



# Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2027

Bridging Gaps, Enhancing Lives

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**About this document**  
 Title: All-Age Autism Strategy 2024–2027 - Bridging Gaps, Enhancing Lives  
 Approved by: Lambeth Council  
 Date: May 2024  
 Status: Live  
 Implementation date: Immediate  
 Review frequency: Refresh every 1 year

## Foreword

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy is an initiative designed to enhance the lives of autistic individuals and their families in our community.

This strategy is a testament to our commitment to addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by autistic individuals while acknowledging their resilience and determination. It recognises the strengths and talents they contribute to society and the hurdles they encounter in a world that is only sometimes understanding or accommodating.

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy shows our dedication to the Lambeth Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2021–2024, which sets out our shared vision, principles, and priorities for meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND from birth to 25 years old. Our strategy complies with the Children and Families Act 2014. It aims to foster inclusion and outcomes for autistic individuals and their families, ensuring they receive the support necessary to reach their full potential.

The goal of the “Roadmap to Excellence Children Families and Education Plan for Improvement 2023–26”, specifically targeted towards autism and broader disability support, is to ensure robust planning for transitions for children with disabilities through a multidisciplinary approach, ensuring Education Health and Care Plans are child-focused with impact-based outcomes, and to support children and their families with a clear understanding of what to expect and access to necessary resources as they transition to adulthood.

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy is guided by core principles emphasising the importance of understanding, acceptance, and inclusion. We recognise that autism is a lifelong condition, and our strategy takes a lifespan approach, addressing the needs of autistic individuals from early childhood through adulthood. The strategy outlines key priorities and initiatives across various areas: education, employment, healthcare, and community support. This ensures that autistic individuals in Lambeth can access the services and opportunities they need to thrive.

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy is grounded in the broader vision of Lambeth partnerships, as outlined in the Lambeth 2030, Our Future, Our Lambeth Borough Plan, which sets out a vision for the borough to thrive with growth and change, offering opportunities for all residents, delivering excellence in public services, and driving fairer outcomes for the diverse community of Lambeth. The All-Age Autism Strategy aligns with this vision by ensuring that autistic individuals and their families are valued and included in the community, with access to appropriate education, employment, and housing opportunities tailored to their unique needs.

The Lambeth Together health and care partnership strives to improve the health of Lambeth residents, reduce inequalities, and commission high-quality

health services. Our strategy highlights the importance of addressing the mental health and well-being of autistic individuals and their families, guaranteeing access to appropriate support and services.

We recognise the essential role of various stakeholders in delivering our strategy, including elected members, leaders, professionals, clinicians, managers, and community organisations. By collaborating, we aim to ensure that all autistic individuals in Lambeth have access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

We are proud to announce that we have secured £240k from South-East London Integrated Care System to support the implementation of the Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy over the next three years (2024–2027). This funding will enable

us to work with stakeholders across the borough to improve support and services for autistic individuals and their families, using it most effectively to achieve our shared vision of a more autism-friendly Lambeth.

We proudly present this strategy and look forward to collaborating with our partners to make Lambeth a more autism-friendly and inclusive borough. Together, we can make a difference and create a community where everyone can thrive.

**Cllr Jacqui Dyer and Cllr Ben Kind**

**Andrew Eyres, Fiona Connolly and Andrew Carter, Corporate Directors**



London Eye

# 1. Introduction and Context

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy 2024–2027 has been developed in collaboration with autistic individuals, carers/guardians and our professional voluntary and statutory stakeholders in the health, education and employment sectors.

The strategy outlines our vision to make Lambeth an autism-friendly borough, where autistic Adults and children can thrive in an environment where their needs are understood and catered for so they feel valued and included, and can contribute to the fabric of Lambeth, a vibrant and inclusive borough of opportunities.

## 1.1 Autism and Autism-Friendly

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex, lifelong neurodevelopment condition influencing how individuals perceive, process, and engage with their environment. At its core, autism is marked by challenges in social communication, restricted and repetitive behaviours, and heightened sensory sensitivities. It's pivotal to understand that autism manifests uniquely in each individual, leading to a diverse range of abilities, challenges, and support necessities. Some autistic individuals might need extensive support, whereas others can lead largely independent lives. Given this spectrum nature, a person-centred approach becomes vital in delivering services. The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy champions this philosophy, aiming to empower every autistic individual to realise their potential while cultivating an inclusive community for all.

### Social communication difficulties

Autistic individuals may face challenges with verbal and non-verbal communication, including understanding and using spoken language, gestures, facial expressions, and body language. They may also need help understanding social cues, maintaining conversations, or adjusting their communication style to suit different contexts or audiences.

### Restricted and repetitive behaviours

Autistic individuals may engage in repetitive behaviours, such as hand-flapping, rocking, or repeating words or phrases. They may also have intense and narrow interests or preferences for specific routines, which can create challenges when faced with changes or transitions.

### Sensory sensitivities

Many autistic individuals are susceptible to sensory stimuli, including sounds, lights, textures, or smells. This can result in over- or under-responsiveness to sensory input, leading to discomfort, distress, or difficulty processing sensory information.

An autism-friendly approach aims to create environments, services, and communities that are inclusive, accessible, and supportive for autistic individuals.

This involves raising awareness and understanding of autism among professionals, educators, and the

general public, as well as implementing evidence-based practices and accommodations that address the unique needs of autistic individuals.

An autism-friendly community recognises, understands, and embraces the unique needs and strengths of autistic individuals. It creates inclusive

and supportive environments that empower autistic individuals to reach their full potential and participate fully in society. Lambeth has formulated a fundamental set of principles derived from a range of sources. An autism-friendly community is built on these principles:

### **Awareness and understanding**

Raising public awareness about autism and promoting understanding of the diverse experiences and challenges faced by autistic individuals. This involves challenging stereotypes and misconceptions, fostering empathy, and celebrating neurodiversity.

### **Inclusive environments**

Designing physical spaces, services, and communication methods that are accessible and welcoming for autistic individuals. This can include sensory-friendly spaces, clear signage and information, and alternative communication options, such as visual supports or assistive technology.

### **Tailored support and services**

Providing person-centred support and services that consider the unique needs, strengths, and aspirations of each autistic individual. This involves adopting evidence-based practices and ensuring professionals have the knowledge and skills to support autistic individuals effectively.

### **Opportunities for participation and engagement**

Encouraging and facilitating the involvement of autistic individuals in all aspects of community life, including education, employment, leisure, and social activities. This includes promoting inclusive practices, providing accommodations, and fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance.

### **Advocacy and empowerment**

Supporting autistic individuals to have a voice in decision-making processes, advocating for their rights and needs, and empowering them to be active and valued community members. This involves promoting self-advocacy, building confidence, and providing opportunities for autistic individuals to share their experiences and perspectives.

Ultimately, an autism-friendly community listens to and respects the voices of autistic individuals, continuously working to remove barriers and create a more inclusive and supportive society for all.

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents)

[www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer)

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-autism-strategy-statutory-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-autism-strategy-statutory-guidance)

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/contents)

[www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/campaign](http://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/campaign)

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7cac22ed915d7c983bc342/special\\_educational\\_needs\\_code\\_of\\_practice.pdf](http://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7cac22ed915d7c983bc342/special_educational_needs_code_of_practice.pdf)

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg128](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg128)

## 1.2 National Context

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy is developed within the broader framework of the national autism strategy and policy landscape. At the national level, the UK government has committed to improving the lives of autistic individuals and their families by implementing policies, guidelines, and initiatives that address this population’s unique needs and challenges.

### National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults: 2021 to 2026

The UK government’s strategy encourages local authorities to embrace an all-age approach to supporting autistic individuals. Authorities are urged to engage with their local autistic communities, collaborate closely with health and education sectors for cohesive services, ensure clear pathways for support across all age brackets, and diligently address any service gaps, while also being transparent by publishing their ongoing plans and advancements. This includes providing support for diagnosis, health and social care services, education, and employment opportunities.

Recent UK data highlights several key areas where autistic individuals face significant challenges:

#### Employment

Only **21.7%** of autistic adults in the UK have paid jobs, a significantly lower rate than others with additional needs.

#### Education

Autism is the primary need for **31.3%** of pupils with EHCPs, amounting to **103,400** students in the UK.

#### School Experience

**70%** of autistic children and young adults believe that schools would improve if teachers had a better understanding of autism.

#### Economic Impact

The UK spends **£32 billion** annually on care and lost earnings for autistic individuals. Early intervention and support can help them live more independently.

#### Healthcare Experience

In an Autism Research Centre survey, autistic participants reported lower healthcare quality in **50 of 51** areas than non-autistic individuals.

#### Communication Challenges

Autistic individuals often struggle to describe symptoms, understand healthcare professionals, and know what is expected during appointments.

#### Sensory Overload

Autistic individuals are more than **7x** as likely to struggle with sensory overload, affecting their focus during healthcare conversations.

#### Healthcare Outcomes

Autistic individuals are **3x** more likely to leave healthcare appointments feeling unhelped.

#### Healthcare Distress

Autistic individuals are **4x** more likely to experience distress, such as shutdowns or meltdowns, in everyday healthcare situations like booking appointments.

**Key national policies and guidelines that inform the Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy include:**

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>The Autism Act 2009</b>   | <b>The National Autism Strategy “Think Autism” (2014)</b>      | <b>The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015)</b> |
| <b>The Autism (Adults) Core Capabilities Framework (2019)</b>                  | <b>The National Autism Strategy “The Right Support” (2021)</b> | <b>The NHS Long Term Plan (2019)</b>   |
| <b>The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidelines</b> | <b>The Care Act 2014</b>                                       | <b>The Children and Families Act 2014</b>  |

These guidelines provide evidence-based recommendations to inform best practice in identifying, assessing, and managing autism across health and social care settings. See appendix for links to policies and guidelines.

By aligning the Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy with these national policies and guidelines, we

ensure that our local efforts are consistent with the broader vision and objectives set out by the UK government. This alignment also enables us to capitalise on the resources, best practices, and innovations that emerge from national initiatives, ensuring that autistic individuals and their families in Lambeth receive the highest quality support and services possible.



Self portrait



## 2. The Strategy

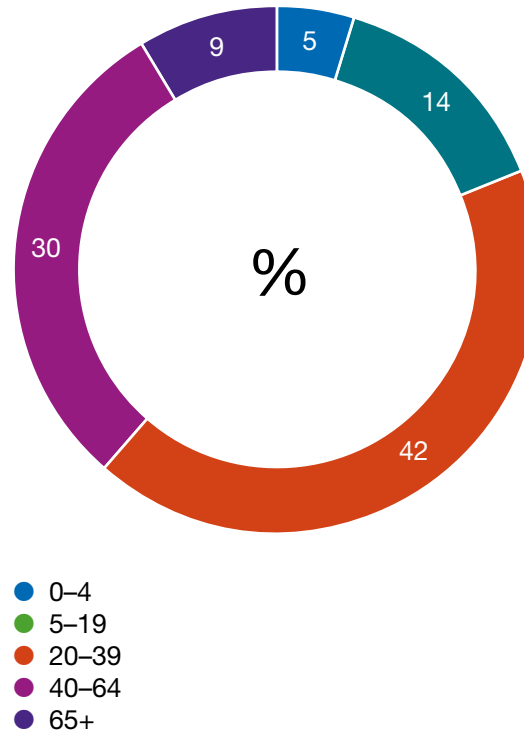
### 2.1 Lambeth Context

In Lambeth, a diverse and dynamic borough in South London, developing and implementing an All-Age Autism Strategy is important. With its vast array of cultures, ages, and genders, Lambeth underlines the importance of creating initiatives that cater to everyone, particularly autistic individuals.

According to the ‘Lambeth 2030: Our Future, Our Lambeth’ State of the Borough plan, the demographics of Lambeth is as follows<sup>1</sup>:

- Lambeth has an estimated population of **317,600** residents, with a high concentration of people between the ages of **20 and 40**.
- Lambeth has an estimated **86,606** residents aged **0 to 24** years.
- Lambeth is home to roughly **15,116** children under the age of five.

