

Autism Strategy 2024-2027 Consultation Plan Summary

Background

The draft North Yorkshire All-age Autism Strategy has been developed across a number of partner agencies working together with autistic people, their carers and families. Building on this work, approval is being sought to run a public consultation from 27th November 2023 to 15th March 2024 (12 weeks plus additional time to account for Christmas period). The consultation will gather views and feedback from autistic people, their carers and families, the general public, practitioners and partners.

Aims

The consultation has a number of key aims covering the following areas:

- **Strategy content:** To gather feedback on the content of the strategy including whether the content of each key priority areas reflects and responds to the key issues in North Yorkshire and whether any areas are missing
- **Prioritising actions:** To encourage people to give their views on the most important action within each priority area and the order of priority for actions to be delivered in Year 1, 2 and 3 of the strategy
- **Measuring success:** To invite people to give their views on what success looks like for them and how they would like us to measure success against the strategy.
- **Design:** To gather feedback on the layout, design and accessibility of the draft strategy and to encourage people to be involved in a design group to coproduce the strategy design – (for example front cover, back cover, artwork and poetry)
- **Working together:** To understand people's views about what good co-production looks like and to explore and encourage ongoing involvement of individuals with clear, accessible and regular opportunities to work together. To understand how long people have been involved with the autism strategy (throughout the engagement or just for formal consultation) and how people became aware of the consultation, to inform future work.

Stakeholders

Throughout the consultation, we will seek the views of autistic people of all ages (children, young people and adults), their families, friends and carers; as well as autistic people who are carers themselves. Our Equality Impact Assessment findings to date have highlighted that we need to ensure we hear feedback during consultation from people of different ages as well as different genders, given that diagnosis rates vary between these different groups. Similarly as the prevalence of autism nationally varies between different groups, we will aim to reach people from different groups. Inclusion North will be commissioned to support some of the consultation events.

Autistic people and their families are supported by a range of practitioners, services and agencies across localities. These colleagues understand specific local challenges, the day-to-day realities when carrying out their roles, and the practicalities of turning a strategy into reality. We will therefore also seek the views of those who work with autistic people including schools, service providers, health care workers and social workers.

Methodology

The consultation will follow mixed methodology of surveys, in-person local events and online webinars. This will include:

- A virtual launch event with information about the consultation, key messages, links to the strategy and accompanying documents, links to the survey and events schedule.
- A number of local in-person events (World café) – taking careful consideration of existing groups, time of year (weather), accessibility of the venue (local / transport connections), location and target audience
- A number of online sessions (World Café) – including at different times of day including a weekend session to enable as many people to participate as possible.
- An online survey aimed at autistic people and carers (plain English) – also available in other formats (audio, paper, etc as required)
- An online easy read survey to support autistic people with a learning disability (also available in paper as required).
- Online / paper surveys aimed at children and adolescents (one primary age focus, one secondary age focus).
- Attendance at individual sessions of existing groups as appropriate (such as Learning Disability Partnership Board, Disability Forums, Older People Forums/ Groups, Partnership Groups – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion forum, CYPS provider forum etc)
- Discussion at Scrutiny of Health committee

The partnership consultation planning group will continue to review, refine and update the plan during consultation as required, for example to provide further opportunities to reach specific groups, depending on initial response levels.

A full schedule of events will be provided at the launch of the consultation.

Risks

The key risks and mitigations around the consultation are:

Risk	Mitigation
<p>A number of consultations / engagements are ongoing over similar time periods – potential for confusion or lack of engagement. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Strategy Consultation • North Yorkshire Housing Strategy (live) (closes 11/12/23) • North Yorkshire Housing Options process (live) • NY ICB Adult Autism and Engagement assessments process (Do it profiler screening) (due) – launch Oct – Feb 2024. It is anticipated that this exercise will generate significant interest • Learning disability and autism housing needs assessment (due) (winter 2024) 	<p>Discussions are ongoing with housing colleagues and ICB colleagues to review consultation plans and join up key sessions (events etc) and communication where possible, including to clarify as much as possible for Autistic people and carers. Any feedback given in one session will be shared with relevant colleagues</p>
<p>The EIA and previous engagement has highlighted potential barriers to reaching individuals with one or more protected characteristics with the consultation, and the importance of their voice. Groups identified include women and girls, LGBTQIA+ communities, autistic people with co-occurring conditions.</p>	<p>The consultation group have identified key stakeholders and groups that can support with extended reach. Variety of methods to cater for different preferences – surveys/ events, online and in-person, accessing groups that people are already attending.</p>
<p>Consultation window falls over Christmas bank holiday period.</p>	<p>Consultation extended to 16 weeks to allow sufficient opportunity for participation</p>
<p>Given the consultation will be taking place over the winter season, there is a risk that poor weather may impact on attendance at events</p>	<p>People will be asked to register for events so that they can be contacted with any changes due to adverse weather, eg re-arranging the date and/or moving the session online.</p>