



Stockport's All-Age Autism Strategy 2023 – 2026

(Full Version)

Autistic people to feel safe, supported, included, and valued

Acknowledgements

This all-age Autism Strategy has been co-produced with our autistic community, their families, and local partners. We want to thank all the people who contributed to creating this strategy and its ongoing implementation plan.



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1. Foreword

In Stockport we are committed to improving the lives of autistic people. Our vision for 2030¹ sees us all working together to develop a borough which is inclusive, caring, enterprising and full of ambition. We want people to live the best lives they can and feel happy, healthy, included, and independent. For autistic residents, this means supporting autistic individuals and their families to achieve the best possible start in life; supporting positive transitions into adulthood; and reducing inequalities in employment opportunities, health, and care. The best way to achieve this is by working together as ONE system. We will work with autistic individuals, their families, carers, local groups, and partner organisations to create a sustainable person-centred system where professionals work together – recognising and building on the strengths and assets of autistic individuals. We intend to work with our local businesses to roll our ‘inclusivity award’ highlighting good practice.

Whilst as a system we are passionate about improving lives and reducing inequalities, we must recognise the current issues experienced by children, young people and adults who may face long wait times for assessment and diagnosis, sometimes years. This can cause stress, anxiety, frustration and a lack of access to the right support in schools, work and home, leading to mental health problems and possible crisis. As a system we must recognise and address these issues and work together to ensure appropriate pre and post diagnostic support is available to all autistic residents in Stockport.

I am pleased to be leading on Stockport’s first all-age Autism Strategy. This has been created in collaboration with our autistic community, both adults and children, their families and professionals working with them. We have spent time discussing the issues that they face and co-produced priorities to make a difference going forward. Our last Autism Strategy focused solely upon adults, whilst the service delivery had focused upon children. I intend to ensure that this is an all-age strategy, identifying all age gaps and offering all-age solutions. A clear governance structure has been created and our Autism Partnership Board has been re-established with new subgroups to ensure that we deliver on our promises.



Cheryl Knupfer, Strategic Lead for Autism

This new Stockport autism strategy is deliberately bold in its vision and in its ambitions. Our understanding of autism has changed substantially in recent years, and we are beginning to understand how many groups of autistic people have gone unseen or found it difficult or even impossible to access support in particular women and girls. This new strategy aims to address that.

Autistic people vary immensely, and our circumstances also vary. Some autistic people may live in supported environments, and some will live independently in family homes of their own. Some autistic people may work, possibly in senior professional roles, whilst far too many autistic people

Autistic people to feel safe, supported, included, and valued.

are unable to find employment. Some autistic people may be non-verbal, whilst others may be eloquent. But all of us share the experience of being autistic, the lived experience of anxiety that is part of the core of autism, and all of us will also have our own individual strengths.

By making sure that this new Stockport autism strategy includes the lived voices of autistic adults with direct lived experience, as well as the voices of autistic children and their family members, we aim to provide much better support in Stockport for so many autistic people who have previously been excluded from help and support. This applies to those autistic adults who do not also have a learning disability - we now understand they are some 85% of autistic adults, and they have previously been excluded from support.

One of my autistic colleagues summed it up very nicely: “We are not broken neurotypicals – we do not want to be fixed. We just need support and guidance to get on in life. Sometimes, each day feels like a battle.”



Nick Rosenthal, Autistic Adult and Co-chair of Stockport's Autism Partnership Board



2. Executive Summary

This three-year all-age Autism Strategy supports our aim for Stockport to become a place where autistic people and their families are understood, valued, and supported to achieve their individual ambitions.

It has been co-produced in partnership with autistic people and their families across Stockport. We have sought to capture their lived experiences and what is most important to them. The development of The Strategy was supported by Parents and Carers Together Stockport (PACTS), members of Stockport's autistic community, colleagues from partner organisations such as the NHS (National Health Service), Pennine Care, Greater Manchester Police, Stockport Homes, Primary Care Staff, and Stockport Council Staff.

This Strategy document is supported by a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which has enabled us to understand the demographics of autism across the community of Stockport. Both national and local data sources were used to provide up to date information specifically in relation to autism, illustrating that the number of people with an autism diagnosis across Stockport is predicted to rise. This is key to understanding how Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) and the NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care (GMIC) will support all autistic children, young people, and adults.

To steer and inform the strategy, seven subgroups have been established which include members of our autistic community and their families to ensure lived experience is heard and responded to. The subgroups have representatives from Social Care, Education, Housing, Health, Employment, Criminal Justice, and Advocacy, in addition to third sector organisations.



3. One Stockport Borough Plan

The ONE Stockport Borough Plan provides a shared vision and priorities for Stockport, developed in partnership with Stockport Council and Stockport based organisations and stakeholders, including people who live or work in the Borough.

It sets out an overarching vision for Stockport in 2030 as a ‘caring and growing’ and ‘fair and inclusive’ borough for everyone - where children have the best start in life, people live ‘the best lives they can – happy, healthy and independently’ and where diversity and inclusion are celebrated, and everyone has equity of opportunity.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <h2>ONE HEART</h2> | <h2>ONE HOME</h2> | <h2>ONE FUTURE</h2> |
| <p>At the heart of Stockport are its people and the communities in which they live.</p> | <p>Stockport is a great place to live, where no one is left behind.</p> | <p>Growing, creating and delivering a thriving future for Stockport.</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 A caring and growing Stockport Stockport is a great place to grow where children have the best start in life 2 A healthy and happy Stockport People live the best lives they can - happy, healthy and independently 3 A strong and supportive Stockport Confident and empowered communities working together to make a difference | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 A fair and inclusive Stockport A borough for everyone - diversity and inclusion is celebrated and everyone has equity of opportunity 2 A flourishing and creative Stockport Stockport is an exciting place to live, where people are active and celebrate the culture 3 A climate friendly Stockport Stockport is a responsible and sustainable borough | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 An enterprising and thriving Stockport A thriving economy which works for everyone 2 A skilled and confident Stockport Everyone has the opportunities and skills to successfully achieve their ambitions 3 A radically digital Stockport A digitally inclusive and dynamic borough |

The Stockport all-age Autism Strategy contributes to all three ambitions and is one of a suite of strategies and plans which sit beneath the overarching ONE Stockport Borough Plan.



4. Background

Legislation that has shaped this strategy

2009 – The Autism Act²

The first national guidance and legislation specifically aimed at provision for autism was ‘The Autism Act’ (2009); this put a duty on Central Government to produce, and regularly review, a National Autism Strategy to meet the needs of autistic adults in England. This included a duty to produce statutory guidance for local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (from April 2022 known as NHS Greater Integrated Care (GMIC)) to implement strategies locally.

At the core of this, there is a duty on every local area to have:

- A pathway to diagnosis for adults
- A named joint commissioner/ senior manager to lead commissioning of care and support services for autistic adults
- A meaningful local autistic partnership arrangement that brings together different organisations, services, and stakeholders (including autistic adults) to locally set the direction of services
- A means of collecting data and information on the needs of the local autistic population and inclusion of this information in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- A joint commissioning plan for services for autistic adults based on the JSNA
- A plan to make sure that staff across health and care have training in autism, appropriate to their roles
- Specific training in place for community care assessors

2010 – Implementing “Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives”³

[Fulfilling and rewarding lives: the strategy for adults with autism in England](#) set a clear framework for all mainstream services across the public sector to work together for autistic adults.

2014 – Think Autism⁴

The national guidance “Implementing and Rewarding Lives” and “Think Autism” puts a statutory duty on local authorities and health services to have in place plans in relation to the provision of service for autistic people. It states that local authorities and NHS bodies need to work in collaboration with local partners to take forward the key priorities in ‘Think Autism.’ Crucially, at its core, autistic people need to have access to a clear pathway to meet their needs and know that this pathway is aligned with care and support assessments, and that there is post-diagnostic support available from relevant agencies even if the person does not meet social care support criteria. Commissioning decisions need to be based on knowledge and awareness of autism, the needs of the local population, and informed by autistic people and their families. The national guidance sets out requirements for local authorities and NHS organisations. It set out the statutory duty to work together with partners to develop a strategy for autistic people and gives a framework of what this should include, for example, in the criminal justice system, into employment. It provides clarity

about what they must do to meet the needs of autistic adults including preventative support and safeguarding.

2021 – National All-Age Autism Strategy⁵

The new National All-Age Autism Strategy is the government’s refreshed national strategy for improving the lives of autistic people and their families and carers in England. The scope of the strategy is extended to children and young people for the first time and recognises the importance of ensuring that autistic children receive early diagnosis and the right support as early as possible and across their lifetime.

The strategy is informed by our understanding of the challenges faced by autistic people and their experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategy sets out a vision for the next five years underpinned by six themes:

- i. Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society
- ii. Improving autistic children and young people’s access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood
- iii. Supporting more autistic people into employment
- iv. Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people
- v. Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
- vi. Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems

2022 – GM (Greater Manchester) All-Age Autism Strategy⁶

The Greater Manchester Autism Strategy was launched in 2022 and sets out the following vision: -

“To work towards making Greater Manchester an autism friendly place to live. This means a place where you can get a timely diagnosis with support, meet professionals with a good understanding of autism, find services, organisations and employers that make reasonable adjustments when required, where people can feel safe, have aspirations and fulfil their potential, and become a full member of the local community.”

The Greater Manchester Strategy includes 4 key areas of work:

Access - making sure that public services for autistic people are accessible; that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in mainstream settings and that staff in these settings are trained.

Community - making sure that autistic people and their families can take part in their communities, fulfil their role as active citizens and access the information and help to which they are entitled.

Health and support – making sure the planning of health and care services is informed by local need and ensuring access to diagnosis and post diagnostic support for autistic individuals and their families.

Employment and transition - including employment support and supporting the transition into adulthood for autistic people and family members

2023 - GM Adult’s Standards⁷ and Children’s Standards⁸

The Greater Manchester (GM) Post Diagnosis Standards for autistic children and adults will ensure equity of quality post diagnostic support across the region, regardless of postcode. The standards set out what is required for neurodivergent people who may be on pre-assessment pathways, the information that autistic people receive about autism and the ongoing support they might need. All

localities are being asked to implement post diagnostic support standards listed in this document. The standards will continue to be reviewed, and in the coming 12-18 months' time there will be an audit undertaken to assess progress in each locality.

