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A cross-system framework for commissioning social care,
health and children's services for autistic people



Font- Rockwell



Introduction

This framework is for commissioners who work in social care, health, education and children's commissioning services for autistic people, to help them to make informed commissioning decisions and improve the outcomes for autistic people and their families.

It explains the things that you need to analyse, the things that you need to do, and who/what organisations you should engage with, as well as links to useful guidance and information, to help you to identify and plan the changes needed to improve your commissioning practices and deliver person-centred outcomes for local autistic people.

It gives you a checklist of questions to help you to analyse your current position, and outlines what you need to do, including the services and support that you should commission to ensure that local autistic people can access the care and support that they want and need. In each section we've split the content under these headings to help you to structure your thinking:

- understanding the local population
- culture, context and management
- working in partnership
- research, learning and development.

You do not need to consider all of the questions in each section. You can use the framework to help you with specific commissioning decisions, as well as broader ranging decisions.

You could use it in your own role, with other people in your organisation and other organisations, in team meetings and as part of professional development.

In the framework we use the term 'autistic people' to include children and adults. At all times, we have developed this framework with a focus on the outcomes that autistic people want to achieve and the lives that they want to lead.

You can use the framework to ensure that wider thinking about health and wellbeing commissioning takes into account the needs of autistic people. This will also include how you jointly commission health, education and social care services that impact on the lives of autistic people.

It's been developed by Skills for Care, National Autistic Society (NAS), National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and Autism Alliance on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), and in partnership with autistic people and organisations that are engaged with autistic people.

We'd like to share examples of good commissioning practice to support this document. If you have any feedback or examples, please share them with us by emailing policy@skillsforcare.org.uk.

Working in partnership

Does your local area have an autism partnership board?

What are your mechanisms for engaging with local autistic people and families, councils, health organisations, education and the voluntary and independent sector?

How do you review your engagement with local autistic people and families?

What are your mechanisms for engaging with social workers, education professionals, social care and health practitioner leaders and staff working with autistic people?

How do you review your engagement (at least annually) with local services to identify if they're feeling included and heard?

Is there a local autism strategy group that meets on a regular basis?

Have you explored the assets that exist in the local community and how they can improve outcomes for autistic people?

...Click [here](#) to access more things to analyse

Who to engage

Understanding the local population

What self-advocacy support and services are available for autistic people, carers and families?

Is there a broad range of community and social groups for autistic people, carers and families, of all ages?

Do you have an autism hub and/or one-stop-shop?

What type of low-level, community-based support could be put in place to help autistic people and their families in their daily lives and prevent escalation when they are struggling so having to access more formal and higher tier services?

Working in partnership

What focus groups and engagement processes do you have to connect with local autistic people and families?

Are the following sectors involved in your autism partnership board and groups:

- criminal justice, including, police, probation and prison services as well as prison healthcare providers and commissioners and Liaison and Diversion healthcare services operating within police custody and the courts

- housing and accommodation

- psychological therapies

- mental health services

- Jobcentre Plus and employment support?

Are young people and carers involved in designing the local special educational needs (SEN) offer?

How do you engage and enable the voluntary sector to develop support for autistic people, carers and families?

Is autism identified as a priority within local housing strategy and planning?

What employment support projects and services enable autistic people to access work?

Sources of support

Understanding the local population

Skills for Care (2019), [Autism population calculator](#)

This calculator will help you to understand the local population of autistic people.

NHS England (2017), [Developing support and services for children and young people with a learning disability, autism and both](#)

This document explains how the national service model from 'Building the right support' applies to children and young people with a learning disability and/or autism.

Culture, context and management

Skills for Care (2018), [Culture for care toolkit](#)

This toolkit explains what workplace culture is and gives practical tips and activities to help you to improve your workplace culture.

[Autism Act \(2009\)](#)

Up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 15 June 2021.

Government (2015), [Adult autism strategy: supporting its use](#)

This information is for local authorities and NHS organisations about how to support the implementation of the autism strategy.

SCIE (2017), [Commissioners of autism services](#)

This webpage outlines some general pointers for commissioners about what makes services accessible to autistic people.

