

My Voice

1. We had an overarching principle of “My Voice” in year one. We said we would:
 - Establish a Children’s Autism Partnership Board to support involvement of autistic children and young people.
 - Develop a Reference Group of autistic young people / family carers to support development and implementation of the strategy.
 - Maintain and build on autistic people and family carers’ involvement in the Adults’ Autism Partnership Board.
 - Develop the Reference Group of autistic adults to support development and implementation of the strategy.
 - Ensure involvement of experts by experience in each of the strategy workstreams.
2. We have delivered all the above. The reference group of autistic young people report regularly to the Children’s Autism Partnership Board and they have produced a document on the use of language, [ATLAS Ableism, Stigma and Discrimination Report](#). This document has influenced the Council’s use of language and we have made the changes suggested. Instead of referring to “special schools” we now refer to “specialist schools”. We have also changed “special needs” to “additional needs”.
3. The Adult reference group did not like the wording used to describe the National Autism Acceptance Week. We therefore changed this in Surrey and referred to Autism **Appreciation** Week”. Our adult reference group felt the words used for the national campaign suggested autistic people were a burden to be accepted by society and wanted to reframe the language to reflect that with the right support, autistic can and should be an asset to be celebrated.
4. Each of our workstreams has an expert by experience as a co-lead or a representative of an advocate organisation such as the National Autistic Society Surrey Branch and Family Voice. An expert by experience is an autistic person who has experienced life with the condition and is therefore well placed to advise us on the problems encountered by autistic people and the potential solutions.
5. A co-production specialist has been appointed to the SEND Transformation Team to support this work and other SEND related projects.

Workstream 1

Information, Awareness and Understanding of Autism

6. **“Develop options and approaches for an autism training offer across services and the community”**
 - At 5th May 2022 1,888 staff in Children’s, Families and Lifelong Learning have been trained in autism awareness. This represents 62% of permanent staff

members and covers all areas of work including public facing staff. The training was online and therefore easily accessible. Staff gained a better understanding of the challenges faced by autistic people and how their needs might be met.

- The Adult Autism Partnership Board has funded development of training by autistic trainers, Autism by Experience. Some of their training materials are available [here](#). The training is geared towards specific roles and goes beyond autism awareness training to give practical approaches to support people, aligning with national standards set by Skills for Care/Skills Health.
- In Adult Social Care, autism training has been delivered to all staff in the Transition Team and the Learning Disability and Autism Team. These courses were delivered between September 2021 and March 2022.
- Work is underway to quantify and prioritise autism training for the wider Adult Social Care workforce designing training suitable to different roles. An autism self-audit tool has been co-designed to support teams to identify their training needs. Training will be delivered to the priority teams of Mental Health, and the Contact Centre, within year one.
- NHS Mental Health services have received autism training from the SABP Neurodevelopmental Team. NHSE money has been awarded to identify and address further autism training needs.
- We have reviewed and updated the Autism Partnership Board Webpages. [Surrey Autism Partnership Board - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk)
- SCC Corporate Comms supported publicity for the strategy and its implementation.
- The SCC Corporate Comms Team worked in partnership with AAAS to create an online event for Autism Appreciation Week, information for the Local Offer pages and the adults' Autism Partnership Board webpages.
- We included a "You said, we did" section and videos of autistic people sharing their views in these sections.
- We are working to establish and develop an Autism Community of Practice. This will be an online platform for sharing information and good practice. It will be available to autistic people and family carers as well as professionals
- We have gathered input from autistic people to inform work on the Digital Front Door.

7. “Work to promote “Autism Friendly Communities”

- Redhill was identified as the pilot autism friendly community and we have worked with Reigate and Banstead Council services including libraries, leisure centre and theatre, representatives of the NHS locally, voluntary sector partners, autistic people, and family carers.
- We secured Better Care Fund funding and the pilot is underway. An accessibility document for buildings was agreed with experts by experience.
- Five autism training courses have been delivered to community partners:
 - 1 x 3hr session for GP receptionists
 - 1 x online 3hr session, 2 x face to face for staff of libraries; leisure centre; theatre; and voluntary sector.
 - 65 people have received training to date.
- Another 2 x short training sessions are planned for businesses and one more for community partners.
- A networking event was held in Redhill on 25th March 2022. It was well attended by many autistic people, family carers, professionals, and members of the public, who engaged in discussion throughout the day.
- Accessible awareness raising leaflets were distributed to the public and businesses around the town centre on the day.
- A voluntary sector partner organisation has agreed to host an ongoing group to keep Autism Friendly Redhill going once the pilot is complete.
- The pilot is due to complete in July 22. The evaluation of the project will inform the rollout to other parts of Surrey starting in Year 2.

