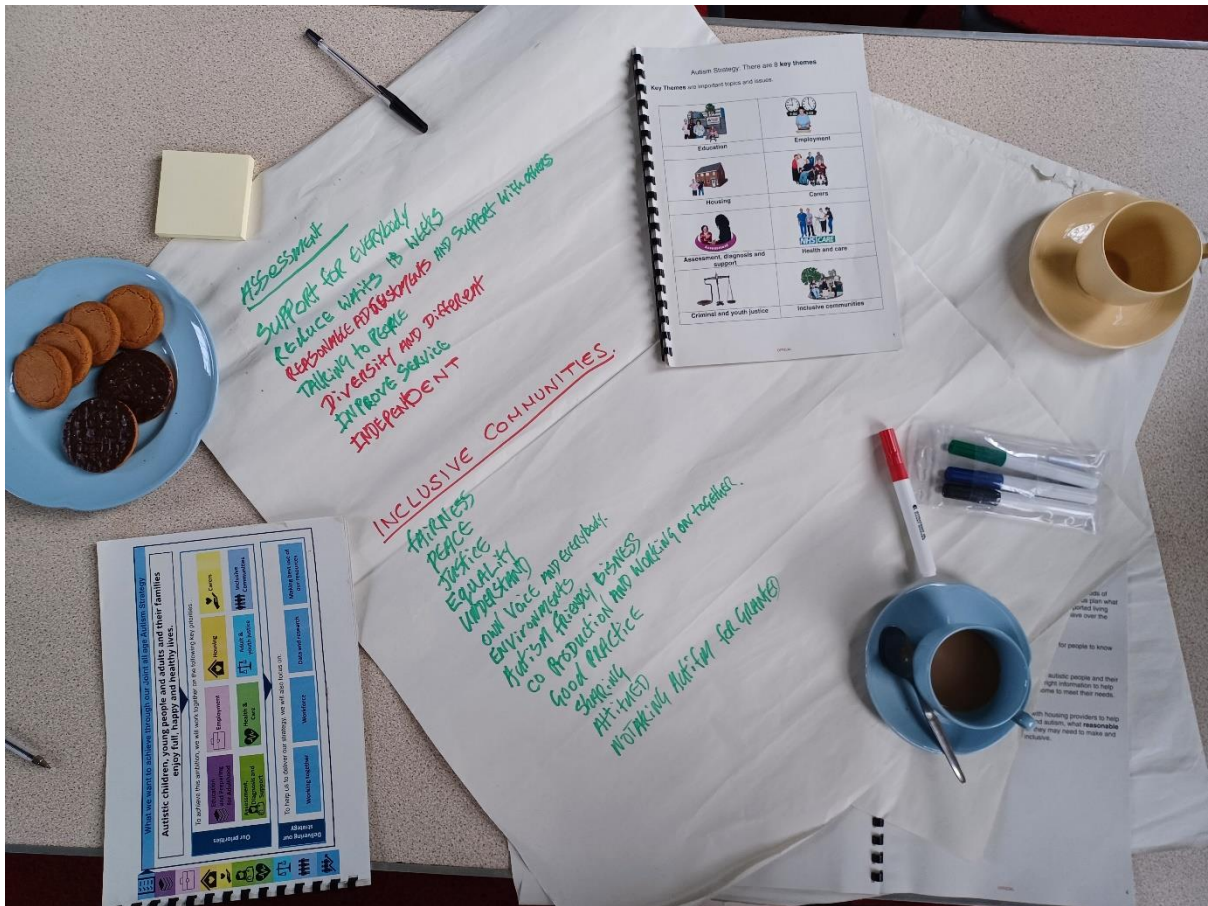




## North Yorkshire Autism Strategy 2024-2027 Public Consultation Feedback Report

May 2024



## Contents Page

*To be updated with page numbers and hyperlinks to sections once draft complete*

### Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Background and purpose.....	5
Methodology.....	5
Consultation Feedback – introduction and general feedback.....	11
Feedback on Education and Preparing for Adulthood.....	15
Consultation Feedback on Employment Chapter .....	30
Consultation feedback on the Housing Chapter .....	39
Consultation feedback on the Carers Chapter.....	50
Consultation feedback for the Assessment, Diagnosis and Support Priority .....	64
Consultation feedback on Health and Care chapter.....	72
Consultation feedback on adult and youth justice priority .....	79
Consultation feedback on Inclusive Communities priority.....	83
Consultation feedback on Working Together .....	91
Appendix 1 – Consultation Participation: Demographic Information .....	97
Appendix 2: Key Communication Activities .....	101

## Executive Summary

This report presents the approach, findings and responses to the North Yorkshire Autism Strategy public consultation. The draft strategy aims to make improvements for autistic people of all ages in North Yorkshire as well as their carers and families through partnership action in 8 priority areas: education & preparing for adulthood; employment; housing; carers; assessment, diagnosis & support; health & care; adult & youth justice; and inclusive communities.

The consultation took place over 15 weeks and 4 days from 27th November 2023 to 15th March 2024 to seek views on the draft strategy from autistic people, unpaid carers, families, those who work with autistic people and wider members of the public. The consultation focussed on gaining feedback on strategy content, prioritizing actions, measuring success, strategy design and working together. This built on the 3 stages of engagement which ran from April to September 2023 and which were used to create the strategy.

This report should be read in conjunction with the updated North Yorkshire Autism Strategy and the year 1 action plan. The information provided as part of the consultation can be accessed via the following weblink: [Previous consultations | North Yorkshire Council](#)

A total of **392 contributions** were received, via the following consultation methods:

- 4 different surveys for different audiences / age groups (available online, as paper copies and in other formats as required) - **181** participants in total across:
  - General Survey - 92 responses
  - Easy Read Survey – 65 responses
  - Primary School Age Survey – 12 responses
  - Teenage Survey – 12 responses
- Events – Presentation and workshop: 1 launch event, 7 in-person workshops (one in each locality) plus 3 online workshops including one evening and one weekend session, and visits to 4 established groups – **172** participants
- Submissions via email - **33**
- Public questions to North Yorkshire Council committees via the democratic process - **6**
- Presentation to Scrutiny of Health Committee public meeting (March 2024)

Analysis of the consultation feedback was completed by a multi-agency team including staff from North Yorkshire Council, Humber North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, Probation Service and Healthwatch North Yorkshire, following common principles and a consistent approach. Consultation analysis was provided to each chapter lead (a senior representative from the relevant organisation) to review and propose amendments and additions to the strategy in response to consultation feedback. This is presented throughout the report.

The summary findings from the consultation are as follows:

- **Strategy content (priorities):** Survey respondents were asked for each of the 8 priority areas how far they agreed that the priority should be a key theme for the strategy. Across the general and easy read surveys, between 96% and 80% agreed that each priority should be a key theme, with Inclusive Communities priority having the highest rate of agreement and

Carer's priority having the lowest rate of agreement. Overall, this demonstrates that the 8 priorities are the right ones for the strategy.

- **Strategy content (actions):** Those responding to the general survey were asked about how well the draft actions under each priority reflect and respond to the key issues for autistic people in North Yorkshire. Between 71% and 52% agreed that the proposed actions reflect and respond to the key issues, with Inclusive Communities priority having the highest rate of agreement and Carer's priority having the lowest rate of agreement. Overall, this data suggests that whilst some changes or additions may need to be made (see below), most participants agreed with the proposed actions.
- **Strategy content (gaps) and working together:** During the consultation events, participants had the opportunity to give their views on the proposals in the draft strategy, with workshops focussing on exploring the key issues affecting people and any gaps in the strategy. Survey participants were also invited to provide feedback about their responses and any gaps through free-text boxes. This qualitative data has been analysed for each of the 8 priority areas, as well as the theme of "working together" and general feedback on the strategy, to identify areas where the strategy needs to be strengthened, amended or added to. This report outlines the key themes, number of responses and a summary of comments, and then goes on to explain how we have updated the draft strategy in response to the areas raised.
- **Prioritising actions:** The consultation also sought feedback on which of the proposed actions were most important to people. This information is presented under each priority theme and has been used to inform areas of focus for the year 1 action plan which has been developed alongside the updated strategy.
- **Measuring success:** Participants were also asked about how we should measure the success of the strategy. The feedback given has informed updates to the draft strategy and success measures for the year 1 action plan.
- **Strategy design:** People also had the opportunity to provide feedback on the strategy design (which is summarised in this report and has informed the final design of the strategy document) and also to express an interest in being involved in producing the final version of the strategy design, for example by contributing artwork or poetry.

The extensive feedback received through the consultation has resulted in a number of changes to the draft strategy to strengthen areas which are important to people and address the gaps identified, building on the strategy which was itself shaped by engagement with people with lived experience. The rich insights gathered through the consultation will also be used to inform strategy implementation, when the more detailed ideas and suggestions put forward during consultation can be considered and further built upon to deliver improvements for autistic people of all ages along with their carers and families living in North Yorkshire.

## Background and purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the approach, findings and responses to the North Yorkshire Autism Strategy public consultation.

The consultation took place over 15 weeks and 4 days from 27th November 2023 to 15th March 2024 to seek views on the draft strategy from autistic people, carers/families, those who work with autistic people and wider members of the public.

The report includes information about the consultation methodology, participation rates, approach to analysis, key findings (across a number of areas) and how we have responded to these through updates or additions to the draft strategy and the preparation of the year 1 action plan.

## Methodology

### Engagement to inform the draft strategy

The public consultation built upon the 3-stage engagement process which was undertaken between April and September 2023 to inform the development of the strategy. The engagement sought views from autistic children, young people and adults, their carers/families, staff, partners and wider community services which shaped the draft strategy through the following opportunities:

- April - May 2023: 8 public events (in-person & virtual) for autistic people plus carers/families, and a survey which received 170 responses. 104 people attend the events, with 72 autistic people / carers present.
- July 2023: 104 practitioners from across organisations attended 7 events, and 40 colleagues were reached through 2 partnership meetings
- Sept 2023: autistic people, carers/families, practitioners and partners came together for 7 thematic action-planning workshops (mixture of virtual and local), with 77 different people participating

### Consultation design and aims

The consultation was developed and delivered by representatives from a number of organisations on behalf of the North Yorkshire Autism Strategy Steering Group, as follows: North Yorkshire Council, Humber & North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (North Yorkshire Place), His Majesty's Prisons & Probation Service, Community First Yorkshire, Healthwatch North Yorkshire and the Steering Group Lived Experience representative.

Building on the 3 stages of engagement, the consultation focussed on gaining feedback on 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 invite people to be involved in contributing to 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.

## Methodology

For this consultation, the Steering Group applied a mixed methodology with both quantitative and qualitative approaches, in order to broaden the reach and increase accessibility. Methods included survey-based feedback and online and in-person workshop opportunities. A total of 37 people across the steering group, facilitation team and senior leaders in organisations across the partnership attended consultation events to host, facilitate and listen to the feedback. This demonstrates the strength of support/resourcing for the consultation process. These people are not included in the participant figures quoted below.

### Virtual launch event

This event was held online on the day of the consultation launch (27th November 2023). An overview of the draft strategy was presented, along with information about the consultation, key messages, links to the strategy and accompanying documents, links to the survey and the events schedule.

### Surveys

Surveys were available to seek views from individuals about the strategy themes, actions, priorities, design, success measures and working together. The surveys contained a mixture of scaled (quantitative) and free text (qualitative) questions and included optional questions to help distinguish between responses from different groups/characteristics e.g., autistic; carer/family member; partner/professional. The surveys were hosted online, with paper copies shared at events and available at local libraries. Links shared with local GP surgeries and consultation information was also sent via assessment providers to people on their waiting lists. Other formats were made available as required.

4 surveys were designed to reach different audiences, these are outlined below with total participation rates. **Appendix 1** includes more detailed demographic information about survey participants.

Survey	Number of participants
General	92
Easy Read	65
Primary School Children	12
Teenagers	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>

### **Public events visits to established groups**

Following on from the virtual launch event, 7 in-person consultation events were held (one in each locality) plus 3 online events including one evening and one weekend session. A total of 11 events were open to the public and were hosted by a senior representative from the Steering Group alongside the Steering Group Lived Experience representative. The schedule of the events can be found in the appendix.

Each event consisted of a presentation about the strategy and workshop discussions which used discursive methodologies where people collaborated to explore ideas and respond to the consultation aims. The workshops were guided by a framework of questions based on the consultation aims and supported by copies of the consultation documents, but the focus of each workshop discussion was tailored to enable people to spend time talking about the areas of most interest to them. During the in-person events, individual discussions and/or quiet spaces were made available on request to assist participation.

Where invited to do so, a member of the consultation team attended established groups to run a session based on the same format as the public events but in a more familiar and/or convenient setting for participants. Visits were made to 4 local groups to conduct workshops and 3 local forums to give an overview of the strategy and promote opportunities to participate. Visits were also initially also scheduled for a further 2 groups however these were subsequently cancelled due to illness of group hosts/participants - however other methods of participation were available including paper copies of the survey.

A total of **172 people** attended consultation events and workshops with established groups (excluding facilitators, steering group members and senior leaders of partner organisations). 6 people attended more than one consultation event. Some people self-declared as autistic, carers etc within the events or at the time of booking but this was not required in order to participate. The conversational method used at the events means it is not possible to distinguish between responses of different groups. Attendance at events and groups has been categorised in **Appendix 1**.

### **Written responses**

In total 33 written responses or documents were submitted to the consultation. These were received by email and included in the analysis below.

## **Public Statements through North Yorkshire Council Democratic Process**

During the consultation period, a number of public questions/statements on autism and the autism strategy were presented through the North Yorkshire Council Democratic Process, as detailed below. The content of these statements has been incorporated into the thematic analysis of consultation responses as outlined in the rest of the consultation report.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Number of statements</b>	<b>Link to Minutes</b>
13/12/23	Scrutiny of Health	1	<a href="#">Printed minutes 13th-Dec-2023 10.00 Scrutiny of Health Committee.pdf (northyorks.gov.uk)</a>
06/02/24	Executive	1	<a href="#">Printed minutes 06th-Feb-2024 11.00 Executive.pdf (northyorks.gov.uk)</a>
08/03/24	Scrutiny of Health	2	<a href="#">Printed minutes 08th-Mar-2024 10.00 Scrutiny of Health Committee.pdf (northyorks.gov.uk)</a>
15/03/24	Health and Wellbeing Board	2	<i>Forthcoming (add link when available)</i>

## **North Yorkshire Council Scrutiny of Health Committee**

On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (one week before the consultation closed), the North Yorkshire Council Scrutiny of Health Committee received an update on the strategy and consultation, and provided their views and contributions to the process. Following consideration of the presentation, subsequent discussion and public questions, Members of the Committee unanimously agreed that they have every confidence in the strategy and the consultation process. General minutes of the meeting can be accessed here: [Printed minutes 08th-Mar-2024 10.00 Scrutiny of Health Committee.pdf \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Accessibility Considerations**

Easy read versions of the strategy and survey were available online alongside general versions. Paper copies of the strategy and survey (both the standard and easy read versions) were made available at consultation events. Paper surveys were available at local libraries, links shared with local GP surgeries and other formats made available as required. Survey links and paper copies were signposted during the consultation events, and the webpage to access surveys also included details of the events, so that people could make their own choice of how to take part.

The in-person conversational approach at the events was designed to be inclusive and adaptable. As well as the above, other channels for feedback included telephone and email. The strategy documents were also available in other formats on request.

The draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for this work identified the need to consider the needs of different groups as part of consultation to ensure we reach and hear feedback from them on the strategy in response to our EIA findings e.g., women/girls, different ages, those who are gender diverse, those from the armed forces community and those from different ethnic groups.



The Steering group reviewed data from consultation responses in mid-January and end February 2024 to consider representation across different groups. This review identified a number of groups which were under-represented at that point and agreed a number of targeted actions to support proactive promotion of the consultation with a view to reaching more people in these groups: Children and Young people, military community, LGBTQI+, Craven and Ryedale localities.

The format of public consultation events was adapted after first session in response to feedback from autistic people and carers. This was in order to make the session more welcoming and accessible (rather than changing the nature of the consultation or opportunities to participate), which was validated by feedback from subsequent events.

### Communications and Promotion

The Steering Group was supported by the North Yorkshire Council (NYC) Communications Team and by communications colleagues in the partner organisations. To extend reach, a range of communication channels and methods were used. A list of key communication activities can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Respondents to the general survey were asked ‘How did you hear about the Autism Strategy Consultation?’ 53 people answered the question, with responses showing that information about the consultation was accessed in different ways as shown in the table below.

	%	Number
Through organisations	30%	16
Social Media	30%	16
News Media	15%	8
Email	11%	6
Personal Connections	13%	7

There were no trends in how autistic adults/ children or carers had heard about the consultation.

Survey respondents were asked to report on how long they had been involved with the strategy development. The vast majority of people (86% [n=70]) reported that it had been their first time being involved with the strategy development. One person (1%) stated that they had attended events in July and had remained involved, another person stated that they had attended the events in September but have not since been involved. 11% [n=9] of people responding to this question also stated that they wished to stay involved.

Of the 172 people attending consultation events, 27 people had also previously attended an engagement event. People registering for and attending the consultation events were given the chance to sign up to a mailing list to receive further information about the strategy and involvement opportunities. The majority of people agreed to this.

In conclusion, whilst it was the first time for most people to be involved in the strategy consultation work, a satisfactory number of people have wished to remain involved in shaping the strategy.

### Feedback on the consultation process

Where people provide general feedback on the consultation format in the workshops, these were captured. The comments generally related to or reflected personal experiences of taking part in the consultation. Comments were both positive and negative.

One person requested guidance to obtain a paper version of the survey as they felt unable to “get down what [they] need[ed] to say”; and another fed back that the survey was “confusing”. 3 comments suggested that the events should be better advertised in the places where autistic people go.

## Consultation Feedback – introduction and general feedback

Analysis of the consultation feedback was completed by a multi-agency team including staff from North Yorkshire Council, Humber North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, Probation Service and Healthwatch North Yorkshire, following common principles and a consistent approach. This included both analysis of quantitative survey data, thematic analysis of qualitative feedback from both surveys and events and consideration of whether survey trends varied between different groups of people (eg autistic people, carers, people from different localities). Following the completion of consultation analysis, this was provided to each chapter lead, a senior representative from the relevant organisation. Chapter leads were responsible for reviewing the consultation analysis and proposing amendments and additions to the strategy in response to what people told us. This is presented throughout the document.

The consultation feedback is presented in this report as follows:

- General feedback on the strategy and vision
- Specific feedback relating to each priority / chapter area, including:
  - o Survey responses on the extent to which the chapter should be an area of focus for North Yorkshire
  - o Survey responses on the extent to which the draft strategy reflects and responds to the key issues in North Yorkshire
  - o Analysis of qualitative feedback from all sources on gaps and improvements – presented together with how we propose to respond to this feedback in the amendments to and delivery of the strategy
  - o Analysis on what actions are most important – this draws on information from the surveys in which participants were asked to rank the proposed actions in order of priority. A weighted score was applied to determine those which on average were felt to be more important.
  - o Analysis of consultation responses about measuring success
- Feedback relating to working together
- Feedback relating to the strategy design

### Feedback on the strategy vision

During the consultation events, workshop discussion was held on the strategy vision (as well as individual chapters – see sections below). The emerging themes are outlined below along with our response:

Key Theme: <b>Status and needs</b>	Number of Responses: 15
Comment Summary	5 responses suggested that the vision needed to explicitly encompass people who have a diagnosis of autism, those who are undiagnosed and those who are waiting for an assessment/diagnosis. Other comments reflected the diversity of needs within the autistic spectrum (such as those with complex needs, non-speakers, older people, those living in care homes and those with or without learning disabilities, pre-school children).
Our response	Updated vision wording to read “autistic people of all ages...”

