



Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership & Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children's Services

Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2023 - 2028

Artwork by a member of the Connect 'N' The Broch Fraserburgh Day Opportunities, February 2023

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Webpage (Autism Strategy): [A New Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults | Engage Aberdeenshire](#)

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Foreword and Executive Summary



Pamela Milliken

Chief Officer

Aberdeenshire Health and
Social Care Partnership

We are delighted to see the publication of Aberdeenshire’s Autism Strategy. This strategy has been a long time in the making, but it has been vital to get it right and to ensure the voices of those with lived experience have been heard loud and clear in developing this strategy. When we started this process, we were clear we wished to have our autistic community actively involved in the development and implementation. Through careful planning we have been able to support an inclusive approach and ensure the voices of our autistic community are heard.

This is a joint strategy for all ages, from childhood right through into adulthood and importantly it has been produced by Aberdeenshire’s Health and Social Care Partnership, Aberdeenshire Council’s Education and Children’s Services team and of course, and most importantly, members of Aberdeenshire’s autistic and neurodivergent communities.

This strategy sets out our intentions under the seven key themes and provides a clear direction for the next 5 years. Our ambition is to make positive changes and improve outcomes for the autistic community and their families and we are pleased to note just how much active engagement has been undertaken in developing this strategy to ensure it is meaningful for those it is designed to support.



Laurence Findlay

Director

Education and
Children's Services

We would like to thank all those in the communities across Aberdeenshire who have given their time to tell their stories and share their hopes and aspirations for this important work and we hope everyone recognises that their contributions have all been used to develop the final strategy.

Getting it right for our autistic and neurodivergent communities is a clear goal for us and our challenge now across all services for children, young people and adults is now to bring the words in this strategy to life and we look forward to working with colleagues to see this positive work taken forward over the years ahead.

1. Introduction

1.1 Our Autism Strategy

When our previous strategy came to an end, it was important to review and plan our strategic approach for supporting autistic people and unpaid carers. Supports and services for autistic people have developed and expanded, as has our understanding of autism. This strategy is building on the [Aberdeenshire Council's 2014 Strategy for Autism](#) (produced pre Health & Social Care Integration) which aimed 'to help ensure that people with autism lead lives that are as fulfilling as possible'.

The Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy is a five-year strategy which makes a commitment to autistic children and young people, adults, older adults and their families and unpaid carers within Aberdeenshire. We aim to improve the lives of autistic individuals through our support, services and wider public knowledge and understanding. We view this as being our initial steps towards discussing and planning a future pathway which extends from an Autism Strategy to a wider Neurodevelopmental pathway. ¹

¹ P.51, *Evaluation of the Scottish Strategy for Autism, Social Research, The Scottish Government*, (September 2021): [Evaluation of the Scottish Strategy for Autism \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

1.2 Our Journey Together

We began a review of our autism strategy in 2019, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic the work was required to be paused. In the summer of 2021, it was agreed to revive this work and move forward collaboratively creating the next Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy.

The Autism Strategy Planning Group was created to lead the planning process. The aim of this group is to co-ordinate the development of the Aberdeenshire's Autism Strategy, including planning engagement and communication. The Group is co-chaired by a Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Service Manager from Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and a Quality Improvement Officer from Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children's Services (see Appendix 1 for more details). Autistic adults, parents, carers, a representative from the charity, Autism Understanding Scotland, and an individual who self-identifies as neurodivergent are also members of the planning group. Other members include various professionals including representation from GPs and the third sector.

It was agreed that this process will follow the ethos of co-production and co-designing, which is fundamental in creating a robust, effective, and meaningful strategy. By doing this, we created a Strategy Planning Group consisting of not just professionals, but also members of the public with lived experiences. An example of where this worked well included members of the autistic community with lived experience co designing and co facilitating the sessions open to public, professionals and young people during the Engagement Phase. Autistic people and their families also contributed to reviewing the draft strategy.

We cannot commit to delivering everything we learned from the engagement process. However, we fully recognise the importance of the strategy having a holistic view. Our strategy and action plan will focus on the key themes that were identified through the engagement phase.

Therefore, we aspire to work with the wider community to support the autistic and non-autistic community to work together inclusively to promote accessibility, understanding and acceptance.

This strategy and accompanying delivery plan highlight our aims, actions, timelines, and how we will measure the impact of the strategy.

‘Co-production goes beyond participation and partnership working because it requires people to act together on an equal basis. It means we can all contribute our lived experience, skills and ideas about what works, to make communities even better’.²

2 [What is co-pro? - Scottish Co-production Network \(coproductionscotland.org.uk\)](https://coproductionscotland.org.uk)



Artwork by a member of Ellon Day Opportunities at Ellon Resource Centre

1.3 Our Use of Language

In this document the language used will be identity-first (autistic) rather than person-first (with autism). This reflects research which shows that most autistic people prefer this use of language (Bottema-Beutel et al, 2021). In addition, language used in this strategy will also reflect the research that shows that using deficit-based, medicalised language has a detrimental effect on autistic people. Instead, a strengths-based, difference-based approach will be used. It should be noted that whilst this is the general preferred terminology, individual differences must be respected and you should always use the preferred terminology of the autistic individual you are speaking with.