Other Relevant Legislation

2015 – SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Code of Practice⁹

Meanwhile, for children, the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice \(2015\)](#), continues to place duties on local authorities, NHS organisations and schools in respect of autistic children and young people. Meanwhile, for children, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice published in 2015, places duties on Local Authorities, NHS organisations and schools in respect of autistic children and young people.

2015 – Building the Right Support¹⁰

Building the Right Support sets out a clear framework to develop more community services for people with learning disabilities and/ or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition. It follows on from Transforming Care, a national programme of work focussed on improving health and care services so that more people can live in the community, with the right support, and close to home.

2017 – Lenehan Report¹¹

The Lenehan report provides strategic overview and recommendations about practical action that can be taken to co-ordinate care, support and treatment for children and young people with complex needs involving mental health problems and learning disabilities and/ or autism.

2019 – Learning Disability and Autism Long Term Plan¹²

The NHS has a crucial role to play in helping people with a learning disability, autism or both lead longer, happier, and healthier lives. Our NHS Long Term Plan aims to improve people's health by making sure they receive timely and appropriate health checks, while improving the level of awareness and understanding across the NHS of how best to support them as patients.

2023 – Dynamic Support Register and Care (Education) and Treatment Review – Policy and Guidance¹³

This recent document provides policy and guidance for both Dynamic Support Registers (DSRs) and Care (Education) and Treatment Reviews (C(E)TRs, which are both key elements of a pathway providing people with a learning disability and autistic people with appropriate support and care at the right time – so that they can lead the lives they want to and meet their ambitions and aspiration; and can stay safely and healthily in the community or return to this as soon as possible



5. Stockport's Progress to Date

- In August 2021 Stockport appointed a Strategic Lead for Autism for an initial 12-month period, to strengthen Stockport's infrastructure around autism. The Strategic Lead role was to oversee the development of an all-age Autism Strategy and action plan, in line with other GM (Greater Manchester) authorities to improve outcomes for autistic adults, children and their families.
- Established an Adult Autism assessment team locally so that adults no longer need to access out of borough services.
- Established an Adult Autism Social Care Team.
- Created a clear governance structure to ensure that the Autism Programme is a key priority for the One Health and Care Board (Integrated Care Locality Partnership).
- Refreshed the Autism JSNA 2022 to gain a clear understanding of the current picture.
- Re-established the Autism Partnership Board. This is now co-chaired by Nick Rosenthal, an autistic adult alongside the Director for Family Help and Integration in the local authority, who has a broad all age and cross system lens, to ensure true co-production.
- Created 7 subgroups that meet every 6 weeks to take forward the necessary work, all subgroups have members of our local autistic community, capturing lived experience to share our vision.
- Carried out a 12-month 'test for change pilot' responding to children's autism assessment referrals offering early intervention and multi-agency working. Created a new referral form with a parental option.
- Co-produced training webinars with PACTS (Parents and Carers Together Stockport) that parents/ carers identified as areas of need.
- Co-produced an 'Inclusivity Award' to make Stockport a more inclusive borough.
- Co-produced whole school peer awareness training.
- Piloted neurodiverse job profiles within Stockport Family.
- Rolled out the Autism Education Trust training programme to all settings Early Years to Post-16.
- Successful in the Autism in Schools bid promoting a whole school response.
- Joined the GM groups to embed their priorities and commitments at a local level.
- Created a work profile for autistic adults.
- Created visual aids to aid understanding with autism assessment appointments.
- Took learning from COVID-19 and made changes to service delivery for example started to offer face-to-face or virtual meetings.



6. Our Vision and Understanding

This all-age Strategy will be vastly different to our previous autism strategies, in response to changes in our societal understanding of autism over the past ten years.

We want to highlight some of these changes in our understanding and how they impact upon our vision for autistic people of all ages living in Stockport. We have had a fundamental 're-think' about what an autistic person might look like, what sort of life they live and what their needs might be, in terms accessing a range of services from education and health care to transport and employment, to living an active and fulfilling life.

We recognise that previous strategies have not been as successful as we had hoped for. Previous strategies have focused solely upon adults, whilst the service delivery had focused upon children. This strategy aims to focus on recognising and responding to the 'unseen groups' of autistic people. We want to recognise that there is a much broader range of autistic adults living in Stockport, some may require intensive support whilst others may live independently, have their own families and work in professional jobs, yet still may require occasional support. We also recognise that autistic girls and women, and ethnic minorities have gone unseen for far too long. Previous strategies have suggested a higher prevalence of Learning Disability amongst our autistic population. Our own GP data highlights that only 13.6% of our autistic population have a LD (Learning Disability) diagnosis. For many years we have worked on an autism prevalence figure of 1% of the population. We now know that this figure is an underestimate. From a range of studies and anecdotal evidence from across Stockport we know that this figure is more likely to be 2-3% of our population. To confirm this, we know that here in Stockport we have at least one autistic pupil in each class of thirty children.

From Stockport's JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2023)¹⁴ and through discussions with a range of autistic people whilst creating the JSNA, we know that there are considerable gaps in the support that we offer.

Support from identification of need, regardless of a diagnosis: At present there are significant waiting times for an autism assessment across our three pathways: Pre-School, School-Age, and Adults. Currently a lot of the support offered is post-diagnostic support and our aim is to move to a needs-led support offer. Our vision is to provide support from identification of need. We aim to review current services to free up capacity to enable us to work in a new way. We will take learning from the 'Portsmouth Model' to be able to screen children and young people with a neurodiverse profile and implement a support plan in all relevant settings.

Support for adults over 30: The JSNA highlights that as a local area and health service provider, we simply do not know who the autistic adults are over 30 in Stockport. We aim to get to know our autistic adults to further understand the needs and gaps in our offer and explore ways of providing greater support.

Girls & Women: The JSNA data shows us that we are diagnosing many more males than females. Girls appear to be both misdiagnosed and undiagnosed. The 2022 "Keeping it all inside"¹⁵ report by

the Autistic Girl's Network gives a good overview of modern thinking around autism. Our aim is to ensure that our staff receive up to date training to further improve understanding. We will ensure that we have representation on our groups of autistic females to continue to capture the voice of autistic girls and women.

Accessing Healthcare: Our autistic community inform us that they have difficulty accessing a broad range of healthcare services and more reasonable adjustments are required. These issues were highlighted in the Westminster Autism Commission report "A Spectrum of Obstacles 2016".¹⁶ Our aim is to work with our autistic community and senior health leads to highlight these challenges and improve access to healthcare for our local autistic community.

Stockport's vision to support our autistic community

- ❖ Early family support offered upon identification of needs
- ❖ A commitment to co-production and clear communication
- ❖ An all-age autism assessment pathway
- ❖ A website to signpost to services and support
- ❖ Autistic representation upon the Autism Partnership Board and subgroups
- ❖ An all-age training offer
- ❖ Utilise learning from the new JSNA to address gaps within the new strategy
- ❖ Support at key transition times
- ❖ Use strength-based language



7. Autism Definition and Terminology

This strategy uses identity-first language (Autistic people rather than people with autism) this was the stated preference of our community that we consulted within Stockport. This also aligns with research led by the National Autistic Society based on the response of over 3,000 people. We do, however acknowledge that some people prefer the term “person with autism.”

Autism affects how people communicate and interact with the world. A conservative estimate is that one in 100 people are autistic and The National Autistic Society estimates there are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the United Kingdom (UK).

Autism is often seen as a neuro type which means autistic people share a similar thinking style. This is unique and different to a neurotypical thinking style. As the world is often designed by and for a neurotypical style, the environment can often cause autistic people a great deal of stress. Getting the right support and understanding can make an enormous difference to autistic people.

Below is a definition from Andy Smith founder of Spectrum gaming:



Just like every other brain type (yes, that includes 'normal' brains too!), the autistic brain has its negatives and things that make life more difficult. But autistic brains also have many positives that others may never have the opportunity to experience. These may include having a logical brain with good attention to detail, the ability to focus deeply, strong memory skills and unique thought processes. Autistic people place less value on small talk and more on openness and honesty. Autistic people may also have lots of knowledge and skills in one specific area.

The key to happiness is to focus on your positives, and then either work on or make adjustments for the difficulties that you experience.

But the world is made for the majority, and we are expected to be like the majority too because people cannot see our brains are wired differently. So autistic people are often expected to conform to a world that is not made for them, meaning we do not get much opportunity to show our true strengths or prove our potential.

There is another big difficulty autistic people face, which is that most people are afraid of difference. If you have an interest that is different from most, you may be judged for it. If you react to your sensory differences or are feeling anxious, people often lack empathy and put you through difficult experiences that you are not ready for. If you talk, act, or behave in a different way, people may misunderstand or mistreat you because they do not understand. Even without these environmental barriers, autism has its difficulties. But we aspire to live in a world where there is a level playing field and where autistic people have the best possible chance of thriving.

