



# **Hull's Autism Strategy 2025-2028**

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# Foreword

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## Welcome to the Hull Autism Strategy 2025-2028

We are delighted that this strategy has been developed by the Autism Partnership Board through participation and engagement with autistic people, families and people who provide support. The Partnership Board has taken the six themes from the National Autism Strategy and asked what the experience of people in Hull is and what needs to happen to make things better. As a council it is important that we have talked to autistic people to find out what is important to them and sought their views on what they want to see we focus on to support people to thrive and to live well in Hull. Hull is a vibrant, resilient, and ambitious city and the aim of this strategy is to help make it an inclusive place to live.

This strategy sets out the foundations for change to improve the lives of autistic people in Hull by ensuring opportunity for everyone to live a healthy, safe , fulfilling life. As Director of Adult Social Care and Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care we are pleased to support this strategy and to thank everyone who have shared their experiences and contributed to the development of our Hull Autism strategy . We are committed to ensuring that what you have told us you need to live fulfilling lives in our city are actioned, and together with you and our partners make best use of what we have available, and make the changes that will deliver improvements.

Councillor Linda Chambers

Tracy Meyerhoff- Director of adult social care

# Acknowledgement

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**Thank you to the many individuals and organisations who have given their time, energy, experience and passion which has made the Hull Autism Strategy what it is.**

# Introduction

**This is the Autism Strategy for young people and Adults 2025 - 2028. Autism is one aspect of neurodivergence which includes Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Tourettes Syndrome, Dyscalculia, language and audio processing disorder.**

**This work has been inclusive of stakeholders which include autistic people , carers and family members and members of the Autism Partnership Board.**





# Methodology:

This strategy is informed by what autistic people in Hull have told us, this is the leading section for each of our themes. We have then added context from the National Autism Strategy before setting out the actions that we need to take.

01

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Work to develop the strategy began in April 2024 when we asked people to tell us what was important to them.

02

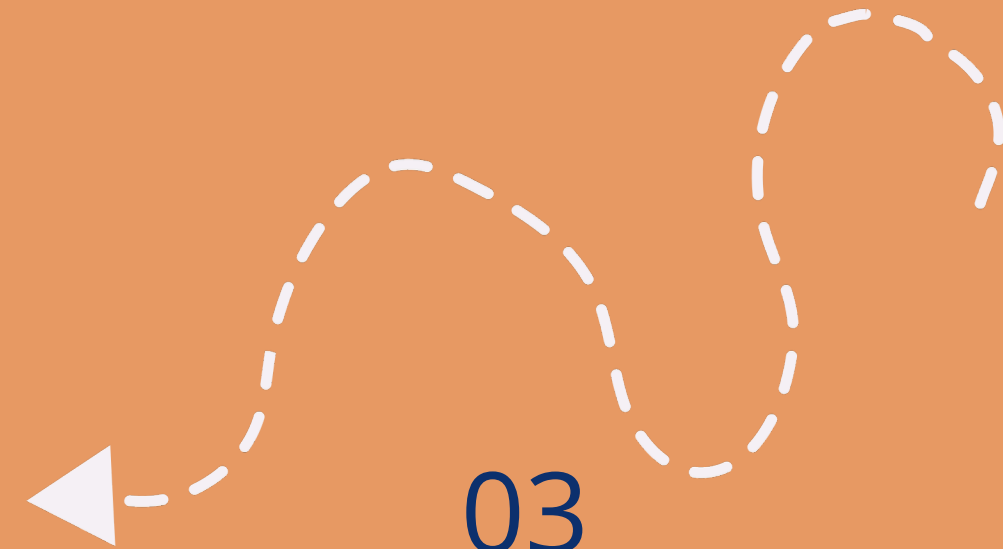
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For the month of April 2024 we ran an online survey asking people what they felt was important to be captured in the strategy and we followed this up with another event on the 11th July 2024 at Matthew's Hub

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We have held six weekly sessions at Matthew's Hub where we have focused on a specific theme from the National Strategy.





