



National Audit Office

Supporting people with autism through adulthood

A report about the support services that adults with autism and their carers in England get

Easy read

**Easy words
by Mencap.
Pictures by
Photosymbols**



This report can be found on the
National Audit Office website at
www.nao.org.uk

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About this report

Who is this report by?



We are called the **National Audit Office**.

Our job is to make sure the Government is spending public money in the best way (this is money that people in the country pay to the Government).

What is this report about?



We did a big study to find out what support adults with autism and their carers in England get.

Adults with autism and their carers get support from **support services**.



Support services are where staff give you support to do things in your life, like help to go out and about, get a job or learn new things.

We looked at the support adults with autism get to do things like

- learn things at places like college and university
- get benefits. For example, Disability Living Allowance
- get a job.

How did we do the study?



We asked lots of people what they thought. For example, we asked

- adults with autism and their carers
- doctors
- people who support disabled people to get a job, get benefits or to learn new things.



What did we find out?

We found out that some good things are happening.

But we also found out some things that could make support for adults with autism and their carers much better.



Now you can find out more about this.

1 Better information

What we found out



We found that people in charge of support services do not always have the right information to do their jobs well.

What needs to happen



People in charge of support services need to get better information together about how many people with autism there are in their local area.

The information will help them find out

- what support people with autism in their area need
- how well this support is working
- how to work better with other groups who give people with autism support.

People in charge of support services can use this information to make sure people with autism get the support they need.

2 Changing from being a child to an adult



When some disabled children are about 14, their school should make a plan about what support they need when they start to be an adult. For example, support to get a job or go to college.

A group called **Connexions** also gives young people information and advice at this time.

What we found out



The people in charge of this support do not always know

- enough about autism
- who the young people with autism in their area are. And what support they are getting.

This means young people with autism and their carers do not always get the support they need.

What needs to happen



A new team of people are working to make support better for young people with autism when they start to be an adult.

The team should make sure they find out the best ways to give young people and their carers this support.



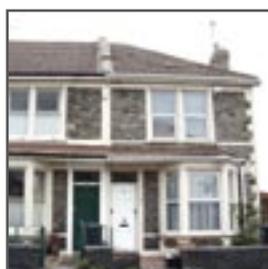
People who work for **Connexions** should

- have more training about autism
- give the Government information about how well the support for people with autism in their area is working.

(Connexions is a group that gives young people information and advice to help them make decisions about their lives.)

3 Getting support in your local area

What we found out



Some people with autism have to live away from their local area to get the support they need.

This is because people in charge of support services say there is no support for these people in their own area.

What needs to happen

Some people may need to move to another area to get the support they need. But many people could get the right support in their own area. And this support could cost less money.



The Government needs to help people in charge of support services in local areas to make this happen.

4 Choosing your own support



The way people get support is changing.

Local councils are now giving more people the money for their support services straight to them. This means people can choose for themselves what support they want.

What needs to happen



People with autism and their carers should get the help they need to choose their own support.

They may need help to do things like

- look after the money for their support
- choose the support that is right for them.



The Government should give good information to local councils about how to make this happen.

Local councils can then give the right help to people with autism and their carers in the local area.

5 Helping people to know about autism

What we found out



Staff in charge of giving support services to people with autism do not always know enough about autism and what people with autism need.

This means they cannot always help people with autism in the best way.

What needs to happen



More training is needed for staff like

- doctors
- other health staff
- staff from local councils whose job it is to find out what support people need
- staff who help people with autism get a job, learn new things or get benefits (benefits are types of money you can get. For example, Disability Living Allowance).



Staff may need training in things like

- what autism is
- how to tell if someone may have autism
- how to communicate with someone with autism.



6 Getting a job

What we found out



People with autism who do have a job can do really well at it.

But many people with autism do not have a job.

This could be because groups who give people jobs do not know enough about autism.

What needs to happen



The Government needs to do more to show these groups

- why it would be good to give jobs to people with autism
- what support people with autism may need when they do have a job.

7 Going to college or university

What we found out



People called **Disability Support Officers** support people with autism at college or university.

They told us that people with autism who go to college or university can do really well if they get the right support.

But people with autism do not always get the support they need.

What needs to happen



People with autism who go to college or university may find their new life hard. They may need support to do things like get used to the new place, make friends and get to places on time.



If you are disabled and you go to college or university, there is some money you can get to pay for the support you need.

The Government should make sure people know that the money can be used to pay for all types of support that someone with autism may need.

8 Better support for people with high-functioning autism or Asperger syndrome and their carers

What we found out



People with types of autism called high-functioning autism and Asperger syndrome do not always get the right support.

This is because there are not always support services for them. And people in charge of support services do not always understand what they need.



Better support for these people could help them and their carers to have a much better life.

What needs to happen



There needs to be special support for people with these types of autism.

Lots of people may help give this support.

This special support would help to



- find out what type of autism people have
- give people with these types of autism the support they need
- help make their lives better. For example, help them get out and about, have a job or do more things for themselves.



The Government should show people in charge of support services

- how this special support can help people
- how to give people in their local area this type of special support.



A story about a man called Paul who got good support to get a job

Paul has a type of autism called Asperger syndrome.

Paul said he really wanted to work in a supermarket.



He got lots of help from a group called **Prospects**. Prospects help people with autism to get a job.

Paul got lots of help before he started work. For example, he got help to know

- what having a job is like
- how to work well with other people.



Then Paul got some work for a short time at a local supermarket.

He still got help after he started work to make sure he was getting on OK.

He got on really well in his job. His boss said he could come back to work at the supermarket as soon as there was a job to give him.



Paul was very happy about this!

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