2. Autism Knowledge and Understanding

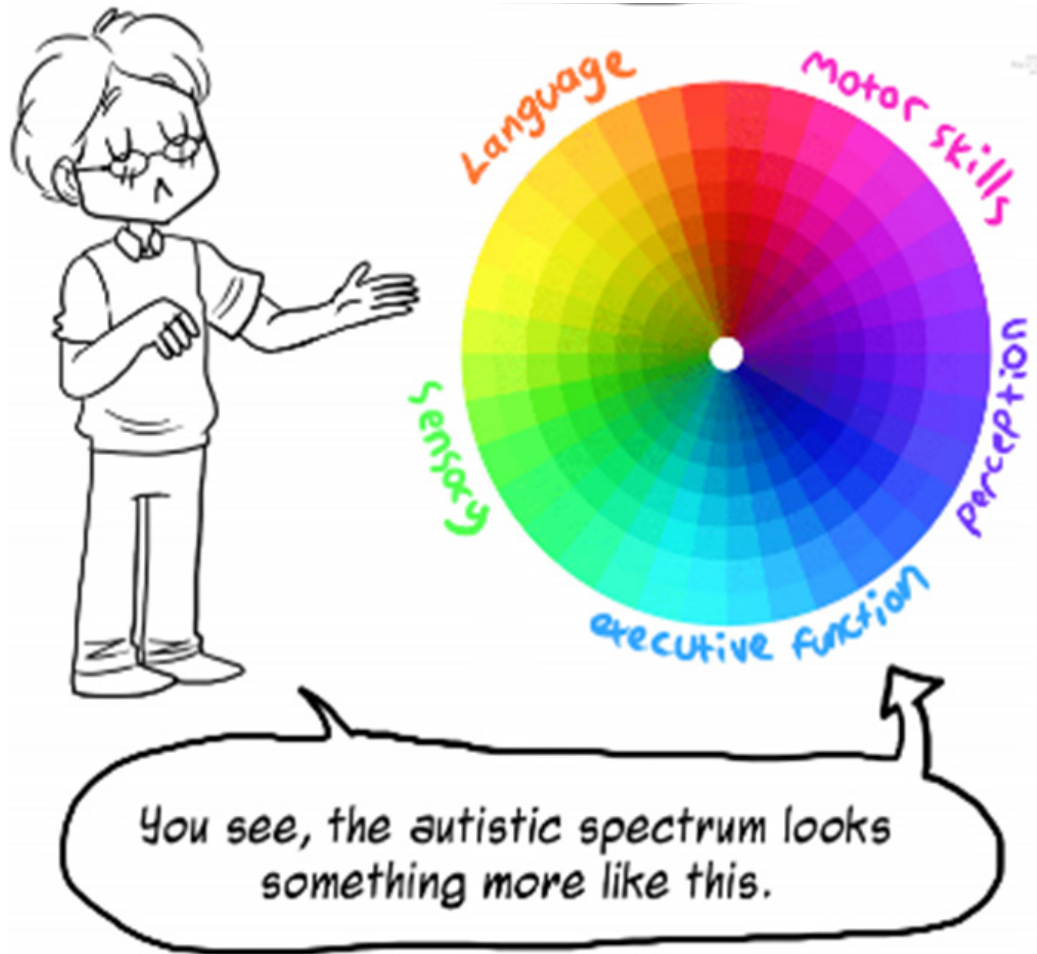


I'm Felicity Goodhall, the senior autism practitioner at Autism Understanding Scotland. The work we do at the charity is all centred around aiding understanding of autistic people and their lived experience, as well as striving to make the world a better place for autistic individuals. From a personal standpoint, I am late-diagnosed autistic and have autistic children who will be going through their education in Aberdeenshire. This all means I have a lot – professionally and personally – invested in making the strategy a success and I felt strongly about helping to facilitate the working groups to ensure everyone who wanted to was able to input into it.

I hugely enjoyed facilitating the working groups I was involved in. We heard from a range of people – both autistic and not – who had some brilliant ideas for how to better support the local autistic community. Everyone was enthusiastic about trying to work together and I came away with some resources I wasn't even aware of before being involved with the strategy.

2.1 What is Autism?

Our understanding of autism has changed over the last decade. This is primarily due to listening to and learning from autistic individuals' lived experience. More research is being led by autistic people and new theories and ways of understanding the autistic experience have developed.



Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental difference. The way autistic people's brains work is different to the way non autistic people's brains work. Autism is often talked about as a spectrum. This does not mean a linear spectrum with one end and another. Instead, it refers to a range of experiences that an individual might have which are interconnected and related and dependent on a range of factors. The image below explains this. It is crucial to remember that every autistic person is different and will experience the world differently not only to non-autistic people, but also other autistic peers. For more information about autism, you can follow this link [Autism Understanding](#) Scotland's webpage.

By artist Rebecca Burgess,
accessed 09.01.2022, Webpage:
The Art of Autism³

3 Rebecca Burgess, *The Art of Autism: Understanding the Spectrum - a comic strip explanation* | [The Art of Autism \(the-art-of-autism.com\)](#)

2.2 The Data

In Scotland it is estimated that 1 in 100 people are autistic.⁴ Although it is worth noting that this figure is likely to be underestimated as it only recognises individuals who are diagnosed and have chosen to disclose this information. There is currently no one single national database recording data on autistic adults. This information is recorded and held across a range of separate systems, such as the database held by local Adult Autistic Assessment Pathways and GP Practices. Therefore, it is currently not possible to accurately measure the prevalence rates and possess reliable data on autism in adults.⁵

In 2021, an [Adult Autism Assessment Team \(AAAT\)](#) was established to deliver an autism assessment pathway for adults over the age of 18. This service provides a service coverage for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, and from 2022 this also covered Moray. From its development in 2021 until March 2023, the assessment team has received 347 referrals for those wishing to be assessed within Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership area and approximately 80% of these referrals were self-referrals.

Within education there are [Pupil census supplementary](#) tables, which use the terminology 'receive support as a result of Autistic Spectrum Disorder', which indicate that in 2017, 8% of the school population in Aberdeenshire was receiving this support. In 2021 this rose to 10%. At present, NHS Grampian does not have a specific autism assessment pathway for children and young people who live in Aberdeenshire. For these individuals, referrals for assessments can either be submitted to [Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(which is more widely known as CAHMS\)](#) and/or [Community Child Health](#). At present this data is not jointly collated.

⁴ *Different Minds Campaign: [Different Minds | Autism Scotland](#)*

⁵ *The Microsegmentation of the Autism Spectrum, 2018:*

[The Microsegmentation Of The Autism Spectrum - Economic and research implications for Scotland \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

According to Aberdeenshire Council records, its data indicates that in March 2023 there were 181 home educated pupils in Aberdeenshire. At present, we do not know how many of these pupils are autistic. From this, it indicates that there is a gap in our level of knowledge around home educated autistic children and families.

Based on these figures and from the knowledge we have, there is a demand for support and intervention, therefore we must be responsive, while considering the constraints on what is able to be achieved. We also recognise that over the years, more autistic children and young people are receiving support in schools, and more autistic adults are receiving support within the community, and we acknowledge this is an ongoing journey for us all to work together on.

Please see appendix 2 for more data information.

3. Our Key Influencers and Strategic Drivers

In creating our strategy, it is important to consider a number of key influencers, local and national strategic drivers which can impact the outcomes we hope to deliver. Below are some examples of relevant documents we have considered:

All links within this section can be found at the end of this document (endnote).

Our local drivers:

Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan 2023-2036 ⁱ

Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership – Learning Disability Strategy, Be All You Can Be – The Big Plan 2020 to 2025 ⁱⁱ

Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership – Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024 ⁱⁱⁱ

Aberdeenshire Adult Carer Strategy – Caring for our carers 2019 - 2022 ^{iv}

Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership – Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024 ^v

Aberdeenshire Adult Carer Strategy – Caring for our carers 2019 - 2022 ^{vi}

Key influencers and national strategic drivers:

Learning/intellectual disability and autism; transformation plan ‘Towards Transformation’ ^{vii}

This plan was published jointly by Scottish Government and COSLA in March 2021 and states that: “We want this plan to shape supports, services and attitudes to ensure that the human rights of autistic people and people with learning/intellectual disabilities are respected and protected and that they are empowered to live their lives, the same as everyone else.” For more information about this plan you can follow [this link](#).

The Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill ^{viii}

Scottish Government have “committed to introducing a Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill. This Bill will ensure that the rights of autistic people, people with ADHD, dyslexia, and other neurodivergent people are respected and protected. This Bill will also consider establishing a Commissioner to protect people’s rights in practice.” (Scottish Government Website, December 2022). The proposed bill is currently in development and engagement stages. Please note that this Bill is still subject to consultation. For more information you can follow [this link](#).

Local and National Legislation, Policy and Guidance

It is important to recognise how autism fits into the wider picture of legislation and guidance. The table below contains links to the key documents that have helped shape this autism strategy. You can click on each link for more information.

<i>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> ^{IX}	<i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</i> ^X
<i>The Equality Act 2010</i> ^{XI}	<i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> ^{XII}
<i>Education (Scotland) Act 1980</i> ^{XIII}	<i>Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000</i> ^{XIV}
<i>Presumption of Mainstreaming Guidance (2019)</i> ^{XV}	<i>Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 (the Act)</i> ^{XVI}
<i>Planning improvements for disabled pupils' access to education: guidance for education authorities, independent and grant-aided schools</i> ^{XVII}	<i>Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2009)</i> ^{XVIII}
<i>Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice (Revised Edition) 2017</i> ^{XIX}	<i>The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014</i> ^{XX}
<i>How Good is Our School?</i> ^{XXI}	<i>Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006</i> ^{XXII}

<i>The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013</i> ^{xxiii}	<i>National Health and Social Care Indicators</i> ^{xxiv}
<i>The Scottish Strategy for Autism 2011</i> ^{xxv}	<i>Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) 2014</i> ^{xxvi}
<i>Scottish Strategy for Autism: outcomes and priorities 2018-2021</i> ^{xxvii}	<i>SIGN Guideline 98: Assessment, Diagnosis and clinical interventions for children and young people with autism spectrum disorders, 2007</i> ^{xxviii}
<i>National Care Service</i> ^{xxix}	<i>Scottish Mental Health Law Review</i> ^{xxx}
<i>Coming Home Agenda</i> ^{xxxi}	<i>Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015</i> ^{xxxii}
<i>Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003</i> ^{xxxiii}	<i>Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007</i> ^{xxxiv}
<i>Scottish Government Home Education Guidance (updated 2001)</i> ^{xxxv}	

4. The Development of our Strategy

4.1 Timeline of our work

2019 – 2020: Collaboration and scoping work began between Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children’s Services and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership with the aim to develop a new Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy and Action Plan.

This work was paused in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Spring 2021: Creation of the Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy Planning Group

This group meet on a regular basis to discuss, plan and deliver work around developing the Strategy.

To help us to cascade our updates to the public, we created a webpage⁶ and we also tried to keep in touch with others through social media.



6 Webpage: [A New Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults | Engage Aberdeenshire](#)

April 2022 – September 2022: the Engagement Phase.

The purpose of this phase of work was to capture the views of everyone – including children, young people and adults on *what should be in our next Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy?*



Broadly, the main questions asked throughout all the discussions and surveys questions were based on:

- What is currently working well?
- What is currently working but needs some improvements?
- What is currently not working well?
- What are the gaps and barriers?
- What needs to happen to improve planning, delivery of services and support for autistic children, autistic young people, autistic adults and older autistic adults in Aberdeenshire

September 2022 – January 2023:

- Analyse all feedback and responses
- Identify our Strategic priorities/goals
- Prepare Draft Strategy Report and Draft Delivery Plan.
- Revising our Strategy



February – April 2023:

Seek feedback and comments from Governance Bodies – Aberdeenshire Council GIRFEC Strategic Group, Aberdeenshire Council’s Education and Children’s Service Leadership Team and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership’s Strategic Planning Group. We also met with Area Committees (Councillors) and launched our Public Consultation phase in which various methods to contribute and respond were made available, including online and face to face sessions.