**Our ambition for this strategy is to make Hull an inclusive place to live, where there is equal opportunity for all. The strategy recognises that in order to make this happen some things will need to change.**

# Why is this strategy important?

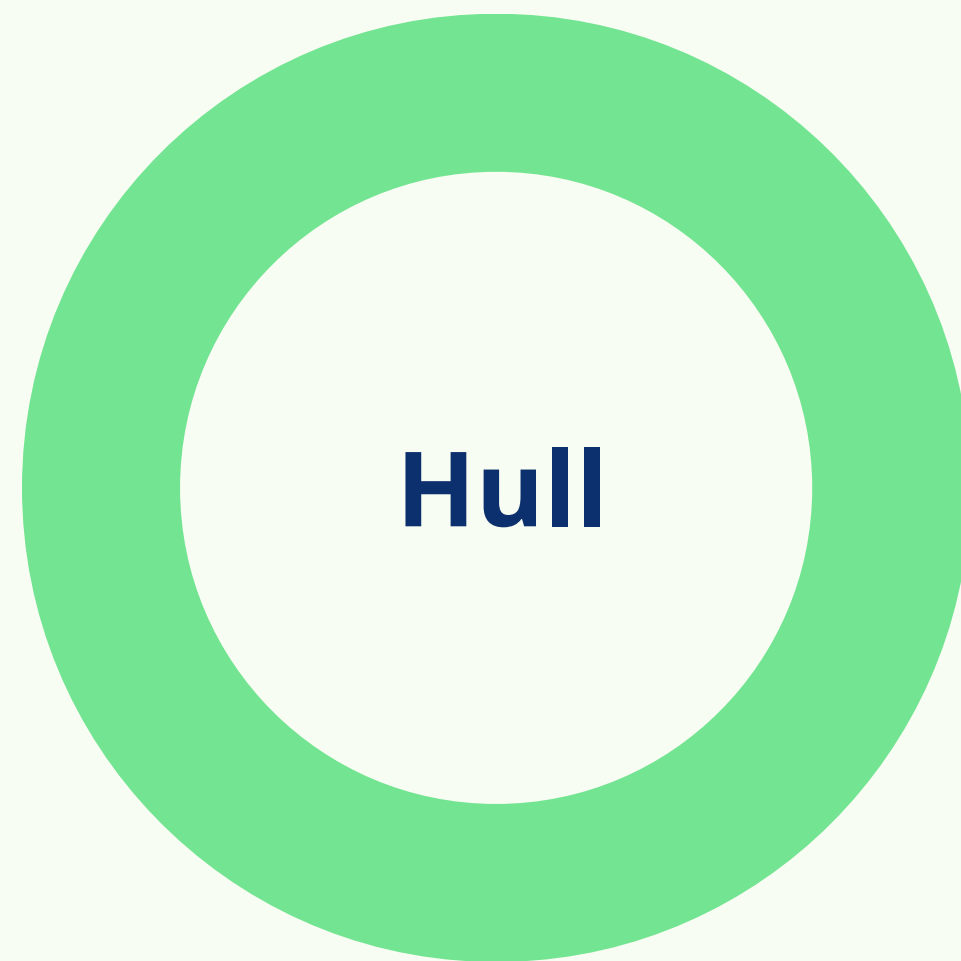


We know that autism can affect people in different ways. We have heard from autistic people about the impact being autistic can have on their physical and mental health, experience of the education system, access to wider public services such as transport, involvement with the criminal justice system and employment opportunities.

When we consider this along with the backdrop of levels of deprivation that Hull faces we can start to understand how autistic people are being impacted in fundamental areas of their lives.



# What do we know about our city?



Population of 267,000 (2021)

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66% of the population is of working age

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**At least 2670 people in Hull have an autistic prevalence**

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Delays in accessing diagnostic services mean that some people who may be autistic have not been diagnosed in Hull.

**In recent years the demand for diagnostic services has increased nationally and locally.**

**Approx. 1500 autistic people will be of working age**

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445 people who are autistic are known to Adult Social Care but not all of them are in receipt of social care support

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Many autistic people whether undiagnosed or diagnosed never come to the attention of services and are independent or supported by family members



**Improving understanding and acceptance  
of autism within society.**

# What people from Hull have told us.

**01**

General lack of awareness and understanding about autism can lead to people not being signposted to the right services and support

**02**

There is not enough understanding or acceptance of autism in Hull

**03**

We know that the Local Authority and Health have a training offer however people have told us that other public facing services would benefit from their staff having more awareness and understanding of autism.