Rationale	
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Key Theme: <b>Inclusion of other groups</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	There were 3 requests for the vision to refer specifically to carers, in line with the chapter priority on carers. 1 comment referred to the need to improve consistency across North Yorkshire.
Our response	Updated vision wording to read “.. and their families and carers living in North Yorkshire”
Rationale	Specific reference made to carers aligned to the chapter priority; specific reference to place included

Key Theme: <b>Requirement for a vision</b>	Number of Responses:16
Comment Summary	7 comments suggested that the vision should be a “given” for every person in North Yorkshire, but that it needed to be stated. 6 comments referred to the need to ensure that the vision brings inclusivity for autistic people in communities, places of work etc. 3 comments referred to the importance of putting the person first in the vision.
Our response	No changes proposed to vision.
Rationale	Vision starts with “autistic people”. Recognise that the vision describes what we are working towards. Inclusivity in workplace, communities etc is covered in the relevant chapters.

Key Theme: <b>Agreement</b>	Number of Responses: 8
Comment Summary	8 comments stated broad agreement with the vision
Our response	No changes proposed to vision.
Rationale	Other changes proposed retain and expand upon the sentiment of the vision outlined during consultation

Key Theme: <b>Deliverability / ambition</b>	Number of Responses: 17
Comment Summary	9 comments referred to the lack of detail in the vision about how it would be delivered/resourced and how success would be measured. 4 responses suggested that the vision was far from reality (for example not moving on since the last strategy, long waiting lists, lack of infrastructure). 2 comments related to the vision being aspirational and 1 comment suggested it could be more ambitious
Our response	No changes proposed to the vision
Rationale	Recognise that the vision describes <b>what</b> we are working towards and so it should be aspirational and ambitious. Whilst vision does not describe <b>how</b> we will get there, this is outlined in the strategy commitments, with specific actions, resources and success measures identified in the year 1 action plan.

### Other general feedback

A range of other consultation comments related to the overall strategy, including reference to deliverability, cross-cutting themes etc. These are summarised below along with the response:

Key Theme: <b>Stigma, Language &amp; Societal Expectations</b>	Number of Responses:10
Comment Summary	2 comments referenced the importance of adopting a social model of disability. 4 general comments were made about the distress and difficulty caused by societal expectations. 4 comments related to experiences of discrimination/being misunderstood, the importance of language and/or the danger that the strategy could be stigmatising.
Our response	No amendments made to the strategy
Rationale	Inclusive Communities priority includes work to increase understanding and awareness of autism. Workforce identified as a cross-cutting theme to acknowledge the importance of training/awareness-raising amongst professionals. Working together is a cross-cutting theme – continuing to involve autistic people as we begin delivering the strategy should help to build positive language and understanding.

Key Theme: <b>Data and Evidence</b>	Number of Responses: 6
Comment Summary	3 comments referred to the need to use the most up-to-date data and research to inform the strategy including unmet need. 2 comments suggested there should be an evidence-based assessment of the economic impact of the whole strategy and/or funding transfer between public sector agencies. 1 person referred to the importance of feedback from autistic people to evidence the difference the strategy has made.
Our response	Cross-cutting theme on “making best use of our resources” updated to refer to information as something which can be better shared to support delivery of the strategy. Year 1 action plan includes an action around reviewing and update available data and evidence on autism needs.
Rationale	Evidence and data will support delivery and evaluation of strategy

Key Theme: <b>Leadership &amp; Accountability</b>	Number of Responses: 13
Comment Summary	Concerns were raised regarding legislative compliance (5 comments) and ensuring appropriate senior leadership and political oversight, with suggestions provided as to how this could be achieved (3 comments). Suggestions were also made about how understanding and appreciation of autism could be widely embedded across organisations (4 comments) and 1 comment suggested that the work under the strategy should be guided

	by principles including person-centred thinking, transformational change, integration across health and social care and transparency.
Our response	Workforce cross-cutting theme wording updated to refer to the need to embed understanding, appreciation and leadership. Year 1 delivery plan includes an action to prepare and publish an annual progress report.
Rationale	Legal advice has been sought throughout the strategy development to ensure compliance with statutory duties. The public consultation process has facilitated transparency and accountability; and the strategy will be approved and adopted through North Yorkshire Council's democratic governance. An annual update on strategy delivery will be prepared and published. Workforce has been identified as a cross-cutting theme with a range of actions in the strategy to improve how understanding and appreciation of autism is embedded more widely across organisations.

<b>Key Theme: Accessibility</b>	Number of Responses: 5
Comment Summary	6 responses suggested more information was needed to better signpost to support and activities, ideally in a centralised location.
Our response	Update made
Rationale	Cross-cutting theme on "making best use of our resources" updated to refer to information as something which can be better shared to support delivery of the strategy.

<b>Key Theme: Needs of specific groups</b>	Number of Responses: 8
Comment Summary	Comments were received about the need to understand and respond to the distinct needs of different groups within the autistic population including those with and without learning disabilities (5 comments), women/girls (2 comments), and considering autism, ADHD and wider neurodiversity together (1 comment).
Our response	Strategy and EIA already acknowledge that different autistic people have different needs and that autism is individual. However, gaps in data/knowledge are also acknowledged therefore the Year 1 action plan includes an action around reviewing and update available data and evidence on autism needs. See also: chapters on Assessment, Diagnosis and Support; and Health & Care.
Rationale	Continuing to improve data/understanding will support more effective delivery of the strategy

<b>Key Theme: Deliverability</b>	Number of Responses: 6
Comment Summary	2 responses referred to the need for more resources to deliver the strategy and/or the impact of austerity on services. 1 response referred to geographical challenges in North Yorkshire. 2 responses referred to the impact of welfare reform and the disabled bus pass scheme
Our response	No changes proposed to strategy
Rationale	"Making best use of our resources" is a cross-cutting theme. Acknowledge that reality of public sector finances means funding is limited. Year 1 action plan identifies the resources to deliver on each area.

## Feedback on Education and Preparing for Adulthood

### A) Should Education be a key priority in the strategy?

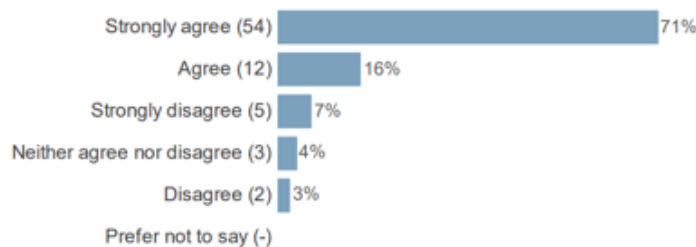
Survey question 2a1 asked “How far do you agree that ‘education’ is a key theme for the autism strategy?”

Throughout the whole consultation gathering of data, a high proportion of people felt that Education should be a key priority within the strategy.

78 people responded to this question. 71% [n=54] strongly agreed that ‘education’ is a key theme; 7% [n=5] of respondents strongly disagreed.

When aggregated, 87% [n=68] people strongly agree and agree, and 10% [n=8] strongly disagree or disagree. The remaining 4% [n=3] of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

Please indicate your agreement with the questions below: (How far do you agree that education and preparing for adulthood are key themes to supporting autistic children and young people to thrive?)



From the easy-read survey:

48 people answered this question. 90% answered yes [n=43] with 8% [n=4] answering no and 2% [n=1] answering don't know.

Overall, across both surveys, 126 people completed them; 88% [n=112] of people agreed education should be a key theme, 3% [n=4] neither agreed nor disagreed or were unsure and 9% [n=12] disagreed.

### B) Looking at the ‘what we are proposing to do?’ section on page 10, for education and preparing for adulthood, how far do you agree that these actions reflect and respond to the key issues?

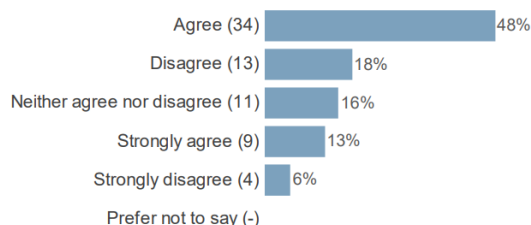
The majority of discussions and surveys completed were in agreement with the actions identified in the strategy:

71 people responded to this question. Most people agreed 48% [n=34] and 13% [n=9] strongly agreed giving a total of 61% [n=43] agreeing or strongly agreeing. 16% [n=11] neither agree or disagree that the actions reflect and respond to key issues. 18% [n=13] disagreed and 6% [n=4] strongly disagreed to the proposals reflect and respond to key issues.

Combining the responses into strongly agree/agree and strongly disagree/disagree shows that around two thirds of people 61% [n=43] agree compared to 24% [n=15] who disagreed or strongly

disagreed. This feedback suggests that some additions or changes may need to be made. However, the majority agree with the current proposed actions.

Please indicate your agreement with the questions below: (Looking at the 'what are we proposing to do?' section on page 10, for education and preparing for adulthood, how far do you agree that these actions reflect and respond to the key issues?)



**C) What is missing or could be improved in the draft strategy relating to the employment priority, and how have we responded to these?**

There were 83 additional comments made by people who completed the general survey (some made multiple comments).  
General Survey

Key Theme: <b>More Specialist provision</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Including schools for post 16 Improve the range of provisions
Our response	North Yorkshire has a Personalised Learning College, Flying High, catering for learners, aged 16-25 with an EHCP. Post-16 options include supported internships, apprenticeships and further education. We are currently increasing the capacity within supported internships.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>More support for families</b>	Number of Responses: 5
Comment Summary	Children with violent/challenging behaviour Including respite Consistent Case workers 2 Post diagnosis 3
Our response	
Rationale	



Key Theme: <b>Early Identification</b>	Number of Responses: 3
Comment Summary	
Our response	<p>Dingley's promise training offered to all providers.  Verbo to be offered to all early years setting.  Unlocking Autism to be offered to all settings to support improving the settings for all children.  SENCo network training  Focussed support for schools through Delivering Better Value (DBV) project.  Work with schools and settings to ensure they are confident in the early identification of SEND and that the application of the graduated response is effective.</p>
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>More training for professionals</b>	Number of Responses: 28
Comment Summary	<p>adaptations in school, include training for all children, lists of available training, autism hubs in mainstream settings, Autistic girls, Specialist TA's, Autistic people involved with training, OT support for sensory support, Oliver McGowan, Elklan</p>
Our response	<p>Dingley's promise training offered to all providers.  Verbo to be offered to all early years setting.  Unlocking Autism to be offered to all settings to support improving the settings for all children.  SENCo network training  Focussed support for schools through Delivering Better Value (DBV) project.  Work with schools and settings to ensure they are confident in the early identification of SEND and that the application of the graduated response is effective.</p> <p>Update: With practitioners going in as part of DBV, they are advising on everyday support.</p>
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Schools to include life skills</b>	Number of Responses: 15
Comment Summary	<p>1:1 support for autistic teens with this, education to be more flexible for child, improve adult education and post teens</p>
Our response	<p>Currently up to 15 schools with autistic provision in Targeted Mainstream Schools – aim to have 31 TMPs by Dec 25.</p>
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Improve waiting time for EHCP</b>	Number of Responses: 6
Comment Summary	
Our response	Early identification is key – work with SENCOs around training in all schools and early years settings around identification of autism.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Improve how we track and assess Autistic children</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	
Our response	As above, early identification is key – working closely with SEND early years forum to improve early years provision and create a transition Charter protocol and handbook for Neurodivergent children.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Improve the specialist provisions to meet needs of autistic children</b>	Number of Responses: 3
Comment Summary	
Our response	As above, increase Targeted Mainstream Provision places for children with SEND.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Improve waiting times for diagnosis</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	
Our response	Work through the ICB to increase capacity within assessment services. Long-term, this is one of the HNY ICB's priorities, to standardise assessment pathways across all of Humber and NY. Additionally, significant investment proposed in Bradford and Craven to reduced the waiting times.
Rationale	

Key themes that came out of the general survey were:

- All adults who work in schools to be trained in Autism. (34% of the survey)
- Increased capacity with specialist provisions. (16% of the survey)
- Schools/post 16 education to include life skills and improved preparation for adulthood. (18% of the survey)
- More support for families of children who are aggressive or violent.
- Improve EHCP waiting times.

The General survey: Total of 37 responses

43% [N=16] identified as autistic

54% [N=20] identified as not autistic

3% [N=1] didn't know or choose not to share.

Within this data 54% [N=20] were also carers or family members and 19% [N=7] worked directly 8% [N=3] were other

Easy-read Survey:

Key Theme: <b>There are places for autistic children in local schools and there is help for children who are unable to go to school and their families.</b>	Number of Responses: 21
Comment Summary	
Our response	Currently up to 15 schools with autistic provision in Targeted Mainstream Schools – aim to have 31 TMPs by Dec 25.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>People who work in schools and colleges have the right information and training to support autistic children and young people</b>	Number of Responses: 25
Comment Summary	
Our response	Dingley's promise training offered to all providers. Verbo to be offered to all early years setting. Unlocking Autism to be offered to all settings to support improving the settings for all children. SENCo network training Focussed support for schools through Delivering Better Value (DBV) project.

	Work with schools and settings to ensure they are confident in the early identification of SEND and that the application of the graduated response is effective.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Autistic children and young people are helped to understand what being autistic means to them</b>	Number of Responses: 10
Comment Summary	
Our response	Hub support working with individual children when referrals are sent in. Focussed support – specialist teachers to support/signpost support for developing self-identity. Unlocking Autism unit on identity to be available through traded offer for all schools. Work closely with Autism central regarding parental support – identity.
Rationale	

Easy read survey The most common selection was that People working in schools and colleges have the right information and training to support autistic people 45% of all answers.  
37% felt that there being places for autistic children in local schools and there is help for children who are unable to go to school and their families.  
18% felt Autistic children and young people being helped would be key.

This supports the General Survey in thinking that all people in school settings should be trained

Easy Read Survey: Total of 48responses  
29% [N=14] identified as autistic  
40% [N=19] identified as not autistic  
31% [N=15] didn't know or choose not to share.

Within the general survey – of the people who identified as autistic, 24% [N=9] either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the actions propose. 13%[N=5] agreed or strongly agreed and 5% [N=2] were neither agreeing or disagreeing.

There were also 21 comments made by people completing the easy-read survey. Of these comments 29% [n=14] were from people who identified as autistic.  
Of the 21 comments made:  
57% felt schools needed to be well trained in autism.  
23% [N5] specifically mentioned improving transition to adulthood or improving post 16

Comments recorded during the in-person consultation events were also analysed and separated into

- Reflections on lived experience
- Suggestions for missing actions
- Comments about the suggested actions.

There were 117 comments about the suggested actions which were included for consideration in this section.

Comments from both surveys and consultation events were analysed and 5 themes identified:

- All adults who work in schools to be trained in Autism.
- Increased capacity with specialist provisions.
- Schools/post 16 education to include life skills and improved preparation for adulthood.
- Education to be consistent and support to be offered around transitions particularly to secondary and into employment.
- More support for families of children who are aggressive or violent.
- Improve waiting times for EHCP

Key Theme: <b>Training educational provisions</b>	Number of Responses: 8
Comment Summary	Reasonable adjustments made – ear plugs, go to toilet, more time to finish tasks, increase social friendships staff to know me, teachers to listen to me, slower pace, quiet place for me to go to, ability to work from home sometimes, to follow through with agreements,
Our response	Increased places in Targeted Mainstream Provision
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Real life skills taught</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	How to use money – get a job
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Training neurotypical children to support autistic children/ friends</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Children are unkind. I haven't got any friends.
Our response	
Rationale	

Not everyone answered every question, however an overwhelming majority of teens raised that schools need training to be able to meet autistic children's needs. Many children referred to not being heard or their needs understood within the school setting.

#### Primary age Survey

12 surveys completed.

The key theme that children talked about was training staff and schools to understand needs.

Key Theme: <b>Training educational provisions</b>	Number of Responses: 12
Comment Summary	Quiet rooms for learning, teachers know me and my triggers, listen to me, explain to me, reassure me, lots of sensory breaks, resources to help communicate and to support sensory needs
Our response	
Rationale	

Discussions around training in schools were around inconsistencies amongst staff and settings. Some families/children felt that they were well supported at times, but then transition into a new class/setting sometimes presented with inconsistencies and built barriers for the child. Children and teens talked about the importance of all staff knowing agreed support, including adults who don't directly know that child through learning e.g. reception staff who often greet children at start of day. There was also discussions around improving transitions, particularly from Primary to secondary. There were many discussions about preparation to adulthood and children learning life skills that would support them in employment.

Harrogate Event:

Key Theme: <b>Schools to have better training and understanding of autism</b>	Number of Responses: 12
Comment Summary	Every school have specialist support/champion for autism. Teacher training to include training specifically on autism. More support with secondary schools transitions. Improve sensory environment in schools Improve the support for children who find attending school challenging.
Our response	Dingley's promise training offered to all providers. Verbo to be offered to all early years setting. Unlocking Autism to be offered to all settings to support improving the settings for all children. SENCo network training Focussed support for schools through Delivering Better Value (DBV) project. Work with schools and settings to ensure they are confident in the early identification of SEND and that the application of the graduated response is effective.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Improve Autistic children's post 16</b>	Number of Responses: 6
Comment Summary	Improve preparation for adult hood, Children need to be taught life skills. It is important to get qualifications. Social events outside of school – social prescribers.
Our response	Flying High, increased capacity in supported internships, as well as other options.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Improve pre-diagnosis Support</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	More support for the individual child. Like the Daisy Chain support – but this focusses on parents and groups.
Our response	The aim is to have a fully needs-based diagnostic and support system, to ensure needs are met, without relying on the full assessment first.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Increase funding</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Increase the funding in schools. How funding is spent to be published.
Our response	
Rationale	

Northallerton Event:

Key Theme: <b>Schools to have better training and understanding of autism.</b>	Number of Responses: 27
Comment Summary	Advocates, champions for autistic children. Peer training/support – all children to have an awareness of autism. SENCo training. Improve early identity – schools to be empowered to encourage parents to seek diagnosis. Teacher training to include autism training. Everyone in school to have a knowledge of autism.
Our response	Dingley's promise training offered to all providers. Verbo to be offered to all early years setting. Unlocking Autism to be offered to all settings to support improving the settings for all children. SENCo network training Focussed support for schools through Delivering Better Value (DBV) project. Work with schools and settings to ensure they are confident in the early identification of SEND and that the application of the graduated response is effective.

