



**Lincolnshire's All-Age
Autism Strategy
2019 – 2022
Summary Version**



NHS
*Lincolnshire East
Clinical Commissioning Group*

NHS
*Lincolnshire West
Clinical Commissioning Group*

NHS
*South Lincolnshire
Clinical Commissioning Group*

NHS
*South West Lincolnshire
Clinical Commissioning Group*

Introduction

It is important that Lincolnshire has a plan about autism so that:

- More people understand what autism is
- Autistic people get the help they need when they need it
- Services improve how they work to make it easier for autistic people to use them
- Autistic people and their families can be involved to help make services better

Some of the key things about the Lincolnshire Autism Strategy are that:

- It is for autistic people of all ages, including children and young people with autism
- It has an action plan to help improve services and support for autistic people over the next 3 years
- It has been written by the Lincolnshire Autism Partnership Board (LAPB), which includes the Council, the NHS, other public services and autistic people and their family members



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What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong condition. It is a spectrum disorder – this means that everyone who is autistic will experience it differently.

Some things that you may find difficult if you are autistic include:

- Social communication
- Social settings and situations
- Imagining how other people might be feeling or how they might react
- Changes in routine
- Sensory experiences

Some of these things may cause stress and anxiety. However, every person's experience of autism is unique and most autistic people have a range of strengths alongside their needs.

Why do we need an autism strategy in Lincolnshire?

A strategy is a plan. The government has a general plan to improve support and services for autistic people in England. Each local area around the country will also have their own plan to improve specific support and services for autistic people where they live.

The strategy we have developed for Lincolnshire has been made by:

- Looking at what the government wants us to do
- Looking at what we have done so far and what we can do better
- Listening to what autistic people, family members and carers, and staff who provide services say is important

It is estimated that around 1 in every 100 people is autistic. This means that there are likely to be about 8,000 autistic people living in Lincolnshire.

Not everybody who is autistic will have a diagnosis, so it is difficult to know the exact number. However, where people are known to the NHS and the local authority, data can be collected to help identify services they use and try to improve the support they receive.

How will we deliver the strategy?

The Lincolnshire Autism Partnership Board (LAPB) is responsible for making sure the local autism plan is carried out. The LAPB was formed in 2010 and it was updated in 2015 when Lincolnshire's first All-Age Autism Strategy was launched.

There are different people involved in the LAPB, including:

- Autistic people
- Family members and carers
- People who work in health and social care
- People who work in children's services and education
- Staff from public services that autistic people use
- Community and voluntary groups

There is lots of work to do in the plan, so it has been split up into the 4 areas that are listed below:

Awareness &
Training

Involvement
&
Collaboration

Data &
Information

Service
Provision

Each of these areas has a working group set up to look at what needs doing. The leader of each group will update the Board about their part of the plan and what work is being done.

There are people involved in each of the working groups who have the experience and knowledge to help work on the tasks that need to be completed.

15 Priority Challenges for Action

In the government's autism plan they listed a set of 15 things that they want to do to help autistic people lead more fulfilling and rewarding lives.

The LAPB agreed that these were good things to do and need to be in our local plan. We asked people what they thought about the 15 Priority Challenges and they said that:

- The challenges should reflect the current position in Lincolnshire
- They would prefer it if they were written as 'We' rather than 'I' statements
- There are lots of challenges, so we should focus on the 5 challenges that local people think are the most important

The 15 Priority Challenges for Action are listed below. The 5 priorities that people feel are most important are highlighted in **bold**:

An equal part of our local community

1.	We want to be accepted for who we are within our local community and for people to have an awareness and acceptance of autism.
2.	We want our views and aspirations to be taken into account when decisions are made in Lincolnshire and to know that services and support here is as good as other places in the country.
3.	We want to know how to connect with other people and have access to local autism peer support.
4.	We want the everyday services we use to know how to make reasonable adjustments to meet our individual needs and for staff to be aware and accepting of autism.
5.	We want to be safe in our community and free from the risk of discrimination, hate and mate crime, and abuse.
6.	We want to be seen as individuals and for our gender, sexual orientation and race to be taken into account.

The right support at the right time during our lifetime

7.	We want a timely diagnosis from trained professionals and information and support throughout the pre and post-diagnostic process.
8.	We want good information about autism needs to be maintained in the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, so that person-centred health, care and support services is available for autistic people.
9.	We want staff in health and social care services to understand autism and how this affects us as an individual.
10.	We want to know that our family and carers can get help and support when they need it.
11.	We want services to understand how autism affects us differently and to be supported through various life changes, such as transition from school, getting older or when a person close to us dies.
12.	We want people to recognise our autism and adapt the support they provide based on any additional needs we have, such as a mental health problem, a learning disability or if we communicate through behaviours which others may find challenging.
13.	If we are a victim of crime or break the law, we want the criminal justice system to think about autism and how to work well with other services.

Developing our skills and independence and working to the best of our ability

14.	We want the same opportunities as everyone else to enhance our skills, to be empowered by services and to be as independent as possible.
15.	We want support to get a job and support from our employer to help keep it.

Our Local Action Plan

We have a list of things that we want to do over the next 3 years to improve services and support for autistic people in Lincolnshire:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure that services complete the Autism Reasonable Adjustments Mark, which checks if autistic people are supported to access services they need. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce Autism Champions in a range of services, including health and social care, education, businesses and community settings. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an autism training plan to make sure that staff who work in local organisations and services are aware and accepting of autism. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help to develop a new children's autism diagnostic pathway that includes the right support being available for families afterwards. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help to review the current adult autism diagnostic pathway to make sure it can meet the increase in demand. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure that data about people being assessed for an autism diagnosis is being recorded and analysed to monitor how many people this includes and what the outcomes are. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure that autistic people who don't have a learning disability have the same level of access to health services. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the local online Autism Information Hub for autistic people, families and professionals to access information and advice about autism, and services and support that is available. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with local carer and family support groups to develop a wider range of support for people caring for autistic people. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help to develop a better pathway for young people with additional needs (including autism) as they prepare for adulthood. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure that autistic people who may need to go into hospital are checked to see if they are safe, that they are being cared for properly and that there is a plan for them to live in the community in the future. |

- Make sure that autistic people are involved in the LAPB, so they can help review services and be included in decisions about making changes and improvements.
- Offer opportunities to local autism peer support groups to help them grow and prosper.
- Work with the Police and the Criminal Justice System to make sure autistic people feel safe in their community and that their autism is considered if they are a victim of crime or if they break the law.
- Carry out work to review data about autistic people, so that there is a better idea of what support and needs people have.
- Improve housing support for autistic people and make sure their needs are considered in the local housing plans being developed.
- Work with the Council and other organisations on specialist employment projects to ensure autistic people have better job opportunities and are supported by employers to help keep them.

Our plan will be reviewed each year to check what has been achieved and make changes if new actions need adding.



The 'Autism Lincs' logo you can see in this strategy is used as the branding for the LAPB. It was kindly developed by Joel Watkin-Groves, an autistic designer from Lincolnshire, and we wish to thank Joel for producing the logo and allowing us to use it.