**04**

It would be helpful if there could be allocated , quieter area seating on buses, wider access to disabled passes and having a mechanism to easily identify who to approach for help on transport if it is needed.

# What people from Hull have told us.

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**05**

Systems do not work for everyone and some small changes could make a difference

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**06**

"I am not disabled, society disables me by not enabling me to access".



# Action plan to include:







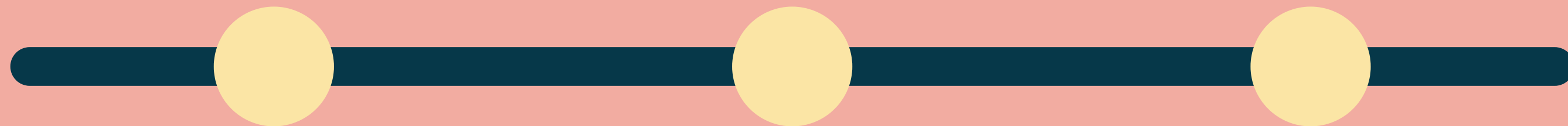
**Improving autistic children and young people's access  
to education and supporting positive transitions  
into adulthood.**

# What people from Hull have told us.

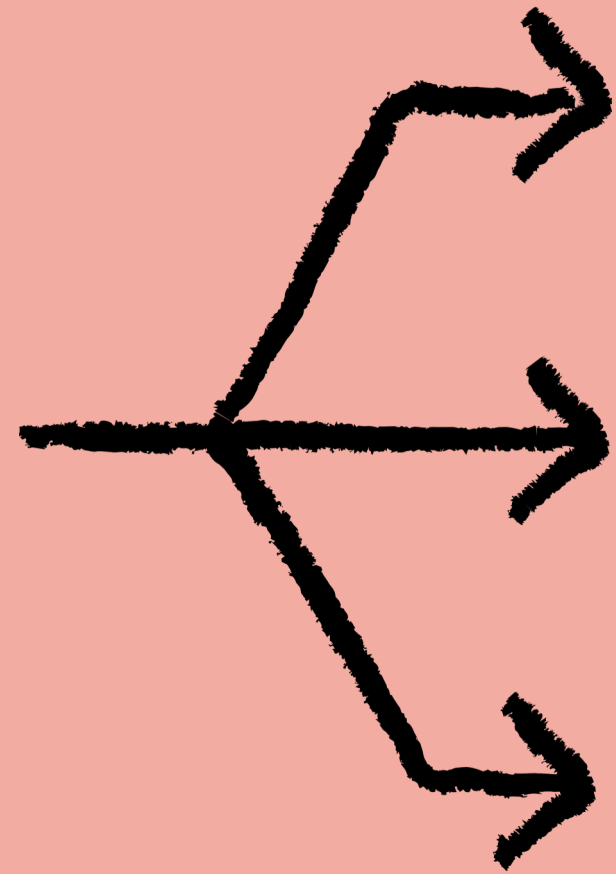
Young autistic people often experience barriers within the education system and being able to access good support.

Changes in their child's or their own mental health, feeling able to remain in education and interaction with friends can be difficult during this time in their lives.