Age



Lambeth demographics

**130**

languages spoken in the borough, which may be important to consider when providing support and resources for autistic individuals and their families

**17%**

of the population indicate that their day-to-day activities are limited to some extent by health problems or a disability

**17.8%**

of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN)

**63,200**

children (up to 18) in Lambeth, of which 43% live in poverty after housing costs

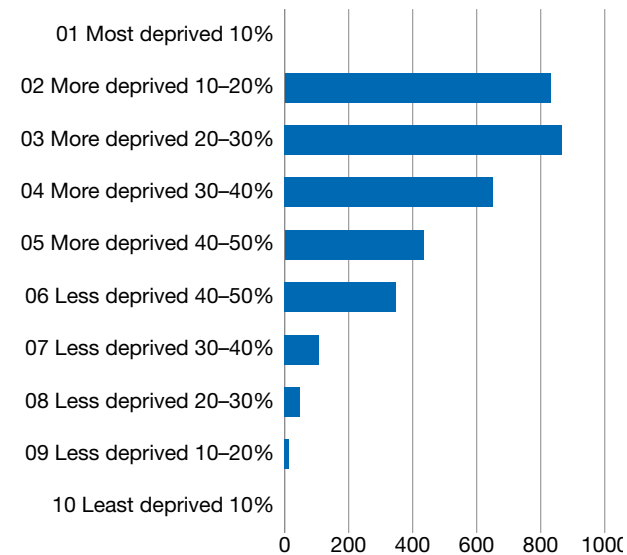
**63%**

of the children and young people in the borough are Black, Asian, or Multi-Ethnic, compared with 21% nationally

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/Lambeth\\_2030-Our\\_Future\\_Our\\_Lambeth.pdf](https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/Lambeth_2030-Our_Future_Our_Lambeth.pdf)

## Lambeth demographics

IMD decile



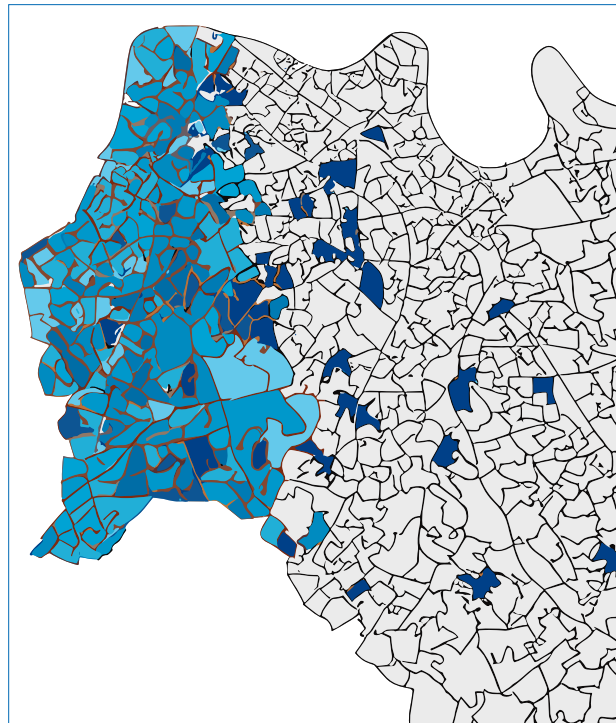
Total Registered Population

**452,743**

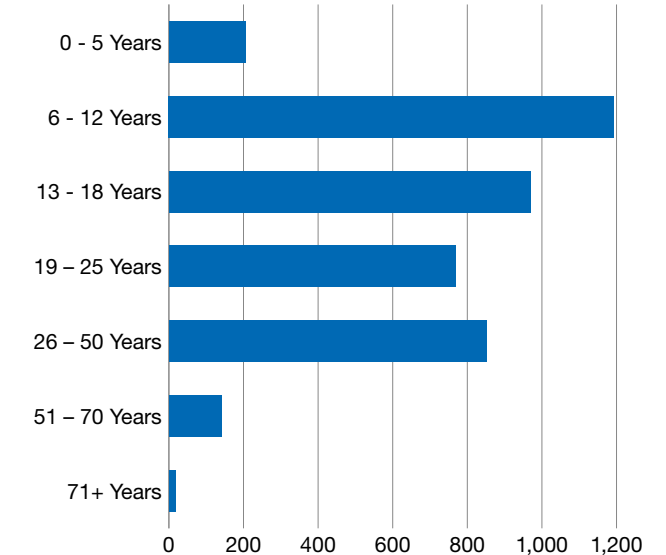
Diagnosed

**4,146**

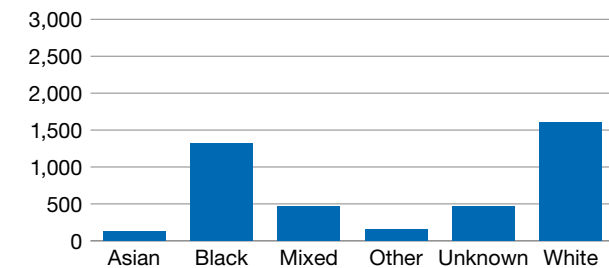
Patients with ASD residing Wards in Lambeth



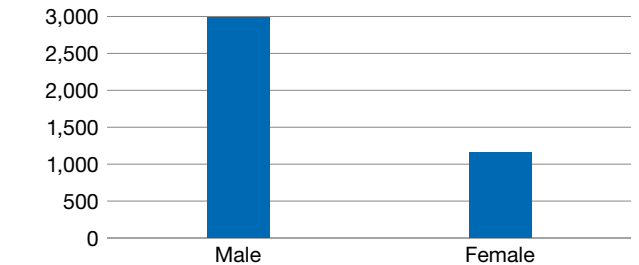
Age band



Ethnicity



Sex



### Vision for the All-Age Autism Strategy in Lambeth:

“The vision for Lambeth’s All-Age Autism Strategy is to create an autism-friendly environment where autistic individuals of all ages are valued and included in their communities by increasing understanding, acceptance and awareness of autism among Lambeth population. In addition, we aim to provide access to early intervention and education services, as well as employment and housing opportunities.”

### SEND dashboard

**38,712**

students in schools within the borough.

**6,957 (17.9%)**

of students are categorised as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and **5,391** (13.9%) have Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support.

**3,061**

residents in the borough have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

**5.7%**

of students with EHCPs are enrolled in mainstream schools, resource bases, or enhanced learning provisions.

**17.6%**

For the 2023/24 academic year, approximately 17.6% of the 6,957 (1,227) SEND students in Lambeth had autism as their primary need. A noticeable trend in national data shows an increase in students identifying autism as their primary need, with 16.4% in 2022/23 and 15.2% in 2021/22.

**24**

The borough supports under 5s with 24 operational children’s centres, which offer a variety of services. These services range from play activities to support (including sensory environments), and they provide access to other services such as midwifery, health visiting, SEND support, and ASC diagnosis.

**1.5%**

of school-aged children nationally are diagnosed with autism, yet they account for 2.5% of exclusions.

Data Source: Lambeth Interactive SEND dashboard – From SEND team

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy will build upon the Lambeth SEND and Inclusion Strategy<sup>2</sup> and Lambeth 2030, Our Future Our Lambeth Borough Plan<sup>3</sup>, to ensure that appropriate support and services are in place to help autistic residents reach their full potential. The strategy also builds upon the national strategy's six priority areas. In addition, it introduces a seventh priority area that focuses on improving understanding and support for the roles of parents and carers of autistic individuals. This additional priority demonstrates Lambeth's recognition of the crucial role that parents and carers play in supporting their loved ones.

Recognising the importance of autism, local authorities, including Lambeth, have prioritised devising a holistic strategy to cater to the multifaceted needs of autistic members of their communities. The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy emerged from a joint effort involving diverse stakeholders: families, autistic individuals, community organisations, and service providers. This strategy aspires to be the blueprint for designing and executing high-quality, research-led services for autistic individuals of all age groups in Lambeth.

<sup>2</sup> [www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/Lambeth%20Local%20Area%20SEND%20and%20Inclusion%20Strategy%202021-24.pdf](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/Lambeth%20Local%20Area%20SEND%20and%20Inclusion%20Strategy%202021-24.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [www.lambeth.gov.uk/better-fairer-lambeth/projects/lambeth-2030-our-future-our-lambeth](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/better-fairer-lambeth/projects/lambeth-2030-our-future-our-lambeth)

### Engagement Overview:



Between February and March 2023, Lambeth undertook a thorough engagement process. The primary aim was to engage with a diverse range of groups, including parent/carers, families, professionals, businesses, organisations, and autistic individuals themselves.

To develop a truly representative and effective strategy, Lambeth actively engages with autistic individuals, their families, carers, and various community organisations. This collaborative approach ensures that the lived experiences inform the All-Age Autism Strategy of those directly affected by autism in the borough.

In response to the identified needs, there are ongoing efforts to expand awareness campaigns

and best practice training. The objectives of these initiatives are to boost staff confidence, foster inclusivity in mainstream education, promote student self-advocacy, increase student attendance and engagement, and reduce exclusions.

Understanding and addressing the needs of autistic individuals in Lambeth requires a multi-faceted and inclusive approach. The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy represents a significant step forward in ensuring that every autistic individual, regardless of age, has access to the support and resources they need to thrive in the community.

Special thanks to:



## 2.2 Enablers

In ensuring that our All Age Autism Strategy in Lambeth is both effective and impactful, we've identified a series of enablers. These underpin the successful delivery of our vision. An “enabler” in the context of a strategy or plan generally refers to factors, tools, or elements that support and facilitate the achievement of objectives.



Jubilee Primary School, Lambeth, shared posters which they had made during Autism Awareness Week '23 (March 2023)

## Enablers

### Engaged Community Stakeholders

Building strong partnerships with local community groups, organisations, and advocates to harness their expertise and ensure that the needs of autistic individuals are being addressed.

### Specialised Training and Resources

Ensuring that professionals across education, health, social care, and the workforce undergo continuous autism-specific training. This guarantees that autistic individuals receive the best support possible.

### Accessible Communication Platforms

Creating platforms where autistic individuals and their families can voice their concerns, share their experiences, and offer feedback. These insights will be invaluable in shaping the strategy's initiatives.

### Research and Evidence-based

Regularly updating our knowledge with the latest research on autism to ensure the interventions and services are effective and beneficial.

### Tailored Support Systems

Designing and implementing tailored programs that cater to the unique strengths, challenges, and interests of autistic individuals across different life stages.

### Awareness Campaigns

Using public awareness campaigns to engage with the wider community about autism, thereby reducing stigma and ensuring that autistic individuals are treated with respect and understanding.

### Inclusive Infrastructure and Facilities

Encouraging physical spaces like schools, community centres, and workplaces, to make reasonable adjustments ensuring they are autism-friendly and cater to the sensory needs of autistic individuals.

### Inter-departmental Collaboration

Ensuring that within Lambeth Council and with its wider statutory partners work cohesively towards the shared vision. Collaboration ensures a holistic approach to providing support.

### Feedback Loop and Continuous Improvement

Regular evaluations and reviews of the implemented strategies. Actively seeking feedback from the autistic community ensures that the strategy remains relevant and effective and quality assured.

## 2.3 Approach

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy takes a comprehensive, evidence-based, and collaborative approach to address the needs of autistic individuals and their families within the community. Recognising that autism is a lifelong condition, our strategy focuses on providing support and services catering to the unique needs of autistic individuals across all age groups. Collaborating with stakeholders, we aim for an inclusive Lambeth where autistic residents can excel. Through continuous engagement with the community, we'll ensure our efforts are relevant, striving for an autism-friendly environment. With stakeholder backing, we believe this strategy will enact lasting positive change for our autistic community.

| The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy                  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Collaboration and Engagement</b>                  | The strategy results from extensive collaboration with various stakeholders, including autistic individuals, families, service providers, and community organisations. We have conducted surveys, focus groups, and interviews to gather input from diverse perspectives, ensuring that the strategy is informed by the lived experiences of those it seeks to support.                      |
| <b>Evidence-Based Practices:</b>                     | Our approach is rooted in the latest research and best practices in autism. We continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions, adapting and refining our strategy based on evidence and feedback from the community.   |
| <b>Person-Centred and Strengths-Based</b>            | We recognise that every autistic person is unique in their strengths, interests, and challenges. Our approach emphasises a person-centred perspective, focusing on individual needs and aspirations rather than solely on deficits or impairments. We aim to empower autistic individuals by fostering their strengths and providing them with the tools and support they need to thrive.    |
| <b>Holistic Support:</b>                             | The strategy acknowledges the complex interplay between various aspects of an autistic person's life, including health, education, employment, housing, and social connections. We strive to provide coordinated and integrated support across these areas, promoting a seamless transition between services and life stages.  |
| <b>Accessibility and Inclusivity</b>                 | Our approach prioritises the creation of inclusive and accessible environments for autistic individuals, both within specific services and in the broader community. We are committed to raising awareness and promoting understanding of autism, challenging stereotypes, and working towards eliminating barriers that impede the full participation of autistic individuals in society.   |
| <b>Ongoing Evaluation and Continuous Improvement</b> | The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy is a living document that will evolve. We are dedicated to continuously monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of our initiatives, incorporating feedback from the community, and refining our approach as needed to ensure that our strategy remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of autistic individuals and their families in Lambeth. |

## 2.4 Impact of Covid-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted global communities, including autistic individuals in Lambeth. The crisis intensified their vulnerabilities and underscored the gaps in services. In response, the Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy introduces targeted actions, such as continuous support, adaptable educational and employment options, and bespoke mental health assistance. Through this, the strategy aspires to bolster resilience and elevate the well-being of autistic residents and their families.