	Unlocking autism training also for parents.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Transition</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	To make sure all information is passed on during transition.
Our response	
Rationale	

#### Richmond Event:

Key Theme: <b>Training in school</b>	Number of Responses: 7
Comment Summary	Schools to complete a sensory assessment; All school staff to be trained; children to be supported around identity and puberty
Our response	Dingley's promise training offered to all providers. Verbo to be offered to all early years setting. Unlocking Autism to be offered to all settings to support improving the settings for all children. SENCo network training Focussed support for schools through Delivering Better Value (DBV) project. Work with schools and settings to ensure they are confident in the early identification of SEND and that the application of the graduated response is effective.
Rationale	

#### Malton Event

Key Theme: <b>Celebrate success and share good practice</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Ambassadors to share good practice; share good news stories; Ensure make use of all current resources
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Training in school</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	Education for all at a young age;
Our response	
Rationale	



Key Theme: <b>Home education</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	Include home education;
Our response	
Rationale	

Scarborough Event:

Key Theme: <b>Training to be up to date and current</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	Training needs to be updated e.g., Autism in women & girls;
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>All areas working together</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	Thinking needs to be joined up and all parties need to work together. A clear plan for after diagnosis; Fair access to opportunities in all locations e.g., activity groups, directory of services, someone with an overview of locality
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Training in schools</b>	Number of Responses: 11
Comment Summary	use the primary model in secondary; support transitions; autism champion in all schools; Better support to improve attendance; smaller groups; flexible around the individual;
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Transition into adulthood</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	Better transition into 6 <sup>th</sup> form
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>EHCP quicker to access</b>	Number of Responses: 1
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Comment Summary	Can be an issue getting needs met.
Our response	
Rationale	

Ripon Event:

Key Theme: <b>Improve the availability of support</b>	Number of Responses: 10
Comment Summary	Currently feels like no support; unclear how to get to support; courses are good – but how do we get them? General increase of awareness regarding the support and how to access it.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Training</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Need to train SENCo – Consistency around SENCos
Our response	Dingley’s promise training offered to all providers. Verbo to be offered to all early years setting. Unlocking Autism to be offered to all settings to support improving the settings for all children. SENCo network training Focussed support for schools through Delivering Better Value (DBV) project. Work with schools and settings to ensure they are confident in the early identification of SEND and that the application of the graduated response is effective.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Better support in schools</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	1:1 support would be good
Our response	
Rationale	

Online:

Key Theme: <b>Secondary schools need to improve</b>	Number of Responses: 24
Comment Summary	Increase of training at: teacher training; ECTs; senior leadership team. Identification to improve; if we do not train (secondary school) Leadership teams, change will not happen” Too much emphasis on attendance – this needs to flex around the child’s needs; not enough support or resources; support SEMH better; look at strengths not deficit.
Our response	Dingley’s promise training offered to all providers. Verbo to be offered to all early years setting. Unlocking Autism to be offered to all settings to support improving the settings for all children. SENCo network training Focussed support for schools through Delivering Better Value (DBV) project. Work with schools and settings to ensure they are confident in the early identification of SEND and that the application of the graduated response is effective.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Employment</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Job centres not always fit for purpose; work place needs training – can be ignorant to autism.
Our response	
Rationale	

**D) What actions relating to Education are the most important?**

There are 7 key actions within the education chapter. The highest priorities included to strengthen the range of provisions for autistic children and training schools and educational settings to support autistic children.

Priority	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Strengthen the range of education provision for autistic children in North Yorkshire, including local provision for autistic children and young people who are formal learners and more placements in Targeted Mainstream Provision.	22%	22%	15%
Training for schools and education settings to support autistic people well (including pre-diagnosis support and reasonable adjustments)	21%	18%	20%
Continue to support autistic children and young people with one to one sessions	17%	12%	15%

around developing self-identity and understanding their diagnosis.			
Work with SENCOs to improve earlier identification of needs to improve children and young people's outcomes	13%	17%	7%
Establish a framework for children that have been identified as unable to access education in a school or setting.	10%	20%	11%
Implement changes to the preparing for adulthood pathway and joint working with partners to support autistic children from 14 years old including review short break offers for children; develop needs analysis for education, care and accommodation provision to expand the market, and; training for employers to support autistic people well.	16%	4%	17%
More courses for parents, carers, and families – continue rolling out and enhancing the Unlocking Autism and Unlocking Autism Plus programmes (see case study)	6%	2%	16%

#### **E) How should we measure success for the Education priority?**

There were 52 people who provided a response to this question in the survey with a total of 58 comments made as individuals made comments that span across more than one theme. The following themes were identified.

Key themes	Numbers	Percentages
Successful placements, fewer children out of education, fewer exclusions	16	28%
CAMHS referrals reducing Outside agency referrals reducing, fewer autistic people on medication for depression	4	7%
Children's needs been met and successful regarding education and social and emotional needs, EHCP targets met	12	21%
OFSTED measurements	1	2%
Early diagnosis increasing	1	2%
Feedback from schools and employers regarding training	1	2%
Surveys: Fewer parent complaints about schools, parent feedback, school feedback child feedback, wellbeing measures	15	26%
Observations	1	2%
Number of Autistic people transitioning into employment	3	5%
Time of diagnosis reducing	1	2%
All staff to have recognised qualification/number of people who have done the training	2	3%
Provision available	1	2%

Key themes to measure success include:

1. Successful school placements, fewer children out of education, fewer exclusions
2. Surveys and discussions consulting schools, parents, and children.
3. Children's needs being met socially, emotionally, and academically in education evidenced through EHCP/school targets.

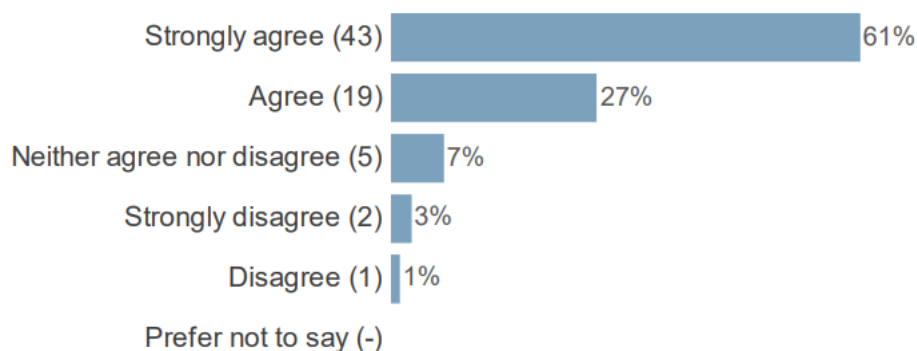
Several comments spanned more than one of these themes. This may be considered objectively through measuring numbers of autistic people successful in educational placements, having their needs met within the setting, fewer referrals to outside agencies for support and transitioning into employment as well as a reduction of referrals for mental health in employment. Equally important is actively engaging with and reflecting on the experiences of autistic children in the education settings.

## Consultation Feedback on Employment Chapter

### A) Should Employment be a key priority in the strategy?

**General survey** question 3a1 asked “How far do you agree that ‘employment’ is a key theme for the autism strategy?”

70 people responded to this question. 61% [n=43] strongly agreed that ‘employment’ is a key theme; 3% [n=2] of respondents strongly disagreed. When aggregated, 88% [n=62] people strongly agree and agree, and 4% [n=3] strongly disagree or disagree. The remaining 7% [n=5] of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

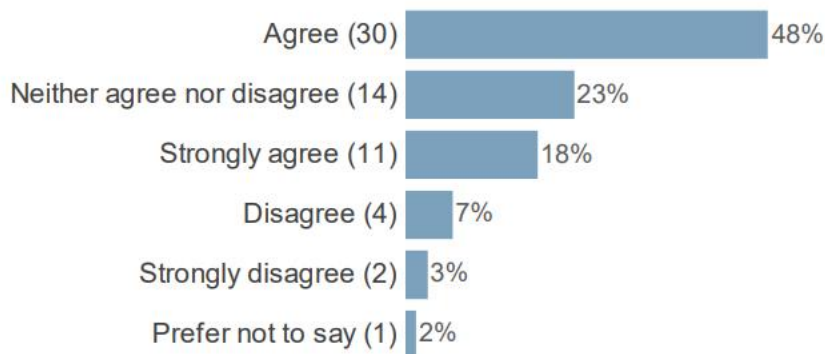


**The easy read survey** asked: ‘We want more autistic people to have the same work opportunities as everyone else. Do you think getting a job should be a key theme in the autism plan?’ 44 people answered this question. 82% answered yes [n=36] with 9% [n=4] answering no and 9% [n=4] answering don’t know.

Overall, across both surveys, 85% of people agreed employment should be a key theme, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed or were unsure and 7% disagreed.

### B) How well do the draft actions under the Employment priority reflect and respond to the key issues?

62 people responded to this question from the **general survey**. Most people either agreed 48% [n=30] or neither agreed nor disagreed 23% [n=14] that the actions reflect and respond to key issues. Smaller numbers of people either strongly agreed or disagreed, with these being 18% [11] and 7% [n=4] respectively. Combining the responses into strongly agree/agree and strongly disagree/disagree shows that around two thirds of people 66% [n=41] agree compared to 10% [n=6] who disagreed. This feedback suggests that some additions or changes may need to be made. However, the majority agree that the proposed actions reflect and respond to the key issues.



**C) What is missing or could be improved in the draft strategy relating to the employment priority, and how have we responded to these?**

Respondents to the **general survey** were asked if they would like to provide additional comments about how well the draft actions reflect and respond to the key issues around employment. There were 28 additional comments of which 39% [n=11] were from autistic people, 50% [n=14] were from carers or family members of autistic people, 7% [n=2] were from people who work directly with or support an autistic person and 4% [n=1] didn't identify. Within the comments, 21% [n=6] disagreed or strongly disagreed with the draft actions. 57% [n=16] agreed or strongly agreed with the draft actions and the remainder neither agreed nor disagreed.

Participants who completed the **easy read survey** were asked 'is there anything else you want to tell us about getting a job?'. A total of 19 comments were made, 58% [n=11] were from people who identified as autistic. The employment chapter was also discussed at the events, with much feedback given.

The following themes have been identified:

- Personalised Support
- Employers
- Information and action
- Personal Experience
- Attitudes and values
- Preparing for adulthood

Key Theme: <b>Personalised Support</b>	Number of Responses: 39
Comments Summary	<p>50% of people in surveys (n=14) talked about the need for both professionals providing support and employers to be aware of the need for a personalised approach. Autistic people have a diverse range of skills, strengths, and support needs. There was discussion of the support for autistic people to identify and articulate their strengths to employers and to discuss reasonable adjustments. Some people referenced the benefits and challenges of having employment and the need for support throughout working life both for those leaving education and those diagnosed later in life.</p> <p>8 responses from the Easy Read survey: Need more support helping autistic adult get a job or have equal job opportunities/Place to contact for employed autistic adults so they can stay in employment. Not intervene when gone</p>

	<p>wrong. All employers should have details for staff to contact local support/More support needed for Autistic people to get a job in a workplace/Get a CV for getting a job/raising more awareness if there is support out there, for example access to work/At the moment there are only a small number of young people accessing support into employment/Once they've had a job, they're expected to do it on their own for the next job. There should be support for as long as they need it. That's why they are unemployed for so long, in-between jobs.</p> <p>34% [n=17] of event comments were related to the services and support people felt was needed. Support to identify key strengths and abilities and to articulate these to an employer, support in the workplace, to understand the impact on benefits and to negotiate in work support such as work buddies. The Supported Employment Service and Community Support Organisations were both mentioned positively but with the caveat that there was not enough capacity or access.</p>
Our response	<p>Raise awareness of and improve access to NYC's supported employment team, the job centre's specialist employment service and community support. Promote Supported Internships and apprenticeships in both SEND and mainstream provision. Develop a support group/network for autistic job seekers. Share information about disability confident employers</p>
Rationale	<p>By raising awareness and improving access to existing support, more autistic people will have access to personalised help. Knowledge of disability confident employers means job seekers can target those businesses who have more experience with offering support. The option to access a support group/network around employment can help improve confidence, understanding of different industries, help to identify strengths and skills and support to identify what would be helpful adjustments.</p>

<b>Key Theme: Employers</b>	<b>Number of Responses: 43</b>
Comment Summary	<p>36% of people in surveys (n=10) mentioned the plans to work with employers and agreed that this was important in ensuring the right support was in place for autistic people in the work environment. Frequent mention was made of the need for reasonable adjustments. Education and training to support employers to see the benefit of neurodiversity in the workplace and provide them with the skills to support neurodiverse employees.</p> <p>54% [n=27] of comments from events related to employers. A lack of understanding, empathy and appropriate support were seen as the main barriers to autistic people thriving at work. 8 people spoke specifically about employers needing a different attitude to employing autistic people; specifically, that cultural change throughout the whole workplace was needed, not just with the recruiting manager.</p> <p>Easy Read Survey – 6 comments: Employers need to have more of understanding of Autism/Disability confident employers to be increased/The employers and staff need to made reasonable adjustments to support autistic adults in workplace/Employers and workplaces should have autism training/ Better education and support for employers</p>



	There was a common consensus amongst the comments that employers needed information and education to be motivated to offer the support and adjustments needed.
Our response	<p>Training for employers needs to include the importance for change in workplace culture and 'inclusive by default' which extends to all employees.</p> <p>We will put together a steering group to focus on the design and delivery of a package of training to employers to raise awareness of autism, inclusive recruitment, and reasonable adjustments. Members of this group will engage employers through job fairs and business networks to raise awareness of training and resources. Put together a portfolio of good news stories and testimonials from employers who employ autistic people and from autistic people with successful careers. Promote the Autistica neurodiversity employers index and the Support with Employee Health and Disability Service.</p>
Rationale	Employers need support and information to make the adjustments needed. Providing access to helpful training, sharing stories and best practice examples and providing access to resources should ensure employers have the confidence and ability to be more inclusive

<b>Key Theme: Information &amp; Action</b>	Number of Responses: 6
Comment Summary	<p>The remaining comments were varied but could broadly be themed under a wish for additional information about the draft actions and how they will be achieved. 2 comments mentioned the need to link to education and one comment mentioned the benefit of linking to 3<sup>rd</sup> sector employment support.</p> <p>6% [n=3] comments specifically mentioned the need for information about existing support for autistic people and employers to be more easily accessible, services working together and sharing information and resources in one place.</p>
Our response	Steering group to link in with the inclusive communities' chapter group around sharing information
Rationale	Employers and businesses are part of the wider community network including VCFE organisations who may provide voluntary or work experience opportunities. A joint approach to sharing information will make it easier for everyone to access.

<b>Key Theme: Personal Experience</b>	Number of Responses: 8
Comment Summary	16% [n=8] of comments reflected on respondents' lived experience of the workplace or the difficulties associated with gaining and maintaining employment. This feedback focussed mainly discrimination in the application process or from colleagues, lack of understanding and adjustments. This led to people not either not being successful in gaining

	employment or not being successful in maintaining it. One comment mentioned accessibility problems in application forms.
Our response	Whilst it's clear some people have benefited from receiving support from services. Where people haven't received support their experiences in employment have not been positive either due to lack of understanding or active discrimination. Steering group to promote disability confidence to employers and provide access to training. Develop an autism support/network for autistic job seekers.
Rationale	We need to learn from the experiences of autistic people seeking employment. Greater understanding from employers and additional support to manage when difficulties arise, to ask for adjustments when needed.

<b>Key Theme: Attitudes &amp; Values</b>	<b>Number of Responses: 4</b>
Comment Summary	we need to empower and enable individuals with ASD/This should not be about mere compliance with the equalities act but positive adjustment and recruitment/Employment opportunities if any should reflect qualifications and experience. training, empathy and support, not rampant un/intended discrimination/Need to promote Autism put yourself in their shoes/ spend the day with them.
Our response	We will share good news stories and testimonials about the benefits of employing a diverse workforce. Highlighting the benefits to business and to society when we are inclusive by default.
Rationale	Employers will be more informed about the benefits of employing a diverse workforce which should improve conversations with autistic employees and job seekers.

<b>Key Theme: Preparing for Adulthood</b>	<b>Number of Responses: 4</b>
Comment Summary	More education materials from schools and wider services on how the family can help promote and support independent skills/Support and information given in time. A long, slow build up until school leaving. If not already done - autistic employed school leavers return to speak to current children/College courses designed in preparing students for the workplace/Start looking for jobs and the process of getting a job whilst people are at school to help them prepare
Our response	This links with our existing draft action around improving information to young people post 16 and access to work experience, employability skills and supported internships. We will work alongside our colleagues in CYPs to deliver.
Rationale	Young people will have access to information and work experience opportunities and will be more informed about careers opportunities and support to access employment

**Question 5a3: Please tell us if you think there are any actions missing.**

There were 21 responses to this question from the general survey. 48% [n=10] were provided by autistic people and 52% [n=11] were provided by family members or carers.

- Accessible Information and Resources
- Person Centred and Accessible

Key Theme: <b>Accessible Information &amp; Resources</b>	Number of Responses: 12
Comment Summary	57% of responses identified the need for clear, accessible information about legislation, resources, support, and organisations about a range of issues. Of these 12 comments, 25% referred specifically to one central point or webpage for sharing information.
Our response	Steering group to explore options for a single central point for sharing information related to employment, self-employment, benefits, holistic support
Rationale	This would be a significant step forward in improving accessibility of information for people. However, there are challenges around multiple organisations sharing information and regularly updating in a shared space.

Key Theme: <b>Person Centred &amp; Accessible</b>	Number of Responses: 6
Comment Summary	Autism is different in everyone/ Consult with autistic people/ Ensure support is accessible/ consider autism throughout the lifespan/ Ensure professionals follow their own advice
Our response	Ensure the steering group has input from autistic people. Training for employers to be co-produced. Stories and testimonials from autistic people to be shared with employers. Support group/network to be supported by NYC by led by autistic job seekers.
Rationale	By co-producing with autistic people we understand that personal experience is key and that autism is a diverse condition which incorporates many different experiences, needs, skills and strengths. A one-size fits all approach will not be effective.

**D) What actions relating to employment are the most important?**

There were 3 proposed actions in the employment chapter of the draft strategy

1. Work together with autistic people to develop a programme of training, information, and guidance for employers around workplace wellbeing. This will include information about reasonable adjustments, autism inclusive recruitment practices and a person-centred approach which enables autistic employees to gain employment and thrive at work.
2. Work with existing networks and services who offer support around employment to increase partnership working, improving knowledge and access for autistic people to existing support

and opportunities. Review referral pathways into NYC Supported Employment service in response to the National Autistic Society (NAS) recommendations around improving access to timely support.

3. To increase post-16, support and information for schools, young people and families around employment. This should include information and access to supported employment, supported internships, apprenticeships, and work experience opportunities. Explore ways to enable young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to use support information in their plan to inform employers about how to accommodate their needs.

People completing the **general survey** were asked to rate the draft actions on a scale of 1-3 with 1 being their highest priority and 3 being the lowest. 67 people completed the rating for the 3 draft actions. The most popular draft action was found to be draft action 1, closely followed by draft action 3.

Participants who completed the **easy read survey** were provided with 3 options as follows. They were asked to rate the statement which was most important to them. 46 people answered this question as below.