Workstream 2 Education and Preparing for Adulthood

“Inclusive educational provision which enables children and young people to be taught within their local community”

8. “Autistic children and young people go on to live rich and fulfilling lives in their own communities”

- We are building more specialist school places and specially resourced provision in mainstream to enable children to access provision close to home.
- We have expanded existing maintained specialist schools to create 126 ASC places in 22/23 with this rising to a possible 370 by 28/29.

- We have secured funding for, and are building, two Specialist Free Schools for children and young people with ASC creating 130 places in 24/25 rising to 380 in 28/29.
- We are creating 17 additional places in specially resourced provision in mainstream schools 22/23 with this rising to a possible 119 by 28/29.
- By being educated in their own communities, children and young people can make friends, put down “roots” and become engaged with local services. This makes transition to adulthood much less stressful.

9. “Autistic children have their additional and educational needs met at the earliest time. “

- We have undertaken a successful pilot with Freemantles School for Early Years to support children who are possibly on an autism pathway and do not have an autism diagnosis.
- This pilot is available to settings and families where training focuses on Supporting Targeted Education & Play Skills (STEPS).
- 120 STEPS packages have been delivered.
- Children with additional needs receive their early years entitlement in a local mainstream provision using the Early Intervention Fund (EIF) to support individual need.
- The EIF fund has supported 493 settings and 1676 children since Sept 2021.
- Early Years Inclusive Pathway Planning (EYIPP) uses a team around the child/setting approach to discuss what is working well and what is required to enable children to make progress.
- Through the EYIPP process an appropriate Early Years setting is recommended to meet individual need. Children may also be discussed at the Early Years Governance Board regarding specialist nursery.
- 63 EYIPP meetings have taken place in this academic year.
- 43 children came to the Early Years Governance Panel before May 2022 compared to 152 children in 2021. This means that more children had their needs met in mainstream settings in their communities.
- We have established a pilot programme “Team Around the School” in the 2021/22 academic year. This pilot aims to meet children’s needs as soon as they are identified without waiting for either a diagnosis or an EHCP.
- 16 schools, mainly but not exclusively in Spelthorne, are participating in the pilot. These include primary, secondary, a specialist school and a PRU.

- A multi-agency team meet to discuss those children the staff are concerned about and agree the interventions required.
- A Steering Group of head teachers and other stakeholders was established in September 2021 to support this.
- A Team Around the School Manager was employed in January 2022 to manage the pilot and facilitate evaluation.
- A Practitioners Group was established in January 22 to enable SENCOs to support each other.
- The pilot will be evaluated, and a decision made regarding the next steps of rolling out to all schools.
- We established a programme of support known as “PREP” (Personalised Resilience and Engagement) which seeks to address barriers to engagement with education, work, and everyday life.
- This commission supports young people who may have been affected by anxiety, school refusal or other trauma, including those with autism.
- The aim is to promote community inclusion to improve young people’s health and wellbeing and facilitate their journey back into education or employment.
- We have undertaken a review of outreach service for schools and a project manager has been recruited to support the design of the service specification.

10. “Services will work together to plan with young people and their family carers across their life course”

- We worked with autistic children and young people and their representatives to establish the baseline of services the Local Authority expects to be available in settings.
- A guidance document has been produced called “Ordinarily Available” supporting family carers to discuss the type of adjustments and interventions they can expect from settings that will be of benefit to a child or young person.
- This document is in the final stage of governance.
- The Inclusion and Additional Needs Service, which provides specialist education support to education settings, worked to develop a service offer setting out a range of support services.
- A service offer has been published which supports schools to assess children’s needs and provide evidence-based interventions at the point a concern is raised.

Workstream 3

Health and Social Care Support

11. Assessment and Diagnosis

- We have made successful bids for NHS England funding to improve diagnostic processes for both children and adults.
- Funding has been secured and plans are in place for improvements to pre- and post-diagnosis support, ensuring people receive support earlier. This includes peer mentoring and support before the diagnostic assessment takes place, along with post diagnostic support to understand the implications of a diagnosis and navigate the support system. Posts will be recruited to progress this work within year one with the delivery following in years 2 to 5.
- Plans are in place for improvements to pre- and post-diagnostic support, ensuring people receive support earlier.
- Plans for improving diagnostic processes are in place.

