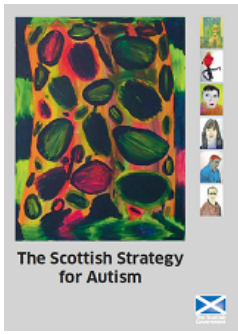


# Scottish Borders Autism Strategy





The Scottish Government has a 10 year **strategy** (big plan) for support for people with autism in Scotland.



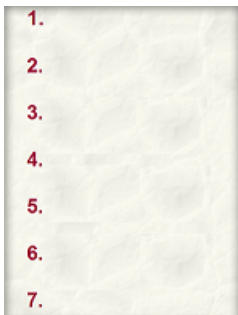
We have written a local strategy to make sure the needs of people with autism in the Scottish Borders are supported.

## Who wrote this plan?

People from all of these places helped us write the Scottish Borders Autism Strategy:



- the National Health Service (NHS)
- education services
- social work
- charities
- parents and carers



The plan has 7 parts. We will tell you about each part in this easy read.

## What do we want to happen?



We want people with autism and their families to feel accepted and valued by their community.



We want people with autism and their families to get the services they need when they need them.



This plan will help us make this happen.

## What is autism?



A person who has autism will have it for their whole life.



Some people with autism find it hard to tell people how they feel and what they want.



Some people with autism find it hard to make new friends and meet people.



Some people with autism find it difficult to know how other people think and feel.



Some people with autism will need support to live an independent life.

# Why do we need an autism strategy for the Scottish Borders?



People with autism may think about and understand the world differently from people who do not have autism.



Each person with autism is an individual and will have different needs.



Some people with autism may need a high level of support.



Some people with autism may only need a little bit of support now and again.



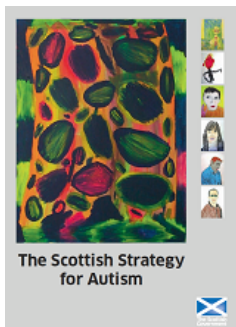
At the moment people with autism may not be able to find the services they need. Or they may find it hard to access the services they need.



This means people with autism might not be able to do the things they want to do in life.

We think this is unfair.

## **What is already happening across Scotland for people with autism?**



The Scottish Strategy for Autism was written by the Scottish Government in 2011.



This strategy wants people with autism to be respected and valued by their communities.



This strategy wants people with autism to know they will be treated fairly and have good lives.



The Scottish Strategy for Autism says each local area should have its own plan for people with autism.



There are 26 **recommendations** in the Scottish Strategy for Autism. A recommendation is an idea about how to make things better in the future.



The Scottish Strategy for Autism is a 10 year plan.

One of the recommendations for the first **2** years of the strategy is:



To make sure the right support is in place for individuals and their families once they have been told they have autism.

One of the recommendations for the first **5** years of the strategy is:



To make sure services work together to support people with autism throughout their lives.

One of the recommendations after **10** years of the strategy is:



People with autism should get the right assessment of needs throughout their life.





Self-directed support can help people have better lives. It is for anyone in Scotland who gets support that is paid for by their local council.



Self-directed support lets people with autism and their carers choose the support that is right for them.

## **What is already happening across the Scottish Borders for people with autism?**



We have local plans in place that support the Scottish Borders Autism Strategy too.



We already work together with partners to plan and offer services.



We have agreed with the Scottish Government what we will work towards achieving with these partners.



Scottish Borders has a local housing plan.



The local housing plan says that more people who need support should be able to live independently in their own home.



There is already a plan in the Scottish Borders for services for children and young people.



There is also a plan for children and young people's health.



The plan says that there should be access to person centred health care at the right time and in the right place.



It also says that young people should be included in decisions and planning that are about them.



Links between the Scottish Borders Autism Strategy and these local plans should be made.



Scottish Borders also took part in the Autism Mapping Project.



This meant talking to people with autism, their families and service providers.



We found out what autism services were already available in our local area.



We also found out what the gaps there were in services for people with autism and their families in our local area.

## How many people have autism?



We think about **1** in every **100** people in Scotland have autism.



We think there are about **1,025** people with autism living in the Scottish Borders.

## How did we write our autism strategy?



A group has been meeting since June 2012.

The group is made up of people from:



- NHS Borders
- Scottish Borders Council
- Education services
- Learning disability services
- Charities
- A carer organisation
- Parents of people with autism



We asked people what they thought about the things the group thought should be our **priorities**. Priorities are the main things we should be looking at.



We did this by asking people to fill in questionnaires.



We also held meetings and interviews. We listened to what people told us.



Once the final draft of the strategy was ready we held a **consultation**. This means we asked people to tell us what they thought about what we said in the strategy.

## What are the priority areas for the Scottish Borders?



The **first priority** is to raise awareness and understanding of autism. We want to do this with the public and professionals.



This will make it easier for people with autism to use mainstream services.



We think that giving people training about autism will help them communicate better with people with autism.



The **second priority** is to make sure there is early **diagnosis** and support for children and adults with autism. A diagnosis is when you are told by a doctor or health worker that you have autism.



Some people told us they were not sure how to get a diagnosis. They did not know where to find this information.



This means it can take longer for people to find out if they have autism or not.



People thought that autism training for staff such as health visitors and teachers would help people know when someone has autism.

This means they would be able to tell them what to do next.



The people we spoke to told us that an assessment for autism can be stressful.



More support could help make it less stressful. This might mean things like being given information about what will happen during an assessment.



People should also be told how long an assessment will take.



The **third priority** is to get the right services at the right time for adults with autism who do not have a learning disability as well.





This group are more likely to find out they have autism when they are older. This means their needs are not being met.



We want understanding of autism and no learning disability to get much better.



We want people to know where to go to find information that is accessible and up to date.



We want people to know how to access services that are right for them.



The **forth priority** is to find the right day and job opportunities for people with autism.



People have told us that they sometimes do not know what choices they have when they leave school.



This can be stressful for people with autism and their families.



We know that some people with autism need extra support to be successful in training or further education.



Getting the right support from employment staff who are knowledgeable about autism to help find and apply for jobs and training is very important.



The **fifth priority** looks for ways of developing social skills and social opportunities for people with autism.



The feedback we got told us that having the choice to take part in social activities was important.



With more public understanding of autism it will be easier for people with autism to take part in activities in their community.



The **sixth priority** looks at ways of making housing options better for people with autism.



We want people with autism to have equal access to a range of housing options to meet the needs of the individual.



We want people to know where to access information about housing and who to contact for advice.



We want to work with our partners to have more housing that has been planned with people with autism in mind.



The **seventh priority** looks at ways of making sure people with autism and their families are included and their voices heard by professionals.



We want people with autism and their families to have their say in planning services now and in the future.



We want there to be lots of different ways of communicating with people with autism so their voices are heard.