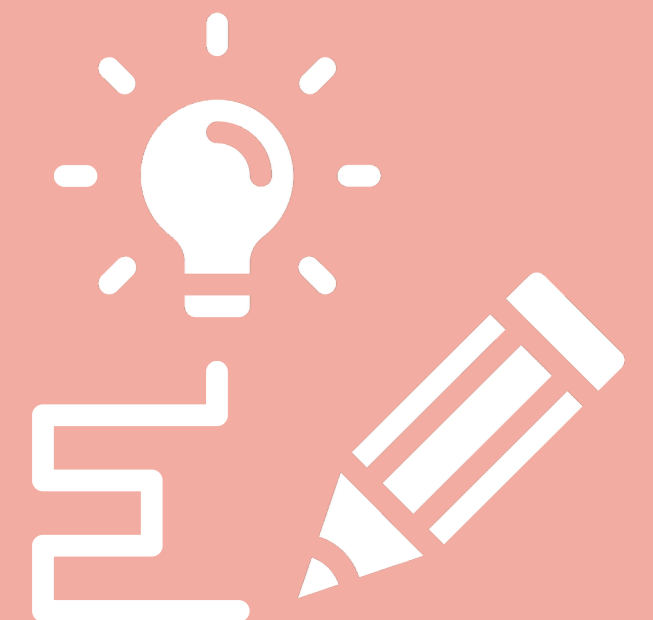
The young person is achieving their academic milestones and the difficulties they experience may be in other areas such as managing anxiety or coping in a sensory overloaded environment.



# How we will work towards this:



- 1. Improving educational professionals' understanding of autism and inclusive cultures within schools**
- 2. Improving how the SEND system supports autistic children and young people**
- 3. Supporting positive transitions into adulthood**



# Action plan to include:

01

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**To map** the current system and better understand where the barriers and gaps are.

02

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**To link** with statutory services and SEND to identify where support can be improved.

03

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**To link** with current work such as the PINS project and KIDS to develop plans to improve access to education.

04

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**To develop** mechanisms to monitor what support is in place and who is providing it.

05

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**To connect** this strategy with other strategic plans to ensure that they include plans to improve children and young people's access to education and supporting positive transitions into adulthood.

06

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**To identify** appropriate representation from other strategic partnerships



**Supporting more autistic people into employment.**



# Data taken from The Buckland Review of Autism Employment Report, dated February 2024:

**'Only 3 in 10 autistic people are in any kind of employment. This is one of the worst employment rates of all disability groups.'**

'Autistic people are more likely to be under employed and held back from reaching their full potential. They face the largest pay gap of all disability groups receiving on average a third less than non disabled people (Office for National Statistics (2022) Disability Pay Gaps in the UK: 2021).'



# What people from Hull have told us.



1

General recruitment process create barriers to getting a job such as completing the application form and particularly whether to tell the employer about being autistic

2

It is sometimes hard to stay in the job without the right support in place.

3

The traditional interview process as being difficult to navigate.



**‘Autistic people face a wide range of barriers to work such as recruitment and interview processes and reasonable adjustments.’**

**‘The connection between employment and mental wellbeing and quality of life is evidenced by research (1) and unemployment is a known risk factor for suicide. Research by Autistica has found that up to 11% of people who die by suicide may be autistic. (2).’**

1. Hendricks D (2010) and Mason D et al ( 2018).  
2. Van Orden K et al (2010) and Pelton MK et al (2010)  
As referenced in the Buckland Report 2024.

# How we will work towards this:



**Improving employment support  
and the welfare system**

# Action plan to include:

1

To connect this strategy with other strategic plans to develop employment opportunities for autistic people (e.g. workforce plans).

2

To identify where there are autism friendly recruitment and retention practices and promote learning to improve recruitment and retention of autistic people across the city.

3

Support the statutory sector to become Disability Confident Employers and become Disability Confident leaders.

4

To support more autistic people to enter meaningful work; be that employment, internships, voluntary or otherwise.

5

Supporting more autistic people succeed in their workplace and realise the personal fulfilment that meaningful work can bring.



# Action plan to include:

6

**To ensure that employers and employees understand the concept of reasonable adjustments and how to make this work for each individual**

7

**To raise awareness of Access to Work. An action is to support organisations to utilise access to work within their organisations.**

8

**To support employers to identify those roles that the strengths of autistic people make them particularly suited to.**

9

**To identify appropriate representation from other strategic partnerships**



**Tackling health and care inequalities  
for autistic people.**

# What people from Hull have told us.

01

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Children often receive a diagnosis sooner than adults

02

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The impact receiving a late diagnosis has had on their mental health and in some instances have been misdiagnosed with a mental health condition.

04

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There is not enough support for parents to understand how to support their child and that there is a lack of wrap around support from statutory services to support families in this situation.