Key impacts of COVID-19 on autistic individuals include:

**Disruption to routines**

**Reduced access to support and services**

**Increased isolation and mental health concerns**

**Barriers to education and employment**

## 2.5 Learning from lives and deaths – People with a learning disability and autistic individuals (LeDeR)

LeDeR is a service improvement programme which aims to improve care, reduce health inequalities, and prevent premature mortality of people with a learning disability and autistic individuals by reviewing information about the health and social care support people received before their death.

It does this by:

**Delivering local service improvement, learning from LeDeR reviews about good quality care and areas requiring improvement**

**Driving local service improvements based on themes emerging from LeDeR reviews at a regional and national level**

**Influencing national service improvements via actions that respond to themes commonly arising from analysis of LeDeR reviews**

Local Integrated Care Systems are now responsible for ensuring that LeDeR reviews are completed for their local area and that actions are implemented based on the recommendations made. There are now two processes as part of LeDeR reviews, all referrals will have an initial review, depending on the findings and other factors a focussed review may also be carried out.

A focussed review is conducted if:

**It is requested by family**

**There are concerns about quality of care or coordination of care**

**Death of an Autistic individual**

**Deaths of people with a learning disability and/or Autism from Black, Asian or minority ethnic background**

**Deaths of people with a learning disability admitted to long stay/mental health unit**



### 3. Lambeth Priorities

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy is built around seven key priorities identified through extensive consultation with autistic individuals, their families, and professionals in the field.

These priorities represent the core priorities and areas of focus for the strategy, ensuring that the needs of the autistic community in Lambeth are comprehensively addressed.

By addressing these seven priorities, the Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy seeks to create a more inclusive and supportive community for autistic individuals and their families, promoting their well-being and empowering them to reach their full potential.

#### Core priorities

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Priority 1</b><br>Improving Understanding and Acceptance of Autism within Society | <b>Priority 2</b><br>Improving Autistic Children and Young People's Access to Education and Supporting positive transitions into adulthood | <b>Priority 3</b><br>Supporting More Autistic individuals into Employment           |
| <b>Priority 4</b><br>Tackling Health and Care Inequalities for Autistic individuals  | <b>Priority 5</b><br>Building the Right Support in the Community and Supporting People in Inpatient Care                                   | <b>Priority 6</b><br>Improving Support within the Criminal and Youth Justice System |
|  | <b>Priority 7</b><br>Local Initiative - Understanding, valuing and helping parents and carers in their role and as partners                |   |

### 3.1 Priority 1: Improving Understanding and Acceptance of Autism within Society

#### Background and Context

**National Strategy:** We aim to enhance the public’s understanding and acceptance of autism, highlighting its diverse manifestations, especially in women and girls. Our goal is to promote inclusivity in businesses, public services, and transport, ensuring autistic individuals have equal access.

**Lambeth Context:** In Lambeth, our dedication is to understand and embrace autism, especially among our girls and women who often go undiagnosed. We aim to challenge misconceptions and promote inclusivity throughout our community. Based on our residents’ feedback, we’re launching new campaigns, offering specialised training, and organising local events to celebrate our autistic communities.

The insights of our autistic community have been essential in guiding our initiatives. We’re proud of our progress, aligning with the Children and Families Act 2014. We envision a Lambeth where all autistic individuals thrive, receiving understanding, timely support, and fair treatment across services. Our goal is to showcase their unique skills, reduce obstacles, and ensure active participation in community life.

We recognise the importance of Lambeth Council providing clear support and information during key life transitions, from infancy to adulthood, for parents, carers, and families. Collaborating with educational institutions, we’re centring on each child’s specific needs. Yet, we acknowledge there are areas to improve, especially in delivering prompt and personalised support for younger individuals.

#### Lambeth Actions: Priority 1: Improving Understanding and Acceptance of Autism within Society

| Theme  | You Said  | We Will   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Awareness &amp; Education</b>                             | ▶ Talk about the importance of early support for autistic people and correct misunderstandings. | ▶ Support Autism Awareness Week. Inform children and parents early about support available and ensure schools meet students' needs.                     |
| <b>Combatting Discrimination &amp; Increasing Acceptance</b> | ▶ Stand against wrong views about autism and show its varied nature.                            | ▶ Encourage businesses to be autism-friendly. Highlight the strengths and achievements of autistic people.  |
| <b>Professional &amp; Community Training</b>                 | ▶ Improve understanding among educators, public and include experiences of autistic people.     | ▶ Offer the Oliver McGowan Training and train on communication and handling mental health issues.   |
| <b>Feedback, Engagement &amp; Continuous Improvement</b>     | ▶ Listen to feedback, tweak our goals, and tackle wrong ideas.                                  | ▶ Offer opportunities to give feedback so we can learn, check and update our goals based on feedback.   |
| <b>Protected Learning Time</b>                               | ▶ There’s a need for doctors and nurses to learn more about autism and ADHD.                    | ▶ Plan special training sessions for doctors and nurses in Lambeth to learn about ASD and ADHD, helping them to understand and support patients better. |

### 3.2 Priority 2: Improving Autistic Children and Young People's Access to Education and Supporting positive transitions into adulthood

#### Background and Context

**National Strategy:** We aim to enhance support for autistic children in schools, reducing exclusions due to behaviour. It also focuses on assisting autistic individuals transitioning to adulthood, promoting their well-being, employment, and education, to prevent crises and mental health admissions.

**Lambeth Context:** In Lambeth, we recognise the educational challenges autistic individuals face as they move towards adulthood. Based on our residents' feedback, we've identified areas for action, from early interventions to championing inclusive education. Our goals are clear: offer timely support, reduce the number of school exclusions, and make the shift to employment smoother for those on the autism spectrum. We're committed in transforming these commitments into tangible actions and enhancing the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to mirror each child's growth and needs.

Many autistic individuals do well in mainstream schools that are customised to their needs. Schools that champion inclusivity not only enrich our community but lay the foundation for a more understanding society. With the SEND System of Excellence, we're fostering a positive ethos, aspiring for every Lambeth school to embody this spirit and eliminate support restrictions based on diagnosis. All our learning spaces should be mindful of varied sensory requirements.

We're championing continuous educational support with the adaptability to move between specialist and mainstream schools based on the student's preferences. We're also rolling out the "Moving On" guide to equip our youth with essential information as they transition.

Transitions, even those between year groups, are significant moments that need specific focus. Success in these transitions depends on detailed planning and clear communication between educational establishments. It's important for early years and schools to collaborate, assess recent transition experiences, and strategically use these insights for improved results.

#### Case Study: SENCO at a local school

Grace, a SENCO, pioneered a program to enhance the understanding of autism within the broader community. Her primary aim was to bridge the gap between the structured support that schools provide for autistic children and the challenges parents face in daily public situations.

She stated: "While educational institutions are equipped with trained professionals to assist autistic students, parents often face scrutiny and misunderstanding in public settings, such as shopping centres. We are dedicated to providing these parents with tools and strategies to confidently communicate their child's condition and help onlookers comprehend their child's unique expressions."

Through her diligent observations and understanding, Grace identified a significant lack of awareness and empathy in the community. This led her to advocate for the integration of autism-focused sessions in the school's PSHE curriculum, ensuring that students transition into adulthood with a well-rounded education and understanding of autism.

Lambeth Actions - Priority 2: Improving Autistic Children and Young People’s Access to Education and Supporting positive transitions into adulthood:

| Theme   | You Said  | We Will   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Timelines &amp; Early Intervention</b>     | ▶ It's important to act early for autistic children to be ready for adulthood.  | ▶ Support young children with special needs by encouraging early intervention and guiding them towards a prepared adulthood.  |
| <b>Support Services and Access</b>            | ▶ It's hard to get professional help like Speech and Language Therapists. How do people get the right support?                              | ▶ Continue to develop our SEND Local Offer to make it easy for families to find the services and support they need.   |
| <b>Educational Focus &amp; Infrastructure</b> | ▶ Primary and secondary school is vital. Schools should be welcoming, and there should be help in colleges for students with special needs. | ▶ Guide initiatives to support schools and colleges to be more inclusive and supportive educational environments.   |
| <b>Awareness &amp; Training in Schools</b>    | ▶ Schools need better training about autism, especially as some girls hide their symptoms.  | ▶ Offer teacher training to better understand diverse minds and mental health, ensuring they can effectively guide and support students, including autistic individuals.      |
| <b>Transition &amp; Progression</b>           | ▶ It should be easy moving from EHC plans to jobs, and there should be chances to grow in those jobs.                                       | ▶ Develop a plan to support and guide young adults, ensuring a seamless transition from school to the workforce and the encouragement they require.- Preparing for adulthood. |

### 3.3 Priority 3: Supporting More Autistic Individuals in Employment

#### Background and Context

**National Strategy:** We aim to reduce the employment disparity for autistic people, ensuring job retention and enhancing employers' confidence in hiring and supporting them, while also improving their workplace experiences.

**Lambeth Context:** Lambeth Council is actively advancing employment opportunities for autistic individuals within the Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) framework. This initiative acknowledges the unique needs and potential of Lambeth's autistic residents, striving to create a more inclusive and supportive environment. Key elements of this endeavour include the establishment of the Lambeth Supported Employment Partnership, bringing together a diverse network of around 90 stakeholders, quarterly meetings to tailor

opportunities for young SEND residents, and a focus on promoting inclusive recruitment practices.

Additionally, Lambeth is expanding its efforts through the Delivery Plan for Supported Internships, introducing two new programs in collaboration with Lambeth Council and SLAM to create 20 more opportunities for neurodiverse individuals, with a particular emphasis on those within the autism spectrum. Lambeth also recognises the need to cater to neurodiverse residents aged 25 and above, piloting programs in partnership with Adult Social Care to ensure lifelong inclusivity and support. The council further fosters connections between employers and the neurodiverse community through events like the Lambeth Inclusive Futures Event and commits to monitoring service delivery, adhering to quality standards, and aligning with the Preparing For Adulthood Strategy and Equity Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to effectively meet the needs of the autistic community.



Piccadilly Circus by JB

Lambeth Actions - Priority 3: Supporting More Autistic individuals in Employment

| Theme   | You Said   | We Will   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Professional Training and Awareness</b>      | <p>▶ You want better training for people who work in health, care, and education about autism. Training should come from autistic people or those who know a lot about it.</p> | <p>▶ Work with Lambeth Made to improve job guidance and teacher training for special needs.</p>                     |
| <b>Workplace Inclusivity &amp; Training</b>     | <p>▶ You told us workplaces need to understand how great it is to have autistic employees and make places better for them.</p>   | <p>▶ Help employers support and keep staff with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or autism.</p>    |
| <b>Educational and Employment Landscape</b>     | <p>▶ You're worried about autistic people finding it hard to get jobs and think businesses should be more autism-friendly.</p>   | <p>▶ Increase internships and job opportunities in Lambeth for young people with SEND or autism.</p>                |
| <b>Mental Health and Well-being</b>             | <p>▶ You think it's important for autistic people to get the right mental health support early.</p>  | <p>▶ Encourage employers and schools to offer career inspiration for young people with SEND or autism.</p>          |
| <b>Funding and Resource Allocation</b>          | <p>▶ You're concerned there's not enough money for autism services and want a clear plan for funding.</p>  | <p>▶ Use local policies to create job chances for Lambeth autistic residents.</p>                                   |
| <b>Sensory Sensitivities and Accommodations</b> | <p>▶ You said it's important to make places comfortable for autistic people because of their sensory needs</p>   | <p>▶ Support schools and colleges to provide career skills for young people with SEND or autism.</p>                |
| <b>Workplace Integration and Neurodiversity</b> | <p>▶ You believe all workplaces should understand and support neurodiversity, with special training for managing employees who think differently.</p>                          | <p>▶ Organise the Lambeth Employment Partnership to develop jobs that include young people with SEND or autism.</p> |

### 3.4 Priority 4: Tackling Health and Care Inequalities for Autistic individuals

#### Background and Context

**National Strategy:** We aim to lessen health disparities faced by autistic individuals, ensuring they lead healthier, longer lives. We also target quicker diagnosis, reduced waiting times, and enhanced diagnostic processes for both children and adults, enabling timely support access.

**Lambeth Context:** Lambeth is dedicated to improving health outcomes for autistic individuals. Taking feedback from our autistic community, we're reviewing our assessment methods for conditions such as autism and ADHD. Our main goal is to reduce waiting times, ensuring support is provided promptly. We also promote inclusivity in our schools and services, offer specific resources for families, and make use of nature's therapeutic benefits.