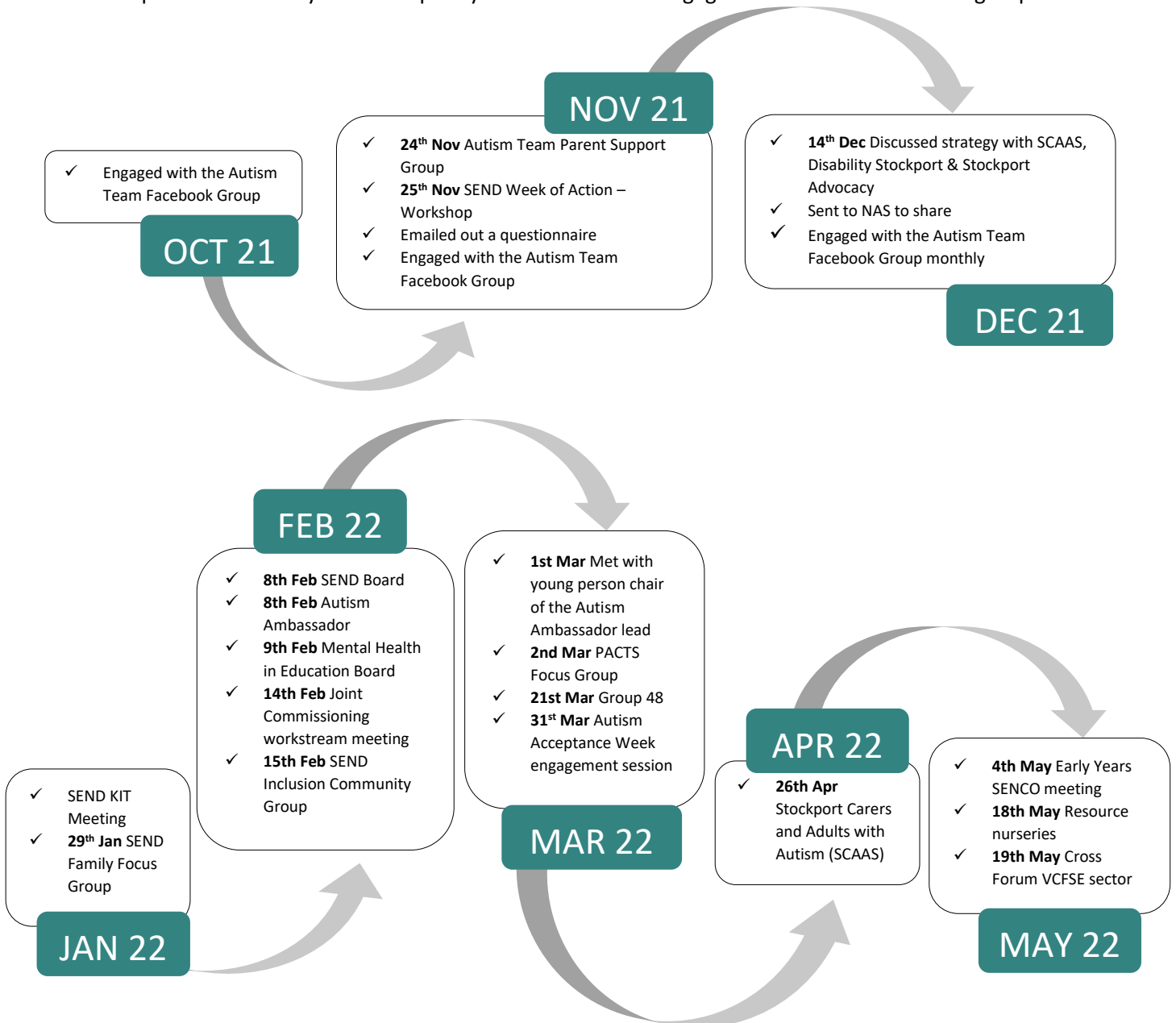
Then, for background information around autism diagnosis, there is the Westminster Autism Commission's report from 2021 on "Support Surrounding Diagnosis":
<https://barrysheerman.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/westminster-commission-on-autism-report-support-surrounding-diagnosis.pdf>¹⁷

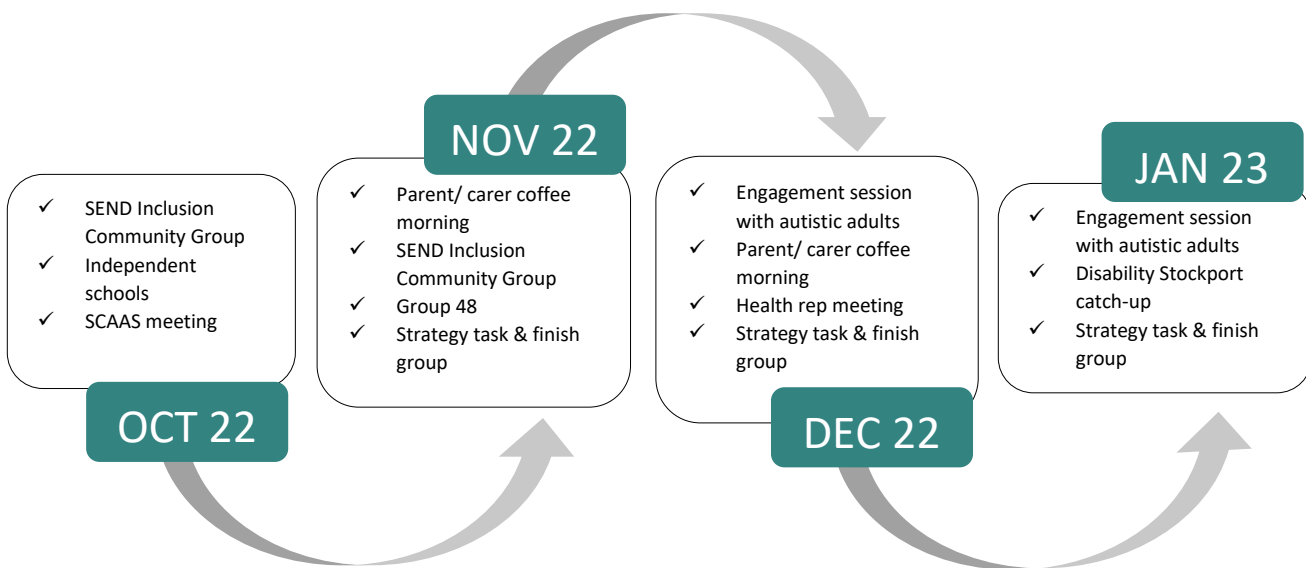
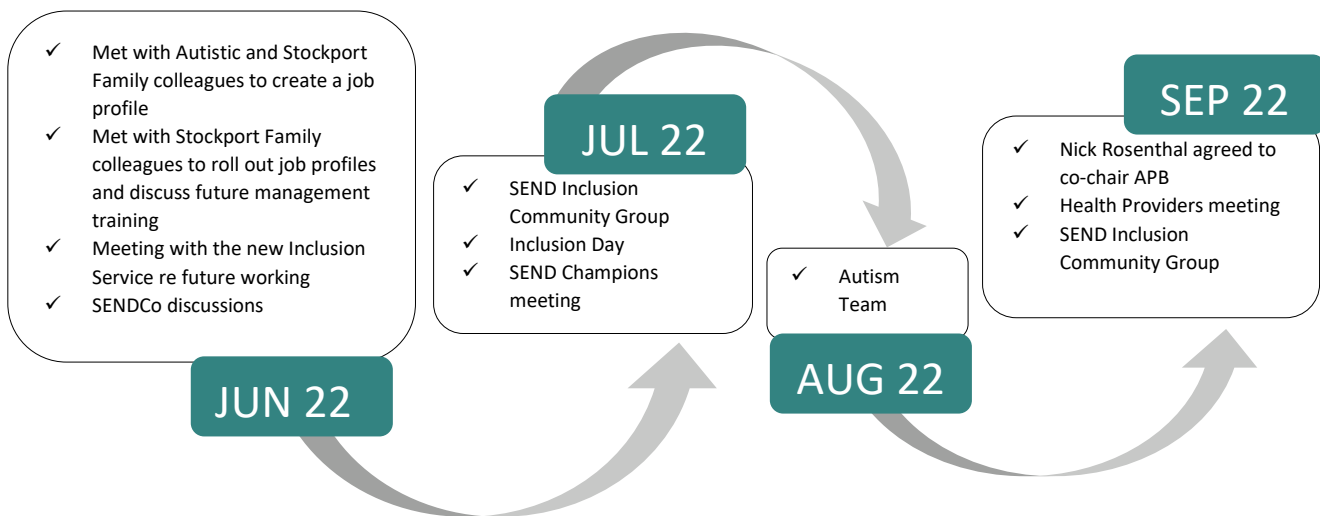


8. Engagement and Co-production

The Stockport Borough Plan strongly emphasises that through working together and supporting each other, we can create a Borough that gives everyone a voice. On that note, to develop an all-age Autism Strategy, we needed to hear from the community so that our priorities will strongly reflect people's voice.

We have engaged with over 400 members of the autistic community in Stockport. This includes engaging with almost 200 people through attending community groups, delivering workshops with parents/ carers of autistic adults and children and young people and engagement with autistic adults, children, and young people. We also sought feedback from the community and received 116 responses in a survey as well as plenty of comments and engagements via local Facebook groups.





Stockport All-Age Autism Strategy 2023-2026 - Shaping Our Strategy

Values

Stockport is committed to co-production in all our work and has agreed a coproduction charter which can be found [here](#).¹⁸

We want to ensure that all participation is meaningful, and individuals and their families feel valued throughout. Building and maintaining relationships is the most important thing.

Coproduction:

- *Strengthens relationships and trust between members of society and professionals or organisations that provide services*
- *Improves resilience, sustainability, and ownership for the future of an individual's or community's health and social care*
- *Transforms power within society and is vital to individuals' autonomy, empowerment, and trust (Summer, 2021)*

For meaningful participation and engagement to take place we must create a space (virtual or physical) where people are supported, provided the right information and tools to have their voices heard, and have the right audience for their views to be included within decision making.

Principles of Participation from Experts by Experience

The below principles have been produced with feedback from communities and their families. For positive participation to work, you must adopt all the following principles:

- ✓ Relationships – Prioritise and strengthen relationships
- ✓ Expectations & Communication – Think transparency, honesty, and clarity of purpose
- ✓ Feedback – let us know what difference our voice is making (we said, you did)
- ✓ Help us work with you – we may need additional support to have our views heard
- ✓ Co-create priorities with people who are impacted by, and who access the services
- ✓ Support the inclusion of lesser heard voices
- ✓ Do not assume – just because we did not attend an event or fill in a form does not mean we do not have anything to say
- ✓ Create the right environment with the right people
- ✓ Do not ask us there to tick a box – do no harm
- ✓ Engage with trusted community members – Do not break this trust
- ✓ Reward us for our time
- ✓ Include us with any decisions which may mean we lose resources; we may be upset but we want to be part of the process
- ✓ Respect our experiences as experts
- ✓ Be empathic – Human First

Our work is underpinned by the following values: -

- We are inclusive – we believe our difference and unique experiences need to be celebrated

Autistic people to feel safe, supported, included, and valued.