05

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Students struggling to maintain places at university due to not being able to cope with the environment.



**diagnosis**

03

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Masking in girls and women can sometimes be a factor in late diagnosis.

# What people from Hull have told us.



## Accessing health services

01

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Some of their experiences of accessing primary healthcare and attending busy hospital or GP settings and how being able to access a quiet space in such environments could help in managing levels of stress and anxiety.

02

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People having poor experiences as a result of a lack of awareness and understanding of autism by those who are in a health or social care role.

# How we will work towards this:

1. Improving early identification and reducing autism diagnosis waiting times
2. Improving health and care professionals' understanding of autism
3. Reducing the health and care inequalities autistic people face





# Action plan to include:

1

To connect this strategy with other strategic plans to support diagnostic pathways and support services for people pre and post diagnosis.

2

To connect this strategy to primary, secondary and mental health care provision.

3

To promote annual health checks for autistic people.

4

To promote reasonable adjustments across agencies to support people access support in all health settings.

5

To take learning from LeDer reviews to improve the experience of autistic people.

6

To identify appropriate representation from other strategic partnerships



**Building the right support in the community  
and supporting  
people in inpatient care.**

# What people from Hull have told us.

1

Some of the services available to provide support for physical and mental health issues have barriers that can prevent autistic people accessing them.

2

They feel like they developed a mental health condition as a result of either a long delay for a diagnosis of autism or not getting the right support after diagnosis

3

Having a poor experience as a child in education can lead to the development of mental health issues

4

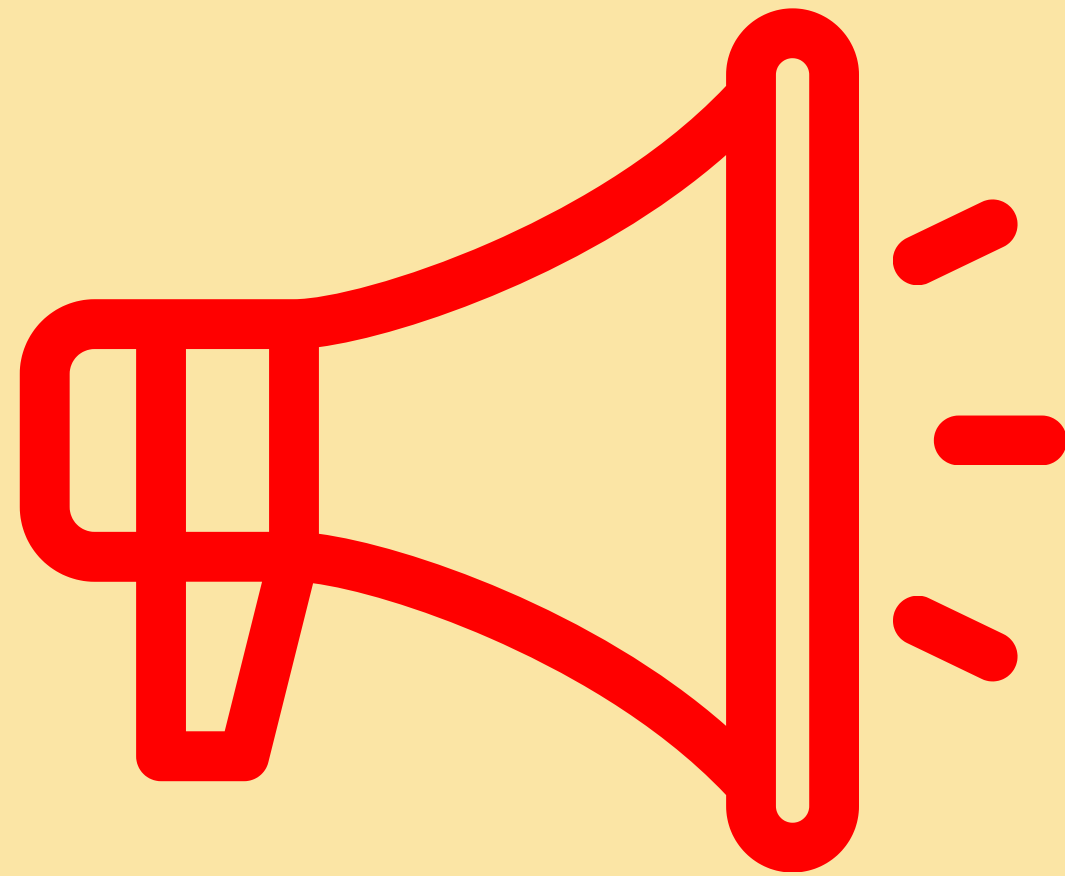
The healthcare professionals do not use the health passport to support the person or they lack an awareness and understanding of autism.