#### Lambeth Actions: Priority 4: Tackling Health and Care Inequalities for Autistic individuals

| Theme   | You Said   | We Will   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Access to Appropriate Care</b>               | Addressing parents' need for a clear escalation pathway, GP support, post-diagnosis aid, and integrated roles like Social Care Navigator.                          | We're working with GSTT to add a new system, EPIC, for better care of those with mild disabilities and to make our services more autism-friendly.     |
| <b>Efficient and Timely Diagnosis</b>           | Focusing on quicker autism and ADHD assessments and ensuring early support after diagnosis.  | We're improving how quickly we can assess and support autism and ADHD, ensuring early testing and consistent support following diagnosis.             |
| <b>Mental Health Concerns</b>                   | Recognising the necessity for specialised mental health facilities for autism and addressing the increased mental health challenges faced by autistic individuals. | We're partnering with mental health services to develop better facilities and strategies for the mental health of autistic individuals.               |
| <b>Recognition, Understanding, and Training</b> | Increasing understanding and recognition of autism in policing, medical professions, and general public.   | We're training healthcare and social care staff to better understand and support autistic individuals, including in policing and medical professions. |
| <b>Barrier Removal and Equitable Access</b>     | Tackling the difficulties in obtaining diagnoses and appropriate care, with an emphasis on equitable treatment for all.  | We're creating a specific autism strategy with GSTT, focusing on fair access to diagnosis and care, with input from those who have autism.            |

### 3.5 Priority 5: Building the Right Support in the Community and Supporting People in Inpatient Care

#### Background and Context

**National Strategy:** We aim to reduce inpatient mental health admissions for autistic and learning-disabled individuals by enhancing mental health legislation, community support, and housing. For those in inpatient settings, care will be individualised and discharge timely.

**Lambeth Context:** In Lambeth, we prioritise the well-being of our autistic and learning-disabled residents through quality inpatient care and community support. We believe that secure housing for them isn't just a shelter but a crucial aspect of their overall well-being and integration into the community. Guided by community feedback, our focus is on accessible care, swift diagnoses, and mental health. We aim to minimise inpatient admissions through professional training, barrier-free access, and early interventions, emphasising a tailored and compassionate approach. Adults in Lambeth Council desire independent living with the best quality of life. Our methods champion individual strengths, promoting ambition and realising potential.

Lambeth Actions: Priority 5: Building the Right Support in the Community and Supporting People in Inpatient Care

| Theme                                     | You Said  | We Will   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Patient-Centric Approach</b>           | Hospital autistic patients get vital information, train psychiatrists to recognise autism traits, and equip hospitals for specific ASD needs. | Make it easier for patients to access information and support for their treatment, assess their needs, and train staff to provide the right support for autistic patients |
| <b>Family Support</b>                     | Promote a holistic, family-focused approach, providing parents and families with the support they need for their loved ones.                  | Focus on supporting the whole family, not just the patient, by working with different services and community groups.  |
| <b>Infrastructure and resources</b>       | Develop specialised housing, crisis respite options, and tackling funding and staffing issues for adequate support.                           | Better combine social care and housing services, keeping in mind the specific needs of carers and families in our planning and policies.                                  |
| <b>Tracking and Feedback</b>              | People want us to keep track of how well treatments work for autistic people.   | We'll use special ways (PROMs and CROMs) to check how treatments help autistic people in their daily life and health.   |
| <b>Support Services and Accessibility</b> | There's a big need for ongoing support services for autistic adults to help them be more independent and part of the community.               | We'll commission a special service in Lambeth for autistic adults to help them live independently and join in with community activities.                                  |
| <b>Housing and Independent Living</b>     | Better housing options are needed for people with learning disabilities and autism. People want to live more independently.                   | We'll work with partners to understand housing needs for people with learning disabilities and autism.  |



### 3.6 Priority 6: Improving Support within the Criminal and Youth Justice Systems

#### Background and Context

**National Strategy:** We aim to comprehend how autistic people interact with the criminal and youth justice systems and ensure they receive appropriate support at all stages, from courts to prisons. We will enhance the understanding of autism within police and justice system staff, making the entire system more autism-inclusive.

**Lambeth Context:** Lambeth Council’s strategy for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within the justice system integrates early identification and specialised support. Key initiatives include the Liaison and Diversion Services provided by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Complementing this, a pilot program for comprehensive pre-sentence reports by health and education professionals informs judicial decisions, focusing on the unique needs of young people with ASD. Additionally, regular engagements like coffee mornings with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and legal representatives enhance understanding and communication between the justice system and those with ASD.

The strategy also includes the Autism Card initiative, which facilitates better interaction between law enforcement and individuals with ASD. These cards, obtainable via [autism@met.police.uk](mailto:autism@met.police.uk), guide officers on appropriate and sensitive communication with autistic individuals. Emphasising community involvement, the strategy encourages parents and carers to obtain Autism Cards for their children, ensuring their safety and effective communication with the police. Overall, Lambeth’s approach aims to foster an inclusive and understanding justice system, empowering individuals with ASD to navigate it effectively with the necessary support and awareness.

#### Lambeth Actions - Priority 6: Improving Support within the Criminal and Youth Justice Systems:

| Theme                                    | You Said  | We Will   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Autistic Individuals in the CJS</b>   | Autistic people face challenges in the justice system.                                | Provide early help and support for young people, including autistic individuals, in Brixton and Wandsworth Custody Suites through our Liaison and Diversion Services. |
| <b>Training</b>                          | Autistic-led training is needed for police and professionals.                         | Use feedback from coffee mornings with legal professionals to improve autism training for staff, including probation officers.  |
| <b>Legal Safeguards</b>                  | Autistic people need more support in legal processes, like having someone with them.  | Advocate for thorough pre-sentence reports by health and education professionals to better guide judicial decisions for autistic young people.                        |
| <b>Understanding Autism</b>              | We need to understand and support autistic people better, especially women and girls. | Support the widespread use of the Autism Card to help autistic individuals communicate better with law enforcement.   |
| <b>Support within the Prison System</b>  | Concerns about how autistic people are treated in prisons.                            | Regularly update our care strategies based on feedback from autistic individuals and their families.  |
| <b>Early Intervention and Prevention</b> | Stop problems early to keep autistic people out of the justice system.                | Apply insights from working with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to better identify and support autistic young people in community settings.      |

### 3.7 Priority 7: Local Initiative - Understanding, valuing and helping parents and carers in their role and as partners

#### Background and Context

**Local Initiative:** We seek to boost autism awareness and collaboration with parents/carers of autistic individuals. Introducing policies prioritising their needs, offering support in public settings, aiming for a more inclusive community for these individuals and their families.

**Lambeth Context:** Lambeth is committed to making the most of the resources it has available to support parents, carers and families of autistic individuals. We aim to enhance collaboration with medical professionals, provide tailored support initiatives, and foster an inclusive environment where autistic individuals and their families feel valued and empowered.

Lambeth Housing Department understands the relationship between housing and health. Our housing advisors will undergo regular training on autism to improve their knowledge. Over the next three years, our housing team has set up continuous training. . The department focuses on making the right allocations on the Housing Register, considering the importance of housing on health. Autistic individuals, or their guardians, are advised to provide relevant medical documents to support their housing application.

Lambeth Actions: Priority 7: Local Initiative - Understanding, valuing and helping parents and carers in their role and as partners

| Theme   | You Said  | We Will  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Recognition and Support for "Autism Champions"</b> | Autism Champions need more respect and training.                  | Encourage and support carers, particularly the young ones. Guide them towards mental health resources.   |
| <b>Support for Parents and Carers</b>                 | Carers need breaks, mental health help, and guidance.             | Offer guidance, ensuring carers' well-being - financial, mental, and social - are nurtured and recognised.   |
| <b>Medical Professionals' Involvement</b>             | How do GPs help autistic people and families?                     | Strengthen collaborations with carers when patients transition out of the hospital. Encourage GPs to be trained in autism needs.   |
| <b>Tailored Parenting Courses and Support Groups</b>  | Want courses and groups for parents of autistic children.         | Continue to develop our parenting support offer to provide tailored, evidence based support for parents of autistic children.  |
| <b>Perception of Parents</b>                          | Parents feel wrongly judged.                                      | Understand and acknowledge the needs of carers, respect their rights, and provide the necessary support.   |
| <b>Care for Broader Carer Community</b>               | Need to support all, especially mums, caring for autistic people. | Recognise the role of parents and carers as experts by experience and establish helpful, collaborative relationships to support them in their role.  |
| <b>Carers Support</b>                                 | Carers of autistic people face challenges and need more support.  | We'll offer discounts on things like fun activities and food through the Lambeth Carers Card. We'll also give special help to young carers and young adult carers through the Carers' Hub Lambeth. |

## 4. Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy Action Plan 2024–2027

This strategy's priorities have been developed through close collaboration with stakeholders and set out our vision for the coming three years.

Based on the feedback gathered during our consultation period, we have drafted an action plan that consolidates the detailed aspirations voiced by parents, carers, and other key stakeholders.

The Learning Disabilities and Autism Steering Group have agreed on the final action plan, which was developed jointly with parents, carers, and key representatives from both statutory services and the voluntary and community sectors. Together, we'll define our benchmarks for success, drive actions and determine how to evaluate our achievements. We will review our progress on a quarterly basis through the designated group to review the actions and will report to the Learning Disabilities and Autism Steering Group and other partners. We will also produce an annual report.

### Year 1: Awareness, Understanding, and Training

**Focus:** Raising public awareness, understanding autism better, and initiating comprehensive training for professionals.

| Priority/Theme  | Action   | Directorate                       | Time Frame |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>1. Improving Understanding and Acceptance of Autism within Society</b> | 1.1 Support awareness campaigns in schools and communities. Use campaigns such as National Autism Awareness Week to educate and inform. Provide children, young people, and parents with the right information at the earliest opportunity. Ensure schools and settings consider the needs and wishes of pupils. | Lambeth Autism Advisory Service   | Year 1     |
|   | 1.2 Implement awareness programmes. Encourage and support organisations and businesses to be autism-inclusive and/or autism-accredited. Celebrate and recognise the unique skills, attributes, achievements, and perspectives of autistic individuals.   | Lambeth Autism Advisory Service   | Year 1     |
|   | 1.3 Offer specialised training programmes for professionals. Collaborate with autistic individuals for real-life insights. Develop training around de-escalation and communication and to meet the needs of those experiencing mental health crises.   | Lambeth Autism Advisory Service   | Year 1     |
|   | 1.4 Learn from LeDeR reviews and report findings. Prioritise and review the views of autistic individuals across various programmes and initiatives. Review and refine objectives regularly.   | Integrated Commissioning (Adults) | Year 1     |
|   | 1.5 The South East London ICB (Lambeth) is planning a dedicated autism session in the upcoming Protected Learning Time (PLT) and a targeted PLT session for Autism and ADHD next year, focusing on specialised training for medical practices.   | Integrated Commissioning (Adults) | Year 1     |

| Priority/Theme  | Action  | Directorate                       | Time Frame |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>2. Improving Autistic Children and Young People's Access to Education and Supporting positive transitions into adulthood</b> | 2.4 Provide free training in schools, developing each school's understanding of autism in educational settings and how to adapt the environment to meet needs.  | Lambeth Autism Advisory Service   | Year 1     |
| <b>3. Supporting More Autistic individuals in Employment</b>  | 3.1 Enhance public awareness through campaigns such as the Dialogue Hub BSL Cafe and the Lambeth Inclusive Futures Event.   | Economy Inclusion and Skills      | Year 1     |
|   | 3.1 Collaborate with Lambeth Made for an improved SEND Careers Offer and comprehensive SENCO/teacher training.  | Economy Inclusion and Skills      | Year 1     |
|   | 3.2 Supporting employers (including those with Section 106 and social value commitments to deliver support employment places) to build their capacity to recruit, support, and retain SEND/LD and autistic employees.   | Economy Inclusion and Skills      | Year 1     |
| <b>4. Tackling Health and Care Inequalities for Autistic individuals</b>  | 4.4 Work with professionals to ensure wide uptake of the Oliver McGowan training, and roll it out to all age health and social care staff. We will also raise awareness of autism, celebrating the unique skills and attributes of autistic individuals.  | Public Health                     | Year 1     |
| <b>5. Building the Right Support in the Community and Supporting People in Inpatient Care</b>                                   | 5.1 Enhance patient-centered care by increasing information accessibility for in-patients, implementing the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training for health and social care staff, conducting thorough needs assessments upon patient admission, effectively using the NHS Digital Reasonable Adjustment Flag, and fostering close partnerships to leverage insights gained from these initiatives.    | Lambeth Public Health             | Year 1     |
|   | 5.2 Using PROMs (Patient-Reported Outcome Measures) and CROMs (Clinician-Reported Outcome Measures) to effectively gauge treatment impact on individual symptoms, daily functioning, and quality of life from both patient and clinician perspectives, aiding in tailoring interventions and tracking progress over time for autistic individuals.  | GSTT / Evelina service for CYP    | Year 1     |
|   | 5.3 ALD Placement Transformation Strategy. Aims to orient placement commissioning around promoting and maximising lifelong independence Implementation of Assistive Technology, a systematic and clear cost model and contractual framework that provides clarity of our expectations. Ongoing review of high-cost placements including opportunity to maximise use of independent living settings. | Integrated Commissioning (Adults) | Year 1     |