- We proactively address inequality and hold ourselves accountable for everyone feeling included and valued
- We are ambitious – we believe in Stockport, our people and the places that make up our Borough. We are continuously challenging ourselves to be the best we can be for Stockport
- We are collaborative – we believe in working together, including with our citizens, openly and honestly
- We support each other and always work together for the benefit of Stockport

Principles

Our approach is based on the following principles:

- Person centred – putting people at the heart of our services, recognising their skills, networks, and assets. Professionals and organisations will work together for our communities
- Place based – working together across Stockport and within neighbourhoods to support shared populations and ensure decisions are taken closer to the communities they affect. Considering the entire system and responding to complexity with collaboration
- Outcomes focused – delivering excellence in our services, health and wellbeing outcomes, leadership and in how we support our colleagues. Being innovative and informed by evidence
- Strengths and asset-based – recognising the strengths and assets individuals and communities bring and proactively engaging with them to co-produce the right support. Enabling personal growth and empowering people to determine and achieve their goals, drawing on their own and their communities' assets
- Fair – reducing inequalities at the core of all we do, with links to wider public services and determinants of health. Valuing diversity and adapting ways of working to empower all our communities
- Sustainable – able to meet changing local needs within the available place-based budget. Make best use of digital technology to support our work and enable independence. Working together to respond to the challenge of climate change

Lived Experience – Issues Raised

Understanding the lived experience of autistic people in Stockport is vital for ensuring we are focusing on the issues that are important. The next two pages summarise the current issues raised by autistic people, by age cohort.

- Limited transition support into school
- Gap between the Child Development Unit and the Children’s Mental Health Service assessment pathways
- Limited family support offer
- Lack of Early Years autism training
- Childminders not asked for their input/ advice
- Lack of accessible resources
- Limited parenting training

Early Years



- Limited transition support
- Lack of work experience opportunities
- Many services end at 16 years old
- Limited family support
- Unaware of employment support

Transition to Adulthood



- Autistic young people do not feel that staff recognise their individual needs
- Staff in settings do not have appropriate training
- Universal services and settings struggle to meet the needs of autistic children and young people
- Long assessment waiting lists
- Difficult to navigate the local offer to understand what short breaks and activities are available
- Home-educated children do not have the same access to information as those in settings
- Parents/ carers are unaware of the available support
- Limited transition support and preparation for changes such as Christmas activities and school trips
- Limited pre-diagnostic support
- Limited access to activities and short breaks
- Club and activity staff not trained to meet needs of autistic young people
- Limited support for children who are not accessing school
- Not currently seeing the full educational potential of autistic young people
- The school environment lacks break out areas, providing young people with the time and space they require to regulate their emotions

School Age



- Unable to access disability travel passes to help overcome social isolation
- Need to identify autistic adults over 30 in Stockport
- Lack of employment support
- Lack of support in the workplace – understanding and reasonable adjustments
- Need to understand the wide range of needs of all autistic individuals and their family members
- Limited post-diagnostic support is required for the individual and their family members
- Inadvertent discrimination when accessing appointments from making a GP appointment to requesting a travel pass – most autistic people prefer online booking systems to telephone calls
- Many autistic adults aged 30+ years are undiagnosed
- Many autistic adults do not meet the Care Act criteria but require an element of support at different points. This need is not currently met by services
- Difficulty accessing health care appointments (GPs and hospitals)
- Lack of clear understanding of autism from healthcare staff
- Lack of peer-led post-diagnostic support groups or courses offer real insight to newly diagnosed autistic people and help them understand their autism.
- Reported feeling lonely and isolated, limited access to clubs and activities
- Lack of support for autistic females around pregnancy and the menopause
- No central place to access support and services

Adults



- Unable to access disability travel passes to help overcome social isolation
- Limited access to healthcare
- Lack of training for care staff and Social Workers
- Services need to understand how to support autistic people (including those who are undiagnosed)
- Care home environment/ activities are not always suitable for autistic people

Older Adults





9. Learning from Stockport's Autism JSNA 2023

The JSNA has highlighted the following areas of concern that this strategy needs to address:

- Unclear data regarding our autistic adult population
- Access to healthcare services
- Access to local community activities
- Many services do not have a digital autism indicator which misinforms us about the true needs of our autistic community
- Lengthy delays for an autism assessment (all-age)
- 75% autistic individuals do not have a Learning Disability
- The need for all-age pre-diagnostic and post-diagnostic work
- Clear training programme needed
- Improved communication with our autistic community – creation of an all-age autism website

National prevalence estimates suggest that there are 3,000-3,250 autistic people in Stockport. Around 1,000 of these being children and 2,250 being adults, and with a strong gender profile with about eight times more males than females identified. We know however that these estimates are often based on studies from several years ago and that these may well underestimate the true prevalence, the prevalence could be as high as 2-3%, new research due to be published in 2023 will enable us to better estimate true prevalence levels. We know that many autistic adults in Stockport are still unknown to services (Health and Social Care).

GPs have 2,116 autistic people on their records in Stockport, this is lower than estimated prevalence of 3,000-3,250, and we recognise that many autistic adults over 30 may not have a formal diagnosis of autism, may not know they are autistic or may not have told their GP they are autistic. However, GP recording levels have increased by more than 80% from the last JSNA (2016) when the number diagnosed was 1,170. Most of the increase has occurred in those under 30 years old. In the younger age groups the level of diagnosis is similar to the more recent estimates of around 2%.

Analysis by area of residence shows that there is an increase in autism diagnosis rates as deprivation increases. This relationship is not as strong a deprivation profile as for other conditions, such as learning disability, depression, or heart disease, but does suggest that autistic people are more likely to be in areas of social disadvantage.

Across primary, secondary, and independent schools in Stockport there are an estimated 1,500 autistic pupils, around 2.9% of all pupils in primary schools and 4.5% of all pupils in secondary schools, this level is higher than the expected prevalence. Around 1,000 pupils are identified as SEND with a primary need of autism, a number similar to the estimated prevalence.

Our JSNA data therefore shows that in many cases services in Stockport do not know all autistic people in our community, especially if they are aged over 30. If the same prevalence rates apply as in younger age groups, then most autistic people over about 30 are not only undiagnosed formally, but possibly also do not realise they are autistic. Being autistic without knowing it could represent a serious threat to a person's health and wellbeing, so we need to address this 'knowledge gap'.

Impact of Autism

National data shows that autistic adults aged 16-64 years are much less likely to be employed (29%) and are much more likely to have no qualifications (25%) than the population with no disabilities (90% and 5% respectively). Many autistic adults live with their parents (76%). However, autistic adults may live alone, or have their own families and may hold professional jobs.

One of the most important investigations¹⁹ of recent years revealed that the average age of death (mean) of our autistic population is between 39.5 years and 58.4 years. The non-autistic population average age of death in the study was 70.2 years, meaning on average autistic people lost 30 years of life.

Services for Autism

Since August 2019 there have been 1,009 referrals to the children's Autism Team, an average of 26 per month. The children's post-diagnostic Autism Team have 1,301 active autism cases aged 4-16, 545 are aged 4-10 years, 756 are aged 11-16 years.

In February 2021 Stockport established a dedicated adult Autism Social Care Team. From April 2021 to October 2022, 100 autistic adults have received support from Adult Social Care. This is a small proportion of the overall number of autistic adults due to Care Act eligibility. There is a stark contrast in the support dedicated to children and young people than to the support available to our autistic adults. Many other autistic adults in Stockport report considerable difficulties in accessing any form of support.

Assessment for Autism

In the past year there have been 95 pre-school referrals and 538 school-age referrals to the assessment pathway for an autism diagnosis. Around 37% of pre-school assessments result in a diagnosis of autism. Referrals for adult assessment have increased substantially over the last 8 years, rising from around 60 per year in 2014/15 to around 300 per year since 2019/20, reflecting better awareness and improved pathways. Stockport services currently offer no post-diagnostic support for autistic adults and their families. Limited support is available via VCSFE and peer support networks.

The Impact of Covid 19

All communities and every aspect of children and adults' services have been affected by Covid-19. However, the experiences of individuals have varied greatly. The pandemic has reinforced inequalities and has placed further pressure on many autistic individuals and their families.

The National Autistic Society²⁰ has worked with four other leading autism organisations to better understand the impact of the pandemic on autistic individuals and their families. Their findings highlight the often disproportionate and devastating impact of the pandemic on the mental health, wellbeing and education prospects of autistic people and their families.

They found that:

- 9 in 10 autistic people worried about their mental health during lockdown
- 85% said their anxiety levels increased
- Autistic people were 7 times more likely to be chronically lonely than the general population and 6 times more likely to have low life satisfaction (comparisons using ONS (Office for National Statistics) data)

- 1 in 5 family members responding to the survey had to reduce work due to caring responsibilities
- 7 in 10 parents say their child has had difficulty understanding or completing schoolwork and around half said their child's academic progress was suffering

We engaged with Stockport's parents/ carers of autistic children and young people to gain understanding of the impact that COVID-19 had upon them. We received 107 responses.

