, highlighting the strengths and contributions of autistic individuals.
- Provide needs-based support - Ensure that autistic individuals can access appropriate support and services tailored to their specific needs at the right time
- Enable fair access to education - Improve educational opportunities for autistic children and young people within local settings, ensuring their needs are met inclusively.
- Support more autistic people into employment - Encourage workplace inclusivity and provide necessary support to help autistic individuals secure and thrive in meaningful employment.
- Recognise and combat isolation and loneliness - Facilitate social inclusion and meaningful activities to reduce isolation and loneliness among autistic individuals.
- Provide inclusive mental health and wellbeing support - Offer appropriate mental health services and support to address the unique needs of autistic individuals.
- Improve support within the criminal and youth justice systems - Ensure that autistic individuals involved with the justice system receive fair and appropriate treatment with necessary adjustments and support.

### **Principles**

6. In all our work with autistic people of all ages in the borough, we will apply the following five principles:

- Ensure children, young people, adults, and families are valued and respected and are involved in decision making about themselves, their future and their borough.
  - Empower and enable all children, young people, adults, and families to be as independent as they can be.
  - Deliver accessible joined up services and share good practice to increase the quality of provision.
  - Make sure that Enfield is a positive place for autistic people to learn and thrive through making reasonable adjustments to the environment across our settings, services and programmes.
  - Identify needs early and provide the right support, in the right place, at the right time to avoid future crises.
7. A dedicated film has also been developed in partnership to share more information about the Autism Strategy and our Autism Partnership Groups.

## **Background**

8. Autistic people experience the world differently to most people in the following three areas:
- Communication and social interaction
  - Flexibility, information processing and understanding
  - Sensory processing and integration
9. Autistic people learn new skills, make progress and thrive. As with every community, success is more noticeable if everyone takes time to understand each other and to support individual strengths and interests. Many autistic people try to fit in by masking their differences to try and reduce the risk of bullying and stigmatisation. Masking can be an exhausting activity and have a long-term impact on their mental health. Others express their challenges and distress through behaviours, which may be harmful, dangerous or make them vulnerable to exploitation and/or become involved in criminal activities.
10. It is currently estimated that approximately 1% of the total population are diagnosed autistic and it is thought there are roughly 700,000 autistic people in the UK (more than 1 in 100). However, recent research by UCL estimates that there may be 750,000 undiagnosed autistic people aged 20 and above, bringing the total to over 1.2 million people.
11. In Enfield in 2023, it was estimated that there were 2,840 autistic adults (aged 18+). As of January 2024, Autism was listed as the primary category of need in 26% of Education Health and Care Plans (1,154 children).

## **Regulatory Context**

12. The Autism Act 2009, places duties on local authorities and NHS organisations to ensure that adults with autism receive appropriate support and services that recognise and meet their needs. The Act mandated the creation of a national autism strategy.

13. The subsequent National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2021-2026, sets out several key priorities to ensure that autistic individuals of all ages receive the support and services they need. This included promoting awareness and understanding of autism within the community; and improving collaboration and joint working between local authorities, health services and other stakeholders through Autism Partnership Boards. The partnerships are intended to help co-ordinate services and support for autistic people. Enfield's Autism Partnership Group has two dedicated workstreams for adults and for children and young people.
14. Additionally, the national strategy includes priorities focused on access to education and the transition to adulthood; support into employment; tackling health and care inequalities; building the right community support and inpatient care; and improving support in the criminal and youth justice system.
15. The Enfield strategy has embedded the national priorities and shaped these through partnership work and consultation to meet the needs of our local population.

### ***Working together for Autism in Enfield***

16. Adult Social Care started the Adult Autism Partnership Group in August 2024, the group is chaired by One to One Enfield and includes experts by experience as well as professionals from social care and health. The Adult Autism Group have co-produced autism information and advice on [MyLife](#) with details of local organisations for autistic people and their carers (including how to access a diagnostic assessment, social care assessment and carers assessment).
17. The Children and Young People's Autism Partnership Group is well established with excellent partnership collaboration from across Education, Health, Social Care and the Voluntary and Community Sector. There is representation from the Adults Autism Group, and Autistic people have been active members of both groups.
  - The [Enfield Advisory Service for Autism \(EASA\)](#) is the autism-specialist outreach service in the borough and are funded by the local authority. EASA are part of Russet House School and provide support to autistic children and young people up to 25 years old. EASA support equal numbers of pupils/students with and without Education Health and Care Plans. EASA do this by working with families, educational settings, local professionals and partner services to increase understanding of autism and develop provision and practice across the borough. The [EASA website](#) provides an overview of the offer for children, young people, parents/carers and schools.
18. [One to One Enfield](#) are commissioned by Adult Social Care to support autistic adults through peer support, guidance and signposting. The service supports adults who are diagnosed, awaiting assessment, and self-identified with the development of self-management skills, healthy coping mechanisms, and to achieve goals that promote overall mental and physical wellbeing. One to One Enfield also support the wider autistic community by raising awareness of autism in Enfield, hosting an annual autism conference and chairing the Adult Autism Group. Additionally, One to One co-ordinate and facilitate the Learning Difficulties and Autism Council, as well as delivering a range of learning events and training.
19. Please see Appendix 2, to find out more about how we are working together for Autism in Enfield.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

20. The draft Enfield Autism Strategy has been informed by the national Autism Strategy and brought to life through discussion at our multi-agency working (Autism Partnership Groups), SEND Partnership Board, Joint Health and Social Care Board (JHSCB), Learning Disability Partnership Board and through discussion with colleagues and the Council's staff Disability Working Group. It has also benefitted from working with the Enfield National Autistic Society, as well as staff and members of voluntary sector group One to One Enfield (including attending their annual conference) and Our Voice Parent Care Forum.
21. The resulting draft strategy was also subject to a formal public consultation, which launched on the 6 Dec 2023 and closed on the 14 Jan 2024. The consultation was promoted through the Headteacher's Briefing, at the SENCO reference group, through members of the Autism Partnership Group and the SEND Partnership Board. Furthermore, a questionnaire was hosted online via our Have Your Say landing page.

## **Governance and Action Plan Development**

22. The Children and Young People's Autism Partnership Group and Adults Autism Group will be responsible for overseeing the day to day implementation and monitoring of the strategy. Updates will be provided to the overarching Health and Wellbeing Board, with reporting timeframes to be agreed.
23. To ensure we measure the impact of the strategy, a series of outcomes and performance indicators have been incorporated. These are in addition to the measures collected by interdependent strategies.
24. The Council will work in partnership with stakeholders to draw up an action plan aligned with the strategy. This process is being facilitated by the Children and Young People's Autism Partnership Group and Adult's Autism Group. The action plan is expected to be completed by the end of January 2025.
25. As a multi-agency strategy, the intention is that the action plan will help us to have oversight of a whole system approach for autistic people of all ages. Commitments within the action plan are being developed within the current financial and resource constraints across the Council, the wider health, social care and education systems. This decision is not seeking additional funding.

## **Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies**

26. The Autism Strategy should be considered alongside other partnership strategies, including Supporting Independence: A Local Prevention Strategy, and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Partnership Strategy.

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## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Enfield's Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults 2025-30*  
*Appendix 2: Working Together for Autism: An overview.*