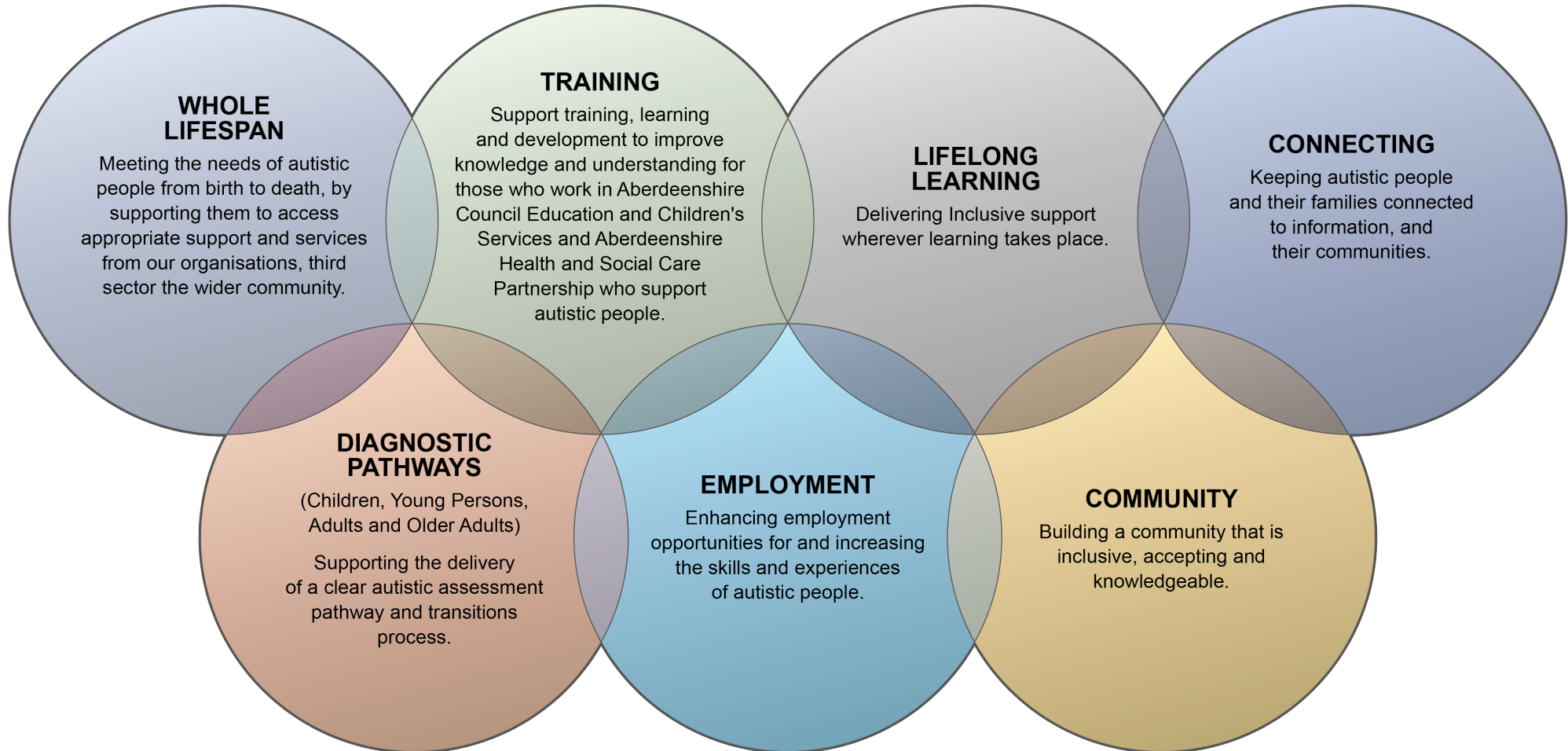


May – July 2023:

Approval being sought from Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership IJB and Aberdeenshire Council’s Education and Children’s Services Committee.

4.2 Key Themes: Our Strategic priorities/goals

All the feedback gathered from the engagement sessions was analysed and the following **7 Key Themes** were identified:



Key Theme 1: Whole Lifespan

Our Aim:

Meeting the needs of autistic people for all their lives, from birth to death by supporting them to access appropriate support and services from our organisations, third sector and from the wider community.

Our Commitments:

- To work together with autistic people and other stakeholders to enhance the lives of autistic people, their families and/or carers at key stages of their life, such as the transition from social work and/or children's health services to adult services, from early years to primary, from primary to secondary school, or the transition from secondary school, for example, into employment or further education. Transitions reach beyond education-based changes and will impact on people throughout their whole lives.
- To work together with autistic people and colleagues in health to ensure the health needs of autistic people are understood and that there is knowledge and understanding of autism within our services.
- To work together with autistic people and other stakeholder to ensure that the needs of older autistic people are understood, accepted and planned for.

It is key for our autistic community within Aberdeenshire to have a positive journey through life, from a timely diagnosis, appropriate supports at the right time and having good access to health and wellbeing services is essential. An autistic person will experience many ups and downs within their life and it's important our autistic community have appropriate supports in place to enhance this.

An autistic person may need support or guidance as they transition through key stages of their life. It is important that we empower the autistic person to do as much as they can for themselves, while providing clear and consistent support as needed. Transitions at any stage in life can be difficult, even more so for an autistic person.

In Education and Children's Services, some transitions have specific timescales, as outlined in Additional Support Needs legislation, and many transitions are supported through the GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child)⁷ assessment and planning processes. GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) will continue to play a key role in improving transitions for autistic children and young people.

We recognise the transition from children's services to adult services to be one that sometimes feels challenging and daunting. Over the last number of years, we have begun to improve this, we aim to ensure good transitions in all parts of our services to support the autistic person as they go through life.

As our autistic population ages, it is important that we ensure we maintain good outcomes for older autistic people. We require services to be understanding, supportive and adaptive to changing needs. We intend to explore the option of working with Aberdeenshire care providers to increase the awareness of autism and ensure we meet the needs of older autistic people.

⁷ *Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC): [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2015/06/Getting_it_right_for_every_child_(GIRFEC)_-gov.scot_(www.gov.scot).pdf)*

Key Theme 2: Diagnostic Pathways (Children, Young Persons, Adults and Older Adults)

Our Aim:

Supporting the delivery of a clear autistic assessment pathway and transitions process.

Our Commitments:

- To support the delivery of a ‘person centred’ autistic assessment pathway. Support should be given regardless of what age you are.
- To provide appropriate and timely support and clear information about what is available, including access to services before, during and after being part of a diagnostic pathway.

Feedback from our consultation process has highlighted a continued need for early recognition, and access to clear assessment pathways with support at all stages, across the lifespan. This includes access to post-diagnosis support for both children and adults. As such, the strategy aims to establish a clear pathway for assessment, diagnosis, care and support to autistic individuals, their families and carers, across the lifespan.

Assessment and Diagnostic Services for Children

An assessment should include a history of the individual, clinical observation which looks at social interaction and play, speech, language and communication difficulties and behaviour. A number of professionals, such as a Speech and Language Therapist and Psychologist may be involved.

If the child is at pre-school stage, the GP, health visitor or nursery staff can currently refer them to Community Child Health to progress an assessment. Other agencies can refer too.

Children between the ages of 5 and 18 can be referred to Community Child Health, or between the ages of 0-18, they can be referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for assessment. NHS Grampian has delegated responsibility for delivery of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, and the service provided supports people who reside in Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Moray. Referrals will often come following discussion through the GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) Child's Planning process, but referrals can come from a variety of professionals, including the GP.

Based on feedback from our Engagement Phase, parents/carers state that there is a lack of clarity around the assessment process and that they are waiting a significant length of time for a referral process to be initiated and completed.

Our local strategy aims to support the understanding of the diagnostic pathway for children and young people from the point of referral, through to assessment, diagnosis and post diagnostic support.

Assessment and Diagnostic Services for Adults

Within Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership adults and older adults with a diagnosis of autism as their predominate condition are generally supported by mental health services. Those who have a dual diagnosis of autism and a learning disability may be supported by learning disability services.

As of January 2021, an adult autism assessment pathway was established in Grampian. Assessment and Diagnosis of Autism for those 18 years and over (without diagnosed Learning disability) is currently undertaken by the NHS Grampian Adult Autism Assessment Team (AAAT). This pilot team is funded until March 2024. The team take self-referrals and can be contacted on gram.adultautismteam@nhs.scot

This multi-disciplinary team consists of Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Nursing and Psychology staff. This specialist assessment involves a history-taking element, a clinical observation/assessment element, and obtaining wider contextual and functional information. The team work with the diagnostic criteria in the DSM-5. There is currently a waiting list for this service.

Assessment and diagnosis for those 18 years and over with an identified learning difficulty is discussed within the learning disability multi-disciplinary team and a referral is made to psychology for them to support with this process.