Out of 107 responses:

- 84% reported that their child/ young person struggled to engage with home learning
- 52% reported that their child/ young person struggled to return to school following COVID-19
- 87% reported that there was a reduction in their child/ young person's communication and engagement
- 93% reported an increase in their child/ young person's mental health
- 88% reported an increase in their own mental health



10. Our Priorities

The Stockport all-age Autism Strategy mirrors the national and Greater Manchester Autism Strategies and focuses on the 6 national priorities:

- **Priority 1: Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within Stockport**
- **Priority 2: Improving autistic children and young people’s access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood**
- **Priority 3: Supporting more autistic people into employment**
- **Priority 4: Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people**
- **Priority 5: Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care**
- **Priority 6: Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems**

| Priority 1: Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within Stockport | | | | |
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| In line with the National Autism Strategy: | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve public understanding and acceptance of autism, and that autistic people feel more included in their communities, and less lonely and/or isolated. | | | | |
| You said... | We will... | How we will get there | How it will be measured | What Will Good Look Like? |
| Our autistic community and their families said that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of autism in Stockport, leaving them feeling excluded | Develop a greater understanding and acceptance of autism with our local communities, community representatives and staff and provide guidance on how to make reasonable adjustments to be more inclusive to our autistic community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture current training offer Identify current gaps in training Coproduce and create a tiered, inclusive training programme to roll out across Stockport Training information to be accessible on the new autism web page Create a communication passport for our autistic community to share with local businesses and services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback (case studies) from autistic community Capture number of organisations that adopt the training Capture number of people that undertake the training Evaluation forms to be completed pre and post training Track web traffic on the autism webpage Feedback from our autistic community and services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeing a real change on the ground and in everyday lived experience of autistic people who are trying to engage with local services and overcome isolation Communication passports to be in operation |
| Our autistic community and their families said they were unaware of the local support | For our autistic community to become aware of the local support available to them and how to access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture the current support offer for our autistic community Identify current gaps in our support offer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from autistic community on use of the webpage Feedback from autistic community re knowledge of local available support | A centralised platform to signpost autistic people to services that provide meaningful support |

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| available, making them feel isolated | this support, reducing feelings of isolation | Create an autism webpage containing up to date information regarding our local support offer for our autistic community (all age) including activity information | Track web traffic on the autism webpage | Ongoing engagement sessions and co-production to ensure communication and updates are shared effectively and in a sensitive manner More people accessing correct services as signposting is efficient |
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Priority 2: Improving autistic children and young people's access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood

In Line with the National Autism Strategy:

- We want all education settings to provide better and more inclusive support to autistic children and young people
- We want transitions into adulthood to improve for autistic people

| You Said... | We Will... | How we will get there | How it will be measured | What Will Good Look Like? |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Our autistic young people said that their individual needs are not understood by their teachers | Support teaching staff and pastoral support staff within schools to develop a greater understanding of autistic students' individual needs | <p>Ensure all autistic young people in all settings have a one-page profile which is proactively used to inform staff of their strengths, challenges, and useful strategies to best support their needs</p> <p>The Autism Team will conduct post-diagnostic planning meetings within three months of receiving the diagnosis to support schools in creating an individualised plan</p> <p>Roll out Autism Education Trust (AET) training in all settings</p> <p>Pilot Autism in Schools project in three schools – Oaktree Primary School, Adswold Primary School, and Stockport Academy</p> <p>Roll out peer acceptance training to children and young people (whole school assemblies)</p> | <p>Capture feedback from our autistic students and parent/ carers as to whether the one-page profiles are being proactively used</p> <p>Inclusion Service to check-in with school staff regarding their understanding of the individual's one-page profile needs</p> <p>Run a report on system to check that the meetings occur within the 3-month timescale</p> <p>Feedback from school staff and parents/carers re planning meeting</p> <p>Evaluation forms pre and post AET training from teaching staff</p> <p>Collect data re number of teaching staff that have undertaken AET training</p> <p>AET competency framework (Audit tool)</p> <p>Autism in schools' evaluation reports</p> | <p>Staff will be aware of the autistic student's needs as outlined in their one-page profile and will make appropriate adaptations within their teaching and learning approaches</p> <p>Staff will predict situations that could heighten anxiety levels and put in reasonable adjustments such as pre warning and visual aids for class trips. Feedback will be gained from children and young person interviews completed by school staff/ The Autism Team</p> <p>50% of schools engaging in the AET training</p> <p>Good transition support in place from year to year and on to future provisions evident from child and parent voice</p> <p>Fewer exclusions (see figures in current JSNA)</p> <p>Autistic young people report that they feel happier attending school evident through children and young people interviews completed by school staff/ The Autism Team</p> <p>Less part time timetables and much more flexible schooling options</p> |

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| Parents and carers said that they wanted guidance re alternative learning arrangements e.g., part-time timetables | Create and circulate clear guidance re alternative learning arrangement for autistic children | Co-produce guidance on alternative learning arrangements and share on the Autism webpage | Feedback from parents & carers on the guidance once it has been developed Data collection from all age autism site around number of times guidance was accessed | Parents and carers report that they have clear access to the information and feel supported in making alternative learning arrangements Improved attendance rates and reduced exclusion rates |
| Parents and carers said that there is little support available for children and young people in education that are home educated or out of school | Ensure that children and young people who are home-educated or out of school, have the same fair access to information that is routinely shared by settings | Ensure that the Local Offer and all age autism website keeps families up to date re local support Ensure that communications are improved, and information is routinely shared with the Elective Home Education Team and families | Data from local offer site on number of times page viewed Feedback from parents and carers of home educated/out of education autistic young people | Parents and carers of children and young people that are either home educated or out of school report that they know how to access the information and are aware of the local support offer |
| Parents, Carers, and specialist school staff report a different offer for young people who attend specialist provisions | Ensure that children and young people who attend specialist settings have an equal access to support from services | Work with parents, carers, and specialist staff to identify gaps and gain a greater understanding of their needs Services to explore a wider support offer Clearly outline the available sources of support on the council webpages | Feedback from parents, carers, and specialist school staff | A fair and equal offer is available for autistic children and young people despite which school they may attend |
| Parents and carers of autistic children and young people have said that they are unaware of the support available in schools once a need has been identified | Clearly outline the early support offer on school SEN information reports and on our council website | Review the current pathway for Neurodiverse students from identification of need Identify the current gaps and design a new Early Support Offer Roll out a phased Early Support approach | Dip samples of information reports as measure Feedback from parents & carers Feedback from parent/carers/staff and professionals | A clear early family help offer in place that those interviewed are aware of Clear explanation from schools about what the offer is regarding SEN support and the graduated response, how that looks in school on a day-to-day basis (clearly outlining reasonable adjustments made and showing the impact) |
| Parents and carers report a lack of support and understanding around the need for continuity of provision at all key transition times | Raise awareness and understanding around continuity of education, access and learning at all levels, including transition within and between schools | Work with our autistic community to further develop existing transition resources and approaches which embed a person-centred approach Share these resources with all settings and wider teams and share on the council webpages | Data from local offer/autism webpage Feedback from parents and carers from school to college Feedback from parents/ carers/ young people and college staff Capture numbers of EHCPs and SEN Support Plans with a transition review in year 9 and clear and agreed plan at the point of transition | Transition support in place from year to year and to other provisions Up to date key information shared from one setting to the other as a child/ young person transitions |
| Parents and carers informed | Increase the awareness of | Outline the post-16 support offer on our | Data from our webpage | A clear post-16 offer for all to access |

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| us that there were unaware of Stockport's post 16 support offer | our post-16 support offer and our Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) ambitions | <p>autism webpage and circulate to relevant services</p> <p>Create and circulate transition resources</p> <p>Children's and adults' services to work together to improve transition</p> <p>PFA targets to be clear in all SEN support and EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) paperwork, with an explicit focus from Year 9 reviews onwards</p> <p>Rollout PFA training across the Borough</p> | <p>Feedback from autistic people transitioning into adulthood</p> <p>Feedback from parents/carers</p> <p>Evidence of PFA targets in paperwork moderation</p> <p>Numbers of people attending the PFA courses</p> | |
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Priority 3: Supporting more autistic people into employment

In Line with the National Autism Strategy:

- Improve the support autistic people can access to find and stay in work
- For employers to have become more confident in hiring and supporting autistic people, and that autistic people's experience of being in work has improved

| You Said... | We Will... | How we will get there | How it will be measured | What Will Good Look Like? |
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| Our autistic community said they were unaware of the support available to help them find employment opportunities | Ensure that our autistic community is aware of the local support available to them regarding employment opportunities | <p>Capture the current support available locally for our autistic community to find and retain employment opportunities</p> <p>Improve information and guidance relating to employment support for autistic people wanting to seek employment and have this available on the autism webpage</p> <p>Promote supported apprenticeships and the support that is offered for autistic people</p> <p>Promote the GM (Greater Manchester) good employment charter on our council website</p> | <p>Capture autism web page traffic</p> <p>Capture feedback from our autistic community re information and training</p> <p>Monitor and report number of offered apprenticeships</p> <p>Monitor, report and celebrate businesses employing autistic people</p> <p>Capture number of employers signed up to the GM good employment charter</p> | <p>Autistic people being aware of the employment support offer to find and retain in work</p> <p>An increase in numbers of autistic people finding work and staying in work</p> <p>Employers to have a greater understanding and put reasonable adjustments in place</p> <p>Increase in number of apprenticeships taken up by autistic people</p> <p>Increased number of employers signed up to the good employment charter</p> <p>Employers take a strength-based approach rather than focusing on what an individual struggles with</p> |

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| Autistic adults said that employers do not understand their needs and do not implement reasonable adjustments | Support employers to gain a greater understanding of autism and further their knowledge on implementing reasonable adjustments | Signpost employers to training to promote awareness and understanding about making reasonable adjustments for Autistic people Co-produce a Job profile and trial this out with neurodiverse staff from Stockport Family Establish a support group for Neurodiverse Stockport Council employees Share this model of good practice with other anchor institutions | Capture number of employers accessing training Evaluation forms pre and post training Feedback from both the employer and employee Regular feedback from the group | Employers to have a greater understanding and put reasonable adjustments in place Employers to have a greater understanding of their employees needs and for employees to feel more supported within their role Employees to feel more supported within their role |
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Priority 4: Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people

In Line with the National Autism Strategy:

- Autistic people will be able to access a high quality and timely diagnosis, as well as the support they need following diagnosis
- We will have also made progress on improving early identification of autism, so more children and young people can get the support they need at an early age

| You Said... | We Will... | How we will get there | How it will be measured | What Will Good Look Like? |
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| Our autistic community informed us that they struggle to access healthcare appointments | Work with healthcare services to make appointments more inclusive and accessible for autistic people | Promote the new training for healthcare staff and public facing staff like receptionists - Oliver McGowan mandatory training Work with healthcare practices to scope the introduction of health passports and for flagging autism medical records, where people want this | Capture numbers accessing the training Feedback from autistic people and their families re quality of guidance information on the webpage Data and feedback re health passports and digital flags and feedback re patient experience Evidence of adjustments in place | GP surgeries and hospitals having real understanding of autism and putting meaningful "reasonable adjustments" in place: online appointment booking, quiet waiting area, staff to be aware of individual's needs Healthcare staff to have accessed the training Digital flags and health passports to be in operation A support offer when clinics are running late |
| Our autistic community and their families report feeling dissatisfied with the current autism assessments, in terms of communication, waiting times and pre and | Review the current autism assessment pathways in Stockport (pre-school, school aged and adults) Review the current communication shared throughout the assessment pathway and make | Capture the current pre and post diagnostic support offer available to our autistic community (all-age) Identify the current gaps in our all-age pre-diagnostic and post-diagnostic support offer Outline the pre and post diagnostic local support offer on the council webpages, | Feedback any traffic on the autism webpage Feedback from autistic people and their families regarding the support available, including communication | People receive both support and diagnosis assessment in a timely manner Positive feedback regarding the assessment process Improved communication around waiting lists and timescales |