5

They feel that they need to reach crisis point before they can access support.

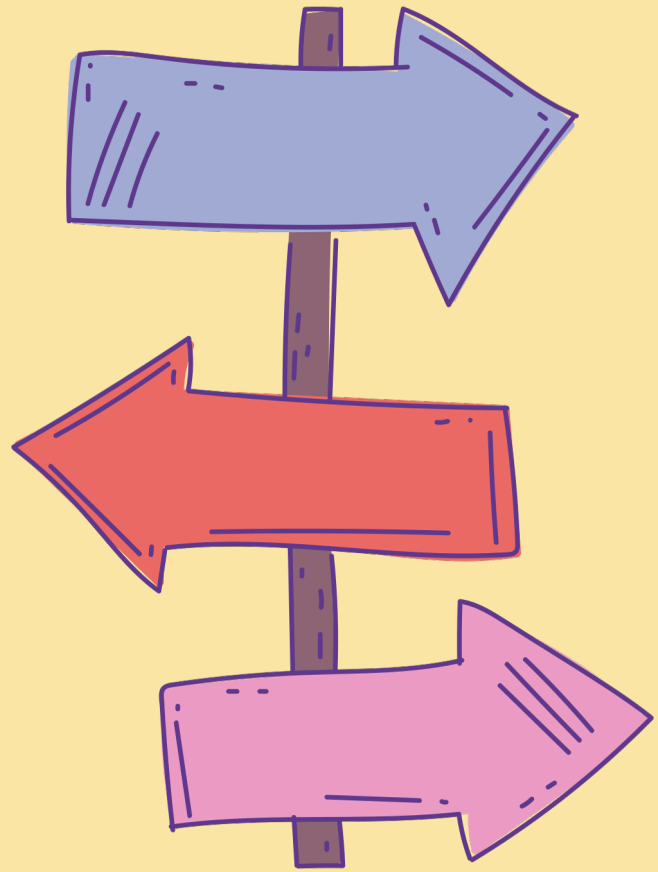
6

The language used in some health settings can be unhelpful and can itself perpetuate the deficit way of thinking about autism.



**The key messages are to raise awareness and understanding amongst health staff, consideration of how language is used across agencies and prevention.**

# How we will work towards this:



1. Improving crisis prevention and avoidable admissions into inpatient settings
2. Improving the quality of inpatient care for autistic people
3. Facilitating timely discharges from inpatient care

# Action plan to include:

1. To connect this strategy with other strategic plans across health, social care, public health and housing to ensure that the needs of autistic people are included.



3. To work with people to develop a 'what does good support look like' for professionals in health, social care, education, public health and housing.

2. To connect this strategy to prevention strategies across health and social care including education and SEND.



4. To identify appropriate representation from other strategic partnerships





**Improving support within the criminal  
and youth justice system.**

# What people from Hull have told us.

We need to know more about how to prevent people from becoming involved with the criminal justice system and how autistic people can get the right support.

We need to better understand how diagnostic services work with criminal justice services to ensure that people receive the right support and if people are convicted that they receive the right support to prevent re offending.

