

All

Age

Autism

and

ADHD

Strategy

2025

–

2030



Produced in partnership
with autistic and ADHD
Experts by Experience
and their families



1. Introduction



- This document is Kingston's **Autism and ADHD Strategy**.
- A strategy is a document like a plan that shows what we want to do and how we are going to do it.
- This strategy sets out Kingston upon Thames vision for a whole life view for autistic people and people with ADHD.



- We worked together as a partnership with professionals and Experts by Experience (EbEs) to write this strategy.
- An **expert by experience** is an autistic person and/or someone who has ADHD. It also might be someone who gives support, like a family member.



- This report uses the terms 'autistic people' and 'people with ADHD'.
- However we understand language around neurodiversity is changing, and people may use different words to describe themselves or others.

2. Summary



“I don’t want to be invisible anymore”

“all I want is a good quality of life...”

- Our vision is for Kingston to be a place where autistic people and people with ADHD have the right opportunities and support to live their lives well.
- There’s still a lot to do, but this strategy is a strong starting point.
- Some good things are already happening, like the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower.
- The Council, health services, education, getting ready for adulthood team, employment, independent living, community safety and other partners are working together to make sure we can deliver our aims.

We spoke to autistic people, people with ADHD and their families and also professionals to find out what was important to them. Over 240 people shared their views.

- Getting a diagnosis and getting support
- Having good healthcare and feeling well
- Education
- Support to get a job and support in that job

4. What is Autism?

AUTISM

- Autism is a lifelong condition that affects how people talk with others.
- Autism is diagnosed by differences in how a person communicates with others.

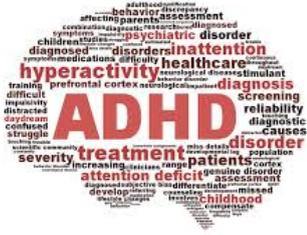


- However, autistic people may experience the world in other ways.
- This can be a very good thing but also makes things difficult sometimes.



- For example, autistic people may:
 - Be good at focusing on details when working on a project
 - Have very good creative skills
 - Be loyal and honest to those around them
 - Find it hard to understand others' thoughts or feelings
 - May have sensory challenges, for example, feel stressed or overwhelmed by bright lights, new textures and noises.

5. What is ADHD?



- ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) is a neurological condition that affects the parts of the brain that help people plan, focus on and do tasks.
- ADHD is often harder to diagnose in girls and adults.



People with ADHD can:

- find it hard to focus or get distracted quickly.
- find it hard to stay still.
- do things without thinking and talk over others.
- have strong creative thinking, often having unique ideas.
- find projects that they really care about and put a lot of work into.



75%

- It is thought that many adults who have ADHD do not know that they have it.

6. Autism and ADHD



40%

- Autistic people and people with ADHD may have sensory issues and issues with memory and thinking. This can make daily tasks challenging.

- People with ADHD are more likely to be autistic than those who do not have ADHD (between 20 and 50%).
- 4 out of every 10 autistic people have ADHD.



- Autistic people may also have trouble managing their feelings and have more movement in their joints than other people.

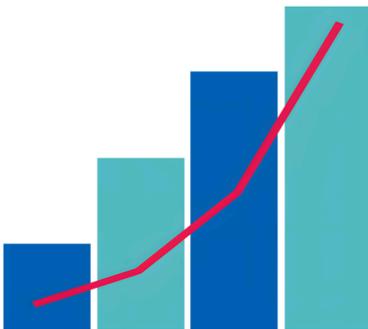


- Autistic people and people with ADHD may also have dyslexia and dyspraxia.



- Problems with speaking and writing are common for autistic people and people with ADHD.

7. Mental Health



- The National Autistic Society suggests that seven out of every ten autistic people have a mental health condition.

- Autistic people are up to four times more likely to have an anxiety disorder, and twice as likely to have depression.

- Research says that suicide is a major cause of early death in autistic people and people with ADHD.
- It has been shown that autistic people and people with ADHD are more likely to have difficult life experiences, which may also affect mental health.