Action Point	People who rated this as their highest priority
Autistic people and employers should develop training and information about supporting autistic people to get a job and do well in work.	52% [n=24]
Organisations who help people find a job should work better together and make it easier for autistic people to get a job.	20% [n=9]
Schools should make sure young people and their families have the right information about what support and opportunities are available for them when they leave school.	28% [n=13]

#### E) How should we measure success for the employment priority?

There were 30 people who provided a response to this question in the survey. Several comments spanned more than one of these themes. There was a general agreement that autistic people should be at the heart of measuring success and that success should be defined by those with lived experience.

Responses were grouped into 3 themes:

- Increased numbers of autistic people gaining and maintaining employment
- The autistic person's self-reported outcomes (linked to employment, health and wellbeing)
- Surveys (of autistic people and employers)

When considering the theme of the autistic person's lived experience all 10 comments related to the person's emotional and physical health and wellbeing whilst employed or seeking employment.

Of those responses which suggested measuring through a survey 50% [n=5] solely recommended this method of measuring success whilst the other half of responses suggested a survey as part of a comment linked to the other 2 themes.

<b>Key Theme: Increased numbers of autistic people gaining and maintaining employment</b>	Number of Responses: 16
Comment Summary	More young people accessing employment/measure in wages/more autistic people in employment/better working conditions and understanding mean the percentage of autistic people in employment should rise/number of young people with an EHCP on courses, work experience or in employment/access to work uptake/opportunities for placements/number of young people leaving education and gaining employment/well paid and fulfilling jobs/staying in employment and less periods of unemployment/number accessing supported employment services
Our response	As a first step to understanding employment rates for autistic people in North Yorkshire, we will work together data and intelligence to build a baseline from which we can measure going forwards. We will also track national data. We will keep track of the number of young autistic people accessing supported internships.
Rationale	Although we have national figures around the number of autistic people in employment, we have no data to advise on figures within North Yorkshire. This is needed in order to measure an increase going forwards.

<b>Key Theme: The autistic person's self-reported outcomes linked to employment, health and wellbeing</b>	Number of Responses: 10
Comment Summary	The person is at the heart of this/the person's support needs and safety should be met/supported and comfortable to request reasonable adjustments/employers being proactive and concerned for their autistic employee's wellbeing/less anxiety at work/job satisfaction/needs are met accessibly and appropriately/better physical and emotional wellbeing
Our response	We will continue to engage with autistic people and co-produce training and resources for employers. Through establishing a support group/network autistic job seekers can tell us more about their experiences.
Rationale	Autistic people are at the heart of delivering against the proposed actions. It is important we listen and ensure the interventions are having a positive effect.

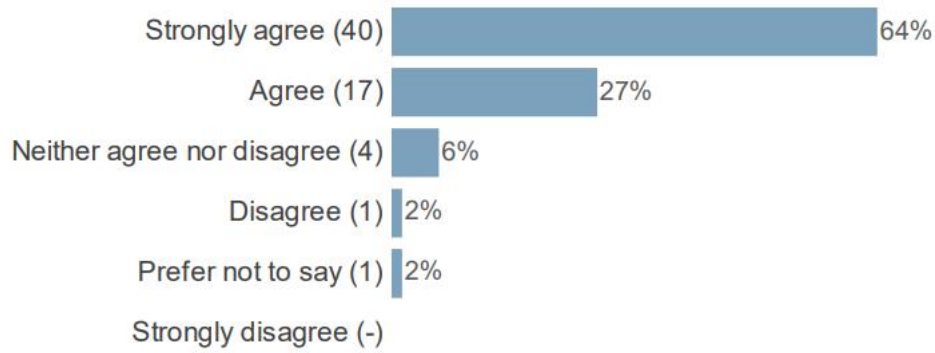
Key Theme: <b>Surveys (autistic people and employers)</b>	Number of Responses: 10
Comment Summary	Questionnaires to measure confidence/feedback from autistic people/companies adopting neurodiverse inclusive practice/wellbeing measures/ask people directly/regular surveys /speak to employers
Our response	The supported employment team have feedback forms. These will be shared widely with employers as part of the roll-out of future training. Surveys to autistic people will be made available through the support group/network
Rationale	Gathering feedback and stories is an important mechanism for measuring success and identifying further improvements

## Consultation feedback on the Housing Chapter

### A) Should housing be a key priority in the strategy?

General survey question 4a1 asked “How far do you agree that ‘housing is a key theme to supporting autistic young people and adults to thrive?’”

63 people responded to this question. 64% [n=40] strongly agreed with this being a key theme and 0% [n=0] of respondents strongly disagreed. When aggregated, 91% [n=57] of people strongly agree and agree, and 2% [n=1] strongly disagree and disagree, 6% [n=4] of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. The remaining 2% [n=1] preferred not to say.

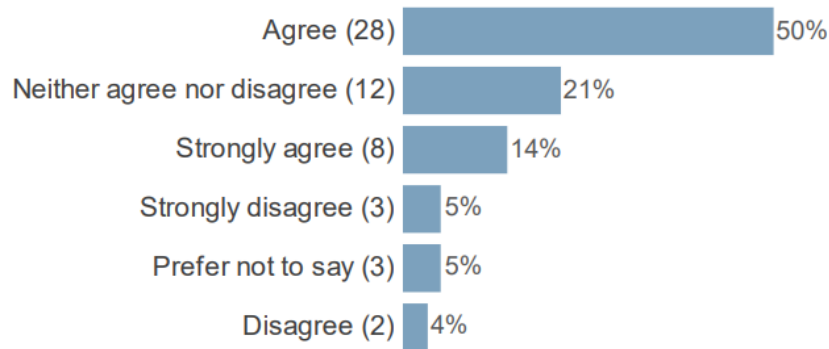


The easy-read survey posed the question ‘Do you think housing for autistic people should be a key theme in the autism plan?’ 56 people answered this question. 93% answered ‘yes’ [n=39] and 7% [n=3] answered ‘don’t know’. 33% [n=14] of the people who answered this question have an autism diagnosis (all answered ‘yes’).

Based on this feedback the survey data suggests that most participants agree that housing should be a key theme within the strategy.

### B) How well do the draft actions under the housing priority reflect and respond to the key issues?

Within the general survey 56 people responded to this question [Q4a2]. A larger proportion 50% [n=28] agreed that the actions reflect and respond to key issues and 4% [n=2] disagreed. Combining the responses into strongly agree/agree and strongly disagree/disagree shows that 64% [n=36] strongly agree/agree compared to 9% [n=5] who disagreed. 21% [n=12] neither agreed nor disagreed and 5% [n=3] preferred not to say.



Based on this feedback the survey data suggests that most participants agree that the draft actions under the housing priority reflect and respond to the key issues.

**C) What is missing or could be improved in the draft strategy relating to the housing priority, and how have we responded to these?**

24 people in the general survey provided an additional comment relating to how well the actions reflected the key issues. In addition 13 comments were made about the what was missing. 13 comments were made in the Easy Read Survey and housing was a key discussion point at the events. These comments came under the following themes:

- Support
- Strategy
- Adaptations
- Housing Stock
- Systems
- Financial support

Key Theme: <b>Support</b>	Number of Responses: 47
Comment Summary	<p>These comments mentioned the importance of ensuring that an autistic person receives a broad range of support from professionals and family/friend networks and housing availability impacts on this if the person must move away. Four comments talked about the importance of support with independent living skills for all levels of needs and how support should be personalised. 1 comment mentioned the need for clear and accessible help and information: website with basic information regarding independent living.</p> <p>In events, comments centred around the need for personalised support with consistency of staff to ensure trust is developed. Support with training around independent living skills (including financial management) was also mentioned. Some people considered the threshold to access support was too high. Two comments were made about the need for the housing service to understand the needs of autistic people and have the ability to recognise complex needs.</p>



Our response	<p>NYC’s NAS accredited Living Well service provides time-limited support which is available for any autistic person who does not qualify for social care around their housing needs. Additionally, we seek in 2024/25 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the skills of our Housing Options Teams through undertaking Oliver McGowan training</li> <li>• Utilise such tools as the <a href="#">Homeless Link Guide</a></li> </ul> <p>Both Housing and Adult Social Care Supported Housing departments are reviewing the content of their webpages and will seek to consult with a variety of user groups on future content.</p>
Rationale	<p>Living Well is a valuable service that can support autistic people without a care need to move into a new home or around other short-term support needs they may have.</p> <p>NYC Housing Options teams are the first point of contact to housing services for many people and by undertaking Oliver McGowan training and using resources such as the Homeless Link tool will better enable them to meet the needs of autistic people across North Yorkshire.</p> <p>Work is underway to review and update NYC Council website pages for Health and Adult Services including involvement of people.</p>

Key Theme: <b>Strategy</b>	Number of Responses: 17
Comment Summary	<p>42% [n=10] talked about the strategy priorities. Comments included references to the need for more detail around delivering the chapter strategy and measuring outcomes in relation to increasing housing stock and housing issues. There was also a suggestion that the strategy should focus on independent living to promote wellbeing.</p> <p>During events comments focused on the need to utilise the NYC restructure to improve the housing offer and make sure the support is more equitable. Another comment stated that there was a lack of clarity around the strategy delivery plan, and short/medium- and long-term goals needed to be more transparent. One participant wanted to understand what opportunities they had to influence/change the service/strategy.</p>
Our response	<p>Use HLIN analysis to set targets</p> <p>New Supported Housing Act requires all LA’s to undertake 5 year reviews of forward plan</p> <p>Again – new website with links etc.</p> <p>NYC’s new housing strategy includes - <b>Supporting the Rural Housing Enabler programme and Community Led Housing groups</b> – and a vision to meet the supported housing needs of people across the county</p> <p>The year 1 action plan for the autism strategy includes specific actions and success measures.</p>

Rationale	<p>NYC wishes to emulate the success of our extra care programme of the past 20yrs across supported housing The needs analysis which is currently concluding will enable us to direct our limited resources into delivering new supported housing where we have clearly defined medium to long-term needs.</p> <p>Reviewing this at least every 5yrs will ensure we keep focus on changing &amp; unmet needs</p> <p>As a unitary authority we are better able to target new housing to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our local communities across NY.</p>
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Key Theme: <b>Adaptations</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	Comments relating to adaptations for sensory sensitivities and how these should consider not only the internal home environment but also outside space (e.g., green spaces) to promote wellbeing.
Our response	<p>In 2025 NYC's new allocations policy will apply uniformly across the county, with everyone having access to North Yorks. Home Choice and the ability to bid on properties. Further, our new allocations policy also gold bands anyone that is successfully moving on from supported housing into their own social housing home.</p> <p>NYC's housing strategy considers the super rural nature of the county and continues to include supporting the Rural Housing Enabler programme</p>
Rationale	Choice based lettings offer's everyone access to the social housing that is available across NYC, with priority given to those in greatest need.

Key Theme: <b>Housing Stock</b>	Number of Responses: 34
Comment Summary	<p>One person in the survey mentioned the levels of housing stock and the need for these to be increased. The other two comments spoke more broadly about where the housing should be situated and the impact large housing estates on vulnerable autistic people and the benefits of remaining in market towns where local family networks could continue to provide support. One person suggested that we should designate 'quiet' buildings/streets and improve soundproofing.</p> <p>Event attendees talked about the need for housing stock levels to increase and for accommodation to be more affordable, with options to both buy and rent. Housing and supported living provision need to be established within local communities and considerations need to be made regarding community amenities and transport networks.</p>
Our response	The challenges of meeting housing need arises across the country and NY is no exception – see challenges in <a href="#">2024-29 strategy</a>

	<p>We plan to use our strengths as a new unitary authority to deliver new housing where it is most needed across the county. With the recommendations from the soon to be published LD&amp;A Housing Needs analysis our supported housing team will seek to commission new supported housing schemes to meet this identified need</p> <p>Use HLIN analysis to set targets</p> <p>New Supported Housing Act requires all LA's to undertake 5 year reviews of forward plan</p> <p>NYC's new housing strategy includes supporting the Rural Housing Enabler programme and Community Led Housing groups and has a vision to meet the supported housing needs of people across the county.</p> <p>Our supported housing design guide sets as a min. that new buildings exceed the building standards sound regulations by 5dB</p> <p>In terms of show house, as our new supported housing teamwork with partners to deliver new housing schemes our partners will be encouraged to consult with future tenants (when known), complete design reviews 6mths post occupation to feed into future designs etc and hold open days.</p>
Rationale	<p>NYC wishes to emulate the success of our extra care programme of the past 20yrs across supported housing The needs analysis which is currently concluding will enable us to direct our limited resources into delivering new supported housing where we have clearly defined needs.</p> <p>Reviewing this at least every 5yrs will ensure we keep focus on changing needs</p> <p>Improving the design of buildings to meet as a diverse a need as possible future proofs homes for everyone – enabling people to live well for longer in their homes. We will always strive to ensure that new Supported Housing schemes offer the opportunity for people to visit to view and learn more about what Supported Housing can offer them, along with ensuring lessons are learnt to ensure schemes are on a constant learning curve and strive for continuous quality improvement</p>

<b>Key Theme: System</b>	<b>Number of Responses: 10</b>
Comment Summary	<p>Event attendees talked about a lack of clarity about at what support is provided at different stages of life. One person suggested a need for fundamental change in legislation and more education around autism. Another comment suggested that there was no joined up working between organisations/agencies. One comment referred to the housing system being more accessible and quicker to access accommodation.</p>
Our response	<p>We will ensure our new website pages easily signpost people to find the right support at the right time to meet their current and future needs.</p>

	<p>Some of these comments are beyond the scope of the housing services. However, NYC will endeavour to provide or direct people to organisations that can support individuals</p> <p>The challenges of creating more supply to meet demand impact upon the speed/ease of access. Supported housing through a private landlord is restricted to LHA rates, thus tenants may have to top up their rent, so we try and avoid using private landlords within SH. But a dom. care / community service could be provided to someone living within the Private Rental Sector.</p>
Rationale	<p>The funding available from Homes England to develop new supported housing is limited &amp;/or financially challenging. Thus, in a county facing high demand for property from many sectors, supported housing providers struggle to compete.</p> <p>Supported housing is best managed by Registered Providers, or similar organisations for many reasons, not least because of the impact of LHA caps upon tenants.</p>

<b>Key Theme: Financial Support</b>	<b>Number of Responses: 2</b>
Comment Summary	2 comments were made about affordable private accommodation / Budget support for families/carers to help with the cost of housing.
Our response	NYC has few levers it can pull to reduce the costs of private housing; however, the Council aims to lead in delivering new homes across the county in the coming years.
Rationale	Delivering more affordable housing of all types (GN, SO, Supported) will, to a degree, help meet demand and thus reduce the demand inflation pressures on the private housing market.

## D) What actions relating to housing are the most important?

The general survey presented the three proposed actions in the housing chapter of the draft strategy and asked respondents to rank them in order of importance.

1. Understanding local need: housing needs analysis for autistic people and/or people with a learning disability.
2. Training and Support for autistic people and carers: create clearer, simpler and more accessible housing pathways and processes with tailored information and guidance to support autistic people and carers with understanding the type, appropriateness and availability of different accommodation options (including general needs, independent living with 24/7 care, extra care and supported living), and; support with the development and/or improvement of independent skills (for example, completing paperwork, budgeting, cooking cleaning and accessing health care).
3. Training and support for housing and care providers: Develop understanding and awareness training and techniques to support housing and care providers who support autistic people with making reasonable adjustments around housing and care issues, such as changes with tenancies, issues with the environment and access to technology, equipment and adaptations where appropriate; we will encourage all providers (including non-specialist autism providers) to be autistic inclusive, this will be reflected within the specifications for commissioned services, and; review and understand accommodation need for all North Yorkshire's autistic residents (living in and out of county), from general needs housing up to complex or crisis support, to reduce the number of people living out of county and develop accommodation and models of support to enable people to stay at home longer.

Feedback suggests that participants see training and support for autistic people and carers (action 2) as the most important action, closely followed by training for housing providers (action 3) and understanding local need (action 1).

Participants who completed the easy read survey were provided with 3 options and asked to rate the statement which is most important to them. 45 people answered this question and 33% [n=15] of respondents were autistic.

Action Point	People who rated this as their highest priority
Housing providers should understand autism, what reasonable adjustments they may need to make and be autistic inclusive.	49% [n=22]
Autistic people and their families have the right information to help them choose a home to meet their needs.	38% [n=17]
We need a plan for the housing needs of autistic people for the next 5 years.	13% [n=6]

## E) How should we measure success for the housing priority?

The general survey asked respondents what success would look like in relation to the proposed actions in section D. 26 people added comments which were analysed, and the following themes were identified. Some comments were assigned to multiple themes.

All comments have been collated into the following themes:

1. Communities
2. System
3. Training
4. Housing Stock

All comments have been collated into the following themes:

Key Theme: <b>Communities</b>	Number of Responses: 12
Comment Summary	46% of people talked about how success would be reflected in the level and type of support autistic people experienced in their community. Examples and suggestions included autistic adults living more independently, Autistic people should be able to live within their communities and maintain family and friend support network. One comment stated that autistic people should not have to experience discrimination when living in their community.
Our response	NYC wish to support people to remain in their local communities when they wish to do so, e.g., Rural enabler Programme  However, SH operates most successfully when established within strong communities, like our market towns, with a strong infrastructure to enable individuals to easily engage within the community and especially for care providers to easily recruit staff.
Rationale	Given the challenges in the UK housing market – supply not meeting demand – and the super sparse nature of NY, it won't always be realistic for people to remain in their community, especially when living within the sparse (13%) or super sparse (85%) areas as inclusion and community sustainability is challenging!

Key Theme: <b>System</b>	Number of Responses: 8
Comment Summary	31% of people mentioned that success could be demonstrated through the system understanding and responding to the needs of autistic people to secure housing and live independently or with support. Examples include equal opportunity to access suitable housing that meets the autistic person's needs, partnership working which includes families, council and housing providers to create safe living environments.
Our response	Use HLIN analysis to set targets  New Supported Housing Act requires all LA's to undertake 5 year reviews of forward plan  Again – new website with links etc.  NYC's new housing strategy includes:  <b>Supporting the Rural Housing Enabler programme and Community Led Housing groups</b> – and a vision to meet the supported housing needs of people across the county.
Rationale	NYC wishes to emulate the success of our extra care programme of the past 20yrs across supported housing The needs analysis which is currently concluding will enable us to direct our limited resources into delivering new supported housing where we have clearly defined medium to long-term needs.  Reviewing this at least every 5yrs will ensure we keep focus on changing & unmet needs.

Key Theme: <b>Training</b>	Number of Responses: 6
Comment Summary	23% [n=6] of people mentioned that more training for housing providers to understand the needs of autistic adults and provide homes which promote wellbeing. Examples include: understanding autism and knowing when and how to support autistic people and housing providers understanding the needs of autistic adults and provide homes which promote wellbeing.
Our response	See above re: training, needs analysis, etc.
Rationale	NYC accept that currently we have very few providers on our APL's that specialise in supporting autistic people and we are working to address this.