12. Forensic Support: Including Police, Prisons and Criminal Justice

- Surrey Police has a representative in this workstream and is reviewing and updating their autism training. They have engaged with the Adult Reference Group and will be including video content developed by an autistic trainer as part of the new course.
- Surrey Police is also working to update and refresh their successful Pegasus Card scheme, which autistic people have found useful in identifying their needs to police officers when they would otherwise have struggled to explain.
- Work has begun on Great Meadows. The building is in place and a support and wraparound clinical and social care package is in development. The facility will open in year one and will be for 6 autistic people with high needs who have not been able to be supported in the community.
- The first six residents have been identified.

13. Market Management

- We have ensured that Adult Social Care Commissioning intentions reflect autism needs.
- We are specifying for autism inclusivity in our contracts and or monitoring processes for:
 - Three advocacy contracts
 - Passenger transport specification
 - Care in the Home for adults. This is mainly an older people's service and has built in autism as specialism for the first time.
 - Carers' support is built into the monitoring process.
 - Forthcoming Supported Independent Living specification.
 - Community Connections for mental health support.

- Sexual Health specification.
- We are collaborating with corporate colleagues in establishing Social Value benefits for autistic people from SCC contracts.

14. Mental Health & Wellbeing

- Mindworks (formerly CAMHS) has undertaken a pilot Neurodevelopmental Profiles Project in a small number of schools to help staff identify and assess neurodivergent children and young people in the 21/22 academic year. The schools are:
 - Pilot 1 St Peters and Kings Secondary, Sandfield and Holy Trinity (all Guildford area).
 - Pilot 2: Epsom Downs, Woolmer Hill, Woodfields, and Potters Gate
- These schools have benefited from intensive training and support. They are using this knowledge to ensure neurodivergent children and young people achieve their full potential.
- By 2023/24 children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both with the most complex needs will have a designated keyworker, implementing the recommendation made by Dame Christine Lenehan. Initially, keyworker support will be provided to children and young people who are inpatients or at risk of being admitted to hospital.
- Keyworker support will also be extended to the most vulnerable children with a learning disability and/or autism, including those who face multiple vulnerabilities such as looked after and adopted children, and children and young people in transition between services. The keyworker model is expected to offer additionality, both workforce and activity, to the local system and must not replace or fund existing roles within the system.
- Work is underway to identify ways to improve the crisis pathway for autistic people struggling with their mental health. User journey mapping with Patients Safety Academy is currently being specified, with funding in place, to be delivered in 22/23. The work will review 10 recent crisis admissions with 3 going into more depth, for a whole life course review. This work will inform the future design of a crisis pathway.
- There has been a successful pilot of the Digital Dynamic Support Register. This is a register of people with a learning disability and/or autism, who are in-patient in mental health hospital or at risk of admission. The register will support crisis prevention, and timely discharge to community settings. It is due to rollout in Year 1.
- A pilot is underway to assess autism accessibility within in-patient mental health provision, Sensory Aware Clinical Environments.
- Both Children's Services and Adults are working on Surrey's Suicide Prevention Agenda with respect to autistic people.

15. Health and Social Care Teams

- Detailed training, co-produced and delivered by autistic people, has been delivered to all members of the Transition Team and Learning Disability and Autism Team. SCC Learning and Development colleagues are in the process of prioritising and identifying levels of training for different roles for other Adult Social Care and Contact Centre Teams. Plans are in place to deliver training to the Mental Health and Contact Centre Teams within Year 1.
- Interface work between Adult Social Care Mental Health LD&A and Transition Teams supporting autistic people has taken place with the teams agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding to support their joint working.
- We have enlisted the support of the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion teams in SCC and Surrey Heartlands to ensure autism is reflected in generic EDI training and approaches (also including recruitment and employment practice).
- Surrey Heartlands held a neurodevelopmental workshop in April 2022 to identify the best ways to improve practice for their neurodivergent employees.

16. Health Inequalities

- Work is underway to develop reasonable adjustment flags on medical records, with input from autistic people, ensuring autism adjustments are understood and included.
- Surrey Heartlands Covid 19 Equalities Group agreed processes to support autistic people who cannot leave the house to get vaccines. This has been shared with the Autism Partnership Board and wider autism support networks.

