Fulfilling and Rewarding lives

Plans to help you make the most of what you can do

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About this plan

This easy read plan was written by the Department of Health. We are the part of government in charge of healthcare for people.

This plan is for adults with autism in England.

The plan says what needs to change and how everyone must work for adults with autism.

The plan will help adults with autism have better lives.
When we made this plan, we talked to lots of adults with autism, their carers and families and people who worked with them.

They told us about their lives and what people wanted.

You said you want to:

- live life to the full
- make the most of the things you can do
- live in a society that understand and accepts you
● be told quickly when you have got autism

● get support if you need it

● have services treat you fairly and as individuals.
What is Autism?

Autism is a disability. It affects how you deal with other people and how you understand the world around you.

People use lots of different words to talk about autism:

- autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
- autistic spectrum condition (ASC)
- autistic spectrum difference
- neuro-diversity
- Asperger syndrome

In this plan we just say **autism** to cover everyone.

If you have autism you have it for your whole life.
People with autism have problems in 3 main areas.

1. Talking to other people to say what you need and how you feel.

2. Meeting new people and making new friends.

3. Understanding what other people are thinking.
Some people with autism also have problems with:

**Sight.** Not liking some bright lights and colour.

**Sound.** Not liking a lot of sound.

**Smell.** Not liking some smells.

**Touch.** Not liking being touched.

**Taste.** Not liking to eat some food.
If you have autism you may like to do the same things in the same order. You might always be interested in the same thing or be very good at one thing.

You may find it very hard when things change.

Adults with autism are all different and good at doing different things.

Many people with autism may also have other difficulties like a learning difficulty.

People with Asperger syndrome find talking easier than others with autism and may be quite clever.

We think that about 1 out of every 100 people have autism.
A word from the Minister for Care Services

We want everyone to have the same chances in life. We want everyone to try for what they want in life. This first national autism plan will help adults with autism to do that.

Hidden disability

Autism is sometimes called a hidden disability. You can’t always see that someone with autism has a disability.

Adults with autism are often left out of their local community, it can be like being hidden away from other people.

This means other people often don't understand the needs of adults with autism. This means that you don’t always have as good a life as other people.
We want to make big changes for adults with autism. This plan will help us all to start making changes.

We want all adults with autism to live life to the full and make the most of their abilities.
Part 1 - Why we wrote this plan

Problems for adults with autism

Adults with autism face many problems and things are often harder for them than other people. They are often left out of society.

This means people with autism:

- can be poorer than others
- might not be getting the services they need
- might not have the support they need
● might not be working

● might need benefits more often

● might need help and support from their families to cope with their daily lives.

Making changes

These are big problems for adults with autism, so we need to make big changes.

It will be hard to make all these changes and it will take a long time, but we need a plan to start to make people's lives better.
What are we doing?

The Autism Act 2009

We have already made a new law called the Autism Act 2009. This is the first time we have made a law that is just for one group of people like this.

The Autism Act has already started to change things in services. Things like:

- health services
- housing services
- care services
Police.

Services need to work together for adults with autism making sure they give them the services they need.

The Plan for Better lives

This plan tells everyone how to follow the new law.

We wrote this plan to say that everyone is equal and everyone has the same human rights.

Adults with autism need to be treated the same as everyone else.
The new law and plan are changing services. Services are now thinking more about adults with autism and they are making services better.

Better services will make peoples lives better.
We need everyone to understand and know about autism. Then adults with autism can be included in society.

Staff in all public services need training to learn about adults with autism and understand their needs.

Workers need to think about what they do and how they talk to adults with autism. They may need to change how they support people or work with them.

Workers may need to change the way they work or the services they give adults with autism, like different healthcare or help to find a job.
People need training:

- people like doctors, nurses and support workers

- people who give you help and information about jobs

- staff from other services like people who work in a library or in the police station

- council workers.
A lot of workers have already been trained in treating people equally and fairly. This training needs to include adults with autism too.

We will work with autism experts to tell public services how to do the training.

Employers also need training to know more about autism.

These are the people who are your boss or in charge of giving you a job.
Part 3 - Finding out if you have autism

A doctor will have to say that you have got autism. You need this to get the right support and treatment wherever you live.

We are working with the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). It is their job to make sure healthcare in England is all of a high standard.

NICE are writing a plan to tell doctors how to check to see if someone has autism and then what to do. They will make sure that all doctors do things in the same way.

Support

You and your carer might need care and support because of your autism.
Your local council should do an assessment for everyone who might need support. This is a check to find out what support you need.

**Local experts**

We want all local areas to have a team of different autism experts, they could be people like doctors, psychologists or social workers.

The team will work together in your local area. They can help make sure each area has all the services you need.

Some areas already have autism expert teams. We need to learn from them and work in the same way in other areas.
Part 4 - Getting the right support and services

We want adults with autism to get the right support to meet their needs.

There is already a law that says services have to make some changes so you can use their services.

You should be able to have more control over your support.

One way of doing this is by having a personal budget. A **personal budget** means you are in charge of the money for your support.

You can choose what support or services to have.

You may need more support when there are big changes in your life. Like if you are moving from child services to adult services.
Lots of local areas give very good services to adults with autism. We need to learn from them and work in the same way in other areas.
Part 5 - Work

We think that working is important for everyone. It is the best way to get money, to have a better life and to be part of society.

Not many adults with autism are working.

We want to change the system to help adults with autism to find and keep work.

The Department for Work and Pensions is helping people with disabilities to find a job and keep it. We will give you more help so you are ready to work.
Part 6 - Local services

Services in local areas need to find ways to meet local needs. This will help save money. Each local area has to write a plan about this.

Lots of different people and groups work together to write these plans including local groups for adults with autism.

This includes asking you and your carers and families to find out what services you need.

The plan will say how they will get services right. Lots of local areas have very good plans that meet their local needs.

We need to learn from them and work in the same way in other areas.
Part 7 - The next steps

This plan talks about the main things we want to see happen. We will write more details to say just what will be done to make these changes happen.

In 3 years time we will check the plans and see what has changed for adults with autism.

This will be done by a team in the Department of Health that is in charge of the plan.
Credits

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