Key Theme: <b>Housing Stock</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	15% [n=4] of people talked about success being reflected in the increased availability of appropriate housing to meet the demand of all autistic people.
Our response	See housing comments above
Rationale	

The general survey asked respondents to comment on the question 'How do you think we should measure success?'. A total of 20 comments were received, of these, 45% [n=9] of comments were from autistic respondents. Comments were assigned to a single theme.

The following themes were identified:

1. Survey
2. Organisational Monitoring
3. External Organisations

Key Theme: <b>Survey</b>	Number of Responses: 18
Comment Summary	90% [n=18] of people spoke about how success could be measured through collection of data from people using the service to measure outcomes relating to quality of life, for example securing their first home, housing needs a proportionate and appropriate for each person and enables them to live an independent life. Being able to contribute positively to the wider community was also mentioned.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Organisational Monitoring</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	One person suggested that success should be measured by the local authority through a cycle of 'Plan, Do, Review'.
Our response	See comments above around needs analysis etc.
Rationale	



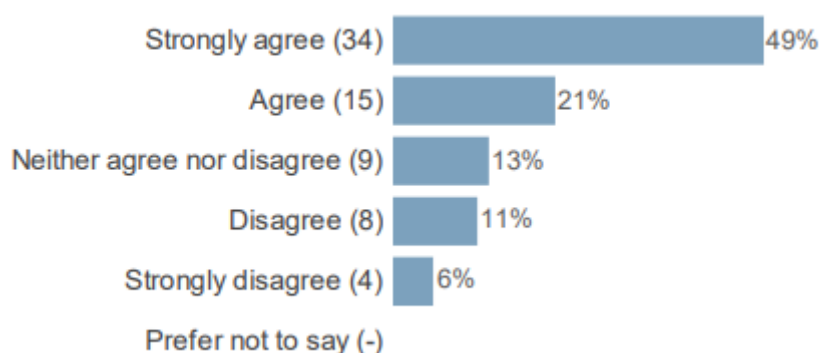
Key Theme: <b>External Organisational Monitoring</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	One person suggested that external organisations such as the CQC agencies should determine the success of the strategy outputs
Our response	All supported housing care providers commissioned by NYC need to register with CQC
Rationale	

## Consultation feedback on the Carers Chapter

### A) Should Carers be a key priority in the strategy?

**General survey** question 5a1 asked How far do you agree that 'parents, carers, and families of autistic people are supported to thrive', is a key theme for the autism strategy?

70 people responded to this question. 49% [n=34] strongly agreed with this being a key theme and 6% [n=4] of respondents strongly disagreed. When aggregated, 70% [n=49] of people strongly agree and agree, and 17% [n=12] strongly disagree and disagree, the remaining 13% [n=9] of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

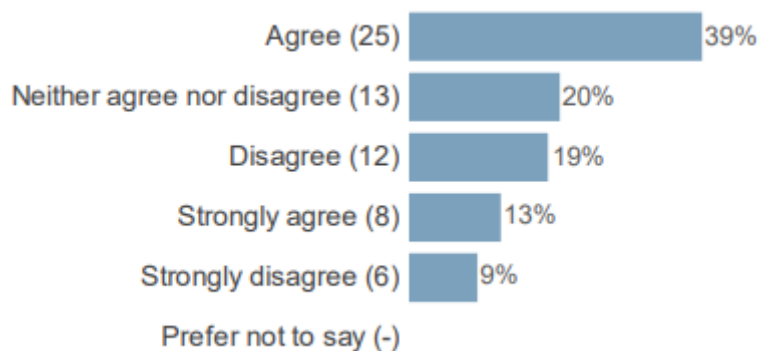


The **easy-read survey** posed the question 'Do you think helping parents, carers and families of autistic people should be a key theme in the autism plan?' 98% answered 'yes' [n=40] and 2% [n=1] answered 'don't know'.

Across both general and easy read surveys, the data shows that 80% [n=89] of people strongly/agreed carers should be a key theme within the strategy, 11% [n=12] strongly/disagreed and 9% [n=10] neither agreed or disagreed or did not know.

### B) How well do the draft actions under the Carers priority reflect and respond to the key issues?

Within **the general survey** 64 people responded to this question [Q5a2]. A larger proportion 39% [n=25] agreed that the actions reflect and respond to key issues and 19% [n=12] disagreed. Smaller numbers of people either strongly agreed or disagreed with these being 13% [n=8] and 9% [n=6], respectively. Combining the responses into strongly agree/agree and strongly disagree/disagree shows that the over half 52% [n=33] agree/strongly agree compared to 28% [n=18] who disagreed/strongly disagreed. The remaining 20% [n=13] neither agreed nor disagreed.



The survey data suggests that most participants agree that the draft actions under the carer’s priority reflect and respond to the key issues.

**Q. 5a2: Please provide any additional comments to your answer above**

Respondents to the **general survey** were invited to comment on how far they agree that the actions reflect and respond to the key issues.

Overall, 33 people provided an additional comment. These were analysed and 5 themes were identified. Some comments were assigned to more than one theme.

1. Support
2. Personal Impacts & Experiences
3. Strategy
4. Services
5. Workforce

Key Theme: <b>Support</b>	Number of Responses: 20
Comment Summary	60% of people talked about the support they receive as carers and the level of involvement they have in planning the care, of the person they care for. Comments reflected some of the barriers and challenges faced by carers when accessing support in their caring role. For example, respondents discussed a need for more practical, emotional, social support and training, either on a one-to-one or peer support basis.
Our response	The council commissions an all-age carers support service which supports parent carers. We will aim to ensure that funding is protected and that the service responds to the needs of carers of autistic people. Already included in the draft strategy is a commitment to review the carers assessment process (including parent carer assessments) alongside CYPS. This will include ensuring that there is a clear pathway for carers of autistic people.
Rationale	The council has a clear commitment and responsibility to support carers.

Key Theme: <b>Personal Impacts &amp; Experiences</b>	Number of Responses: 15
Comment Summary	Just under half (45%) of respondents added comments relating to or describing their personal experiences of caring for an autistic child or adult. The comments suggest carers do not feel heard or involved in their role as a carer for an autistic person. This resulted in the carer experiencing negative interactions and feeling unheard, alone, and unsupported. Two people used the word 'fight/fighting' in their comment relating to accessing a diagnosis and support. Comments also highlighted the impact of caring on both physical and mental health and wellbeing.
Our response	We are already committed to deliver a carers strategy. This will include actions on how to improve support for carers, including physical and mental wellbeing and how to improve respite care and ways for carers to take a break. We will introduce more ways for carers to have their say on services for carers and work with us on improved processes and support, including respite and short break options
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Strategy</b>	Number of Responses: 9
Comment Summary	27% respondents talked about the organisational challenges and barriers relevant to the strategy priorities and/or affecting the support they received as carers. Comments included references to the need for more detail around delivering the organisational strategy, service delivery, workforce challenges, budget impacts, contract management and procurement considerations. People mentioned specifically, the implications of waiting times for assessments and the impact of a lack of respite care and workforce shortages.
Our response	For the carers strategy we will make our annual action plan available. This plan will provide more information about our actions and how we plan to measure the success of them. Already included in the draft strategy is a commitment to review the carers assessment process (including parent carer assessments) alongside CYPS: This will include developing an online assessment and review process for carers. We will seek feedback from carers about their assessment and the support they are offered.
Rationale	Publishing our annual action plan makes it clear as to the detail of our actions. It also ensures we keep track of them, and we can measure how (or not) a difference has been made. The outcome from the carers assessment review is to increase number of carers assessments, improve and ensure timely access by reducing waiting times for assessment.

Key Theme: <b>Services</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	Comments related to the impacts of reduced funding services with some closing with short notice periods, and a lack of appropriate respite care.
Our response	We recognise that delivery of support to autistic people has a profound impact on the experience of carers and this is picked up in other chapters of the strategy e.g. assessment and diagnosis, employment and education
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Workforce</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Comments reflected on the good experiences of professional involvement and the need for professionals to receive more support.
Our response	Already covered in draft autism strategy – to strengthen and deliver training programmes for professionals We will aim to include the voice/experience of carers of autistic people in the training delivery.
Rationale	Purpose of the training for practitioners to understand the impacts of autism for carers and families, including through people’s experiences.

**C) What is missing or could be improved in the draft strategy relating to the carer’s priority, and how have we responded to these?**

**Question 5a3: Please tell us if you think there are any actions missing.**

There were 17 additional comments made on the **general survey**. 24% [n=4] comments were by autistic people and 41% [n=7] were from people who identified as a ‘family carer’. The comments were collectively analysed, and 5 themes identified. Some comments were assigned to more than one theme.

Key Theme: <b>Support</b>	Number of Responses: 11
Comment Summary	65% of people spoke about different elements of support that they considered were missing, these included: respite placements for children and adults that was local; accessible, and clear pathways for support for carers; and one person suggested a need for specialist psychological support for carers who experience violence.
Our response	We recognise that delivery of support to autistic people has a profound impact on the experience of carers and this is picked up in other chapters of the strategy e.g. assessment and diagnosis, employment and education.  We are already committed to deliver a carers strategy. This will include actions on how to improve support for carers and how to improve respite care and ways for carers to take a break.
Rationale	

<b>Key Theme: Service Delivery</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	23% [n=4] people made comments relating to service delivery and the negative impact of service changes/contract arrangements on autistic people and their carers, and the need for flexible appointment times.
Our response	We recognise that delivery of services for autistic people has a profound impact on the experience of carers and this is picked up in other chapters of the strategy e.g. assessment and diagnosis, employment and education
Rationale	

<b>Key Theme: Personal Impacts &amp; Experiences</b>	Number of Responses: 3
Comment Summary	18% [n=3] of respondents offered brief insights into their own personal experiences including the impacts of inflexible employers, termination of services and how this affects autistic people who are unable to deal with sudden change and uncertainty.
Our response	We are already committed to deliver a carers strategy. This will include actions on how to improve support for carers.  We will introduce more ways for carers to have their say on services for carers and work with us on improved processes and support, including respite and short break options.
Rationale	

<b>Key Theme: Workforce</b>	Number of Responses: 3
Comment Summary	A further 18% [n=3] people spoke about workforce issues that should be considered within the strategy. These are the lack of carers within the workforce, more compulsory training within the workforce to understand autism and the needs of carers.
Our response	Already covered in draft strategy – to strengthen and deliver training programmes for professionals We will aim to include the voice/experience of carers of autistic people in the training delivery.
Rationale	Purpose of the training for practitioners to understand the impacts of autism for carers and families, including through people’s experiences.
<b>Key Theme: Transport</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	One comment highlighted the lack of transport support.
Our response	This is recognised as a barrier to accessing support across all social care service delivery.
Rationale	

## D) What actions relating to carers are the most important?

The **general survey** presented the five proposed actions in the carers chapter of the draft strategy and asked respondents to rank them in order of importance.

1. In partnership, North Yorkshire Council is refreshing its Carers Strategy. Individuals, carers, and partners will work together to develop and implement a strategy which considers what priorities are needed to support autistic carers and carers / family members of autistic children, young people, and adults.
2. Strengthen and deliver training programmes including for carers and families to better understand autism and different techniques and approaches which can support an autistic person, their carers and the wider family, and for practitioners to understand the impacts of autism for carers and families, including through people's experiences.
3. Supporting Carers is a key priority for North Yorkshire Council, and we will develop an integrated model to direct carers to a general range of support including prevention offer, online resources, direct payments, and commissioned services.
4. Review carers assessment process: to increase number of carers assessments, improve and ensure timely access by reducing waiting times for assessment, developing an online assessment and review process for carers. North Yorkshire Council is also undertaking a programme of work called Waiting Well, aiming to bring about improvements for people who are waiting for services, wherever they may be in their social care journey. This includes autistic adults and carers.
5. Review support interventions including professional support and access to carers direct payments.

The three most popular proposed actions in order of importance were found to be (AP 3) developing an integrated model to direct carers to a general range of support, (AP 2) strengthen and deliver training programmes, (AP1) refresh the carers strategy, (AP 4) review carers assessment process and (AP 5) review support interventions.

Participants who completed the **easy read survey** were provided with 5 options and asked to rate the statement which is most important to them. 45 people answered this question. 33% [n=15] of people were autistic and 13% [n=6] identified as a carer.

Action Point	People who rated this as their highest priority
There should be help for carers to help them understand different ways of supporting autistic people.	26% [n=12]
North Yorkshire Council continue to work with carers to refresh their plan to support carers.	20% [n=9]
Social care staff should have training to help them understand how autism may affect carers and their families.	20% [n=9]
Carers should have the support and information they need.	18% [n=8]
Carers assessments are reviewed to reduce the waiting time for assessments and an online assessment should be developed.	16% [n=7]

Further responses relating to the carers section of the strategy was gathered at both face to face and virtual workshop sessions. The data was collected during group conversations and participants were asked to comment on the content of the draft strategy, including the actions that carers consider

most important and any missing actions. Comments were not recorded in a way that they could be aligned with an overarching question or discussion. Therefore, all comments from all events have been collated and themed collectively. Some comments were assigned to more than one theme.

All comments have been collated into the following themes:

1. Support
2. Information
3. Service Delivery
4. Training
5. Carers Assessments

Key Theme: <b>Support</b>	Number of Responses: 28
Comment Summary	Support was mentioned at all the events except Richmond. Across these events a total of 28 of people talked about support and the different ways it could be provided, what good support would look like and the types of support that were felt to be missing. The theme was broad in capturing comments which related to the experiences of parent carers, carers of autistic adults as well as sandwich carers. There was a sense that a mix of virtual and face to face, peer and organisational support was beneficial but financial constraints had impacted on delivery.
Our response	<p>The council commissions an all-age carers support service which supports parent carers. We will aim to ensure that funding is protected and that the service responds to the needs of carers of autistic people.</p> <p>We are already committed to deliver a carers strategy. This will include actions on how to improve support for carers and how to improve respite care and ways for carers to take a break.</p> <p>A key priority in all carers support is ensuring that there is appropriate information, advice and guidance available both online and via support groups.</p> <p>While the general issue the care workforce is beyond the remit of this strategy, the council is looking at the feasibility of improving PA rates as part of the DP improvement priority in HAS. The council has a clear commitment and responsibility to support carers.</p>
Rationale	The council has a clear commitment and responsibility to support carers.



<b>Key Theme: Information</b>	<b>Number of Responses: 11</b>
Comment Summary	Discussions at the Northallerton, Harrogate and Richmond sessions contributed to the 'information' theme. Participants talked about the need for information to be accessible, easy to understand and provided at key points of pre and post diagnosis. Carers also spoke about how their own insights and expertise could contribute to the information provided to other carers and professionals.
Our response	We are already committed to deliver a carers strategy. This will include actions on how to improve support for carers and ensuring that there is appropriate information, advice, and guidance available both online and via support groups.
Rationale	

<b>Key Theme: Service Delivery</b>	<b>Number of Responses: 7</b>
Comment Summary	Service delivery was discussed at 2 events, Scarborough, and Ripon. The importance of communication between professionals and carers and within and between organisations and teams was mentioned, in the context of how services are being provided and resourced as well as in a scenario of 'waiting well' and not having to chase for information. The services delivered by carers plus and carers resource were commended and a suggestion that more investment should be made to VCOS. One comment also talked about how carers 'know' their person well and their expertise should be listened to.
Our response	For the strategy we will make our annual action plan available. This plan will provide more information about our actions and how we plan to measure the success of them.  We will introduce more ways for carers to have their say on services for carers and work with us on improved processes and support, including respite and short break options.  We will aim to include the voice/experience of carers of autistic people in training of professionals.
Rationale	Publishing our annual action plan makes it clear as to the detail of our actions. It also ensures we keep track of them, and we can measure how (or not) a difference has been made.

Key Theme: <b>Training</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	Training was mentioned at the Northallerton, Harrogate and Richmond sessions. Comments focused on the need for practical training in addition to virtual training and for carers to be trained more broadly - mental health and employing via a direct payment were examples.
Our response	Already covered in draft strategy – to strengthen and deliver training programmes for professionals We will aim to include the voice/experience of carers of autistic people in the training delivery.
Rationale	Purpose of the training for practitioners to understand the impacts of autism for carers and families, including through people’s experiences.

Key Theme: <b>Carers’ Assessment</b>	Number of Responses: 3
Comment Summary	Carers’ assessments were discussed at the Ripon event. People talked about their own experiences and feelings that the assessments were ineffective.
Our response	See above on carers assessment action – included in the strategy
Rationale	

Participants who completed the **general survey** were asked ‘please provide any additional comments on carers’. A total of 13 comments were added; only 12 were themed as one comment posed a question and could not be analysed with the other comments. Some comments were assigned to multiple themes.

All comments have been collated into the following themes:

1. Support
2. Personal Experience
3. Workforce

Key Theme: <b>Support</b>	Number of Responses: 7
Comment Summary	Support was again the main theme identified from the comments. A couple of comments referred to the cost of care from agencies and the difficulties of employing staff via direct payments. One comment reflected that the better carers are supported, the more cost effective it is for the local authority.
Our response	The council commissions an all-age carers support service which supports parent carers. We will aim to ensure that funding is protected and that the service responds to the needs of carers of autistic people
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Impacts &amp; Personal Experiences</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	Comments relating to this theme discussed personal impacts and experiences of caring being very isolating and how a lack of support has an impact on the person and wider support network.
Our response	As above – carers support service.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Workforce</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Comments reflected difficulties recruiting staff for Direct Payments and having to pay a premium for skilled staff.
Our response	While the general issue of pay in the care workforce is beyond the remit of this strategy, the council is looking at the feasibility of improving PA rates as part of the DP improvement priority in HAS.
Rationale	Greater availability of PAs in the market makes it more likely that people will be able to use DPs.

Participants who completed the **easy read survey** were asked ‘is there anything else you want to tell us about carers?’. A total of 20 comments were made of which 25% [n=25] of people were autistic and 15% [n=3] identified as a carer. 4 comments were not incorporated into the analysis, 3 due to being exact duplicates of comments already submitted and one comment stated ‘no’. All other comments were assigned to one theme.

All comments have been collated into the following themes:

1. Support
2. Information
4. Training
5. Service Delivery

Key Theme: <b>Support</b>	Number of Responses: 13
Comment Summary	81% of comments in response to this question focused on the support that carers need or is lacking. Some of the comments seemed to link directly to the personal experience of the person rather than a generalised comment of all carers, and included references to feelings of exhaustion, fear for the future unknowns, caring being a difficult job, not being seen as the expert of the person they are caring for and the financial implications of being a carer.
Our response	We are already committed to deliver a carers strategy. This will include actions on how to improve support for carers and ensuring that there is appropriate information, advice, and guidance available both online and

	<p>via support groups It will also include commitment to valuing and recognising carers to enable them to access appropriate support. This will include more carer awareness within the council, with health partners and community organisations.</p> <p>We will introduce more ways for carers to have their say on services for carers and work with us on improved processes and support, including respite and short break options.</p>
Rationale	

<b>Key Theme: Information</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	Response requested more awareness. Not carers or family members may not understand Autism. More awareness.
Our response	See above for commitment around awareness and information.
Rationale	

<b>Key Theme: Training</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	Response referred to need for social care staff training.
Our response	Already included in draft autism strategy.
Rationale	

<b>Key Theme: Service Delivery</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	More collaboration... Improvements in waiting times and availability of support will make carers feel more valued
Our response	Already included in carers strategy commitments.
Rationale	

## E) How should we measure success for the carer's priority?

The **general survey** asked respondents what success would look like in relation to the proposed actions in section D above [p.9]. 27 people added comments which were analysed, and the following themes were identified. Some comments were assigned to multiple themes.

