

# The changing landscape of autism in North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire's autism strategy 2015-2020 **made simple**



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## Introduction

Autism is a developmental disorder, which is also considered a disability, recognised by the Equality Act of 2010. There are an estimated 7,000 people with autism in North Yorkshire.

People with autism see things differently, and we want to see North Yorkshire as an 'autism friendly' place, so that this unique perspective is a welcome part of the local community, and that people with autism can contribute fully to local life, through education, employment opportunities and support for families.

## Why has a 'strategy made simple' been written?

A longer version of this autism strategy has been written. You can find it by clicking [here](#). When we asked people with autism, their families and organisations working with people with autism what they thought about the longer version they said it should be shorter, easier to read and written specifically by people with autism, for people with autism.

They said it should be clear, accessible and only contain the most important messages from the longer version of the strategy.

This 'strategy made simple' briefly describes the main aims of the work on autism in North Yorkshire. It says what is happening now in 2015, and what people with autism can expect from the services they access by 2020.

## Who has written the 'strategy made simple'?

We have produced this together with people who have autism and have asked others, including families and organisations working with people with autism for their feedback. This version you are reading reflects what we have produced and agreed together.

The main aims of the work on autism in North Yorkshire have been divided into seven 'themes'. The next few pages describe each theme and some of the work that will be done between 2015-2020. There is much more detail about each theme,

including how we aim to achieve our priorities, within the longer strategy document.



The main aims of the work on autism in North Yorkshire have been divided into seven 'themes'. The next few pages describe each theme and some of the work that will be done between 2015-2020.

## Theme 1 – Support for people with autism and their families

### What is available in 2015?

- Referrals can be made to access services provided by adults' or children's social care
- Short breaks are available to some families
- Advice is available around parenting, behaviour management and sleep
- Carers of people with autism are entitled to request a carers assessment for their own support needs

### Some of our priorities between 2015-2020 will be:

- We will provide information for families about autism, local services and support networks available
- We will provide training on autism for families

- We will provide flexible support for families through the Prevention Service
- We will support the development of autism friendly communities to reduce isolation and develop opportunities for making friends

## Theme 2 - Assessment and diagnosis

### What is available in 2015?

- There is a local assessment and diagnosis pathway for children and young people aged between 0-19
- A local assessment and diagnosis pathway for adults has been procured and will be available in late 2015 for all areas of North Yorkshire except Craven (Craven has an established diagnostic service already in place via Bradford District Care Trust)
- An information pack for parents is available when children receive a diagnosis of autism

### Some of our priorities between 2015-2020 will be:

- The assessment and diagnostic pathways will be continuously monitored and reviewed to improve the support for people with autism and their families
- Support provided following diagnosis will be reviewed alongside people with autism and their families
- Feedback from people with autism and their families about the assessment and diagnosis process will be taken into account to inform any changes



### Theme 3 – Raising awareness and training

#### What is available in 2015?

- As at September 2015 over 1500 social care staff have undertaken online autism awareness training
- North Yorkshire is a Yorkshire and Humber Autism Education Trust Early Years and Post 16 training hub
- Over 100 local authority staff have been designated ‘autism champions’ and have received enhanced training on autism
- 18 North Yorkshire County Council services are working to become National Autistic Society accredited

#### Some of our priorities between 2015-2020 will be:

- We will work to raise awareness of autism within local communities so that people have more understanding of autism and communities become more ‘autism friendly’
- We will extend training opportunities for staff in other public sector agencies

to raise awareness of autism

- We will promote understanding of the different ways that autism can affect groups of people, such as women, girls and older people

### Theme 4 – Information and signposting

#### What is available in 2015?

- 18 day, respite and autism outreach services within North Yorkshire have been given tablet computers containing apps to enhance sensory experiences, learn life skills and improve communication
- Some libraries hubs in North Yorkshire contain autism-specific resources for use by the public
- Customer service staff at North Yorkshire County Council have undertaken basic autism awareness training in order to better understand the needs of people calling to request advice and guidance
- North Yorkshire’s Local Offer has been developed ([Click here](#)).

#### Some of our priorities between 2015-2020 will be:

- We will use a wider range of communication methods to interact with people with autism and their families. These methods will be determined by people with autism and their families
- We will develop autism information hubs and networks both online and through North Yorkshire’s libraries
- We will make it easier for people to know how to access appropriate services and support



## Theme 5 – Employment and education

### What is available in 2015?

- A range of training and development opportunities have been made available for schools and educational settings to access
- The Inclusive Education Service has developed a single point of referral to ensure that schools can easily access support required
- North Yorkshire County Council's Supported Employment service provides guidance in looking for work, interview skills and supporting employees and employers when a person is in work to help them to maintain their job

### Some of our priorities between 2015-2020 will be:

- We will develop appropriate peer support for children and young people with autism
- Children and their families will report that their school is autism-friendly
- We will ensure that people with autism

seeking work feel enabled to do so and that employers feel confident when employing people with autism

- We will improve training opportunities and develop resources to support schools' understanding of their statutory requirements and understanding of autism

## Theme 6 – Supporting people with autism through key life changes including preparing for adulthood (transitions)

### What is available in 2015?

- We provide flexible and personalised packages of support for young people to continue in education or training
- We work with young people on integrated person-centred planning and assessment approaches through the transition period
- Young people with autism are able to request a care assessment and carers can request an assessment of their needs

### Some of our priorities between 2015-2020 will be:

- We will remove the perceived 'cliff-edge' for young people and their families through implementing a seamless model of support
- We will improve transition between primary and secondary and secondary and Further Education for young people with autism
- We will ensure that support planners and specialist careers advisers are knowledgeable about autism



## Theme 7 – Working together

### What is available in 2015?

- Groups have been set up to support the development of the autism strategy, and to monitor whether it achieves its aims
- A ‘virtual reference group’ has been created to involve people with autism, their families and interested groups in the development of autism provision around the county
- North Yorkshire Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the seven District and Borough Councils in North Yorkshire have been engaged in the development of the North Yorkshire autism strategy and have endorsed its key themes

### Some of our priorities between 2015-2020 will be:

- We will provide opportunities for all relevant public and voluntary sector organisations to be involved in autism development
- We will expand representation from people with autism and their families on the virtual reference group
- We will be transparent and honest about our work by regularly sharing progress against the key themes to as wide an audience as possible

The themes and the work needed to achieve our aims which we have described above don't go into any detail about how we will go about this work.

The longer version of the strategy ([please see document attached on lefthand panel](#)), gives more detail about what we plan to do and how we will do it.

We will also be developing a yearly ‘action plan’ with specific tasks which will be carried out by different organisations.

We will make sure that we review the plan to make sure that we are on track. The Health and Wellbeing Board will publish a report every year to let people with autism, their families and other interested parties know how we are doing, what we have achieved, and what work is left to do.

We are working hard to improve support for people with autism and to make North Yorkshire an autism-friendly place.

We hope that you find this document useful. If you have any queries please email us at

[autism@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:autism@northyorks.gov.uk) and we will do our best to answer your questions.

**Credits:** the images on the front cover of this ‘strategy made simple’ have been generously supplied by Rachel Moody and Sam Guy, two people with autism who live in North Yorkshire. Sam and Rachel use different media to create landscapes and they liked the idea of depicting the autism strategy as a changing landscape where services and support will look different between the start in 2015 and the end in 2020.

**If you want to see more of Sam and Rachel's work please contact them via their websites; [www.remporfolio.tumblr.com](http://www.remporfolio.tumblr.com) and [www.sguyphotography.com](http://www.sguyphotography.com)**

### Contact us

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