There have been studies around autism, in particular in women and girls, which has meant our level of knowledge and awareness has increased.⁸

8 Scottish Autism: [Women and Girls Professional Resources](#) | [Scottish Autism](#)

'Our thoughts on diagnosing women and girls has shifted over the last 10 years or so. Diagnostic criteria have changed and so has our knowledge about presentation of autism in girls and women. You can see from the Adult Autism Assessment Team referral data that female referrals have consistently been sitting at 60-65%. I believe this demonstrates that there are many women who were not diagnosed in childhood and who have masked for much of their lives. Our new learning about autism and general increased awareness in the population has meant that these women are now feeling empowered to seek diagnosis.'

*Mrs. Lizzy Archibald, Clinical Lead and Specialist Occupational Therapist,
Adult Autism Assessment Team, NHS Grampian. 24th March 2023*

Key Theme 3: Training

Our Aim:

Supporting training, learning and development to improve knowledge and understanding for those who work in Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children's Services (ECS) and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) who support autistic people.

Our Commitments:

- To work with autistic people and other stakeholders to offer a range of up to date and relevant autism training with the input from autistic people, including opportunities for autistic-led training. We support the promotion of asset-based, inclusive training approach.
- To work with colleagues within and outwith the organisation, and in the wider community to share training opportunities, knowledge and experience.

Feedback from our consultation has indicated that staff in all agencies who support autistic people should have opportunities to access autism related training to support their role.

Responsibility for identifying, collating and delivering comprehensive training across both Adult Social Work, including social care staff, and Children's Social Work Services is primarily undertaken by the Workforce Development Team (WDT) based on collaboration with operational services. Integrated training opportunities across these staff groups and with NHS colleagues is promoted where applicable to work role and professional disciplines within the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Aberdeenshire Council Services.

An annual training needs analysis is completed across all social work and social care services, collated and transposed into a joint annual training plan for each financial year which is shared with senior managers across Adult and Children's Social Work Services. The information gathered informs us of what is learning is required, and professional development activities are commissioned by the Workforce Development Team for colleagues within these services.

In relation to the delivery of autism training post pandemic a review of the efficacy of free and costed courses and training is ongoing. A previously successful programme delivered through a team of interagency trainers delivering entry level autism awareness sessions commissioned from the National Autistic Society has ceased to be viable. Due to the loss of trainers and the identified need to update and reframe material in the light of developing knowledge within the context of practice in Scotland new options are being explored. The NHS Education for Scotland Autism Training Framework 'Optimising Outcomes' (2014) maps out four levels of skill (informed, skilled, enhanced and expertise levels), which are based on the professional's frequency of contact with autistic people and their level of responsibility. The longer term aim is to develop a suite of materials and courses across the spectrum of "informed" to "expert" learning requirements.

Currently staff have access to internal resources on learning platforms, called Aberdeenshire Learning and Development Online (ALDO) and NHS Education for Scotland's (NES) online training platform called TURAS, external free resources via agencies such as the Open University and Skills network which would meet the learning requirements of the majority of new social care colleagues. Where more specialist requirements are identified by services the Workforce and Development Team WDT would seek to resource materials of training courses at the appropriate level as authorised by senior managers.

In Education, a variety of training opportunities are available to staff and a wide variety of professional learning opportunities are available. This includes access to the following:

- The Autism Toolbox (www.autismtoolbox.co.uk)
- Meeting the needs of autistic learners. A professional guide for teachers
<https://www.gtcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/professional-guide-meeting-needs-autistic-learners.pdf>
- Education Scotland online modules (<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/index.php?categoryid=359>)
<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=6935>
- NAIT website (www.thirdspace.scot/NAIT)
- Training provided to individual schools or clusters by Educational Psychology, partners, or external providers.

Consultation, however, has indicated that the training accessed is not consistent and that a clear professional learning framework for education staff would be beneficial.

A Professional Learning Framework for Supporting Autistic Learners has been developed for education staff, based on The NHS Education for Scotland Autism Training Framework 'Optimising Outcomes' (2014). In addition, a Self-Evaluation Tool for schools has been developed, as well as Universal level training on Understanding and Supporting Autistic Learners (available on ALDO). Further Understanding Sensory Behaviours modules are also available to staff on ALDO and other materials will be developed.

The opportunity exists for the Workforce Development Team to engage with colleagues in Education to benefit from the already established course tailored to the needs of children in an educational setting.

In the Early Years, a central early years fund is used to allocate support to settings and can be used for training. At present, there is a pilot underway involving speech and language therapists, who are working with the central early years team and staff in a funded provider setting to deliver intensive interaction training. Intensive Interaction is an approach for helping autistic children who are at early levels of development. The speech and language therapists will continue working with the staff team in the setting over a number of weeks to ensure that highly effective practice is embedded throughout and to offer ongoing advice and guidance.

Following on from the pilot and building on the lessons learned, an effective delivery model will be developed so that it can be rolled out to all school and funded provider settings and embedded over the next 3 years.

As previously mentioned, feedback from our consultation has indicated that staff in all agencies who support autistic people should have appropriate levels of training related to their role. In Health Services for children/young people, the training available is specific to each sector. For example, training for the Speech and Language Therapy team is done largely internally. All Speech and Language Therapists have a basic knowledge and understanding of autism as a result of their undergraduate training however further in-depth training is carried out by specialists within the team. This includes use of Makaton signs and symbols (this is also provided by the Speech and Language Therapy team or other Makaton tutors to the general population and professionals). All Speech and Language Therapy paediatric staff are trained in Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and some have undergone Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS) training. There is regular internal training on how to assess and write a report to support the diagnostic process. 4 team members are trained in More than Words (Hanen) which allows them to run parent workshops for pre-school children with Autism. There are also 3 Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (tool) assessors in the team (one of whom is a trainer for the consortium). Speech and Language Therapy service are also training providers and to education/

early years settings they frequently provide face to face training and coaching on visual supports and adult-child interaction and these are tailored to the needs of the setting.

The adult team have more limited knowledge on autism but have identified training needs within the team and specialists are providing ad hoc training on supporting the communication of those with autism.

Each service within child health is responsible for its own training in relation to autism, and consultation has indicated that people have received inconsistent levels of knowledge and understanding from different health professionals. As one of the aims of this strategy is to support all agencies who support autistic people to have appropriate levels of training related to their role, this will need to be explored further.

There are also a number of other services who support autistic people and the ones included here are just some examples. The strategy needs to do further work to promote the aim that staff in all agencies who support autistic people should have appropriate levels of training related to their role.

Key Theme 4: Lifelong Learning

Our Aim:

Delivering inclusive support wherever learning takes place.