All comments have been collated into the following themes:

1. Support
2. Unable to say
3. Experience

All comments have been collated into the following themes:

Key Theme: <b>Support</b>	Number of Responses: 17
Comment Summary	63% of people talked about how success would be reflected in the level and type of support they received as a carer as well as for the autistic person.
Our response	We will introduce more ways for carers to have their say on services for carers and work with us on improved processes and support, including respite and short break options. We will involve carers in developing further measures of success as part of the delivery of the carer's strategy action plan. We will seek feedback from carers about their assessment and the support they are offered.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Unable to say / did not say</b>	Number of Responses: 5
Comment Summary	19% [n=5] of people mentioned that they were unable to say what success would look like or did not say.
Our response	See above for all the responses that are made to other sections.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Personal impact and experience</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	7% [n=2] of people focused on their own personal experiences and did not provide details of what they thought success would look like.
Our response	See above action on carers assessment.
Rationale	

## Measuring success

The **general survey** asked respondents to comment on the question ‘How do you think we should measure success?’. A total of 24 comments were received, of these, 25% [n=6] of comments were from autistic adults and 29% [n=7] were from people identified as a family carer. Some comments were assigned to multiple themes.

The following themes were identified:

1. Data Collection
2. Support Available
3. External Organisations

Key Theme: <b>Data Collection</b>	Number of Responses: 19
Comment Summary	Respondents spoke about how success could be measured through collection of data from carers by the local authority. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were mentioned, and the range of topics was also varied. Respondents suggested that carers should be consulted directly and asked about their quality of life, satisfaction of services and how supported they feel.
Our response	We will introduce more ways for carers to have their say on services for carers and work with us on improved processes and support, including respite and short break options. We will seek feedback from carers about their assessment and the support they are offered.
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Support</b>	Number of Responses: 7
Comment Summary	Respondents suggested that success should be measured through an understanding of how people access and rate the support services they receive.
Our response	We recognise that delivery of support to autistic people has a profound impact on the experience of carers and this is picked up in other chapters of the strategy e.g. assessment and diagnosis, employment and education
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>External Organisations</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Respondents suggested that external organisations such as the CQC and data from other agencies should determine the success of the strategy outputs.

Our response	The Care Quality Commission is committed to a programme of inspection of all local authorities and will include how well we deliver support for carers.
Rationale	

## Consultation feedback for the Assessment, Diagnosis and Support Priority

### **A) Should Assessment, Diagnosis & Support be a key priority in the strategy?**

Assessment, diagnosis, and support for autism should unquestionably remain a key priority in any comprehensive strategy. This sentiment is echoed by various stakeholders, emphasising the critical role of timely assessment and diagnosis in ensuring appropriate support for individuals on the autism spectrum. The consensus is clear: assessment should be readily available to anyone who suspects they are autistic, irrespective of their level of need. This sentiment is rooted in the understanding that diagnosis and access to support should be based on a person's individual needs rather than subjective criteria.

The urgency of addressing this issue is underscored by several factors. First and foremost, reducing the waiting times for diagnosis assessments is crucial, as prolonged delays can exacerbate distress and hinder access to vital support services. Furthermore, there is a recognised need for enhanced support around the diagnostic process itself, including pre and post-diagnostic support to help individuals and families navigate the implications of a diagnosis effectively. Additionally, there is a call for greater flexibility and inclusivity in the assessment process, recognising that autism presents differently in each individual and that existing criteria may not capture the full spectrum of autistic experiences.

Moreover, the lack of post-diagnosis support is identified as a significant gap that must be addressed urgently. Many individuals and families report feeling abandoned after receiving a diagnosis, highlighting the need for ongoing support to help them understand and adapt to their diagnosis effectively. This sentiment is particularly pronounced among adults, who often struggle to access support services once diagnosed. Overall, the consensus is clear: assessment, diagnosis, and support for autism must remain a top priority in any strategy, with a focus on reducing waiting times, enhancing support services, and ensuring equitable access for all individuals, regardless of their level of need or circumstance.

### **B) How well do the draft actions under the Assessment, Diagnosis & Support priority reflect and respond to the key issues?**

The draft actions under the Assessment, Diagnosis & Support priority reflect some of the key issues raised by stakeholders, but there are areas where further refinement and emphasis may be necessary. One notable aspect is the need for a measurable timescale for waiting for an assessment, addressing concerns about prolonged waiting times that can exacerbate distress and hinder access to support services. Additionally, there is a call for greater consideration of sensory needs and dual diagnoses, such as Autism & Downs, to ensure that assessments are comprehensive and inclusive.

A particular focus on reducing waiting times is highlighted as essential, with stakeholders suggesting that the benefits of expedited assessments justify the additional costs involved in expanding services to accommodate this need. This sentiment is particularly pronounced among individuals who face additional barriers to diagnosis, such as females, who may experience unique challenges in accessing timely assessments.



Moreover, there is a clear call for greater responsiveness to the concerns of parents and caregivers, emphasising the importance of listening to their insights and experiences in the diagnostic process. Furthermore, stakeholders emphasise the importance of early intervention and support, particularly in the early years, to mitigate the need for more intrusive interventions later in life.

In terms of practical measures, stakeholders stress the importance of better training for frontline medical professionals and educators, ensuring that they have the knowledge and skills to recognise and support individuals with autism effectively. This includes providing training on practical approaches and strategies that can be implemented before a formal diagnosis is obtained, as well as making assessments more accessible to all who need them.

Overall, while the draft actions acknowledge many of the key issues raised by stakeholders, there is a need for greater specificity and emphasis on addressing waiting times, sensory needs, and the unique challenges faced by different demographics, such as females. Additionally, there is a clear call for more proactive and inclusive approaches to assessment and support, ensuring that individuals receive timely and comprehensive care regardless of their circumstances.

**C) What is missing or could be improved in the draft strategy relating to the Assessment, Diagnosis & Support priority, and how have we responded to these?**

The draft strategy related to the Assessment, Diagnosis & Support priority highlights several areas for improvement based on stakeholder feedback. One recurring theme is the need to focus on reducing waiting times for assessments and diagnoses, with stakeholders emphasising the importance of timely access to support services. Many express frustrations over prolonged wait times, which can lead to significant delays in receiving necessary interventions and support. Responding to this feedback, the strategy should prioritise streamlining assessment processes and ensuring that individuals have prompt access to diagnostic services.

Another key area for improvement is the need for greater equity in access to assessments and support. Stakeholders emphasise that prioritising certain groups over others can be unfair and overlook the diverse needs of individuals within the autism community. It is essential to recognise and address the unique challenges faced by different demographics, including women and girls, who may encounter barriers to accessing timely assessments and support. Therefore, the strategy should strive to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, have equitable access to assessment and support services.

Additionally, stakeholders highlight the importance of improving post-diagnostic support, noting that many individuals feel abandoned or overlooked after receiving a diagnosis. There is a clear need for ongoing support and guidance to help individuals and their families navigate life with autism effectively. This includes providing access to resources, training, and counselling services to assist individuals in understanding and managing their autism diagnosis.

Furthermore, stakeholders stress the importance of early identification and referral to confirm diagnoses, particularly for children. Early intervention is crucial in providing support and interventions that can help individuals reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. Therefore, the strategy should prioritise early identification and intervention to ensure that individuals receive the support they need as soon as possible.

Overall, the draft strategy must address these key areas for improvement by prioritising reduced waiting times, equitable access to assessments and support, enhanced post-diagnostic support, and early identification and intervention. By responding to these concerns, the strategy can better meet

the needs of individuals with autism and their families, ultimately improving outcomes and quality of life for all.

**Q. 5a2: Please provide any additional comments to your answer above**

Key Theme: <b>Reducing Waiting Times</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Mentioned by multiple respondents, this theme emphasises the urgent need to decrease the periods individuals face when seeking an autism assessment.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Need for Comprehensive Post-Diagnosis Support</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Several respondents highlighted the lack of support available after receiving an autism diagnosis, emphasising the importance of providing ongoing assistance to individuals and their families.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Accessibility and Equity in Diagnosis</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Respondents stressed the importance of ensuring that assessment and diagnosis services are available to all individuals who need them, regardless of factors such as gender, geographic location, or severity of symptoms.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Early Intervention &amp; Support</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Many respondents emphasised the significance of early diagnosis and intervention in supporting individuals with autism, highlighting the need for timely access to appropriate services and support.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Accountability and Implementation of Actions</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Some respondents expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of proposed actions and emphasised the need for concrete steps to address the issues surrounding assessment, diagnosis, and support for autism.
Our response	
Rationale	

**Question 5a3: Please tell us if you think there are any actions missing.**

Key Theme: <b>Measurable Timescale for Waiting for an Assessment</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Establishing clear and measurable waiting times for assessments ensures transparency and accountability, allowing individuals and families to plan effectively and reducing the stress associated with uncertainty.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Focus on Reducing Waiting Times</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Prioritising efforts to bring down waiting times for assessments is crucial, as it ensures timely access to support services and prevents individuals from experiencing unnecessary delays in receiving the help they need.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Accounting for Sensory Needs and Dual Diagnosis</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Recognising and addressing the sensory needs of individuals with autism, as well as those with dual diagnoses such as autism and Down syndrome, is essential for providing effective support and accommodations that meet their unique needs.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Listening to Parental Concerns</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Emphasising the importance of listening to the concerns and perspectives of parents and caregivers ensures that the support provided is aligned with the needs and preferences of individuals with autism and their families.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Access to Support for Recently Diagnosed Children</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Developing plans to ensure that children recently diagnosed with autism have access to one-on-one support services in a timely manner is crucial for facilitating early intervention and maximising positive outcomes.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Assessments</b>	Number of Responses: 7
Comment Summary	Comments related to the lack of pathways and services for autistic people, the lack of reasonable adjustments in assessments eg for housing, mental health and social care.
Our response	
Rationale	

## D) What actions relating to Assessment, Diagnosis & Support are the most important?

The most important actions relating to Assessment, Diagnosis & Support prioritise reducing waiting times for assessments and diagnoses, ensuring equitable access to services for all individuals, and enhancing post-diagnostic support. Here are some key actions that can address these priorities effectively:

- 1. Streamlining Assessment Processes:** Implement measures to reduce waiting times for assessments and diagnoses, such as increasing staffing levels, improving referral pathways, and utilising innovative technologies for remote assessments where appropriate.
- 2. Equitable Access to Services:** Ensure that assessment and support services are accessible to all individuals, regardless of factors such as geographical location, socioeconomic status, gender, or ethnicity. This may involve establishing outreach programs, providing transportation assistance, or offering services in multiple languages.
- 3. Enhanced Post-Diagnostic Support:** Develop comprehensive support programs for individuals and families following a diagnosis, including access to counselling, therapy, educational resources, and peer support groups. Focus on addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by individuals at different stages of life, from childhood to adulthood.
- 4. Early Intervention and Education:** Implement strategies for early identification and intervention, particularly in children, to provide timely support and interventions that can positively impact long-term outcomes. This may involve increasing awareness among parents, educators, and healthcare professionals about early signs of autism and the importance of early intervention.
- 5. Training and Education for Professionals:** Provide training and professional development opportunities for healthcare professionals, educators, and support workers to enhance their understanding of autism, improve diagnostic accuracy, and develop skills in providing person-centred care and support.
- 6. Community Engagement and Collaboration:** Foster partnerships between healthcare providers, educational institutions, community organisations, and advocacy groups to create a coordinated network of support services. Encourage collaboration and information-sharing to ensure that individuals with autism receive comprehensive and integrated support across different settings.
- 7. Research and Innovation:** Invest in research initiatives aimed at improving diagnostic tools, interventions, and support services for individuals with autism. Promote collaboration between researchers, clinicians, and individuals with lived experience to drive innovation and continuous improvement in assessment, diagnosis, and support practices.

By prioritising these actions, stakeholders can work together to create a more responsive and inclusive system of assessment, diagnosis, and support that meets the diverse needs of individuals with autism and their families.

**E) How should we measure success for the Assessment, Diagnosis and Support priority?**

A number of themes emerged from survey responses and discussion of this area.

Key Theme: <b>Reduction in Wait Times</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Measure the average wait times for assessments and diagnoses before and after implementing the strategy. A successful outcome would involve a significant reduction in wait times, ensuring timely access to assessment and diagnosis services for individuals on the autism spectrum.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Improved Access to Support Services</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Track the availability and accessibility of support services following diagnosis. Success can be measured by an increase in the availability of support services tailored to the needs of individuals with autism, including therapies, educational support, and community resources.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Enhanced Quality of Support</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Assess the quality of support services provided to individuals and families post-diagnosis. Success can be measured through feedback mechanisms, surveys, and outcome evaluations that indicate improved satisfaction with the effectiveness and appropriateness of support interventions.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Reduction in Disparities</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Monitor and address any disparities in access to assessment, diagnosis, and support services among different demographic groups. Success would involve reducing disparities based on factors such as race, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and age, ensuring equitable access to services for all individuals on the autism spectrum.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Long-term Outcomes</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Evaluate the long-term outcomes for individuals who receive timely assessment, diagnosis, and support services. Success can be measured by improvements in various domains, including academic achievement, social integration, employment opportunities, mental health outcomes, and overall quality of life.
Our response	
Rationale	

## Consultation feedback on Health and Care chapter

### **A) Should Health and Care be a key priority in the strategy?**

Based on the provided feedback, the inclusion of Health and Care as a key priority in the strategy seems to evoke mixed responses. While some express the importance of prioritising mental health and the overall well-being of individuals, others raise concerns about the implementation and effectiveness of such plans.

Positive responses highlight the paramount importance of health and care, especially in supporting young people and addressing mental health needs. However, there are concerns about the practicality and efficacy of proposed actions. Some express scepticism about the capacity of healthcare systems to adequately address the diverse needs of individuals, particularly those with neurodiverse conditions.

Suggestions for improvement include the need for clearer and more actionable plans, streamlined pathways for accessing support, and a greater focus on listening to the voices of individuals receiving care. Overall, while there is recognition of the significance of prioritising health and care, there are also calls for more tangible and impactful measures to address the challenges within healthcare systems.

### **B) How well do the draft actions under the Health and Care priority reflect and respond to the key issues?**

The draft actions under the Health and Care priority seem to address several key issues raised by respondents, but there are areas where improvements could be made.

Positive feedback includes calls for more joined-up working with the NHS, recognition of the diverse medical needs of autistic individuals, and the importance of addressing mental health concerns. Respondents also emphasise the need for flexibility, transparency, and clear pathways to access support.

However, concerns are raised about the labelling of autistic individuals as high-functioning or low-functioning, which may create barriers to accessing appropriate help. Additionally, there are calls for better support for non-verbal autistic individuals during medical visits and dental appointments. Some respondents highlight the need for a more autism-specific approach within the healthcare system, particularly for women and girls.

Overall, while the draft actions show some responsiveness to the key issues, there is a call for more concrete actions and less ambiguity in the proposed strategies. Additionally, there is a need for greater emphasis on ensuring accessibility and reasonable adjustments within healthcare settings.



**C) What is missing or could be improved in the draft strategy relating to the Health and Care priority, and how have we responded to these?**

Several areas for improvement have been identified in the draft strategy relating to the Health and Care priority, along with suggestions for addressing these gaps:

1. **Consistency in Communication Channels:** Respondents have highlighted the need for consistency in communication channels with general practitioners (GPs), particularly for individuals who cannot use phones or who struggle with traditional methods of appointment booking. To address this, the strategy could incorporate measures to ensure that online booking services are functional and accessible, and that alternative communication methods are available for those who require them.
2. **Avoiding Labelling:** There is a concern about labelling autistic individuals as high-functioning or low-functioning, which can create barriers to accessing appropriate support. The strategy could emphasise the importance of person-centred approaches that recognise the diverse strengths and needs of autistic individuals, without relying on limiting labels.
3. **Specific Support for Mental Health:** While mental health actions are mentioned, respondents emphasise the need for more specific support in this area. The strategy could include dedicated initiatives aimed at improving mental health services for autistic individuals, addressing issues such as anxiety, depression, and suicide prevention.
4. **Collaboration with Healthcare Providers:** There is a call for more information on how local healthcare providers are responding to the needs of autistic individuals. To address this, the strategy could involve greater collaboration between local authorities, healthcare providers, and autism organisations to ensure that services are responsive to the unique needs of autistic individuals across the lifespan.
5. **Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments:** Respondents stress the importance of ensuring accessibility and reasonable adjustments within healthcare settings. The strategy could include measures to facilitate easy access to healthcare facilities for autistic individuals, provide autism-specific training for healthcare professionals, and establish clear pathways for making complaints and seeking redress when accessibility standards are not met.

Overall, by incorporating these suggestions, the draft strategy could be strengthened to better address the healthcare needs of autistic individuals and improve their experiences within the healthcare system.

**Q. 5a2: Please provide any additional comments to your answer above**

Key Theme: <b>Mental Health Focus</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	There is a clear consensus on the need for a specific focus on mental health, particularly concerning suicide prevention and support for individuals with neurodiverse conditions.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Operational Plan</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Concerns are raised regarding the need for a more operational plan, including the development of a rolling 1-year plan to ensure effective implementation of strategies and actions.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Healthcare Accessibility</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Suggestions include improving access to healthcare for autistic individuals, such as creating quiet waiting areas in hospitals and ensuring that healthcare professionals are aware of and respond to special needs appropriately.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Demand &amp; Capacity</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Issues surrounding the understaffing of healthcare services and the inability to meet demand and capacity are highlighted as significant challenges that need to be addressed.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Empowerment &amp; Respect</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	There is a call for more empowerment of individuals with autism and neurodiverse conditions, as well as greater respect, kindness, and patience in healthcare settings. Listening to the voices of young people and ensuring that their preferences and needs are considered are also emphasised.
Our response	
Rationale	

**Question 5a3: Please tell us if you think there are any actions missing**

Key Theme: <b>Improved Collaboration with NHS</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	There is a need for more joined-up working with the NHS, particularly in addressing the additional medical needs of autistic individuals that impact their behaviour. This could involve creating integrated care pathways or protocols for managing both autism and other medical conditions.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Accessibility of Healthcare Services</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Action is needed to address the accessibility of healthcare services, including ensuring consistent and accessible channels of contact to GPs. This could involve reinstating functional online booking services or providing alternative communication methods for individuals who cannot use phones.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Addressing Labelling and Stereotyping</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	There should be initiatives to stop labelling autistic people as high-functioning or low-functioning, as this creates barriers to accessing appropriate support. Education and awareness campaigns could be implemented to promote understanding and reduce stigma.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Tailored Healthcare Services</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	There is a call for a completely different medical system for autistic individuals, especially women and girls, to address the inadequacies of current provisions. This could involve developing specialised healthcare services that are more responsive to the needs of autistic individuals, particularly in terms of mental health support.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Reduced Assessment Times</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Action should be taken to reduce assessment times, with a specific target of achieving assessments within three months. This could involve streamlining assessment processes, increasing resources for assessments, and improving coordination between healthcare providers involved in the assessment process.
Our response	
Rationale	

#### D) What actions relating to Health and Care are the most important?

The following actions relating to health emerge as the most important:

1. **Greater Training Provision:** There is a clear need for more comprehensive and in-depth training provision for healthcare professionals to better understand and support individuals with autism. This includes training on recognising autism traits, providing appropriate accommodations, and understanding the unique healthcare needs of autistic individuals.
2. **Improved Communication and Coordination:** There is a call for more joined-up working between different healthcare providers, schools, and support services. This includes ensuring that healthcare needs are adequately addressed in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and that there is better communication between paediatric and adult healthcare services as individuals transition into adulthood.
3. **Enhanced Sensory Environment:** Suggestions include creating more autism-friendly environments within healthcare settings, such as turning off radios and adjusting lighting to reduce sensory overload, particularly in waiting rooms. These small adjustments can greatly improve the healthcare experience for autistic individuals.
4. **Recognition of Special Needs:** Healthcare professionals need to be reminded to consider the possibility of special needs, including autism, when interacting with patients. This requires increased awareness and training to ensure that individuals receive appropriate support and accommodations.
5. **Tailored Support for Mental Health:** There is a need for specific pathways and services to address the mental health needs of autistic individuals, including those with co-occurring conditions such as eating disorders. This involves providing face-to-face treatments and ensuring that emergency rooms take suicidal ideation seriously and engage with individuals in distress.