Working in partnership

QORU (no date), [Commissioning services for adults with learning disabilities or autism: the views and experiences of commissioners](#)

This report outlines the findings of research with commissioners of learning disability and autism services, about what information they use to make commissioning decisions and challenges to commissioning effective services.

National Autistic Society (2009), [Supporting adults with autism: a good practice guide](#)

This guide shares how different local authorities are working to identify and meet the needs of autistic adults.

Research, learning and development

Skills for Health, Skills for Care and Health Education England (2019), [Core Capabilities Framework for Supporting Autistic People](#)

This framework explains the core capabilities that staff working with autistic people need. It supports the development and planning of the workforce and informs the design and delivery of education and training programmes.

National Autistic Society (2017), [Getting needs assessments for autistic adults right from the start: a guide for local authorities in England on training social care professionals](#)

This guide will help local authorities to improve the skills and knowledge of their social care assessors and gives examples of good practice.

Relevant NICE guidelines

NICE guidelines make evidence-based recommendations on a wide range of topics.

They set out the care and services that are suitable for most people with a specific condition, need or in a particular circumstance/setting, ways to promote and protect good health, the configuration and provision of health and social care services and/or how public sector organisations can improve the quality of care services.

The relevant guidelines can help you to understand what good care looks like and shape the health and social care market for autistic people. They can inform service planning and provision, quality improvement and the development of education and training initiatives.

Here are some of the key guidelines for commissioners who work in social care, health, education and children's commissioning services for autistic people.

[Autism spectrum disorder in adults](#) (guideline CG142)

[Autism](#) (quality standard QS51)

[Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s](#) (guideline CG170)

[Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: recognition, referral and diagnosis](#)
(clinical guideline, CG128)

[Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: diagnosis and management](#)
(clinical guideline, CG142)

[Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: support and management](#)
(clinical guideline, CG170)

[Learning disabilities and behaviour that challenges: service design and delivery](#) (guideline NG93) (includes autism)

[Learning disability: behaviour that challenges](#) (quality standard, QS101)
(includes autism)

[Adult social care: improving people's experience](#) (guideline NG86)

[People's experience using adult social care services](#) (quality standard QS182)

[Transition between inpatient mental health settings and community or care home settings](#) (guideline NG53)

[Transition between inpatient mental health settings and community or care home settings](#) (quality standard QS159)

[Transition between inpatient hospital settings and community or care home settings for adults with social care needs](#) (guideline NG27)

[Transition between inpatient hospital settings and community or care home settings for adults with social care needs](#) (quality standard QS136)

[Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services](#) (guideline NG43)

[Transition from children's to adults' services](#) (quality standard QS140)

[Decision-making and mental capacity](#) (guideline NG108)

Each guideline includes a baseline assessment tool and resources to help you to implement the standard.

Appendix: more things to analyse

Understanding the local population

What low level preventative services are in place to help to prevent autistic people being admitted to hospital?

What is the level of access to community mental health services for autistic people, such as suitable Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and psychological therapies?

How satisfied are autistic people, carers and families with the level of local support and how do you measure this?

How many families support an autistic person at home?

How many siblings are there of autistic people?

How many autistic adults are in work in the area? Is this paid employment or voluntary work?

How many young autistic people have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

How many autistic children are in the care of the local authority?

How many autistic people have a personal budget and/or a personal health budget?

How many autistic people are homeless in your area?

How many autistic people are subject to hate/mate crime?

How many autistic staff do you have?

How many diagnosed autistic people have a sensory assessment and management plan?

How many autistic people access annual health checks and/or regular checks about their physical health?

Does your local public health department conduct a strategic needs analysis of your local population, and does it have sections on autistic people with and without a learning disability?

What autism specific metrics are included in provider contracts?

Working in partnership

Culture, context and management

Autism: Low-level Support References

[York University - Preventative co-ordinated low-level support for adults with high-functioning autism](#)

[SCIE - Early intervention and prevention in autism](#)

[Leeds University - Information, Advocacy and Signposting as a Low-Level Support for Adults with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

[Autistica Action Briefing: Post-Diagnostic Support for Adults](#)

[DoH - Statutory guidance for Local Authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the Adult Autism Strategy](#)

[NHSE - Supporting people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition](#)

[NAS / APPG - The Autism Act, 10 Years On](#)

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