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| <p>post diagnostic support</p> <p>As a local authority we recognise and acknowledge the significant challenge that these long waiting times have upon our autistic community and their families and those who are waiting for assessments</p> | <p>recommendations regarding minimum standards of contact and communication</p> <p>Review the current pre and post diagnostic support offer (pre-school, school aged and adults)</p> <p>Reviewing the opportunity to move towards a needs led approach</p> <p>Establish a regular report to monitor waiting times for those who are waiting</p> | <p>promoting positive autistic identity</p> <p>Review the current autism assessment paperwork, including the communication to people on the waiting list for an assessment</p> <p>Ensure that all autism assessments meet NICE guidance</p> <p>Ensure reports on diagnosis and plans are meaningful and use strength-based language</p> <p>Signpost autistic people and their families to local and GM sources of pre and post diagnostic support</p> <p>Carry out a full-service review of the Autism Team</p> <p>Introduce a Neurodevelopmental pathway with a focus on needs led approach for autistic children and adults – Portsmouth Model</p> | <p>Feedback forms following autism assessments, including reports</p> <p>Training and support group evaluation forms</p> <p>Measure and audit autism assessments against NICE guidance</p> <p>Track progress in line with the new GM audit tools to measure against the new Post diagnostic standards for supporting autistic adults, children, young people, and their families</p> <p>Standardised monitoring framework review for assessment times</p> | <p>A robust pre- and post-diagnosis support offer that meets the needs of individuals and families</p> <p>Fewer individuals experiencing crisis due to not having their needs met whilst on the long waiting list for assessment</p> <p>Launch of a peer-lead post-diagnostic group to offer meaningful post-diagnostic support for newly diagnosed adults which would reduce pressure on clinicians</p> <p>Pre-diagnostic support for adults to understand more about autism before having their assessment</p> |
| <p>Our autistic community and their families report high levels of mental health needs</p> | <p>We will signpost autistic people and their families to mental health support</p> <p>We will work with all our local mental health providers to ensure that they have the skills and understanding to support our autistic community</p> <p>We will continue to work with our partners to support autistic people with high levels and complex mental health needs</p> <p>We will continue to ensure that autistic people who are admitted to a specialist or mental health hospital</p> | <p>Outline available mental health support on the autism webpage</p> <p>Signpost autistic people and their families to the council website and outline the local available support</p> <p>Link with our training subgroup to provide training to our local providers</p> <p>We will roll out the GM (Barnardo's) keyworker scheme for 0-25 years to support children, young people and their families who are experiencing challenges to maintain support in the community</p> <p>Introduce the Children and Young People Specialist Support Team (former known as the Ealing Model), supporting</p> | <p>Capture data re traffic on autism health webpage</p> <p>Capture feedback from our autistic community</p> <p>Training evaluation</p> <p>GM keyworker evaluation process</p> <p>Feedback from our autistic community and their families and</p> | <p>Access to the appropriate mental health support</p> <p>Fewer autistic people escalating into mental health crisis</p> <p>Increased understanding and evidence of change in attitude and support for autistic people</p> <p>Individualised support plans in place to support autistic adults and families at risk</p> <p>Increase number of autistic adults, children and young people identified on our dynamic support database</p> |

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| | receive the right care and treatment | <p>children and young people with complex needs who are at risk of a hospital admission or residential setting</p> <p>Review our mental health urgent care and crisis pathways to strengthen the support for autistic people</p> <p>Further develop the Dynamic Support Database - a Risk Register to ensure that autistic people at risk of hospital admission are identified and recorded to ensure that appropriate support is available and put in place</p> | <p>data on in-patient admissions and discharges</p> <p>Maintain compliance with reporting to Assuring Transformation database</p> <p>Fewer specialist and mental health admissions for autistic people</p> <p>Increased number of autistic adults, children and young people identified on the Dynamic Support Database</p> | |
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Priority 5: Improve the Housing offer and increase Independent Living opportunities

In line with the National Autism Strategy:

- Improve autistic people's access to housing that meets their needs
- Increase the provision of supported housing

| You Said... | We Will... | How we will get there | How it will be measured | What will good look like? |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Our autistic community said that they are unaware of the housing options that are available to them | Outline support available for autistic people to be able to seek independent living opportunities regardless of whether that are Care Act eligible | Create a central place re information, advice and guidance to autistic people and their families about housing support | Feedback from our autistic community Traffic on webpage | Access to clear information about various Housing options and Care Providers, and what moving into a home entails financially |
| Our autistic community raised concerns about their current housing in terms of noise, anti-social behaviour, and the relationship with their landlord/housing association | Outline the support and guidance regarding their housing rights Work with advice agencies to highlight this need for support | Create a central place re information, advice and guidance to autistic people and their families about housing support Have a clear process for people can raise concerns and move if they feel that the accommodation no longer meets their needs | Feedback from our autistic community Traffic on webpage | To be confident in knowing and understanding their rights and the process to raise housing concerns To live in a neighbourhood and environment that is inclusive and mindful of the needs of autistic people |
| Our autistic community said that they struggle to access support from housing providers and the Housing Association | Co-produce autism training including suggestions around reasonable adjustments and support | Work with all housing providers to outline the current difficulties and offer training and support to better support our autistic community | Feedback from our autistic community Pre and post training evaluation forms | Housing providers to have a greater awareness of autistic people's needs and put reasonable adjustments in place |

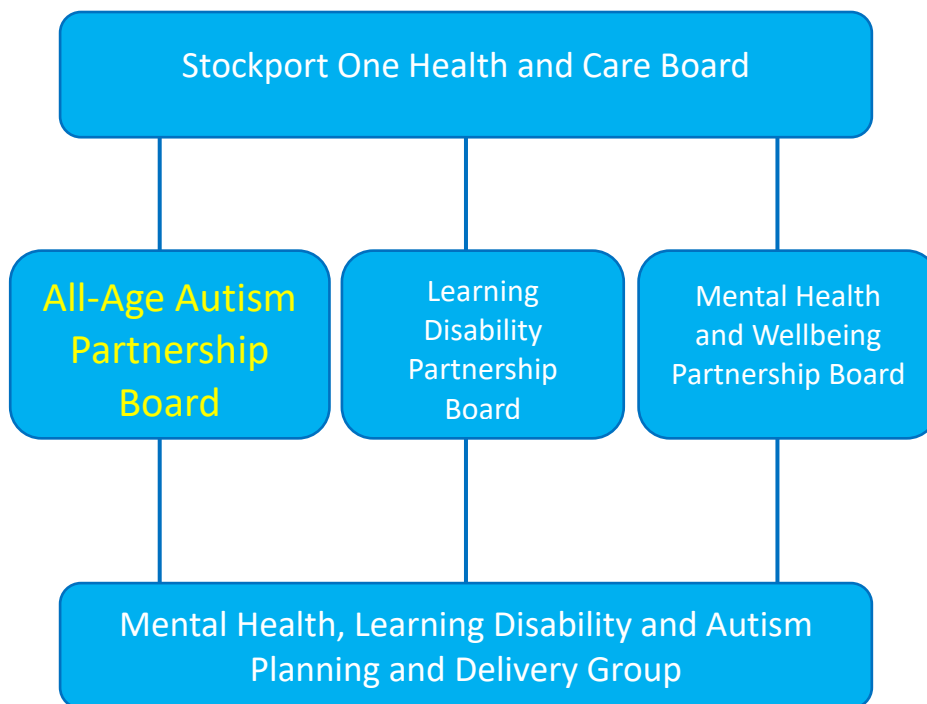
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| Parents and carers of autistic children are requesting adaptations to their homes to make them safe | Work with the Children's Equipment and Adaptations team to review new referrals to discuss possible support options | Work with the Children's Equipment and Adaptations team to review new referrals and explore alternative support for example parent training or behavioural strategies Ensure we maximise the use of funds to support people to stay safe and well at home, in particular the Disabled Facilities Grant | Data re referrals Feedback from parent/carers | A multi-agency approach in responding to housing adaptation referrals Early intervention and family help which may ease some of the needs for some adaptations |
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| Priority 6: Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems | | | | |
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| You Said... | We Will... | How we will get there | How it will be measured | What Will Good Look Like? |
| Our autistic community said that they are unaware of the support available if they were to become involved with the criminal justice system (CJS) as either a victim, a witness or as a perpetrator | Outline the support available for autistic people if they become involved with the CJS Signpost staff to training in CJS to understand the needs of our autistic community and what reasonable adjustments are required to support them | Outline available support on the council webpage for autistic people if they become involved with the CJS, including advocacy services Signpost staff to training in CJS to understand the needs of our autistic community and what reasonable adjustments are required to support them | Capture data re webpage traffic Pre and post training evaluation forms | Clear access to information and contact details for the vulnerable adult's team within the local police force and the Citizen's Advice Witness service CJS staff to have a greater understanding of autistic people's needs and make reasonable adjustments Mandatory training for CJS staff and for this to be part of the induction for new recruits |



11. Governance

Stockport One Health and Care System: Mental Health, Wellbeing, Learning Disability and Autism Governance and Delivery Framework



The Planning and Delivery Group will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of National, Greater Manchester and locality strategies and plans. There are agreed national performance metrics across Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism programme, and the Planning and Delivery Group will be responsible for oversight, this will be through contributions to the monthly Performance, Improvement and Assurance meetings. Working with the three partnership boards the Planning and Delivery Group will agree locality metrics to measure delivery of our strategy and plans.