| Priority/Theme  | Action   | Directorate  | Time Frame         |
|---|--|--|--------------------|
|   | 5.4 Provide a Drop-In/Floating Support Service for autistic adults in Lambeth, managed by KeyRing Community Support Services Ltd. and Lambeth Elfrida Rathbone Society with the aims to enhance independence and community integration.  | Integrated Commissioning (Adults)                                | Year 1             |
|   | 5.5 Develop the specialist housing provider market to offer better options for people with LDA in partnership with SEL partners. Ongoing review of high-cost placements including opportunity to maximise use of independent living settings.  | Integrated Commissioning (Adults)                                | Year 1             |
|   | 5.6 Commission for group of named individuals at highest risk/most complex who require bespoke option.   | Integrated Commissioning (Adults)                                | Year 1             |
|   | 5.7 To promote suicide prevention, individuals aged 25 or younger diagnosed with learning disabilities (LD) and/or autism and registered with a SEL GP can be referred to the SEL Behaviour Intensive Community Service.   | Public Health  | Year 1             |
| <b>6. Improving Support within the Criminal and Youth Justice Systems</b>             | 6.1 Ensure early identification and support for young individuals via our Liaison and Diversion Services at Brixton and Wandsworth custody suites, including autistic individuals. Implement a comprehensive process for identifying the needs of autistic adults before and during court proceedings, and coordinate with professionals and organisations to ensure appropriate support throughout their probation. | Lambeth Youth Justice Team                                       | Year 1             |
|   | 6.2 Integrate insights from the coffee mornings with the Crown Prosecution Service and legal representatives to enhance autism-specific training modules. Continue the implementation of Autism Awareness training for staff, including probation staff, focused on understanding autism and effectively supporting autistic individuals, including adults.  | Lambeth Youth Justice Team                                       | Year 1             |
|   | 6.6 Leverage insights from the collaboration with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Evelina London ARD Service to enhance early identification and support in community settings.  | Lambeth Youth Justice Team / Integrated Children's Commissioning | Year 1             |
| <b>7. Local Initiative - Improving Understanding of Role and Working with Parents</b> | 7.3 Organise dedicated seminars and workshops for GPs to understand the unique needs of autistic individuals and their families.   | Lambeth GP Federation  | Year 1             |
|   | 7.4 Make use of the SEND Local Offer to ensure that families of autistic children are connected to universal and targeted support services, including those that provide early help and parenting support.   | Adult Social Care / Integrated Children's Commissioning          | Year 1 and ongoing |

## Year 2: Inclusion, Integration, and Early Infrastructure

**Focus:** Building inclusive environments, initiating supportive structures, and laying the groundwork for comprehensive infrastructure.

| Priority/Theme  | Action  | Directorate  | Time Frame |
|---|---|--|------------|
| <b>2. Improving Autistic Children and Young People's Access to Education and Supporting positive transitions into adulthood</b> | 2.1 Embed the role of the Early Years SENCO and wider Early Years SEN team to support inclusive provision and provide targeted support to children at the point of transition to school.                            | Education  | Year 2     |
|   | 2.2 Further develop the Local Offer Website, ensuring that professional services are easily accessible and understood by families and individuals.  | Lambeth Autism Advisory Service<br>FIS (Integrated Children's Commissioning) | Year 2     |
|   | 2.5 Implement a focused Preparation For Adulthood (PFA) strategy, ensuring smooth transitions from EHC to employment with targeted training programs and commitment follow-ups.                                     | Economy Employment and skills and Education                                  | Year 2     |
| <b>3. Supporting More Autistic individuals in Employment</b>  | 3.3 Develop supported internship and employment offer in Lambeth to increase the number of placements available, and engagement of Lambeth young people with SEND and autism in supported employment opportunities. | Economy Skills and Culture   | Year 2     |
|   | 3.4 Area SENCO and Skills and Employment team work collaboratively with employers and schools to promote careers inspiration and employability opportunities for young people with SEND and autism.                 | Economy Skills and Culture   | Year 2     |
|   | 3.6 Work proactively with schools, Higher Education and Further Education institutions to deliver employer-led careers and employability skills support for young people with SEND and autism.                      | Economy Skills and Culture   | Year 2     |

| Priority/Theme  | Action  | Directorate   | Time Frame |
|---|---|---|------------|
| <b>4. Tackling Health and Care Inequalities for Autistic individuals</b>                      | 4.2 Implement strategies to streamline the assessment and diagnosis process for autism and ADHD, in the age group of 0-18, focusing on early detection and support. This includes enhancing coordination between different diagnostic services and ensuring adherence to NICE guidelines for post-diagnosis support.  | GSTT  | Year 2     |
|   | 4.3 We aim to collaborate with mental health services, such as the South London and Maudsley Hospital, to enhance mental health services and assistance for autistic individuals and learning disabilities. The aim is to aid the development of SLaM's All Age Autism Strategy, which will promote the improvement of mental health services for both autistic children and adults.  | SLaM, Integrated Commissioning (Adults), Integrated Children's Commissioning and Public Health                              | Year 2     |
|   | 4.5 Work with GSTT to develop and implement a targeted strategy for Autism. We aspire to involving service users with lived experience in developing the strategy. GSTT will also work towards integrating the NHS Reasonable Adjustment Flag into our services to ensure equitable access for all individuals.   | Kings Health Partners   | Year 2     |
| <b>5. Building the Right Support in the Community and Supporting People in Inpatient Care</b> | 5.5 Promote a whole-family practice approach across the system. Recognising the impact of caring on families and promoting a whole-family practice approach across Adults' and children' services. We will consider the needs of the entire family unit when assessing need and delivering support. Collaborating with community organisations, health and social care will ensure a coordinated approach to supporting the holistic well-being of carers and their families. | Adult Social Care and Housing, Children Social Care, Integrated Commissioning (Adults), Integrated Children's Commissioning | Year 2     |
| <b>6. Improving Support within the Criminal and Youth Justice Systems</b>                     | 6.3 Promote the use of comprehensive pre-sentence reports by health and education professionals to inform judicial decisions specifically concerning autistic young people.   | Lambeth Youth Justice Team  | Year 2     |
|   | 6.4 Encourage the widespread adoption of the Autism Card initiative to improve interactions between law enforcement and autistic individuals.   | Lambeth Youth Justice Team  | Year 2     |

| Priority/Theme  | Action  | Directorate  | Time Frame |
|---|---|--|------------|
| <b>7. Local Initiative - Improving Understanding of Role and Working with Parents</b> | 7.1 Recognise and support carers, including young carers, and promote mental health support available for them.   | Adult Social Care and Housing, Children Social Care, Children Integrated Commissioning   | Year 2     |
|   | 7.2 Champion comprehensive support for carers, addressing their financial, mental, and social needs, and ensuring accessible respite, leisure opportunities, and peer connections, all while fostering a community where every carer feels valued, understood, and empowered.   | Adult Social Care and Housing, Children Social Care, Integrated Children's Commissioning | Year 2     |
|   | 7.3 Involve carers during hospital discharge to ensure medical professionals are aligned in their support.  | Adult Social Care and Housing  | Year 2     |
|   | 7.4 Short breaks - For adult carers and young carers (under the age of 16) and young adult carers (aged 16–21), specific support is offered by local partner Carers' Hub Lambeth. As part of Lambeth's emotional and wellbeing services, the Hub has been commissioned to provide short breaks for all young carers and young adult carers. Short breaks offer children and young people opportunities to engage in positive experiences and activities that help their personal and social development, such as afterschool clubs, weekend, or holiday activities. | Children Social Care and Integrated Children's Commissioning                             | Year 2     |
|   | 7.5 Lambeth Carers Card - through expanding the discount programme via Lambeth Carers Card, discounts and offers on a range of things, including leisure and food are provided to carers.   | Children Social Care   | Year 2     |



### Year 3: Infrastructure Consolidation and Continuous Improvement

**Focus:** Solidifying infrastructure, refining existing support systems, and ongoing evaluation for improvement.

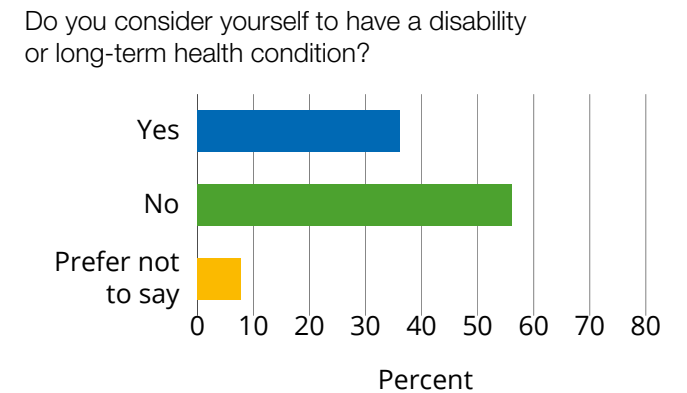
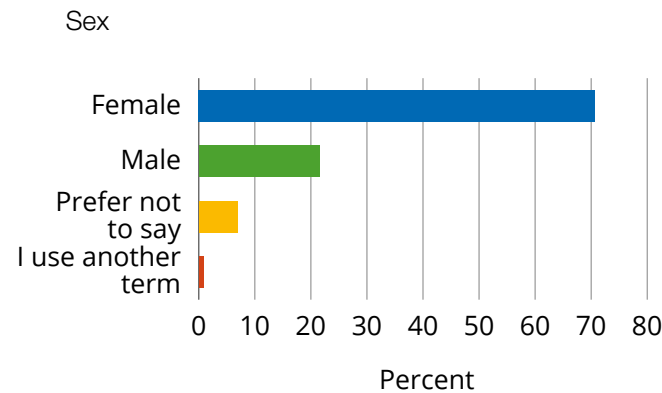
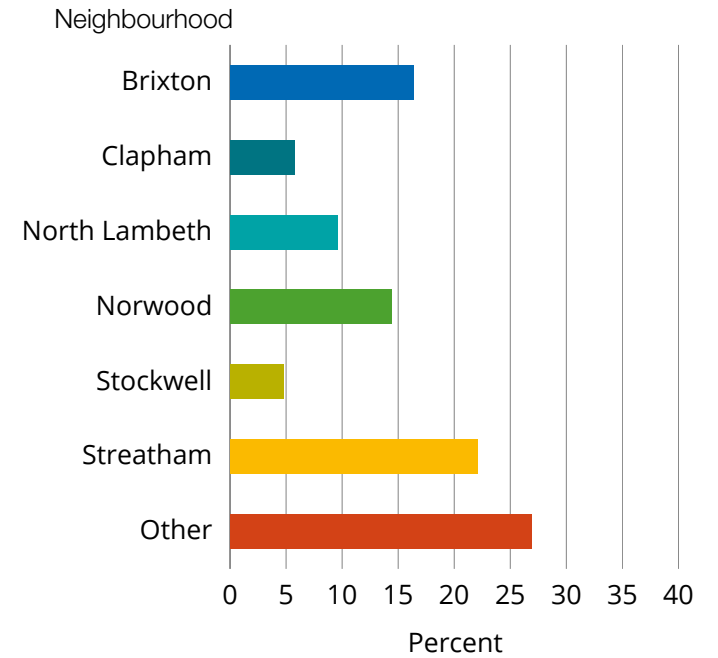
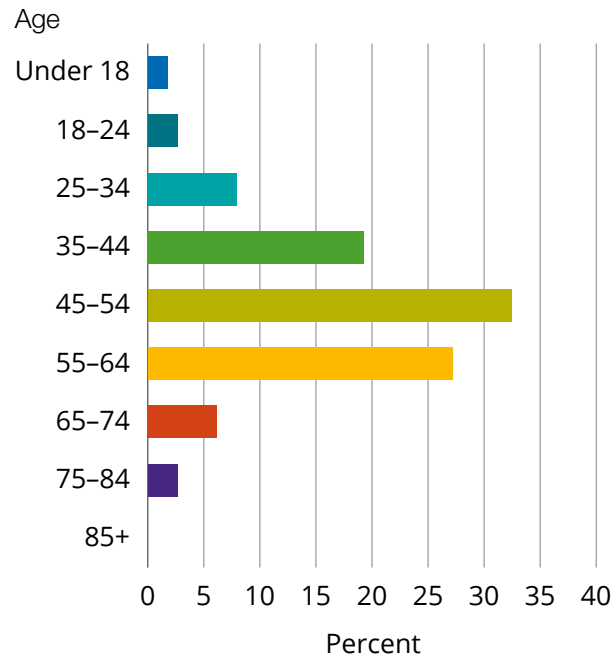
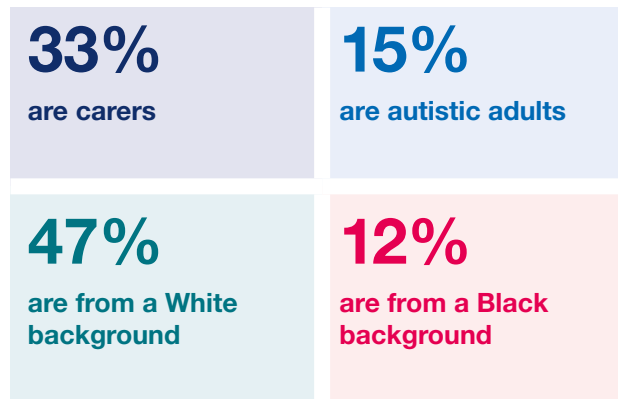
| Priority/Theme  | Action  | Directorate  | Time Frame |
|---|---|--|------------|
| <b>2. Improving Autistic Children and Young People's Access to Education and Supporting positive transitions into adulthood</b> | 2.3 Oversee initiatives via the SEND Operations Board, promoting inclusive environments and bolstering support in schools and colleges.   | Lambeth Autism Advisory Service and Education  | Year 3     |
| <b>3. Supporting More Autistic individuals in Employment</b>  | 3.5 Continued use of Section 106 and responsible Procurement policy levers to create inclusive supported opportunities for residents including those autistic individuals in Lambeth.   | Economy Skills and Culture   | Year 3     |
|   | 3.7 Strategic co-ordination of Lambeth Supported Employment Partnership, bringing together schools, employers, BIDs, Parent Forums, and young people with SEND and autism to inform the development of an accessible and inclusive supported employment offer for the borough.  | Economy Skills and Culture   | Year 3     |
| <b>4. Tackling Health and Care Inequalities for Autistic individuals</b>  | 4.1 Collaborate with GSTT to integrate the new EPIC system to develop reasonable adjustments flag and a live census, improving care for individuals with low-level disabilities. We will work closely with GSTT to ensure these technological advancements align with NHSE national standards and effectively enhance service delivery for autistic individuals.  | Kings Health Partners - GSTT, Kings, SLaM  | Year 3     |
| <b>5. Building the Right Support in the Community and Supporting People in Inpatient Care</b>                                   | 5.3 Develop closer working links between social care and housing. We will continue to develop the integration of Adult Social Care and Housing and proactively identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership working. With a number of key projects throughout 2023-2028, we will ensure carers consulted and considered. Where appropriate, we will identify carers in our review of housing policy and procedures and take account of the specific challenges carers face. | Integrated Commissioning (Adults), Integrated Children's Commissioning, Children Social Care | Year 3     |
| <b>6. Improving Support within the Criminal and Youth Justice Systems</b>   | 6.5 Continuously review and adapt care strategies in response to feedback and evolving needs identified through engagements with autistic individuals and their families.   | Lambeth Youth Justice Team   | Year 3     |