By prioritising these actions, healthcare systems can better meet the needs of autistic individuals and improve their overall health outcomes.

**E) How should we measure success for the Health and Care priority?**

A number of responses were received around how success of this priority chapter should be measured.

Key Theme: <b>Improved Access to Healthcare Services</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Measure the accessibility of healthcare services for individuals on the autism spectrum. Success can be assessed by tracking metrics such as wait times for appointments, availability of specialised healthcare providers, and the extent of geographic coverage to ensure equitable access to healthcare services across diverse populations.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Enhanced Quality of Care</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Evaluate the quality of healthcare services provided to individuals with autism. Success can be measured through indicators such as patient satisfaction surveys, clinical outcomes, adherence to evidence-based practices, and the implementation of person-centred care approaches that address the unique needs of individuals on the autism spectrum.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Increased Awareness and Training</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Assess the level of awareness and training among healthcare professionals regarding autism. Success can be measured by the implementation of training programs aimed at improving healthcare professionals' understanding of autism, as well as their ability to provide culturally competent and inclusive care to individuals on the autism spectrum.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Reduction in Health Disparities</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Monitor and address disparities in health outcomes among individuals with autism. Success involves reducing disparities in healthcare access, treatment outcomes, and overall health status among different demographic groups within the autism community, including racial and ethnic minorities, individuals from low-income backgrounds, and those with co-occurring conditions.
Our response	
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Support for Caregivers</b>	Number of Responses:
Comment Summary	Evaluate the availability of support services for caregivers of individuals with autism. Success can be measured by the provision of respite care, caregiver training programs, mental health support services, and other resources aimed at alleviating caregiver burden and promoting their well-being.
Our response	
Rationale	

## Consultation feedback on adult and youth justice priority

### A) Should Adult and Youth Justice be a key priority in the strategy?

The **general survey** question 8a asked How far do you agree that 'Adult and Youth Justice', is a key theme for the autism strategy?

10 people responded to this question. 50% [n=5] strongly agreed that Adult and Youth Justice' is a key theme; 0% [n=0] of respondents strongly disagreed. When aggregated, 80% [n=8] of people strongly agree and agree, and 1% [n=1] strongly disagree and disagree, the remaining 1% [n=1] of respondents neither agreed or disagreed.

The **easy-read survey** posed the question: 'Do you think adult and youth justice for autistic people should be a key theme in the autism plan?' 38 people answered this question. 84.2% answered yes [n=32], 7.9% answered no [n=3] with 7.9% [n=3] answering don't know.

A total of 48 people responded to this question across **both general and easy read surveys**. The data shows that 83.2% of people agreed Adult & Youth Justice should be a key theme, 8.4% neither agreed nor disagreed or were unsure and 8.4% disagreed.

This would indicate that there is overall agreement that adult and youth justice should be a key priority in the strategy.

### B) How well do the draft actions under the Adult and Youth Justice priority reflect and respond to the key issues?

Within the **general survey**, 10 people responded to this question. 40% [n=4] strongly agreed that the actions reflect and respond to key issues and a smaller group of people, 10% [n=1] agreed. Combining the responses 50% [n=5] agreed or strongly agreed.

10% [1] disagreed and 0% [n=0] strongly disagreed. Combining the responses 10% [n=1] disagree/strongly disagree.

40% of respondents [n=4] neither agreed nor disagreed.

### C) What is missing or could be improved in the draft strategy relating to the Adult and Youth Justice priority, and how have we responded to these?

Respondents were invited to comment on how far they agree that the actions reflect and respond to the key issues and provide any other comments. Overall, 11 additional comments were provided in the general survey, and 4 people in the easy read survey. These were analysed and 3 themes were identified.

1. Early Support
2. Funding
3. Training and Education

<b>Key Theme: Early Support</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	50% people commented on the need for early multi-agency support for Autistic people, so they don't end up in the CJS.
Our response	A significant proportion of CJS funding is now committed to diversion from courts and prisons to provide alternative approaches to reduce reoffending in the community. CJS will continue to support educational and information for all citizens to help them access support and advice when needed.
Rationale	Alternatives to court and custody are central themes for all CJS organisations. Education and advice based systems are a key platform to improving services and support for neurodivergent individuals across North Yorkshire.

<b>Key Theme: Funding</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	25% people identified funding as an issue, primarily linked to support prior to entry into the Criminal Justice System.
Our response	All CJS organisations regularly review funding streams and opportunities to develop new and existing services to improve pathways for relevant people
Rationale	All such decisions are dependent on national and local funding.

<b>Key Theme: Training and Education</b>	Number of Responses: 5
Comment Summary	5 people in the general survey made comments which related to awareness of Autism in the CJS and understanding of different organisations. All 4 comments from the Easy Read survey related to this theme, including: Police and emergency, justice services need to have good understanding of Autism and why Autistic person may behaviour or react in distress or meltdown. Training at a basic understanding is essential for all services dealing with autistic youth, adults, and children.
Our response	All CJS organisations contribute to data collection and analysis to inform actions and developments. HMPPS, Police, YJS and PFCC are committed to reducing reoffending by improving its provision of specialist services both in prison and the community.
Rationale	There is a national commitment across CJS to improve responses to neurodivergent needs to reduce reoffending and help people live more productive lives as citizens.



## D) What actions relating to Adult and Youth Justice are the most important?

There were 4 proposed actions in the adult and youth justice chapter of the draft strategy.

Participants were asked to rank each of the proposed actions on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being their highest priority and 4 being their lowest priority.

1. Implement recommendations from the Ministry of Justice report on neurodiversity across police, judges, courts, prisons, and probation. This includes the development of a universal screening tool; work to improve physical environments for neurodiverse people; improving data collection and recording; improve information sharing and joint working between agencies and other services, and staff training. These are national recommendations which are already being implemented and reviewed regularly.
2. Explore the opportunity to develop a liaison and diversion service for autistic people which is similar to the model for mental health.
3. Increase the use of the Neurodiversity Service available to Probation staff.
4. Office for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) now has a public Confidence and Inclusivity Directorate and is in the process of recruiting an Inclusivity and Public Confidence Manager who will work directly with North Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Enable North Yorkshire to realise the Commissioners priority to enhance positive culture, integrity, and public trust. This role will be key in ensuring we understand our people's specific needs, and how in turn our services take those needs into account to operate effectively.

The three most popular proposed actions in order of importance were found to be:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Action Point 1
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Action Point 2
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Action Point 3

Participants who completed the **easy read survey** were provided with 2 options and asked to rate the statement which was most important to them. 42 people answered this question. 36% [n=15] people identified as autistic. 26% [n=11] were family members or carers. 7% [n=3] were someone working with autistic people.

Action Point	People who rated this as their highest priority
The Office for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner employs someone who will work with the police, fire and rescue services, to help them understand the needs of autistic people.	52% [n=22]
The justice services follow the recommendations of the Ministry of Justice report on neurodiversity.	48% [n=20]

**E) How should we measure success for the Adult and Youth Justice priority?**

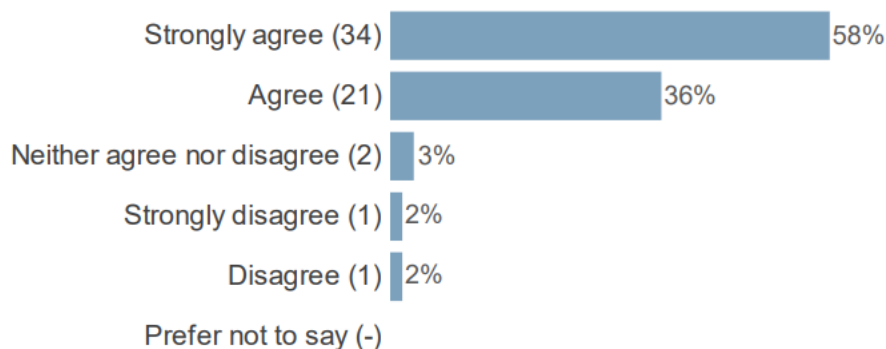
There were 5 participant responses to this question. All of the responses suggested that surveys, feedback from autistic people and consultation with providers would be helpful in measuring success of the work.

## Consultation feedback on Inclusive Communities priority

### A) Should Inclusive Communities be a key priority in the strategy?

The **general survey** question 9a1 asked “How far do you agree that ‘inclusive communities’, is a key theme for the autism strategy?”

59 people responded to this question. 58% [n=34] strongly agreed that ‘inclusive communities’ is a key theme; 2% [n=1] of respondents strongly disagreed. When aggregated, 94% [n=55] of people strongly agree and agree, and 4% [n=2] strongly disagree and disagree, the remaining 3% [n=2] of respondents neither agreed or disagreed.



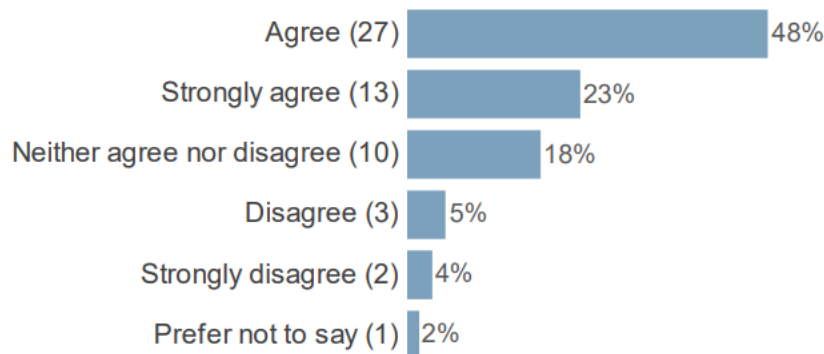
The **easy-read survey** posed the question: ‘Do you think making communities more inclusive for autistic people should be a key theme in the autism plan?’ 39 people answered this question. 97% answered yes [n=38] with 3% [n=1] answering don’t know.

A total of 98 people responded to this question across **both general and easy read surveys**. The data shows that 96% of people agreed inclusive communities should be a key theme, 3% neither agreed nor disagreed or were unsure and 2% disagreed.

### B) How well do the draft actions under the Inclusive Communities priority reflect and respond to the key issues?

Within the **general survey**, 56 people responded to this question. The majority: 48% [n=27] agreed that the actions reflect and respond to key issues and a smaller group of people 23% [n=13] strongly agreed. Combining the responses 71% [n=40] agreed or strongly agreed. Smaller numbers of people either disagreed or strongly disagreed with these being 5% [3] and 4% [n=2], respectively. Combining the responses 9% [n=5] disagree/ strongly disagree. 2% of respondents [n=1] preferred not to say and the remaining 18% [n=10] neither agreed nor disagreed.

The data suggests that whilst some changes or additions may need to be made, most participants agreed with the proposed actions.



**C) What is missing or could be improved in the draft strategy relating to the Inclusive Communities priority, and how have we responded to these?**

Respondents to the **general survey** were invited to comment on how far they agree that the actions reflect and respond to the key issues.

Overall, 9 people provided an additional comment. These were analysed and 3 themes were identified.

- Training and Education
- Personal Experience
- Additional Information

Key Theme: <b>Training &amp; Education</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	44% people made comments which related to training and education within the community. The comments covered a wide range of groups from education in schools, to training for businesses as well as providing information about support for autistic people.
Our response	We plan to develop a comprehensive communication and engagement programme for awareness-raising events. We will work with partners across North Yorkshire to share information and raise awareness of autism so that they, and others, improve their understanding and in doing so, improve their support and access for Autistic people. This will include driving further awareness and understanding of those with protected characteristics and autism.
Rationale	We will improve access to information. These are part of our key actions already identified.

Key Theme: <b>Personal Experience</b>	Number of Responses: 3
Comment Summary	33% people commented whilst referring to their own personal experience. These experiences were a mix of positive and negative but called for a consistency of inclusion and acceptance in the wider community.
Our response	We will co-produce activities and communications with Autistic people. We recognise that personal experience is key and that not all Autistic people are the same.
Rationale	By co-producing with Autistic people we will understand more about where we can make adjustments and design new ways of working so that Autistic people will have hope for the future in NY.

Key Theme: <b>Additional Information</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	2% people said simply that they would like more information about the actions and how a difference will be made.
Our response	We will make our annual action plan available to everyone. This plan will provide more information about our actions and how we plan to measure the success of them.
Rationale	Publishing our annual action plan makes it clear as to the detail of our actions. It also ensures we keep track of them, and we can measure how (or not) a difference has been made.

Further data relating to the Inclusive Communities section of the strategy was gathered at both face to face and virtual **workshop sessions**, there were 10 sessions held in total. Not all the workshops resulted in comments for every chapter, comments about Inclusive Communities were recorded at 4 of the workshops. The data was collected during group conversations and participants were asked to comment on the content of the draft strategy, including the actions they consider most important in the Inclusive Communities chapter and any missing actions. Comments were not recorded in a way that they could be aligned with an overarching question or discussion. Therefore, all comments from all events have been collated and themed collectively. Some comments were assigned to more than one theme.

Themes identified:

- Autistic voices
- Accessibility
- Attitudes and Values

<b>Key Theme: Autistic Voices</b>	Number of Responses: 14
Comment Summary	52% comments were about the importance of hearing autistic people's voices. This included reflections on personal experiences and celebrating autistic people's strengths. Comments collated in this theme focussed on the importance of co-production and of sharing best practice. There was a sense that what is required is not only engaging with communities on behalf of autistic people but empowering them to inspire change.
Our response	We will co-produce activities and communications with Autistic people. We recognise that personal experience is key and that not all Autistic people are the same.
Rationale	By co-producing with Autistic people, we will understand more about where we can adjust and design new ways of working so that Autistic people will have hope for the future in NY.

<b>Key Theme: Accessibility</b>	Number of Responses: 14
Comment Summary	52% comments referred to accessibility. The workshop with Scarborough self-advocacy specifically focussed on accessibility in relation to public transport both in awareness raising and education of drivers and the physical accessibility of buses, bus-stops and timetables. Education and awareness raising was frequently mentioned alongside accessibility in the context of improving environments and motivating and providing positive feedback to business and services. Providing clear information about accessibility issues, including sensory considerations with 'inclusion by default' being seen as the ideal outcome.
Our response	We will work with businesses and NYC services, including transport, to be autistic friendly.
Rationale	This will aim to improve accessibility and contributes to our proposed actions.

<b>Key Theme: Attitudes &amp; Values</b>	Number of Responses: 11
Comment Summary	41% comments related to attitudes and values within the community and the impact this can have on inclusivity. The comments about attitudes and values were typically made in the context of providing information and education to promote understanding. Fairness, respect and kindness were key words identified within this theme.
Our response	We plan to develop a comprehensive communication and engagement programme for awareness-raising events. We will work with partners across North Yorkshire to share information and raise awareness of autism so that they, and others, improve their understanding. This will include raising awareness and understanding of those with protected characteristics and autism.
Rationale	Educating and raising awareness will help build understanding which should help improve attitudes and values.

Participants who completed the **general survey** were asked ‘please provide any additional comments on Inclusive Communities’. A total of 8 comments were added.

All comments were collated into the following themes:

1. Schools
2. Next Steps
3. Workplaces

63% [n=5] comments related to schools with a large focus on diversity, inclusion, and anti-bullying. Other comments made related to wanting to see real, meaningful change and clearer actions to identify how this can be achieved.

Key Theme: <b>School</b>	Number of Responses: 5
Comment Summary	63% [n=5] comments related to schools with a large focus on diversity, inclusion, and anti-bullying.
Our response	Schools and local communities will be included in a comprehensive communication and engagement programme of awareness-raising events.
Rationale	This contributes to one of our proposed actions already identified.

Key Theme: <b>Next Steps</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Other comments made related to wanting to see real, meaningful change and clearer actions to identify how this can be achieved.
Our response	Agree. We will use language and terms that are understandable, and any new initiatives will be able to be measured.
Rationale	Lack of understanding will lead to further barriers with accessibility and inclusivity.

Key Theme: <b>Workplaces</b>	Number of Responses: 1
Comment Summary	One comment reflected that local authority run services appear to be inclusive but that working environments need to improve.
Our response	We will work with businesses and other organisations to be autistic friendly.
Rationale	This will help improve workspace accessibility and inclusivity.

Participants who completed the **easy read survey** were asked ‘is there anything else you want to tell us about Inclusive Communities?’. A total of 12 comments were made of which 67% [n=8] of people were autistic and 25% [n=3] identified as a carer or family member and 8%[n=1] was someone who works with autistic people. 3 comments were not incorporated into the analysis, 2 due to being exact duplicates of comments already submitted and 1 comment stated ‘no’. All other comments were assigned to one theme.

- Awareness raising

Key Theme: <b>Raising Awareness</b>	Number of Responses: 9
Comment Summary	All comments in response to this question focused on raising awareness amongst different people and sectors of the community. This ranged from older adults who may not 'believe' in autism, to employers and businesses, clubs, and groups. 2 comments mentioned the need for autism specific support to facilitate this.
Our response	We plan to work with businesses and other organisations to be autistic friendly. Local communities will be included in a comprehensive communication and engagement programme of awareness-raising events
Rationale	Training and raising awareness form part of our key actions.

**Question 5a3: Please tell us if you think there are any actions missing.**

There were 7 additional comments made on the **general survey**. 57% [n=4] comments were by autistic people and 43% [n=3] were from family members or carers. The comments were analysed, and 2 themes identified with 1 comment spanning both themes.

Social Opportunities  
Education/adaptations

Key Theme: <b>Social Opportunities</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	Respondents spoke about the importance of social opportunities and social inclusion, particularly for autistic teenagers and young autistic adults. Comments reflected a lack of existing opportunities, the isolation this can bring and subsequent impact on mental health. 2 comments referred to the LGBTQ community in relation to autistic people and the support needed when exploring identity.
Our response	We will work with community organisations and leisure and culture partners to improve their inclusivity and increase social opportunities for all-age Autistic people.
Rationale	This feeds into two of our proposed actions.