The Planning and Delivery Group will provide an update report to the Locality Board on a quarterly basis to provide assurance of the delivery of the strategies. Risks and mitigations requiring escalation to Board as they cannot be mitigated or pose a risk to the delivery objectives will be presented to the Performance, Improvement and Assurance group for consideration.

The Planning and Delivery Group will work with Finance colleagues to identify the totality of resource available across the system to support these key areas of work.

The terms of reference for the Partnership Boards and the wider Planning and Delivery Group will be both co-produced and reviewed to define the alignment, relationships, inter-connection and reporting across the governance and delivery framework. It is also recognised that this is a new approach and will be reviewed regularly with our autistic community alongside system partners.

Autism Partnership Board

Joint Chairs: Heidi Shaw (SMBC) and Nick Rosenthal (Autistic Adult)

Meeting Frequency: Quarterly

Subgroup 1: Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within Stockport

Chair: Cheryl Knupfer

Meeting Frequency: 6-Weekly

Subgroup 2A: Improving autistic children and young people's access to education

Chair: Jacqui Terry

Meeting Frequency: 6-Weekly

Subgroup 2B: Supporting positive transitions into adulthood (Preparation for Adulthood)

Chairs: Steph Hardy/ Emma Gardiner

Meeting Frequency: 6-Weekly

Subgroup 3: Supporting more autistic people into employment

Chair: Nick Hill

Meeting Frequency: 6-Weekly

Subgroup 4: Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people

Chair: TBC

Meeting Frequency: TBC

Subgroup 5: Improving the housing offer and increase independent living opportunities

Chair: Andy Kippax

Meeting Frequency: Ad Hoc

Subgroup 6: Improving support within the criminal justice and youth systems

(Acting) Chair: Sarah Kelly

Meeting Frequency: 6-Weekly



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13. Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms:

Ad hoc – When necessary or needed

AET – Autism Education Trust

AIS – Autism in Schools

APB – Autism Partnership Board

ASC – Autistic Spectrum Condition

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder – this term is no longer supported as a description of autistic adults, children or young people but is still used as a code for data analysis

CAMHS – Child and Mental Health Services

CCG – Clinical Commissioning Group

CDU – Child Development Unit

CeTR – Care, Education and Treatment Review

CJS – Criminal Justice System

Cllr – Councillor

CQC – Care Quality Commission

CTS – Children's Therapy Services

CV – Curriculum Vitae

Diagnosis – When someone is given a label for their medical condition

EHCP – Education, Health, and Care Plan

EHE – Elective Home Education

Empathic – Showing an ability to understand and share the feelings of another

EPEC – Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (The EPEC model is a coproduced parenting programme which is led by parent who have participated in the programme. Parents are upskilled and empowered to become leaders and support other parents with their community. Come and find out what EPEC is all about and how you can use the principles of this work to empower the people who access your services)

Flexi-Schooling – Describes an arrangement between the parent and school where children are registered at the school in the usual way but attend school part time

GM – Greater Manchester

GMAC – Greater Manchester Autism Consortium

Hyperfocus – Hyperfocus refers to an intense fixation on an interest or activity for an extended period. People who experience hyperfocus often become so engrossed they block out the world around them

ICS – Integrated Care Systems

Identity-first language – Ways of talking about people that leads with their disability or neurodivergence (e.g., autistic individual). The alternative is person-first language, which leads with the person (e.g., a teenager with autism). Preferences vary between different disabled communities and individuals

JC – Joint Commissioning

JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

LD – Learning Disability

LGBTQ+ – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), and others. The "plus" represents other sexual identities including pansexual and Two-Spirit

Masking/ Camouflaging – The conscious or unconscious suppression by an autistic person of their natural responses and behaviours that might attract negative attention. An example might be resisting stimming behaviour or making eye contact despite it feeling extremely uncomfortable to them

MASSH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub

MH – Mental Health

NAS – National Autistic Society

Neurodivergent – Describes people whose brain differences affect how their brain works. That means they have different strengths and challenges from people whose brains do not have those differences

Neurodiversity – A perspective that embraces the range of ways that people can experience and interact with the world around them as neurologically based differences, not deficits. It is often associated with the social model of disability

Neurotypical – Used to describe individuals with typical neurological development or functioning

NHS – National Health service

NICE – National Institute for Clinical Excellence

OFSTED – Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. They also inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people

Oliver McGowan – The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism is the standardised training that was developed for this purpose and is the

government's preferred and recommended training for health and social care staff to undertake. It is named after Oliver McGowan, whose death shone a light on the need for health and social care staff to have better training

OT – Occupational Therapy

Outcome – The difference something makes

PA – Personal Assistant

PACTS – Parents and carers together Stockport

Pathway – A map that sets out the routes to access services

PFA – Preparation for Adulthood

Prevalence – Prevalence is the proportion of a population who have a specific characteristic in a given time

Reasonable adjustments – Adaptations to services to ensure individuals with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged in accessing services. Adjustments must be reasonable and relevant to everyone

Respite Care – Respite care provides temporary relief for a primary caregiver, enabling you to take a much-needed break from the demands of caregiving a sick, aging, or disabled family member

RIO – Referral Information Officer

SEND – Special Educational Needs and/ Disabilities

SEND Champions – (Our Network of SEND Champions is made up of passionate parents, carers, and professionals all wanting to improve the experience of families and children who have SEND as well as celebrating good news and success)

SEND KIT – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Keeping in Touch (A meeting where SEND professionals come together to discuss prominent issues)

SEND Week of Action – Stockport timetable a range of webinars highlighting key issues and run training sessions

SENDCo – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator

SMBC – Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Strategy – A plan that sets out what should be done to make things better

Transition – A period of change

VCFSE – Voluntary, Community Faith and Social Enterprise

YP – Young Person

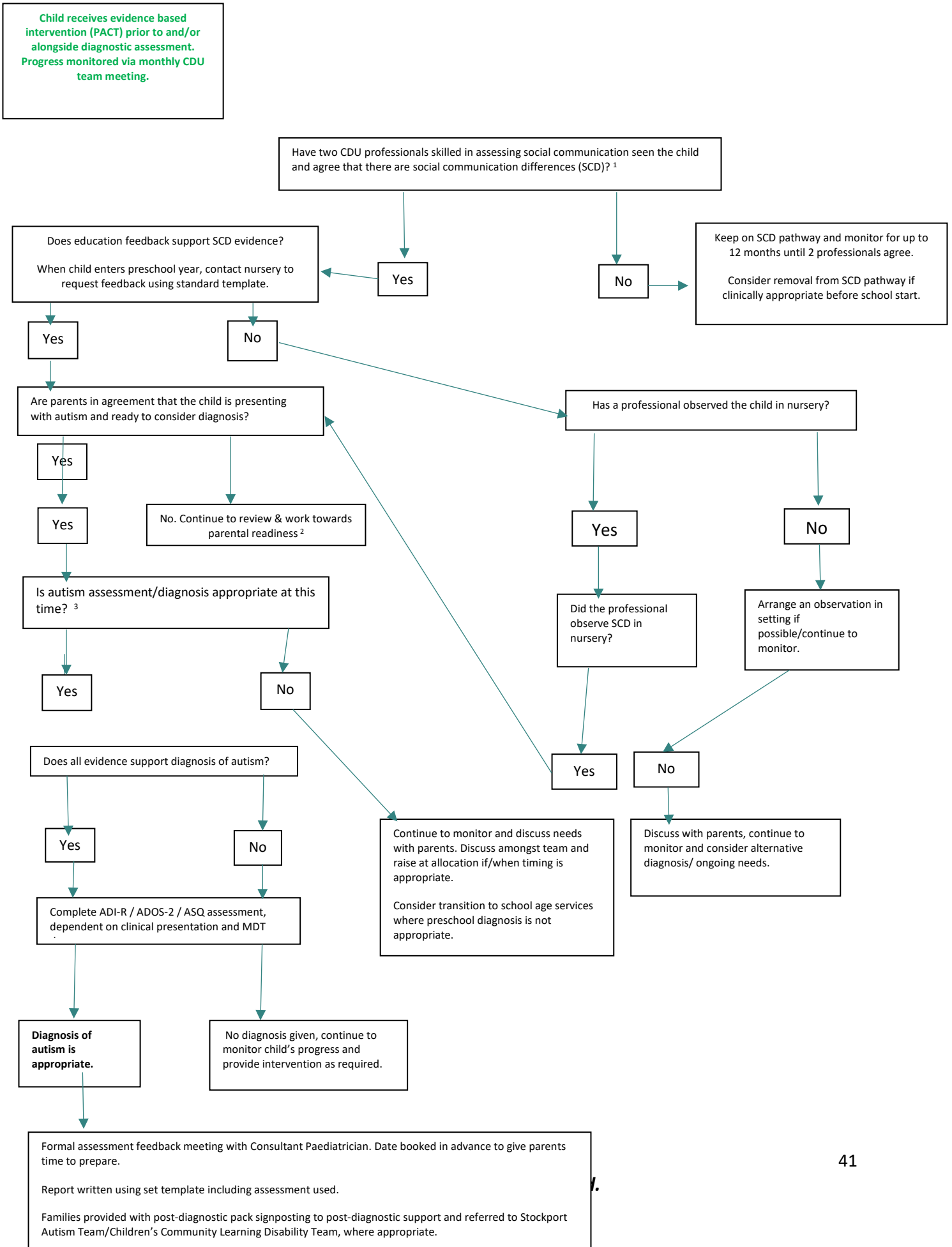
Appendix 2: STOCKPORT'S SUPPORT SERVICES