| Priority/Theme  | Action   | Directorate   | Time Frame |
|---|--|---|------------|
| <b>7. Local Initiative<br/>- Improving<br/>Understanding of Role<br/>and Working with<br/>Parents</b> | 7.5 Champion the cause of carers, striving to recognise their rights, understand their needs, and offer the necessary support to ensure they can care with confidence and dignity.   | Integrated Commissioning (Adults) and Integrated Children's Commissioning | Year 3     |
|   | 7.6 Recognise and reward the invaluable contributions of carers by enhancing local business partnerships, prioritising carers' health and well-being through collaborative support systems, and championing robust peer support mechanisms, including peer-led initiatives and carer advocacy. | Integrated Commissioning (Adults) and Integrated Children's Commissioning | Year 3     |

## 5. Appendix

### 5.1 Survey Respondent Demographics Overview

#### Lambeth demographics



## 5.2 How were the principles developed?

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy envisions a community where every autistic individual feels empowered and integrated. These principles were developed through collaborative consultations with autistic individuals, families, professionals, and educators, guided by national policies, expert insights, and contemporary research. Our aim is to address the genuine needs of the autistic community, ensuring an inclusive environment in Lambeth where all can thrive.

### 1. Awareness and understanding

**The Autism Act 2009:** This was the first ever disability-specific law in England. It led to the publication of the government’s adult autism strategy. The strategy focuses on raising awareness of autism and improving the services available to autistic individuals.

**National Autistic Society campaigns:** These campaigns often focus on raising awareness and understanding of autism, challenging misconceptions.

### 2. Inclusive environments

**Equality Act 2010:** This Act legally protects people from discrimination, ensuring that individuals with disabilities, including autism, are not denied access to services and public spaces.

**SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Code of Practice:** This focuses on the rights of children with special educational needs to be educated in mainstream settings wherever possible.

### 3. Tailored support and services

**NICE guidelines on autism:** These provide evidence-based recommendations on the care and management of autism in children, young people, and adults. It includes guidance on person-centred approaches to support.

**Adult Autism Strategy:** An initiative from the Department of Health, focusing on the importance of tailored support for autistic adults.

### 4. Opportunities for participation and engagement

**Children and Families Act 2014:** This act emphasises the importance of involving children and their families in decisions about their support.

**Local Offer:** A key component of the Children and Families Act, this requires local authorities to publish a clear, accessible, and comprehensive range of support available for children and young people with SEND in their areas.

### 5. Advocacy and empowerment

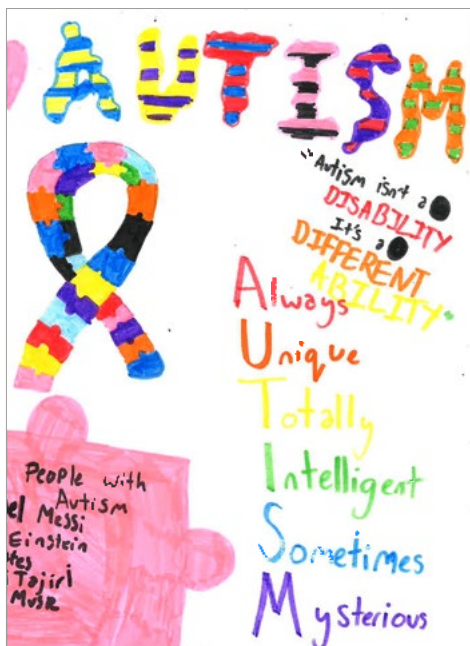
**Care Act 2014:** This act emphasises the need to consider the well-being of individuals, including ensuring their involvement in decisions about their care and support.

**Mental Capacity Act 2005:** This act provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions.

Using these policies and guidelines, service providers, educators, and policymakers can back up initiatives aiming to improve the lives of autistic individuals in the UK.

### 5.3 Summary of the Local Offer and Gaps

The Lambeth Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer is an extensive resource that provides information on support, services, and opportunities for children and young people with SEND, their families, and carers. The Local Offer helps families access practical support, make informed decisions, and navigate the range of services available.



Jubilee Primary School, Lambeth, shared posters which they had made during Autism Awareness Week '23 (March 2023)

### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer

#### Education

The Local Offer covers various educational settings, including early years providers, primary and secondary schools, special schools, and post-16 education. It provides information on the support available within these settings, such as SEND support, Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, and alternative provisions.

#### Health services

The Local Offer details the available health services for children and young people with SEND, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy.

#### Social care

The Local Offer provides information on social care services for families with SEND children, including short breaks, respite care, and support for transitioning between services.

#### Preparing for adulthood

The Local Offer includes information on preparing young people with SEND for adulthood, covering housing, further education, and employment support.

#### Activities and events

The Local Offer provides information on inclusive and accessible leisure activities, sports clubs, and community groups to help children and young people with SEND participate fully in community life.

Although the comprehensive nature of the Lambeth SEND Local Offer, there are still gaps and challenges that need to be addressed:

Addressing these gaps and challenges is essential to improve the Lambeth SEND Local Offer and ensure that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities receive the support they need to flourish and reach their full potential. By addressing the identified gaps and challenges, such as accessibility, service availability, consistency in service quality, and transition support, Lambeth can further improve its SEND Local Offer. This will ensure that all children and young people with SEND in the borough have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive and achieve their full potential.



Autism Awareness Week '23 (March 2023), Jubilee Primary School, Lambeth

### Gaps and challenges

#### Accessibility and awareness

Some families and carers may not be aware of the Local Offer or may find accessing the required information and services challenging. Enhancing communication and raising awareness of the Local Offer is vital to ensure that all families can benefit from the support available.

#### Service availability and capacity

Limited resources, funding constraints, and increasing demand can lead to gaps in service provision, lengthy waiting times, and limited access to specialist support for children and young people with SEND.

#### Inconsistency in service quality

The quality of services and support can vary across different providers and settings, leading to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

#### Transition support

Children and young people with SEND often face challenges during transitions, such as moving from primary to secondary education or education to employment. Enhanced transition planning and support are required to ensure smooth transitions and better long-term outcomes.

#### 5.4 List of organisations that provide support and relevant information:

Please note that the list of organisations provided below is not exhaustive and is based on the available information at the time of drafting the strategy. We are open to including organisations that would like to be added to this table in the next strategy review. For a more comprehensive list of providers offering support to autistic individuals, please refer to the Lambeth SEND Local Offer website: [www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer)

| Organisation                                   | Support Provided  | Stage (Age) |
|--|---|-------------|
| Ambitious about Autism                         | Information, resources, and support for autistic children and young people  | All ages    |
| Autism Education Trust (AET)                   | Resources and training for educators and professionals working with autistic children and young people                  | School age  |
| Contact (formerly Contact a Family)            | Support and information for families with disabled children   | All ages    |
| Family Fund                                    | Grants for families raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people   | 0-17 years  |
| Lambeth Adult Social Care                      | Support and services for autistic adults and other disabilities   | 18+ years   |
| Lambeth Autism Group                           | Support for autistic individuals and families   | All ages    |
| Lambeth College                                | Further education for SEND learners   | 16+ years   |
| Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP)        | Early intervention and support for children and families in Lambeth, including those with SEND                          | 0-4 years   |
| Lambeth Early Help                             | Early intervention services   | All ages    |
| Lambeth Educational Psychology Service         | Assessments, consultations and interventions for children and young people with SEND                                    | School age  |
| Lambeth Parent Carer Forum (LPCF)              | Support for parents and carers of children with SEND, including autism  | All ages    |
| Lambeth SEND Local Offer                       | Central hub for SEND resources and information  | All ages    |
| Lambeth SENDIASS                               | Information, advice, and support services   | All ages    |
| Lambeth Sensory Support                        | Support for children with sensory impairments   | School-age  |
| Mosaic Clubhouse                               | Mental health support for young people  | 16+ years   |
| National Autistic Society (NAS) Lambeth Branch | Information, support, and advocacy for autistic individuals and their families  | All ages    |
| NHS Lambeth Children's Community Services      | Health and wellbeing services for children and young people with SEND, including autism                                 | 0-19 years  |
| Resources for Autism                           | Specialist support services and resources for children, adults, and families affected by autism                         | All ages    |
| The Challenging Behaviour Foundation           | Information and support for families of children and adults with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour | All ages    |

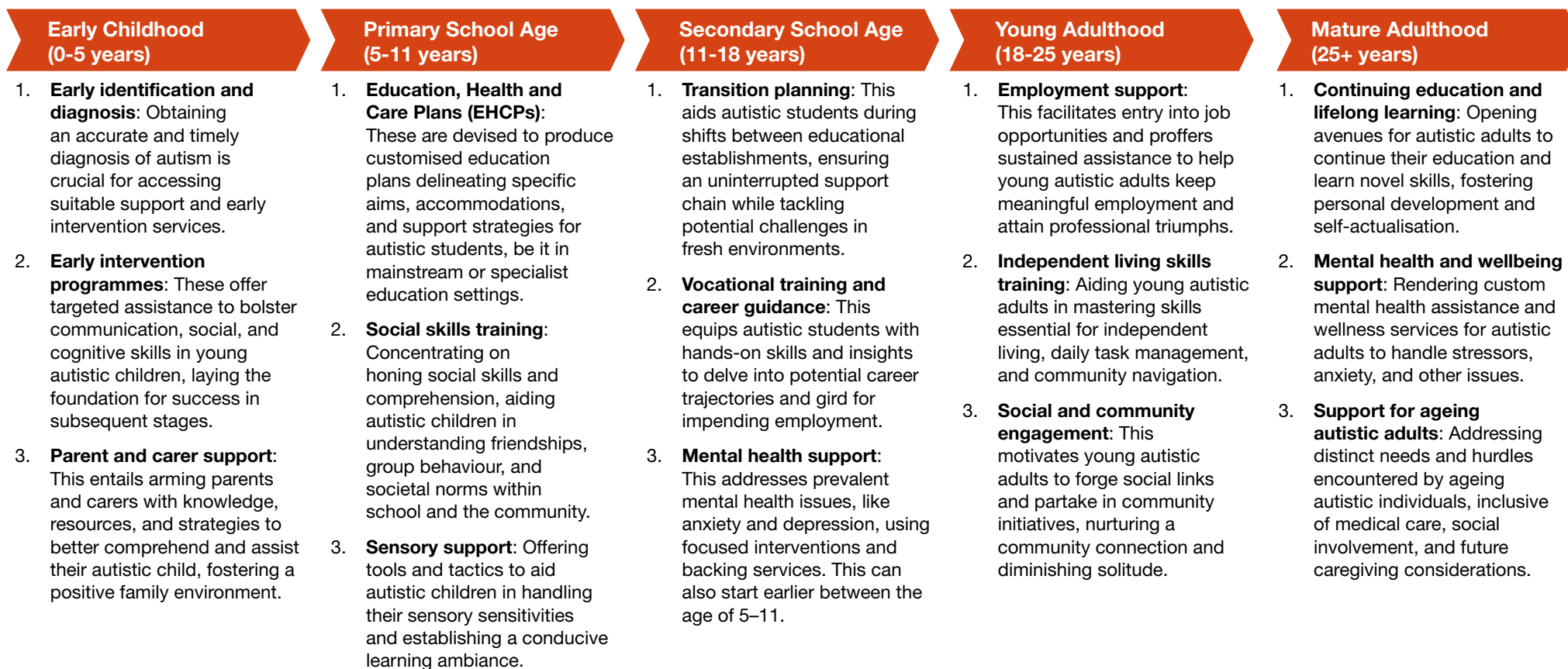
## 5.5 Timeline of Support for Autistic Individuals Across Different Ages

Support for autistic individuals is essential throughout their lives. As they grow and develop, their needs evolve, and the appropriate support must be provided at each phase. This timeline

outlines the pivotal support areas for autistic individuals, from early childhood to adulthood, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary tools and resources to thrive.