Key Theme: <b>Education / Adaptations</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	Respondent made comments relating to education in the wider community about autism. This did cover education in schools but was mainly in the context of adaptations to environments and services. One comment gave the example of a adjustment hairdressers could make, by offering a 'quiet' appointment without small talk and lowering the lighting



	over the mirror or chair. Businesses and services need to have the right information to know what offers and adaptations would be helpful.
Our response	Schools will be included in a comprehensive communication and engagement programme of awareness-raising events. This will include raising awareness and understanding of those with protected characteristics and autism.
Rationale	This theme has been mentioned previously and action on it will help drive inclusivity.

#### **D) What actions relating to inclusive communities are the most important?**

There were 8 proposed actions in the inclusive communities' chapter of the draft strategy

5. Co-produce a social initiative/movement to make North Yorkshire communities, businesses, and services, Autism Inclusive
6. Develop a comprehensive communication and engagement programme for awareness raising events and access to information, promotion of services, activities and offer throughout the year.
7. Build on opportunities to work more broadly across NYC services following local government re-organisation to raise awareness, training and improve support and access for Autistic people, linking into services including housing, leisure, culture (museums, galleries, performance venues and outreach support), tourism, businesses, town centre, transport, locality community partnerships.
8. Work with communities and organisations to access appropriate training that improves understanding of autism, supports with communication, culture and reasonable adjustments to support autism friendly communities.
9. Work to improve physical environments and provide reasonable adjustments to support individuals to access services and facilities within their communities.
10. Work with organisations to understand diversity across services and consider how to improve access and inclusion across all strategy themes
11. Working with community sport organisations on autism awareness raising education programmes and promotion of the benefits of sports for autistic people.
12. Learning from training undertaken by the Skipton Town Hall Cultural Hub will be shared across the new North Yorkshire Council's cultural Hub to support neurodiverse people.

Participants were asked to rank each of the proposed actions on a scale of 1-8, with 1 being their highest priority and 8 being their lowest priority. The three most popular proposed actions in order of importance were found to be

- 1<sup>st</sup> Action Point 4
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Action Point 3

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Action Point 1

Participants who completed the easy read survey were provided with 2 options and asked to rate the statement which was most important to them. 42 people answered this question. 64% [n=27] people identified as autistic. 26% [n=11] were family members or carers. The remaining 10% [n=4] were someone working with autistic people.

Action Point	People who rated this as their highest priority
Helping everyone in the community to work together to make our communities autism inclusive.	43% [n=18]
Work with local communities, businesses, and organisations to help them understand autism and how they can make their environments easier for autistic people to use.	57% [n=24]

#### E) How should we measure success for the inclusive community's priority?

##### Measuring success

There were 15 participant responses to this question. Two themes were identified although there were overlaps between the two, as People achieving goals may be identified through the completion of a survey:

- Surveys
- People achieving goals

Key Theme: <b>Surveys</b>	Number of Responses: 9
Comment Summary	Suggestions for a selection of surveys were offered these included a quality-of-life survey, satisfaction survey and autism friendly surveys.
Our response	We can co-produce with Autistic people an accessible survey to measure the success of the inclusive community's priority which could be sent out annually.
Rationale	This would be an effective way to gather feedback.

Key Theme: <b>People achieving goals</b>	Number of Responses: 6
Comment Summary	Respondents discussed measuring success through the number of training programmes delivered. Autistic people experiencing greater understanding and acceptance. Lower rates of bullying in schools. Employers making organisational adjustments resulting in higher employment rates and positive feedback from support groups.
Our response	These must remain part of our goals and could be measured at year 3 of the strategy.
Rationale	Some of these are longer-term goals and may not be apparent initially.

## Consultation feedback on Working Together

One of the aims of the public consultation was to seek feedback on “Working Together”, one of the cross-cutting themes in the strategy. The purpose was 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.

Feedback was gathered through questions in the survey as well as through event discussions and responses via email, with analysis presented below.

### What does good look like for people when working together on projects (Autism Strategy or other engagement opportunities)?

Question 11c in the general survey asked people to consider the following: “When working together on projects (Autism Strategy or other engagement opportunities) what does good look like for you?”

Overall, 37 respondents provided comments to the question, and some comments were received via events and emails. These were analysed and 5 themes were identified.

- Accessibility
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Impact
- Training

Key Theme: <b>Accessibility</b>	Number of Responses: 13
Comment Summary	Thirteen people mentioned the need for accessibility when working together, considering the language used and the ability to join meetings through different channels such as online.
Our response	Continue to provide a range of different methods for people to be involved.
Rationale	Recognise different people’s preference and needs. Offering choice and involving people early should increase opportunities and participation

<b>Key Theme:</b> <b>Communication</b>	Number of Responses: 19
Comment Summary	Respondents mentioned communication and the need for clear, concise language when communicating with autistic people as well as listening and respecting differing opinions. Expanding the reach was mentioned by communicating appropriately the opportunities to be involved. 4 comments mentioned the need to appreciate the communication difficulties experienced by some autistic people; and 5 comments referenced the importance of keeping people informed.
Our response	Continue to provide a range of different methods for people to be involved. Where possible, design and test methods (e.g., surveys, communications) with people with lived experience.
Rationale	Recognise different people's preference and needs. Offering choice and involving people early should increase opportunities and participation.

<b>Key Theme:</b> <b>Collaboration</b>	Number of Responses: 8
Comment Summary	Respondents consult with autistic people/ reaching out to autistic people & their families/ involve the community/ lived experience take the lead/ come together to share ideas/ involve autistic people from the beginning.
Our response	Working together is already a cross-cutting theme in the strategy. In addition to these comments, people registering for events were invited to join a mailing list so that they can receive updates about the strategy and future opportunities to be involved. The mailing list will be used to promote opportunities to continue working together during implementation of the strategy, as well as seeking to reach more people to become involved.
Rationale	We recognise the importance of collaboration in the design and delivery of the strategy.

<b>Key Theme:</b> <b>Impact</b>	Number of Responses: 7
Comment Summary	Respondents discussed the importance of seeing progress being made, actions taken and quick fixes.
Our response	We recognise that people want to see action, progress and impacts from the strategy and we have therefore prioritised the development of the year 1 action plan alongside the work to complete the consultation analysis and strategy updates. We recognise that some of big changes identified within the strategy will take time to implement, however others can be delivered quite quickly.
Rationale	This means that work can begin on the year 1 action plan as soon as the strategy has been approved.

Key Theme: <b>Training</b>	Number of Responses: 3
Comment Summary	Understanding autism and neurodivergent affirming & trauma. 1 submission highlighted one of the partner organisations as an example of good practice in training on autism.
Our response	Training and workforce are already a cross-cutting theme within the strategy and there are actions throughout the strategy to increase people's understanding of autism through training. Organisations across the partnership can work together to share resources and approaches as appropriate.
Rationale	These comments emphasise the importance of the theme and actions.

**“When working together on projects (Autism Strategy or other engagement opportunities) how can we improve?”**

Overall, 30 respondents provided comments to this question in the **general survey**. In addition, a number of comments from events and email submissions were analysed. The following themes were identified.

- Experience
- Lived Experience Representation
- Advocacy
- Accessibility
- Action
- Communication
- Third sector services

Key Theme: <b>Experience</b>	Number of Responses: 11
Comment Summary	Respondents mentioned improvements relating to experience, such as drawing on learning from other areas and/or the expertise of specialist organisations and schools which work with autistic people.
Our response	North Yorkshire Council is already a key partner in the strategy and a number of organisations working directly with autistic people have contributed to the strategy and consultation. As the strategy is delivered, we will identify, share and build on learning from other organisations and areas
Rationale	We recognise the importance of working in partnership and learning from others.

Key Theme: <b>Lived Experience Representation</b>	Number of Responses: 11
Comment Summary	Ten people suggested improvements in representation, for example involving autistic people of different ages in our work together, establishing an autism partnership board.
Our response	Action built into year 1 action plan to review membership of Steering Group and any sub-groups established to support strategy delivery to increase lived experience representation from both autistic people and families/carers, with annual review of terms of reference
Rationale	Increase representation within strategy governance. Consider annual review of terms of reference / membership to share out opportunities if significant interest.

Key Theme: <b>Advocacy</b>	Number of Responses: 7
Comment Summary	Comments related to the important role played by carers/families and the voluntary sector in advocacy but highlighted concerns about the availability of support and the lack of independence in complaints teams. 1 comment referred to the importance of empowering autistic adults through peer support and advocacy, whilst another comment reflected that there is only so much people can be expected to do for themselves.
Our response	<b>Sent to Erin and Claire for review</b>
Rationale	

Key Theme: <b>Accessibility</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	use all platforms for engagement/ use accessible language/vary times of meetings for working people /Offer different online options not just Teams
Our response	Consultation included one weekend event and one evening event as well as other methods of participation. Continue to use a range of methods for involving people during strategy delivery
Rationale	Increase participation and provide choice to cater for different preferences and needs

Key Theme: <b>Action</b>	Number of Responses: 3
Comment Summary	speed process up/ take action request more funding
Our response	We recognise that people want to see action, progress and impacts from the strategy and we have therefore prioritised the development of the year 1 action plan alongside the work to complete the consultation analysis and strategy updates. We recognise that some of big changes identified within the strategy will take time to implement, however others can be delivered quite quickly. Funding opportunities will be explored where appropriate, the annual action plan identifies the resources needed to deliver each action and making best use of our resources is one of the strategy's cross-cutting themes.

Rationale	This means that work can begin on the year 1 action plan as soon as the strategy has been approved and it will be clear what resources are needed to deliver the actions in year 1.
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Key Theme: <b>Communication</b>	Number of Responses: 2
Comment Summary	Expand the reach an Autism roadshow/ outcomes/ expand reach so people involve from beginning/ reach out to more people
Our response	The mailing list will be used to continue to promote opportunities to work together during implementation of the strategy. In addition, we will seek to reach more people to become involved.
Rationale	We recognise that we need to continue trying to reach more people.

Key Theme: <b>Third Sector services</b>	Number of Responses: 4
Comment Summary	1 individual in 4 different submissions suggested that work was required to develop and grow third sector support/services in North Yorkshire, especially autistic-led organisations
Our response	TBC – with Claire and Erin
Rationale	

## 1. Consultation Feedback on Strategy Design

Survey respondents were also invited to provide comments on the draft design of the strategy. Feedback is varied, with respondents expressing a range of opinions. Many appreciated the document's clarity and accessibility, noting the helpful use of visuals, colour coding, and clear layout that makes it easier to understand and navigate.

However, there were also concerns raised about certain aspects of the design. Some respondents felt that the colours used in the document are too bright or overwhelming and suggest toning them down to make it less visually stimulating. Additionally, there were criticisms regarding the choice of images and symbols, with some finding them patronising or unnecessary. Some comments suggested that the images on the left side of each page should be removed or reduced, as they may be distracting or unnecessary. Additionally, considerations for accessibility, such as dyslexic-friendly fonts and options for adjusting background colours and font sizes, are noted as important improvements.

Comments were also provided on the language in the document, as some respondents found the wording overly complicated or redundant. Respondents expressed a need for simplifying the content and making it more concise. Some respondents suggested creating separate documents tailored to different age groups to better meet the specific needs and preferences of each group. This could involve adjusting the design, language, and content to be more appropriate and engaging for different age ranges within the autistic community.

Some feedback was received about the need for a more inclusive approach to design, involving autistic individuals in the process to ensure that the document better reflects their preferences and needs. The opportunity to be involved in working together on the design of the final version of the strategy was promoted as part of the consultation and X individuals came forward. Further information to be inserted here as the approach is developed during May - Emma

The consultation feedback relating to the design of the strategy was shared with the Design Team to inform the final version which has been produced in line with best practice standards.



## Appendix 1 – Consultation Participation: Demographic Information

### Surveys

4 surveys were designed to reach different audiences, these included a general survey, easy read survey, young persons survey and children's survey. Discussion of each of these surveys are set out below.

#### General Survey

The general survey received a total of 92 responses. The dominant respondent demographic was a white, cis gender, heterosexual female aged between 50 and 64 years of age.

Deeper analysis of the data shows illustrates that the majority of respondents were female (83% [n=74]) and 14% [n=12] were male. A further 3% [n=<5] preferred not to say. Over half of the respondents were aged between 40 and 64 (58% [n=52]). People aged between 16 and 19 years were the smallest represented group of respondents (1% [n=<5]). There was a slightly higher representation of people aged between 20 and 29 (7% [n=6]).

The majority of respondents described their ethnic origin as white (92% [n=82]), a minority of respondents were Asian and 7% [n=6] preferred not to say.

Respondents were also asked to state how they think of themselves. Most respondents identified as Heterosexual or straight (84% [n=74]), 7% [n=6] preferred not to say and the remaining 9% of responses were split between Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian and other sexual orientation.

Further survey demographic data are set out in the tables below. Respondents were asked to indicate if and how they identified as autistic. Options suggested either having received a formal diagnosis or started the diagnosis process, or not having received a formal diagnosis or not going through the diagnosis process but self-identifying as autistic. Some respondents chose not to answer this question, and other respondents identified as autistic (formally or informally) and as one of the options in the 'other' category.

	Formal Diagnosis		Self-Identify	
	%	Number	%	Number
Adult	56%	21	54%	7
Young Person	10%	<5	15%	<5
Child	34%	13	31%	<5

Where respondents to the general survey did not identify with any of the categories in the table above, a further 5 options were provided as set out in the table below:

	%	Number
A family member	43%	29
A family carer	34%	16
Someone who directly works with or supports an autistic child, young person, or adult	18%	12

Someone who has wider interest in autism but does not directly work with autistic people.	4%	<5
Other – a space for comments was provided. These were varied and related to personal and professional circumstances and/or interests.	12%	8

### **Easy Read Survey**

The easy read survey received a total of 65 responses. The survey asked respondents some demographic questions. These are set out in the table below:

Respondents were asked if they were:

	%	<i>Number</i>
<b>Autistic child</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>
<b>Young person</b>	5%	<5
<b>Adult</b>	38%	25
<b>A Carer</b>	9%	6
<b>A family member</b>	8%	5
<b>A worker with autistic people</b>	5%	<5

Have you been diagnosed as autistic?

	%	<i>Number</i>
Yes	23%	15
No	32%	21
Don't know	8%	5

Which age group are you?

	%	<i>Number</i>
16 - 19	5%	<5
20 - 29	12%	8
30 - 39	14%	9
40 - 49	18%	12
50 - 64	12%	8
65 - 74	3%	<5

Are you?

	%	<i>Number</i>
Man	26%	17
Woman	35%	23
Think about yourself in a different way	3%	<5

Where did the survey respondents live?

Locality	General Survey		Easy Read Survey	
	%	Number	%	Number
Craven	4%	<5	8%	5
Hambleton	12%	11	12%	8
Harrogate	28%	26	22%	14
Richmondshire	18%	17	9%	6
Ryedale	5%	5	2%	<5
Scarborough	16%	15	6%	<5
Selby	11%	10	5%	<5
Outside North Yorkshire	0%	0	N/A	N/A
Prefer not to say	4%	<5	35%	23
Other - Filey	N/A	N/A	2%	<5

### Children and Young Person's Survey

No demographic data was collected via these surveys.

Young Person's Survey = 12 responses

Children's Survey = 12 responses

Participant postcodes were provided for the children and young people's surveys however this breakdown has not been included in order to ensure anonymity, due to relatively small numbers when split by locality.

### Events

A total of **172 people** attended consultation events and workshops with established groups (excluding facilitators, steering group members and senior leaders of partner organisations). Some people self-declared as autistic, carers etc within the events or at the time of booking but this was not required in order to participate. The conversational method used at the events means it is not possible to distinguish between responses of different groups. In terms of attendance and consultation events and events with established groups, these have been categorised as follows:

Type of attendee	Participation (all events/groups)
Carers – based on self-declaration during booking or at the event.	27 (16%)
Autistic people – based on self-declaration during booking or at the event.	19 (11%)
Other participants who did not declare a category	72 (42%)
Partners – representing organisations	50 (29%)
North Yorkshire Council Elected Member	4 (<1%)

<b>Total participants (excluding facilitators, steering group members and senior leaders of partner organisations)</b>	<b>172 (100%)</b>
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**List of consultation events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Monday 17 November 2023	11am - 12noon	Online – virtual launch event
Monday 4 December 2023	1pm to 3pm	Skipton Town Hall – Cancelled due to adverse weather (rescheduled below)
Monday 18 December 2023	10am to 12 midday	Civic Centre, Harrogate
Tuesday 9 January 2024	2pm to 4pm	Mercury House, Richmond
Saturday 13 January 2024	10am to 12 midday	Online
Thursday 1 February 2024	3pm to 5pm	The Goosecroft Centre, Northallerton
Friday 9 February 2024	10am to 12 midday	Brayton Community Centre, Selby
Monday 12 February 2024	7pm to 9pm	Online
Wednesday 28 February 2024	10am to 12 midday	Friends Meeting House, Malton
Monday 4 March 2024	10.30am to 12.30pm	Skipton Town Hall
Thursday 7 March 2024	2pm to 4pm	Friends Meeting House, Scarborough
Friday 15 March 2024	2pm to 4pm	Online

## Appendix 2: Key Communication Activities

The following activities were undertaken to promote the consultation:

- Page on the consultations section of the NYC website with information about the consultation, survey links and event details (1,846 views)
- NYC Media releases
  - 6th November 2023 after consultation approved (195 views and coverage in 2 local media outlets – Harrogate & NY-wide)
  - 30th November 2023 after consultation launch (534 views and coverage in 3 media outlets – Hambleton, Scarborough and NY-wide)
- Your North Yorkshire Council resident’s newsletter
  - Article about the consultation included in January edition sent to 149,376 subscribers (open rate 46% - 68, 271 email addresses)
  - ‘Have your say’ headline button included in February e-newsletter email linking direct to current consultations webpage
- Regular NYC social media posts throughout the consultation in December, January, February and March on Facebook, Twitter, Next Door and Instagram launching the consultation, promoting each consultation event, regularly reminding people to take part in the consultation up to the last day with direct links to the consultation webpage, and responding to comments (queries)
- Internal NYC communications to all staff covering consultation launch, events and final reminder messages, plus promotion via NYC Health and Adult Services staff briefings
- Promotion to other organisations including:
  - Schools via mailing lists and SENCO networks
  - Information shared with social care providers registered with NYC Adult Social Care (email and presentation at Care Connected webinar)
  - Community First Yorkshire weekly e-news (3000 contacts) plus regular strategic meetings (Children & Young People, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Leaders) and Craven Communities Together partnership meeting.
- Posters provided to libraries
- Via Healthwatch North Yorkshire website, social media and e-newsletters
- Humber North Yorkshire ICB sent information via assessment providers to people on their waiting lists as well as with Children & Young People’s engagement groups and Parent Carer Forums.
- Word of mouth via peer networks and encouraging event attendees to share details with others