Workstream 4 Housing and Independent Living

17. Adult Social Care Independent Living

- Via the Accommodation with Care and Support Programme, we have secured capital funding to develop supported independent living accommodation for people with a learning disability and/or autism on three Surrey County Council owned sites.
- Via the Accommodation with Care and Support Programme, we have worked with the independent sector care and housing providers to re-register some care home provision as supported independent living ensuring people have more choice and control of their daily lives.
- Mental Health Commissioning colleagues have reviewed the existing Housing Related Support contracts and identified gaps (unmet needs) and areas for improvement. We will work with providers to determine how to address these gaps to improve outcomes for people, including autistic people, with mental health needs.

18. District and Borough Housing

- This workstream is engaged with the Chief Housing Officers group representing all District and Borough Councils in Surrey. The agreed approach was to pilot work with Waverley Borough Council to identify and address the autism training needs of Housing Officers, and the accessibility of housing processes for autistic people, and this work is underway.

19. Building Standards

- We gathered input from the reference group of autistic people, and responded to the BSI consultation on Neurodiversity in the built environment
- The Supported Independent Living specification was reviewed to incorporate autism requirements
- We have engaged with autistic people/family carers re SCC Supported Independent Living design proposals.
- We responded to the commissioning consultation on the Waverley BC Housing Strategy in March 2022.

Workstream 5 Employment

20. Work Opportunities

- The Surrey Chamber of Commerce is engaged with the strategy and is working on raising awareness with local employers to promote the employment of autistic people.
- The Department of Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, is engaged with the strategy. It has employed three specially trained staff across their offices to support people with learning disabilities and/or autism into employment in Surrey.
- A very successful project, funded by the Department of Work and Pensions, was undertaken from December 2020 to December 2021. The “Employment works for Everyone Project” worked with autistic and neurodiverse people on confidence building, basic skills, and interview techniques and resulted in 16 autistic and neurodivergent people securing paid employment. Others on the programme were supported into employment related activities such as volunteering. We hope to run an equivalent project with funding from the Better Care Fund.
- Partner organisations engaged in the Employment Workstream bring employment related opportunities to the attention of the group ensuring they are more widely advertised. The link is an example of the information which reaches a wider audience due to the connectivity the strategy brings.



AS MENTORING PRESENTS:

Looking for Work

Workshops programme for autistic jobseekers

6 Live Workshops
3 one-to-one sessions
autism-specialist mentors

ONLINE EVENTS
JUNE 2022- SEPTEMBER 2022



OUTCOMES FROM PREVIOUS PROGRAMME

"It's a welcoming atmosphere, those involved in delivering the programme had lived in experience with autism in one way or another."

"It clearly presents all of the preparation that people with autism need to do to mitigate difficulties during the recruitment process. The 1-to-1 mentoring sessions help attendees apply what is discussed in group sessions to their situation."

"It informs individuals what they can do to make their environment better when their diagnosis is shared."

80% Secured Interview
Most participants secured an interview within 3 months of the programme end.

Improved confidence
Participants felt better prepared to get paid employment

100%

Secured paid internship
Two participants secured a 6 months paid corporate internship with ASM partners

21. Leading by Example



Preparing for Adulthood

In partnership with

Family Voice

Apprenticeship stories



Holly Joined Surrey County Council as a Business Administrator apprentice in the Children's Commissioning team in September 2021.

"My apprenticeship is giving me the opportunity to experience a variety of work across the job role, and have a go at things the team does.

"The team have been nice and friendly and welcoming, they always ensure I understand the work I'm asked to do and are understanding of my needs. I've been helped with the training for my apprenticeship where needed.

"When I finish my apprenticeship I plan to stay with Surrey County Council in an administration role."





- SCC established an Inclusive Apprenticeship programme for young people who have a current EHCP, some of whom are autistic.
- Seven funded places were taken up in September 2021 and the feedback has been very positive.
- SCC will fund an additional 15 Inclusive Apprenticeships in 2022/23. One of those apprentices, starting in September 2022, will work in the SEND Transformation Programme Management Office and will help to support the AAAS project.
- The apprenticeships last on average 18 months and the salary for the whole period is £21k.

- 20% of the apprentices could be going to college or studying in the workplace.

- Surrey Heartlands held a workshop to identify and support good practice in support for autistic and other neurodivergent staff.
- Surrey County Council Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion leads have been involved and the plan is for both organisations to find ways to address the issues raised.

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