The support for autistic individuals should be modulated according to their distinct needs and

scenarios throughout their lifespan. By offering an exhaustive range of support services across diverse age brackets, we can embolden autistic individuals to realise their utmost potential and live rewarding, valuable lives within their communities.





## 6. Key Content and Links

### Key National Policies and Guidelines

1. The Autism Act 2009: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/contents)
2. The National Autism Strategy “Think Autism” (2014): [www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/L15-497%20Think%20Autism\\_02.pdf](http://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/L15-497%20Think%20Autism_02.pdf)
3. The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015): [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](http://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)
4. The Autism (Adults) Core Capabilities Framework (2019): [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Autism-Capabilities-Framework-Oct-2019.pdf](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Autism-Capabilities-Framework-Oct-2019.pdf)
5. The National Autism Strategy “The Right Support” (2021): [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026/the-national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026/the-national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026)
6. The NHS Long Term Plan (2019): [www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/online-version/overview-and-summary/#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20therefore,and%20to%20lower%20air%20pollution](http://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/online-version/overview-and-summary/#:~:text=The%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20therefore,and%20to%20lower%20air%20pollution)
7. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidelines: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK11822/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK11822/)

8. The Care Act 2014: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted)
9. The Children and Families act 2014: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted)

### Key Local Strategies:

1. Lambeth Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2025: [Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-25 \(lambeth.gov.uk\)](http://Suicide%20Prevention%20Strategy%2022-25%20(lambeth.gov.uk))
2. [Lambeth Carers strategy 2024–2029](http://Lambeth%20Carers%20strategy%2024-2029)
3. Lambeth Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2028: [www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/Lambeth\\_Health\\_Wellbeing\\_Strategy\\_2023-2028.pdf](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/Lambeth_Health_Wellbeing_Strategy_2023-2028.pdf)
4. Lambeth SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021 - 2024: [Lambeth Local Area SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-24.pdf](http://Lambeth%20Local%20Area%20SEND%20and%20Inclusion%20Strategy%2021-24.pdf)

### Other content and links

#### Understanding Autism

1. National Autistic Society: [National Autistic Society \(autism.org.uk\)](http://National%20Autistic%20Society%20(autism.org.uk))

#### Early Identification and Diagnosis

2. NHS: [www.nhs.uk/autismdiagnosischildren](http://www.nhs.uk/autismdiagnosischildren)
3. NHS: [www.nhs.uk/autismdiagnosisadults](http://www.nhs.uk/autismdiagnosisadults)

#### Education and Autism

4. Ambitious About Autism: [www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/education/our-schools-and-colleges](http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/education/our-schools-and-colleges)
5. Lambeth Council’s SEN Local Offer: [www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer)

#### Employment and Autism

6. National Autistic Society: [www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/employment](http://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/employment)
7. Autism Employment Network: [www.autismemploymentnetwork.org](http://www.autismemploymentnetwork.org)

#### Mental Health and Well-being

8. Autistica: [www.autistica.org.uk/mentalhealthandautism](http://www.autistica.org.uk/mentalhealthandautism)
9. Mind: [Home - Mind](http://Home%20-%20Mind)

#### Adult Services and Independent Living

10. Lambeth Adult Social Care: [www.lambeth.gov.uk/adultsocialcare](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adultsocialcare)
11. Autism Independence: [www.autismindependence.org](http://www.autismindependence.org)

#### Useful Links for Housing support

12. Housing Allocation Scheme: [https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/Allocation\\_Scheme\\_April\\_2024.pdf](https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/Allocation_Scheme_April_2024.pdf)
13. Housing medical assessment: [Submit a housing medical assessment](http://Submit%20a%20housing%20medical%20assessment)

## 7. Glossary

1. **Accessibility and inclusivity:** Creating inclusive and accessible environments for autistic individuals within specific services and the broader community.
2. **Accessibility:** The design and adaptation of environments, services, and resources to ensure that they are usable and navigable by all individuals, including those with disabilities or specific support needs.
3. **Autistic residents:** Autistic Individuals who live within a specific community, such as Lambeth, and who may require support and services to reach their full potential.
4. **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** A complex neurodevelopmental condition affecting how individuals perceive, process, and interact with the world around them. ASD is a spectrum condition, meaning it presents differently in each person.
5. **Autism-friendly:** A term used to describe environments, services, and communities that are welcoming, accommodating, and supportive of autistic individuals, promoting their well-being and inclusion in society.
6. **Collaboration and engagement:** Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including autistic individuals, families, service providers, and community organisations, to develop and implement the Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy.
7. **Co-occurring conditions:** Additional conditions or disorders that can be present alongside autism, such as anxiety, depression, or learning disabilities.
8. **Criminal and youth justice systems:** Legal systems that deal with individuals accused or convicted of criminal offences, with a specific focus on understanding and supporting the needs of autistic individuals within these systems.
9. **Demographic profile:** The characteristics of a population, including factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background.
10. **Employment opportunities:** Access to jobs and career paths for autistic individuals may be limited due to barriers and challenges associated with autism.
11. **Evidence-based practices:** Approaches and interventions supported by research and have been proven to be effective in addressing the needs of autistic individuals.
12. **Evolving needs:** The changing requirements and support needs of autistic individuals and their families, which may shift over time due to factors such as personal development, life circumstances, or changes in available resources.
13. **Holistic support:** Coordinated and integrated support across various aspects of an autistic person's life, such as health, education, employment, housing, and social connections.
14. **Inclusive environments:** Settings that welcome and accommodate the diverse needs of all individuals, including autistic individuals, promoting understanding, acceptance, and equal opportunities.
15. **Inpatient care:** Medical or psychiatric care provided in a hospital or residential setting, often for individuals with more severe or complex needs.
16. **Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy:** A comprehensive strategy developed to address the diverse needs of autistic individuals and their families in the Lambeth community. The strategy focuses on providing support and services for autistic individuals of all ages.
17. **Mental health support:** Assistance and services tailored to address the unique mental health needs of autistic individuals, such as anxiety, depression, and social isolation.
18. **National Autism Strategy:** A government initiative that sets out a vision for improving the lives of autistic individuals and their families across the country.

19. **Neurodevelopmental condition:** A disorder that affects the development of the brain and the central nervous system. Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition.
20. **Ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement:** Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of initiatives and interventions, incorporating feedback from the community, and refining the approach as needed to ensure the strategy remains relevant and practical.
21. **Parents and carers:** Individuals responsible for providing care and support to autistic individuals, often playing a crucial role in their well-being and advocating for their needs.
22. **Person-centred approach:** A philosophy that emphasises recognising and valuing each person's unique needs, strengths, and aspirations and tailoring interventions and support accordingly.
23. **Prevalence:** The proportion of a population affected by a specific condition, such as autism. In the context of this strategy, the prevalence of autism in Lambeth is consistent with the national average.
24. **Provision gaps:** Identified areas where available support services or resources are insufficient or lacking, potentially resulting in unmet needs for autistic individuals and their families.
25. **Remote learning and working:** Learning or working from home, usually through online platforms, has become more common during the COVID-19 pandemic and poses challenges for autistic individuals.
26. **Restricted and repetitive behaviours:** Behaviours commonly exhibited by autistic individuals, such as hand-flapping, rocking, or repeating words or phrases, as well as intense and narrow interests or preferences for specific routines.
27. **Sensory sensitivities:** Heightened sensitivity to sensory stimuli (e.g., sounds, lights, textures, smells) experienced by many autistic individuals, which can result in over- or under-responsiveness to sensory input.
28. **Service Landscape:** The range and availability of services and support for a specific population, such as autistic individuals and their families.
29. **Social communication difficulties:** Challenges faced by autistic individuals in verbal and non-verbal communication, including understanding and using spoken language, gestures, facial expressions, body language, and social cues.
30. **Social isolation:** The experience of feeling disconnected or separated from others, which can be exacerbated for autistic individuals due to communication difficulties, sensory sensitivities, or a lack of understanding and acceptance from others.
31. **Stakeholders:** Individuals or groups interested in or are affected by developing and implementing a strategy or initiative, such as the Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy.
32. **Tailored interventions:** Support and services designed and adapted to meet the specific needs, challenges, and strengths of each autistic individual.
33. **The severity of the condition:** The level or degree of impact that autism has on an individual's functioning, which can range from mild to severe and influence their support needs.
34. **Transition:** A change or shift in life circumstances, such as moving from one educational setting to another or from education to employment, can pose challenges for autistic individuals who may struggle with changes to routines or environments.

## 8. Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy – You Said, We Will

### 1. Introduction

The Lambeth All-Age Autism Strategy 2024–2027 has been developed in collaboration with autistic individuals, carers/guardians and our professional voluntary and statutory stakeholders in the health, education and employment sectors. The strategy outlines our vision to make Lambeth an autism-friendly borough, where autistic Adults and children can thrive in an environment where their needs are understood and catered for so they feel valued, and included and can contribute to the fabric of Lambeth, a vibrant and inclusive borough of opportunities.

#### 1.1 Priority 1: Improving Understanding and Acceptance of Autism within Society

| Theme   | You said...  | We will...   |
|---|--|--|
| Awareness & Education                             | Increasing general understanding, debunking myths, and emphasising the importance of early years and educational support for autistic individuals. | Support awareness campaigns in schools and communities. Use campaigns such as National Autism Awareness Week to educate and inform. Provide children, young people, and parents with the right information at the earliest opportunity. Ensure schools and settings consider the needs and wishes of pupils. |
| Combatting Discrimination & Increasing Acceptance | Actively fighting against prejudices, stigmas, and promoting a genuine understanding of autism's diverse spectrum.                                 | Implement awareness programmes. Encourage and support organisations and businesses to be autism-inclusive and/or autism-accredited. Celebrate and recognise the unique skills, attributes, achievements, and perspectives of autistic individuals.   |
| Professional & Community Training                 | Enhancing knowledge and skills among professionals, educators, the general public, and integrating first-hand experiences in training.             | Offer specialised training programmes for professionals. Collaborate with autistic individuals for real-life insights. Develop training around de-escalation and communication and to meet the needs of those experiencing mental health crises.   |
| Feedback, Engagement & Continuous Improvement     | Actively seeking feedback, refining objectives, and addressing misconceptions and misunderstandings.   | Learn from LeDeR reviews and report findings. Prioritise and review the views of autistic individuals across various programmes and initiatives. Review and refine objectives regularly.   |
| Protected Learning Time                           | People in the community have highlighted the need for better training and understanding of autism and ADHD among medical professionals.            | The South East London ICB (Lambeth) is planning a dedicated autism session in the upcoming Protected Learning Time (PLT) and a targeted PLT session for Autism and ADHD in 2025, focusing on specialised training for medical practices/GPs.   |