- [STOCKPORT AUTISM CHILDREN'S TEAM](#)
The Autism Team offers post-diagnostic intervention to young people and their families who have a diagnosis of Autism, are educated in a mainstream educational setting, live in Stockport, and are aged between 5-16
- [ADULT SOCIAL CARE](#)
Our Adult Social Care Team supports autistic adults. Contact the team to discuss your care and support needs. They may support you in completing a care needs assessment
- [PARENTS AND CARERS TOGETHER STOCKPORT \(PACTS\)](#)
Parents and Carers Together Stockport is Stockport's official parent carer forum for parents, carers, grandparents, and family members who have a child or young person between the ages of 0 and 25 years with a special educational needs or disabilities including any additional need. PACTS was renamed in 2020 (previously known as PIPS: Parents in Partnership Stockport)
- [AUTISK](#)
AUTISK is a constituted support community group offering social groups, workshops, advice, and signposting to families who have children with additional needs
- [SEND FAMILIES](#)
A parent run support group that provide families who have children with additional needs to access activities to generate friendships and support circles in an inclusive environment where families feel welcome and supported
- [GROUP 48](#)
Group 48 is a social group for autistic people over the age of 18 who live in the Stockport area
- [INCLUSION SERVICE](#)
The Inclusion Service is a multifaceted team who work in partnership with families and schools to help settings build on and develop their capacity to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND
- [CHILDREN'S THERAPY SERVICES](#)
Children's Therapy NHS Stockport Foundation Trust. Our services include Children's:
 - Occupational Therapy (OT)
 - Physiotherapy (Physio/ PT)
 - Speech and Language Therapy (SLT/ SALT)
 - Equipment and Adaptations Service (CEAS)
- [CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY LEARNING DISABILITY TEAM \(CCLDT\)](#)
CCLDT and CAMHS-LD are two services working integrally as one team to support children and young people aged 3 to 18 years who have a moderate to severe learning disability with complex additional needs
- [AUTISM AMBASSADORS](#)

The Autism Ambassadors is a group of autistic young people who want to improve experiences at school and with services for other autistic young people. The Autism Ambassadors will be working closely with the relaunched S.A.Y.S Young Disabled People's Forum

- [NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY](#)
The NAS aims to help the 700,000 autistic people in the UK and their families. Be it running specialist schools, campaigning for improved rights or training companies on being more autism friendly. They are dedicated to transforming lives and changing attitudes
- [STOCKPORT ADVOCACY](#)
Stockport Advocacy has been operating and supporting people since 2004. They are a Community Benefits Society with a team of experienced and qualified advocates working across the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport
- [DISABILITY STOCKPORT](#)
A local charity which has been improving the lives of people, and their careers, with physical disabilities and/ or sensory impairment for over 30 years
- [CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE \(CAMHS\)](#)
CAMHS offer specialist services to children and young people who are experiencing mental health and emotional wellbeing difficulties. They also provide support to families
- [MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING AND SUPPORT HUB \(MASSH\)](#)
The Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) is the single point of contact for:
 - Support and Advice, including SEND support, early help advice and non-urgent emotional wellbeing & mental health needs
 - Safeguarding referrals to protect children, young people or adults from harm, abuse, or neglect
- [STOCKPORT CARERS FOR AUTISTIC ADULTS IN STOCKPORT \(SCAAS\)](#)
A self-help group providing support and social activities for carers of autistic adults.
- [GREATER MANCHESTER AUTISM CONSORTIUM \(GMAC\)](#)
GMAC aims to be a point of contact for anyone in Greater Manchester needing information about autism and related issues.
- [SPECTRUM GAMING](#)
An online community for autistic young people with 3 main intended outcomes: Building friendships, Increasing self-acceptance and Advocacy
- [SIGNPOST STOCKPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS](#)
An independent charity which provides free, confidential information to unpaid carers of all ages and ethnicity, and professionals who work with carers, in the Stockport area

Appendix 4: Autism Assessment Pathways



¹If the child isn't known to CDU Consultant Paediatrician, consider requesting involvement at the beginning of their pre-school year.

²If parents are not ready/do not wish to pursue formal diagnosis before school start, explain that CDU are unable to offer diagnostic assessment after school start and the child will need to be referred to school-aged assessment service if they wish to pursue diagnosis in the future.

³Consider the following factors around timing of assessment:

- Child is in their pre-school year
- Impact on daily functioning
- Family/environmental circumstances e.g. LAC
- Is now the most appropriate/helpful time for diagnosis?
- Added value of diagnosis
- Have other diagnoses been considered? E.g. selective mutism/anxiety. Seek involvement from relevant team.
- Impact of co-morbid conditions
- Involvement of other professionals: IPS service, Educational Psychology, CCLDT

Terminology:
 CDU: Child Development Unit
 SCD: Social communication differences
 ADI-R: Autism Diagnostic Interview Revised
 ADOS-2: Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule 2nd Edition
 ASQ: Autism Screener Questionnaire
 PACT: Paediatric Autism Communication Therapy

Figure 1 – Flow chart of CDU (Child Development Unit) social communication diagnostic pathway.

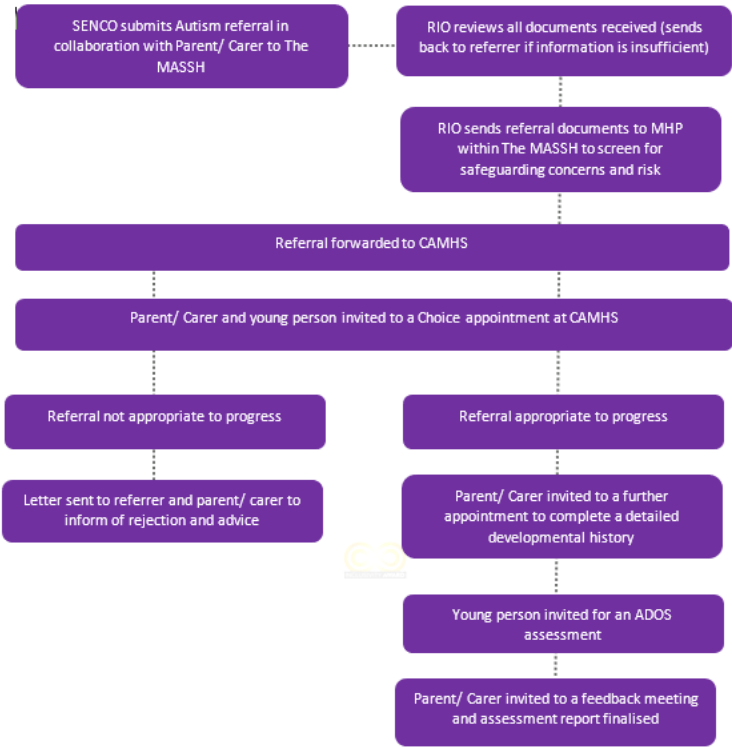


Figure 2 – Flow chart of School-Age MASSH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub)/ CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) Autism Assessment pathway.

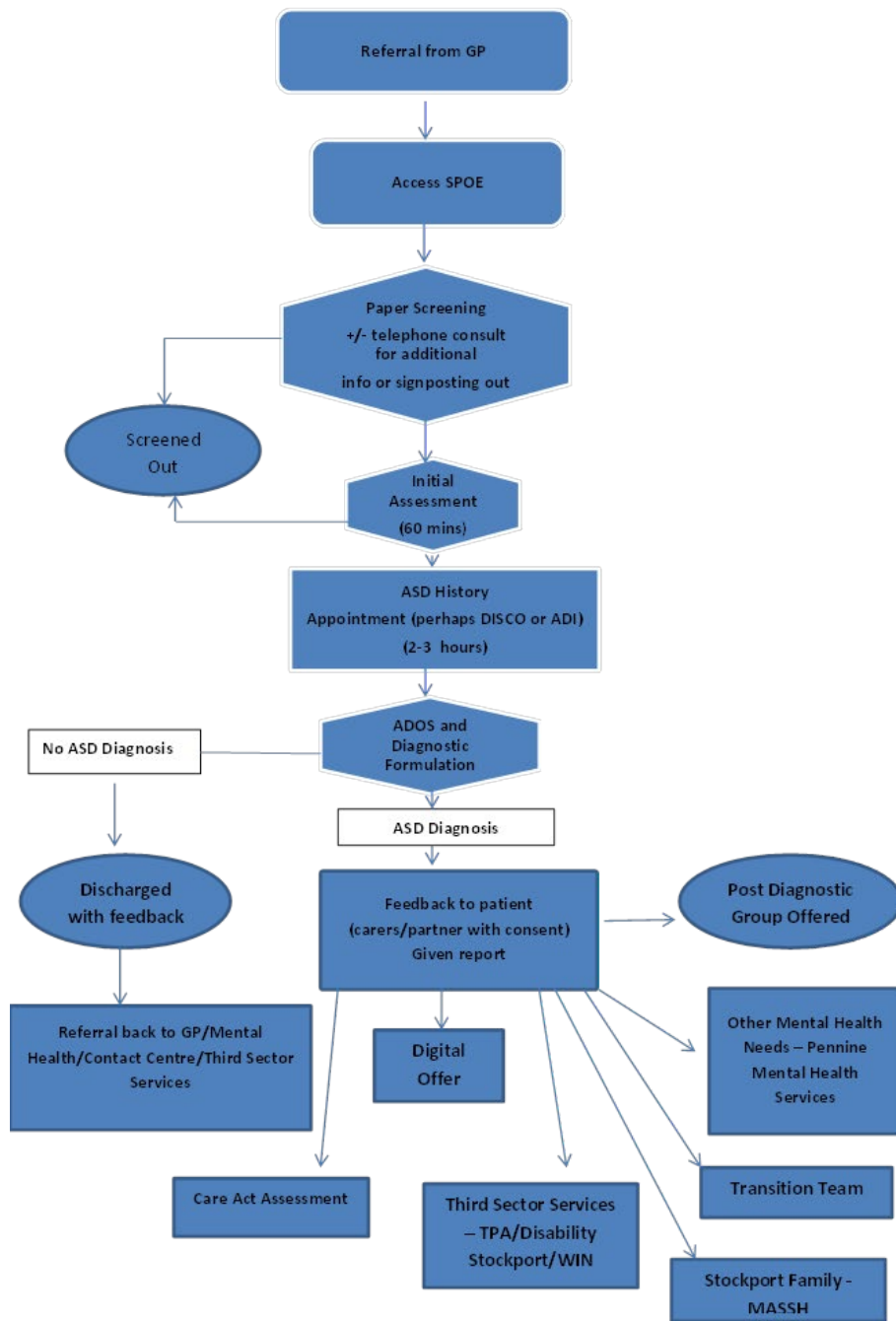


Figure 3 – Flow chart of Stockport’s Adult Autism Assessment pathway.