Our Commitments:

- To continue to improve inclusive support for autistic learners, wherever learning takes place
- To enhance consistency and flexibility of support for autistic learners through increased knowledge and understanding of staff in education and learning settings

Learning happens in lots of different places during our lives. For many it is in formal settings such as in Early Learning and Childcare or a School, and later in life for some it may be in Further or Higher Education. Learning also takes place in lots of other ways and in lots of other contexts. Some children and young people are home educated whilst some access other learning opportunities through other Council Services as well as through voluntary and third sector partners. Learning opportunities, both formal and informal, take place throughout our lives.

Early Years

In the Early Years (0-5) the Health Visitor is the named person. Three and four year-olds (and eligible 2 year-olds) are entitled to 1,140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). In Aberdeenshire there are 160 Early Learning and Childcare providers (87 local authority, 73 Third Sector/Funded Providers) with 4765 children registered (2022), and Early Years provision in Aberdeenshire is delivered to meet the needs of every child, wherever they choose to take their 1140 funded hours. The 'funding follows the child' model for 1140 hours allows parents the flexibility to consider which setting

is right for them and their child, whether this is a school early learning and childcare setting, a play group, a day care or a childminder, or a mixture of more than one.

A central early years fund is used to allocate support to settings. The individual needs of an autistic child are assessed by the setting with involvement from the central early years team and a plan is put in place to ensure that they are safe and well supported to flourish. Funding can be used for additional staffing for the setting, resources and training. In school settings the central team allocate the funding to the school and in funded providers, such as a childminder, day-care or playgroup, funding is provided in the form of an enhanced rate per hour to cover additional staff costs, resources and training.

School aged children and young people

Across Aberdeenshire, around 37,000 children were supported in Primary and Secondary education (as of September 2022). This was delivered through:

- 17 School Clusters (a Secondary School together with its feeder Primary Schools)
- 146 Primary Schools with 20,865 children enrolled
- 17 Secondary Schools with 15,718 young people enrolled
- 4 Special Schools with 229 children and young people enrolled

In each cluster there are different levels of support available to help learners, from universal to targeted and specialist. Meeting a learner's needs can sometimes require a multi-agency response. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) promotes partnership working to ensure that children receive the right support at the right time from the right people. Services need to work together in a coordinated way to meet the specific needs, and improve the wellbeing, of children and young people.

Lots of supports currently exist in each cluster, including Pupil Support Assistants, Additional Support for Learning Teachers, Intervention and Prevention Teachers, Pupil Support Workers, Nature Nurture Practitioners and Educational Psychologists. Learners might also access supports from the local Enhanced Provision or Community Resource Hub, depending on the child/young person's level of need. Some learners access services commissioned by education to meet their needs.

Community Learning and Development

The Community Learning and Development (CLD) Service are part of Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children's Services. They work with adults, young people and communities to support them to change their lives and strengthen their communities through learning. Community Learning and Development is a targeted service, supporting community members at various stages in their lives, therefore the learning journey is life long and life wide.

Community Learning and Development work with targeted young people (12 – 25), adults and community members and groups and deliver informal learning to enable positive changes in communities and in the personal lives of those living and working in our council area. The service priorities based on data and local intelligence are accreditation, capacity building, employability and skills for life, family learning, literacies, learner and youth voice and transition.

Below are some examples of what Community Learning and Development offers to support lifelong learning

- Use of informal learning methods to help people living and working in Aberdeenshire
- Learning in small groups or one to one; online and face to face learning
- Opportunities to learn new skills, improve existing skills and achieve your goals including a variety of accreditation opportunities
- Transitions support for young people P1 to S1, S3/4 and as they approach leaving schools with a focus on developing and achieving their own personal goals during and post school
- Literacies, life skills, personal development and a range of qualifications.
- Support to establish and build capacity, community activity and funding.

Partners in many other local services including Education, Social Work, NHS, and the Voluntary Sector refer learners to Community Learning and Development. Learners can also self-refer. Engagement with Community Learning and Development is voluntary and directed by the individual, group and community needs. Community Learning and Development uses a person-centred approach to delivery supporting the group or learner to achieve their identified needs and learning outcomes.

Further and Higher Education

The provisions local to Aberdeenshire are Robert Gordon University (RGU), University of Aberdeen, and North East Scotland College (NESCOL). Each setting has their own internal support structures for students with additional support needs.

Consultation has indicated that whilst some autistic children/young people/adults and/or their parents/carers were happy with the supports they had received in learning settings, this was not consistent.

Increased knowledge and understanding of staff were a common theme and developments related to this are included in the Training theme.

In terms of lifelong learning, the strategy will aim to provide inclusive support for autistic learners, wherever learning takes place, by enhancing consistency and flexibility of support.



Artwork by a member of Ellon Day Opportunities
at Ellon Resource Centre

Key Theme 5: Employment

Our Aim:

Enhancing employment opportunities and pathways to enhance the skills and experiences of autistic people.

Our Commitments:

- To recognise the range of skills and knowledge possessed by autistic people, and their desire to work, whilst also appreciating the significant barriers can get in this way of this.
- To provide opportunities, support and skills training to autistic people who want to work.
- To work with autistic people and other stakeholders to increase knowledge and understanding of autism in an employment setting and to promote the benefits of having a neurodiverse workforce.

Work has a significant role in adult life. Employment integration can fulfil a variety of needs and is important for social and emotional wellbeing of individuals. This is particularly true for an autistic person. Working offers the opportunity for individuals to feel valued, respected and included in society and can help prevent isolation and mental illness.

Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership work closely with the Employment Support Team which is Aberdeenshire Council's central point for employment support. The team coordinates the Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership, which is where a number of agencies come together to discuss employment opportunities and ensure the best outcome for people seeking employment. The Employment Support Team also commission work to be done with service users using either using their own resources or third sector.

Of course, autistic individuals have highly specific abilities and Employability Services can provide training to employers, co-workers, and job-coaching to the employees. The service is committed to educate employers, challenge discrimination to remove barriers and promote independence, confidence, social skills inclusion, and integration.

Our Autism strategy aims to support autistic people to ensure people work collaboratively to support, assess, identify, and develop their skills integrating autistic individuals into local communities. That can include work placements, training, job-matching, voluntary work or indeed into work or self-employment. Referrals can be open for up to a year where necessary.

Autism is complex and not just one size fits all, it often requires the support of multi-agencies. Employment Connect connects all agencies supporting autistic adults. See the webpage: <http://www.skillsnetwork.com/>.

Key Theme 6: Connecting

Our Aim:

Keeping autistic people and their families connected to information and their communities

Our Commitments:

- Ensuring that autistic people, their families and unpaid carers have access to up-to-date information about what services, supports and opportunities are available to them and how to access them.
- Working with the autistic and non-autistic community to support better connections, reducing the likelihood of social isolation and isolation from support.
- Working with autistic people and other stakeholders to ensure that the needs of those living in remote and rural settings are voiced and listened to.