8. Why do we need a strategy?



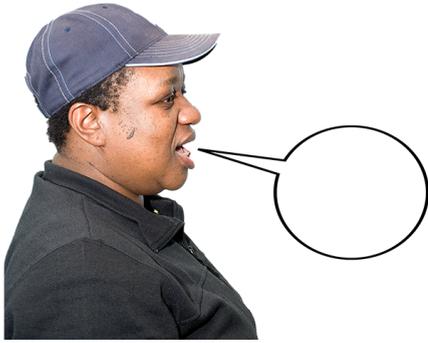
- The Autism Act 2009 says that local boroughs must have a plan to improve services for Autistic adults.



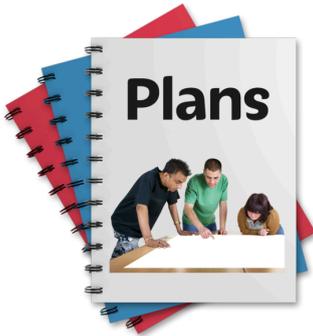
- Over the last year, we have worked with Experts by Experience in Kingston to look at what is important to the residents of Kingston.



- Autistic people and people with ADHD, have told us that there are examples of things working well in Kingston, but to make sure more people live their best lives **we need to make changes.**



- We need to learn more about the challenges that autistic people and those with ADHD face so we can improve their lives.



- The strategy will help us work with local groups and the community to find out what Autistic people and people with ADHD need.



- This strategy includes an action plan that focuses on the changes that are important to the people of Kingston.

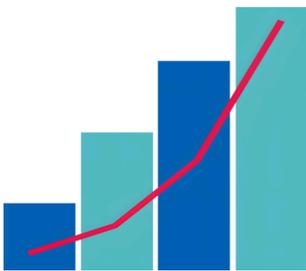


- The action plan has been developed from our engagement work over the last 12 months and will involve working across Health, Housing, Social Care, Education, Voluntary organisations and other services.

9. Autism and ADHD in Kingston



- Around 1 in 20 people in Kingston are autistic or have ADHD.
- 2,200 people had a diagnosis of autism recorded by a Kingston GP. (July 2024)
- We don't have a lot of data about the number of people who have ADHD.



- The true number of autistic people and people with ADHD in Kingston is likely to be higher as not everyone has a diagnosis.

Education



- An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is support for young people in school if they need it.

In Kingston there were;

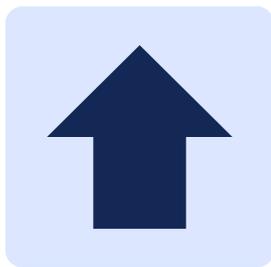


- 1,011 children with an EHCP in the 2023 school year who had a primary need of Autism.
- 834 autistic children and young people are getting Special Educational Needs (SEN) support.

Social Care Support



- In 2024 there were 189 autistic adults getting Social Care support in Kingston.



- The number of people with a support reason for their 'Mental Health' has been growing.



- Most support being given by Kingston Council was to live more independently, followed by day opportunities.



- Most autistic people who used adult social care services were aged **25-34 years old**, followed by **16-24**.



- Fewer people who identify as female get support than those who identify as male.

10. National picture



- In England, autistic children and children with ADHD often find it hard to get a diagnosis and support.



- Delays in diagnosis affect people's education and wellbeing. This can also impact parents and carers.



- For adults, unemployment is high among autistic adults.



- There are laws to stop unfair treatment and to make sure people get the support they need.

11. Results of speaking with residents

Some things are working well in Kingston



“My GP made our referral quickly”



“The Kingston adult autism and ADHD team are great” (Your Healthcare)



“Colleges know about the needs of autistic people”



“I feel services make a good effort to include people and I feel included and heard.”



“Kingston is a safe place, bus drivers know about the Sunflower lanyard”



- People who engaged in focus groups and surveys told us about the challenges in education, healthcare, access to services, employment, mental health and housing.

But we also heard



“I find it hard to make an appointment to see my doctor”



“People are waiting too long to get an assessment, or medication for ADHD”



“There needs to be more help to become independent”



“More support is needed for employment”

People asked for



- Support to live independently and gain employment



- More social events



- Support for parents and carers



- For professionals to have more training about Autism and ADHD



- Help with filling in forms



- Information on support that is on offer in Kingston that is easy to understand.