1.2 Priority 2: Improving Autistic Children and Young People’s Access to Education and Supporting positive transitions into adulthood

| Theme                              | You said...  | We will...   |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Timelines & Early Intervention     | Emphasising the importance of adhering to timelines and commencing interventions early to ensure autistic children are prepared for adulthood.   | Implement an Early Years SEND Strategy with a child and family focus, ensuring that the strategy supports early interventions and aligns services for the preparation of autistic children transitioning to adulthood. |
| Support Services and Access        | Challenges with accessing professional support, like Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists. Concerns about how individuals access the necessary support and if their needs are consulted. | Further develop the Local Offer Website, ensuring that professional services are easily accessible and understood by families and individuals.   |
| Educational Focus & Infrastructure | Stressing the significance of primary and secondary education, creating inclusive environments within schools, and the importance of support in colleges for SEND students.                                    | Oversee initiatives via the SEND Operations Board, promoting inclusive environments and bolstering support in schools and colleges.  |
| Awareness & Training in Schools    | Underscoring the necessity for training in mainstream schools, raising autism awareness among teachers, and understanding particular needs, especially for girls who often mask their symptoms.                | Provide free training in schools, developing each school’s understanding of autism in educational settings and how to adapt the environment to meet needs.   |
| Transition & Progression           | Highlighting the smooth transition from EHC plans to employment and ensuring progression and growth within employment settings.  | Implement a focused Preparation For Adulthood (PFA) strategy, ensuring smooth transitions from EHC to employment with targeted training programs and commitment follow-ups.  |

## 1.3 Priority 3: Supporting More Autistic individuals in Employment

| Theme                                    | You said...   | We will...   |
|--|---|--|
| Professional Training and Awareness      | Stakeholders highlighted the need for improved training for health and social care professionals, educators, and the wider public on autism, emphasising that training should be led by autistic individuals or experts deeply familiar with autism to ensure it respects the individuality of autistic people. | Enhance public awareness through campaigns such as the Dialogue Hub BSL Cafe and the Lambeth Inclusive Futures Event. Collaborate with Lambeth Made for an improved SEND Careers Offer and comprehensive SENCO/teacher training. |
| Workplace Inclusivity & Training         | Feedback pointed out the importance of enlightening employers about the benefits of employing autistic individuals and adapting workplaces to be more accommodating to their unique needs, with a focus on neurodiversity and creating sensory-friendly environments.   | Supporting employers (including those with Section 106 and social value commitments to deliver support employment places) to build their capacity to recruit, support, and retain SEND/LD and autistic employees.                |
| Educational and Employment Landscape     | Concerns were raised about the lack of understanding regarding the barriers faced by autistic individuals in securing employment, with a call for more autism-friendly business practices and support for autistic young people in navigating the job market.   | Develop supported internship and employment offer in Lambeth to increase the number of placements available, and engagement of Lambeth young people with SEND and autism in supported employment opportunities.                  |
| Mental Health and Well-being             | There was a strong call for robust mental health support for autistic individuals, highlighting the need for tailored mental health services and the importance of early identification and support for mental health issues.   | Area SENCO and Skills and Employment team work collaboratively with employers and schools to promote careers inspiration and employability opportunities for young people with SEND and autism.                                  |
| Funding and Resource Allocation          | Stakeholders expressed concerns about insufficient funding for autism strategies and services, emphasising the need for a clear and sustainable funding model to support the proposed actions and improve the existing structures.  | Continued use of Section 106 and responsible Procurement policy levers to create inclusive supported opportunities for residents including autistic individuals in Lambeth.  |
| Sensory Sensitivities and Accommodations | Feedback highlighted the sensory sensitivities of autistic individuals, stressing the need for accommodations in various settings and the importance of creating environments that are mindful of these sensitivities to ensure inclusivity and comfort.  | Work proactively with schools, Higher Education and Further Education institutions to deliver employer led careers and employability skills support for young people with SEND and autism.                                       |

| Theme                                    | You said...  | We will...   |
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| Workplace Integration and Neurodiversity | There was a strong emphasis on understanding and integrating neurodiversity in all workplaces, including the need for specific training for managing neurodivergent employees and supporting them effectively throughout their employment. | Strategic co-ordination of Lambeth Supported Employment Partnership, bringing together schools, employers, BIDs, Parent Forums, and young people with SEND and autism to inform the development of an accessible and inclusive supported employment offer for the borough. |

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## 1.4 Priority 4: Tackling Health and Care Inequalities for Autistic individuals

| Theme                                    | You said...  | We will...  |
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| Access to Appropriate Care               | Concerns about the "Escalation Pathway for Parents", "GP Support and Considerations", the need for "Post-diagnosis Support", and the desire for integrated services like the "Social Care Navigator" role. | Collaborate with GSTT to integrate the new EPIC system to develop reasonable adjustments flag and a live census, improving care for individuals with low-level disabilities. We will work closely with GSTT to ensure these technological advancements align with NHSE national standards and effectively enhance service delivery for autistic individuals.                    |
| Efficient and Timely Diagnosis           | Concerns about the timeliness of autism and ADHD assessments, and the need for early testing and support post-diagnosis.   | Implement strategies to streamline the assessment and diagnosis process for autism and ADHD, focusing on early detection and support. This includes enhancing coordination between different diagnostic services and ensuring adherence to NICE guidelines for post-diagnosis support.  |
| Mental Health Concerns                   | Clear need for autism-specific mental health facilities and concern about heightened mental health issues among autistic individuals.  | We aim to collaborate with mental health services, such as the South London and Maudsley Hospital, to enhance mental health services and assistance for autistic individuals and learning disabilities. The aim is to aid the development of SLaM's All Age Autism Strategy, which will promote the improvement of mental health services for both autistic children and adults |
| Recognition, Understanding, and Training | More understanding required especially in policing and among medical professionals, and broader public sentiment of recognising and valuing autistic individuals.  | Partner with South East London and Kings Heath Partners to implement the Oliver McGowan training across healthcare and social care staff. This initiative will focus on enhancing staff awareness and understanding of autism, ensuring they are better equipped to provide appropriate care and support.   |
| Barrier Removal and Equitable Access     | Challenges in accessing diagnosis and appropriate care, and a strong call for equity in care.  | Work with GSTT to develop and implement a targeted strategy for Autism. We aspire to involving service users with lived experience in developing the strategy. GSTT will also work towards integrating the NHS Reasonable Adjustment Flag into our services to ensure equitable access for all individuals.   |



## 1.5 Priority 5: Building the Right Support in the Community and Supporting People in Inpatient Care

| Theme                              | You said...  | We will...  |
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| Patient-Centric Approach           | Ensuring in-patients have access to essential information, psychiatrists are skilled in identifying autism traits, and that hospitals are equipped to meet the specific needs of those with ASD. | Enhance patient-centered care by increasing information accessibility for in-patients, implementing the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training for health and social care staff, conducting thorough needs assessments upon patient admission, effectively using the NHS Digital Reasonable Adjustment Flag, and fostering close partnerships to leverage insights gained from these initiatives.  |
| Tracking and Feedback              | Community insights emphasised the importance of tailored interventions and the need for ongoing tracking of progress and treatment outcomes for autistic individuals.                            | Use PROMs and CROMs to effectively gauge treatment impact on individual symptoms, daily functioning, and quality of life from both patient and clinician perspectives, aiding in tailoring interventions and tracking progress over time for autistic individuals.  |
| Support Services and Accessibility | The feedback indicates a strong need for continuous, high-quality support services for autistic adults, emphasising the importance of independence and community integration.                    | We aim to collaborate with mental health services, such as the South London and Maudsley Hospital, to enhance mental health services and assistance for autistic individuals and learning disabilities. The aim is to aid the development of SLAM's All Age Autism Strategy, which will promote the improvement of mental health services for both autistic children and adults   |
| Housing and Independent Living     | The community has highlighted the need for better housing options and support systems that promote independence, particularly for people with LDA (Learning Disability and Autism).              | Partner with South East London and Kings Heath Partners to implement the Oliver McGowan training across healthcare and social care staff. This initiative will focus on enhancing staff awareness and understanding of autism, ensuring they are better equipped to provide appropriate care and support.   |
| Family Support                     | The consistent theme of a holistic, family-centric approach where parents and families are provided with the necessary support they need to help their loved ones.                               | Promote a whole-family practice approach across the system. Recognising the impact of caring on families, and promote a whole-family practice approach across Adults' and Childrens' services. We will consider the needs of the entire family unit when assessing need and delivering support. Collaborating with community organisations, health and social care will ensure a coordinated approach to supporting the holistic well-being of carers and their families.           |
| Infrastructure and Resources       | The creation of specialised housing, availability of crisis residential respite options, and addressing challenges related to funding and recruitment to ensure proper support.                  | Develop closer working links between social care and housing. We will continue to develop the integration of Adult Social Care and Housing and proactively identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership working. With a number of key projects throughout 2023-2028, we will ensure carers consulted and considered. Where appropriate, we will identify carers in our review of housing policy and procedures and take account of the specific challenges carers face. |

## 1.6 Priority 6: Improving Support within the Criminal and Youth Justice Systems

| Theme                             | You said...   | We will...   |
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| Autistic Individuals in the CJS   | Recognising the challenges and vulnerabilities of autistic individuals when they come into contact with the justice system.   | Ensure early identification and support for young individuals via our Liaison and Diversion Services at Brixton and Wandsworth Custody Suites, including autistic individuals. Implement a comprehensive process for identifying the needs of autistic adults before and during court proceedings, and coordinate with professionals and organisations to ensure appropriate support throughout their probation. |
| Training                          | The essential need for authentic, accurate, and ongoing training led by autistic individuals for the police, social workers, and other professionals.   | Integrate insights from the coffee mornings with the Crown Prosecution Service and legal representatives to enhance autism-specific training modules. Continue the implementation of Autism Awareness training for staff, including probation staff, focused on understanding autism and effectively supporting autistic individuals, including adults.  |
| Legal Safeguards                  | Implementing a range of procedural safeguards for autistic individuals, such as the presence of an appropriate adult, immediate summoning of a solicitor, and special considerations during court proceedings.    | Promote the use of comprehensive pre-sentence reports by health and education professionals to inform judicial decisions specifically concerning autistic young people.  |
| Understanding Autism              | Ensuring that autistic individuals are understood within the legal framework, assessing their capacity in specific situations, and tailoring police interactions, especially for women and girls on the spectrum. | Encourage the widespread adoption of the Autism Card initiative to improve interactions between law enforcement and autistic individuals.  |
| Support within the CJS            | Addressing concerns about the treatment and understanding of autistic individuals within prisons and youth detention centres.   | Continuously review and adapt care strategies in response to the feedback and evolving needs identified through our engagements with autistic individuals and their families.  |
| Early Intervention and Prevention | The importance of early interventions and a proactive approach to prevent autistic individuals from entering the justice system in the first place.   | Leverage insights from the collaboration with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to enhance early identification and support in community settings.   |

## 1.7 Priority 7: Local Initiative - Improving Understanding of the Role and Working with Parents/Carers

| Theme   | You said...  | We will...   |
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| Recognition and Support for "Autism Champions"  | Autism Champions often feel belittled and seek acknowledgement, as well as training in advocacy.   | Recognise and support carers, including young carers, and promote mental health support available for them.  |
| Support for Parents and Carers  | A significant emphasis is placed on the need for resources and hubs to provide respite, mental health support, and specific guidance for parents and carers.         | In line with the Lambeth Carers Strategy, we will champion comprehensive support for carers, addressing their financial, mental, and social needs, and ensuring accessible respite, leisure opportunities, and peer connections, all while fostering a community where every carer feels valued, understood, and empowered.                  |
| Medical Professionals' Involvement  | Questions arise about the role of GPs in supporting autistic individuals and their families.   | Involve carers during hospital discharge to ensure medical professionals are aligned in their support.   |
| Organise dedicated seminars and workshops for GPs to understand the unique needs of autistic individuals and their families | More understanding required especially in policing and among medical professionals, and broader public sentiment of recognising and valuing autistic individuals.    | Partner with South East London and Kings Heath Partners to implement the Oliver McGowan training across healthcare and social care staff. This initiative will focus on enhancing staff awareness and understanding of autism, ensuring they are better equipped to provide appropriate care and support.                                    |
| Tailored Parenting Courses and Support Groups   | A demand for specialised parenting courses and support groups tailored to families with autistic children.   | Guide families towards specialised parenting courses and support groups tailored to those with autistic children, ensuring they have access to appropriate resources and support.  |
| Perception of Parents   | There's a sentiment that parents are often misjudged and perceived as obstacles rather than allies in caregiving.  | In line with the Lambeth Carers Strategy, we are set to champion the cause of carers, striving to recognise their rights, understand their needs, and offer the necessary support to ensure they can care with confidence and dignity.   |
| Care for Broader Caregiving Community   | An emphasis on recognising and supporting parents, especially mothers, who care for autistic individuals.  | In line with the Lambeth Carers Strategy, we will recognise and reward the invaluable contributions of carers by enhancing local business partnerships, prioritising carers' health and well-being through collaborative support systems, and championing robust peer support mechanisms, including peer-led initiatives and carer advocacy. |
| Carer Support   | The report reveals the challenges faced by carers, including the mental health impacts and the need for more supportive measures for carers of autistic individuals. | Expand the discount programme via Lambeth Carers Card, offering discounts and offers on a range of things, including leisure and food, to carers. Provide specific support offered by local partner Carers' Hub Lambeth, including short breaks for all young carers and young adult carers.   |