There are a number of different plans and services within Aberdeenshire which relate to this theme and some of these are outlined below.

[Aberdeenshire Council Plan 2022 - 2027](#) describes the priorities for 2022 - 2027, supporting and promoting local decision-making and empowering communities to influence, shape and contribute to the delivery of services. The focus is on growing the local economy and promoting healthy and resilient communities.

[The Aberdeenshire Digital Strategy 2020 - 2025](#) aims to ensure that citizens and communities can access all relevant services online, at a time and on a device that suits them, using a single login.

Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership's focus is community empowerment and one of the priority areas for development is Connected and Cohesive Communities. The Connected and Cohesive Communities Strategic Lead Partnership Group highlights that the more 'connected' a community is, particularly in terms of access to services and physical connections, such as transportation, broadband, to social connections and citizens, the greater the opportunity is for the community to be 'cohesive' with a common vision and sense of belonging.

Aberdeenshire benefits from a range of transport options which include First bus and Stagecoach Bluebird services, A2B Dial-a-bus, and Community Transport including minibus hire. Some of these initiatives are responsive to individual or local need, aiming to address issues of access to transport to those who live in rural locations, or for those who need a door-to-door service. Those aged under 22 can access free bus travel almost anywhere in Scotland by using their National Entitlement Card or Young Scot National Entitlement Card.

Aberdeenshire Council and Health and Social Care Partnership commission an advocacy service to support people aged 16 years and over to take more control of their lives by making sure they have the right, and opportunity to contribute to the discussions and decisions about the services and treatment they get.

Tackling poverty and inequality is a strategic priority for Live Life Aberdeenshire, as set out within its business plan. The service aims to reduce barriers to participation and address health inequalities by better understanding the specific needs of service users with additional support needs, including autistic children, young people and adults.

The service will share the guidance and resources available through the Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy to continue to develop activities and services for those with additional support needs and where there is demand/need, develop programmes

focussed on these needs. Live Life Aberdeenshire also arrange a range of inclusive and additional support need specific activities within their sport and leisure venues. For example, its outdoor centres will provide specific Additional Support Needs (ASN) tubing, Nordic ski activities and quiet sessions within its pools, and Lego and coding clubs in its libraries. In addition, the library's doorstep delivery and click-and-collect will support those who cannot or have difficulty visiting a library.

The free Live Life Essentials membership includes access to free sporting activities, digital services like Press Reader and Overdrive to access free books and magazines, and to access digital services within the leisure and library estate.

Money and benefits advice is available from the Money Advice and Welfare Rights Team who are able to provide free, impartial and confidential advice on benefits, which includes support to complete benefit claim forms, challenge a benefit decision and recommend other organisations and agencies that may be able to assist.

Aberdeenshire Council and Health and Social Care Partnership utilises social media such as Twitter and Facebook to publicise information and developments.

These are only a few examples and there are lots of other parts of the Council as well as third sector and voluntary agencies who provide services. Whilst there is plenty information out there, and lots of services are available, consultation indicated that this needs to be more joined up so that people know where to find up to date information.

In addition, it was felt that there could be more opportunities to work with the autistic and non-autistic community to support better connections, reducing the likelihood of social isolation and isolation from support, particularly in rural areas.

Key Theme 7: Community

Our Aim:

Building a community that is inclusive, accepting and knowledgeable.

Our Commitments:

- To work with the autistic and non-autistic community to promote autistic-led knowledge and understanding of autism across Aberdeenshire
- To work with autistic people and local groups, organisations, partners and stakeholders to collectively build trusting relationships and improve our understanding of the autistic community.
- To support societal knowledge and acceptance to support inclusive access and supports.

Alongside our partners, stakeholders and the autistic community, we want to learn more how best to support individuals and families from various different backgrounds, such as those with English as a second language in the hope of reducing isolation. Given the increase in the number of pupils with English as an additional language in Aberdeenshire, we understand the importance of developing our learning around communication (language) barriers, understanding cultural capital and the bilingual autistic brain.

The Autism Strategy: Action Plan

Following on from identifying 7 Key themes, an Action Plan has been created setting out what will be our strategic aims and outcomes over the next 5 years. Our Action Plan will also set out what actions will be taken; the resources put in place and



Craftwork by members of South Day Services at Kraftwork in Aboyne

identify which lead services and officers will be responsible for the work.

Fluidity and change are to be expected in all projects, this plan should be considered as a live document which will continue to be reviewed and where appropriate modified in consultation with the Monitoring Group, including further definition of milestones against which progress will be reported back to the relevant governance bodies. Further national and local performance measures may also be added to this Action Plan as they are developed and become available.

Please see Appendix 5 for details.

5. Project Governance

Steps need to be taken to ensure the strategy and the delivery plan are presented to various governance bodies who have oversight of the work undertaken. These documents will also be made accessible to the public for consultation.

To achieve final ratification and approval, the following stages will occur:

Stage 1: February 2023 – submission of draft strategy report to Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Planning Group, Aberdeenshire Council's GIRFEC Strategic Group and Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children Services Leadership Team, for comments and feedback.

Stage 2: February - April 2023 – Draft strategy report to be made available for Public Consultation and for feedback from Aberdeenshire Council's six Area Committees.

Stage 3: May - July 2023 – Approval sought from Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board and Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children Services Committee.

Reporting structure

The Strategy and Action plan will be delivered and monitored by an Aberdeenshire Monitoring Group which will be co-chaired by professionals from Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children's Service and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

Aberdeenshire's Council's GIRFEC Strategic Group and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Autism Strategic Outcomes Group will oversee the implementation of the strategy and delivery of the actions.



To also help feed into the development and monitoring of actions, we will seek to create an Autist-led Lived Experience Forum consisting of members of the public and people with lived experiences.

Revising our Strategy

It is our intention that at the 3.5 year mark after the Strategy has been implemented, the Oversight Group will be tasked to review and plan which relevant steps to take when the Strategy comes to an end.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to every member of the Autism Strategy Planning Group. Thank you to everyone who helped plan, organise, and facilitate the work.

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We express further appreciation to all the autistic people who engaged and shared with us their views and experiences, to help us put together our Strategy.