12. Principles

Our principles are important ideas we should always think about.



1. Advocacy and Awareness

- Make sure information on Autism and ADHD is easy to find and understand.
- Increase the awareness of neurodivergent conditions.

*Neurodivergent – People who have brains which are organised in a different way.

Sometimes these people may have a diagnosis like Autism, Learning Disability, ADHD, Dyslexia etc.



Accessible

2. Accessibility and Service Coordination

- Make sure there are easy ways for residents to contact and use services.
- Make booking appointments more accessible. This may include appointment reminders and giving people lots of options and how to apply and access services.
- Training and awareness raising for health, social care and educators.



3. Community (feeling safe) and transport

- Low cost and accessible transport options. This includes letting people know about the blue-badge scheme.
- Listen to the needs of autistic and ADHD people when making improvements to the borough.
- Making sure there are quiet spaces like parks and libraries in Kingston.



4. Digital and Data

- We need better data about autistic people and people with ADHD in Kingston.
- Find ways to share data across services.

12. Our Plan



- Our plan aims to address the needs of Autistic people and people with ADHD across the areas that have been highlighted.
- Below are the priorities:

Autistic people and/or people with ADHD:



Will be involved in planning and developing services



Will be supported into employment



Will easily find information and support



Will feel safe and included in their community



Will be given the right support at the right time, including diagnosis.

Kingston Council and partners:



Will support young people as they move to adulthood



Will increase the awareness of Autism & ADHD



- By having an action plan that covers all ages, we will work towards becoming a better community for Autistic people and people with ADHD.



- Over the next five years we will be working across the four areas below to make positive changes.
- We will be working as a partnership across Health, Education, Social care, Voluntary Community Sector Enterprise's (VCSE) and other organisations.

1. Diagnosis and Support

Working with: Health, Education, Social care, voluntary sector partners

- Timely access to assessments
- Finding the available resources and support whilst waiting for a diagnosis and after diagnosis
- Ensuring we have the right services in place to meet the needs of our local community.





2. Healthcare and Wellbeing

Working with: Health, Education, Voluntary sector partners

- Ensure there are accessible ways to make appointments
- Focus on well designed spaces

3. Education and Training

Working with: Health, Education, Voluntary sector partners, Local business networks

- Finding out about autism and ADHD early.
- Creating and sharing resources with parents
- Help with changes between stages such as primary to secondary and important periods such as GCSE's.



4. Adult Support and Employment

Working with: Education, Voluntary sector partners, Local business networks

- Help finding a job
- Support to fill in forms
- Helping workplaces understand how to support people with ADHD and autism
- Encourage businesses to offer real work opportunities and internships.



13. How will we know our strategy is working?



- We will work in partnership with local services such as health services, education, getting ready for adulthood, employment, independent living, and the criminal justice system.
- This will make sure Kingston is welcoming, supportive and inclusive for everyone.

The Autism and ADHD Partnership Board will be making sure the aims of the strategy are met, this could include:



1. Quality of life surveys for people with ADHD and Autism. Making sure changes are being made based on what is in the action plan.

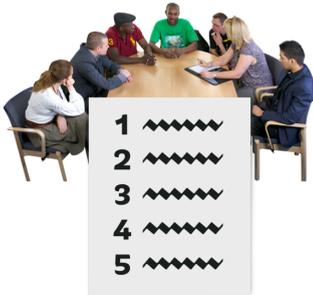


2. Annual reporting. Looking at waiting list times and how many people are accessing services, to see if there are positive changes.

- Making a Neurodiversity Charter and track the number of people signing up.



3. **Tracking employment rates** and how long people with ADHD and autism stay in their jobs.



4. **Establishing a community of practice;** this means a group that will share information on what's going well, what is not and how everyone can do better.



5. **Developing better local data** gathering on the number of children, young people and Autistic adults and/or adults with ADHD in Kingston.



6. **Providing regular updates** on the work of the Autism and ADHD Partnership Board including progress of the action plans.

(The Board is a group of Experts by Experience and professionals who work together to make the lives of autistic people and people with ADHD in Kingston better. They are making the strategy and doing the action plan.)