Reference page

Webpages and Links:

- *Aberdeenshire's Children's Services Plan: [Our Children & Young People's Services Plan \(girfec-aberdeenshire.org\)](https://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org)*
- *Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Strategies, Plans and Reports: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/ahscp/health-and-social-care-strategies-plans-and-reports/>*
- *The Art of Autism by Rebecca Burgess: [Understanding the Spectrum - a comic strip explanation | The Art of Autism \(the-art-of-autism.com\)](https://www.the-art-of-autism.com/understanding-the-spectrum-a-comic-strip-explanation/)*
- *Adult Autism Assessment Team (AAAT): [Adult Autism Assessment Team \(City, Shire & Moray H&SCP\) – Hi-Net Grampian \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/hi-net-grampian/adult-autism-assessment-team/)*
- *[A New Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults | Engage Aberdeenshire](#)*
- *Autism Understanding Scotland: [Autism Understanding Scotland - reframing the narrative around autism](#)*
- *Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAHMS): <https://www.nhsgrampian.org/service-hub/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs-grampian/>*
- *Community Child Health: [Clinics and services \(nhsgrampian.org\)](https://www.nhsgrampian.org/clinics-and-services/)*

- *Learning About Neurodiversity at School (LEANS)*. Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre, The University of Edinburgh: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/salvesen-research/leans>
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- *Different minds campaign*: [Different Minds | Autism Scotland](http://DifferentMinds.org.uk)
- *Autism Toolbox*: [Home | Autism Toolbox](http://AutismToolbox.org.uk)
- *National Autism Implementation Team*: [NAIT | ThirdSpace](http://NAIT.org.uk)
- *Scottish Government Publications, Pupils Consensus*: [Pupil census: supplementary statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)
- *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*: [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\) | United Nations Enable](http://UnitedNations.org)
- *The United Conventions on the Rights of the Children*: [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK](http://UNICEF.org)
- *Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002*: [Education \(Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records\) \(Scotland\) Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

- *Planning improvements for disabled pupils' access to education: guidance for education authorities, independent and grant-aided schools: [Chapter 3: The planning duties and main priorities for the accessibility strategy - Planning improvements for disabled pupils' access to education: guidance for education authorities, independent and grant-aided schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)*
- *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice (Revised Edition) (2017): [Additional support for learning: statutory guidance 2017 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)*
- *The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)*
- *The Equality Act 2010: [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)*
- *Curriculum for Excellence: [What is Curriculum for Excellence? | Curriculum for Excellence | Policy drivers | Policy for Scottish education | Scottish education system | Education Scotland](#)*
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- *Getting it right for every child:* [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultations-petitions/html/2015/06/06150001.htm)
- *Healthcare Improvement Scotland: SIGN:*
[SIGN 98 Assessment, diagnosis and clinical interventions for children and young people with autism spectrum disorders](https://www.sign.ac.uk/sign-98-assessment-diagnosis-and-clinical-interventions-for-children-and-young-people-with-autism-spectrum-disorders)
- *National Care Service:* [National Care Service - Social care - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultations-petitions/html/2015/06/06150001.htm)
- *Scottish Autism:* [W&G - Diagnosis | Scottish Autism](https://www.scottishautism.org.uk/wag-diagnosis)
- *Scottish Women's Autism Network (SWAN):* [For & by autistic women and girls | SWAN \(swanscotland.org\)](https://www.swanscotland.org/)

Documents:

- [*The Aberdeenshire Digital Strategy 2020 - 2025*](#)
- [*Aberdeenshire Council Plan 2022 - 2027*](#)
- *Autism Network Scotland. Principles of Good Transitions 3 2017.*
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- *2021 School [Pupil Census Data Pupils+Census+Supplementary+Statistics+2021+V3.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)*
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- *Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC): [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)*
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- *The microsegmentation of the autism spectrum: research project 2018:*
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[Supporting documents - Learning/intellectual disability and autism: transformation plan - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

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[Scottish Strategy for Autism: outcomes and priorities 2018 - 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Scottish-Strategy-for-Autism-outcomes-and-priorities-2018-2021)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Our Engagement Phase: summary of responses

Appendix 2: The Data

Appendix 3: Our Consultation Phase: summary of responses

Appendix 4: Feedback from Area Committees

Appendix 5: The Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy - Action Plan 2023 - 2028

Endnotes:

- I *Aberdeenshire's Children's Services Plan 2023 - 2026:*
[Our Children & Young People's Services Plan \(girfec-aberdeenshire.org\)](http://girfec-aberdeenshire.org)
- II *AHSCP Learning Disability Strategy:*
<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/bb9f0884-15aa-43fc-8079-834b28e70b9f/resource/8150c85e-d9f0-44ec-91db-70e39a4dcb5b/download/learningdisabilitystrategy-thebigplan.pdf>
- III *AHSCP Adult Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Strategy:*
<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/d3846e4a-b873-4f85-990b-b95dcb8606a2/resource/976d24f7-b046-4d88-a68b-ade91a9d5f70/download/ahscpmentalhealthandwellbeingstrategy2019-2024.pdf>
- IV *Aberdeenshire Carer Strategy:*
<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/ab50175d-cac1-4003-a96d-fab0605d35ea/resource/170ac570-9bb0-44ee-878a-481fe16d6848/download/ahscp-adult-carer-strategy-2018-2022.pdf>
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- VII *Learning/intellectual disability and autism: transformation plan:*
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- VIII *The Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill* [Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill - Lived Experience Advisory Panel: recruitment information - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)
- IX *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:*
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- XI *The Equality Act 2010:* [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- XII *Curriculum for Excellence:* [What is Curriculum for Excellence? | Curriculum for Excellence | Policy drivers | Policy for Scottish education | Scottish education system | Education Scotland](http://www.education.scot.nhs.uk)
- XIII *Education (Scotland) Act 1980:* [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- XIV *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000:* [Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- XV *Presumption of Mainstreaming Guidance (2019):*
[Presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

- XVI *Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002:*
[Education \(Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records\) \(Scotland\) Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
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- XXV *The Scottish Strategy for Autism, Scottish Government, 2011:*
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- XXVI *Getting it right for every child:*
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- XXVII *Scottish Strategy for Autism: outcomes and priorities 2018 - 2021:*
[Scottish Strategy for Autism: outcomes and priorities 2018 - 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- XXVIII *Healthcare Improvement Scotland : SIGN: [SIGN 98 Assessment, diagnosis and clinical interventions for children and young people with autism spectrum disorders](#)*
- XXIX *National Care Service: [National Care Service - Social care - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)*
- XXX *Scottish Mental Health Law Review: [Homepage | Scottish Mental Health Law Review](#)*
- XXXI *Coming Home Agenda: [Coming Home Implementation report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)*
- XXXII *Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015:*
[Mental Health Scotland Act 2015: key provisions - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

- XXXIII *Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003:*
[*Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)*](#)
- XXXIV *Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007:*
[*Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)*](#)
- XXXV *Scottish Government Home Education Guidance (updated 2001)*
[*Home education guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)*](#)