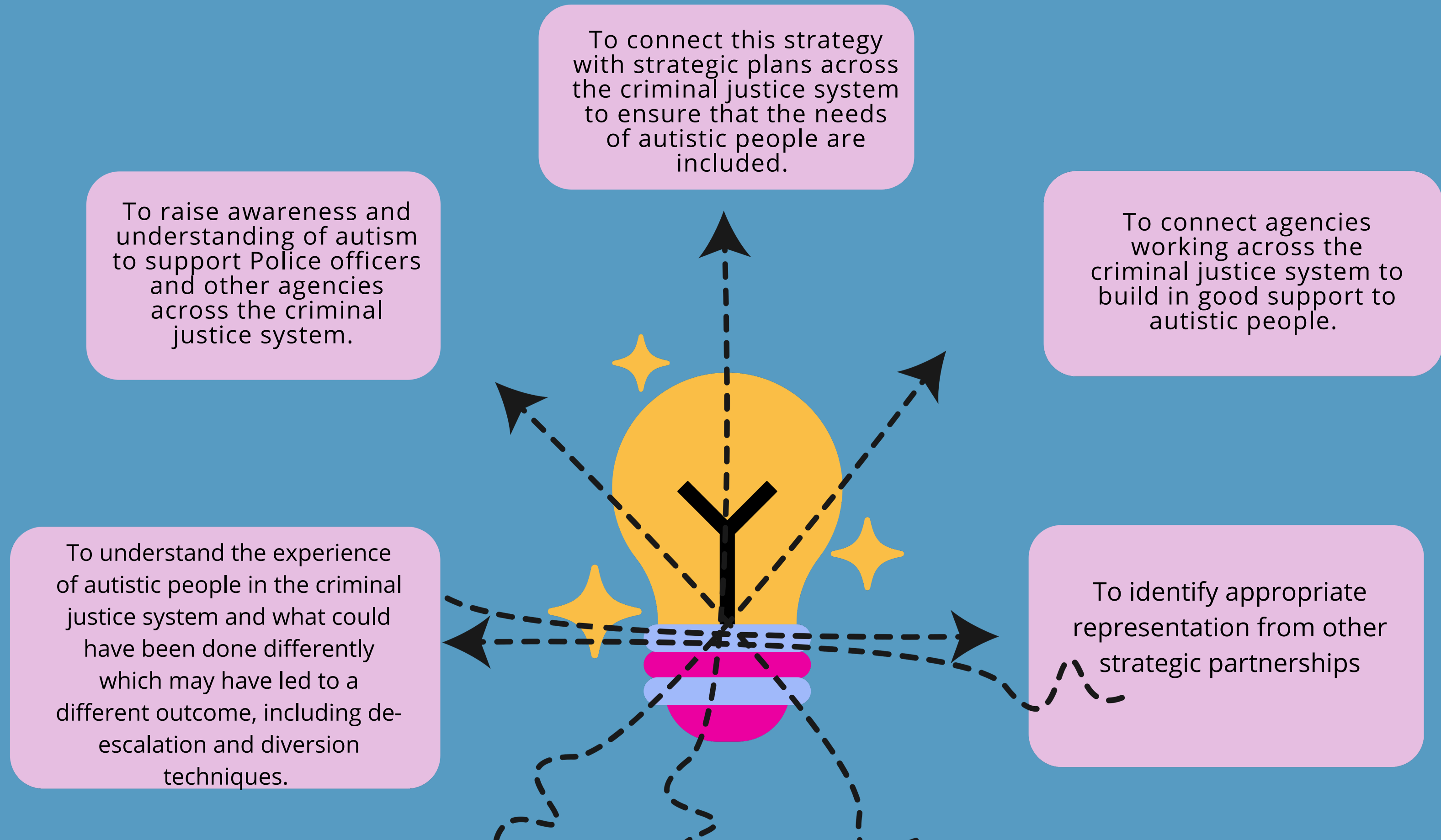
Some of the systems in place locally to divert young people away from the criminal justice system and how Children's Mental Health Services work to support

Situations can escalate quickly with the autistic person sometimes reacting to the situation they find themselves in which can sometimes lead to the worsening of a situation

# How we will work towards this:

1. We need to better understand the experience of autistic people with the criminal justice system
2. Raise awareness and improve understanding of autism amongst those who work within the criminal justice system.

# Action plan to include:





# Next steps



# Action plan: connect to national and local strategies.



How will we know if behaviour is changing towards autistic people and their families, what will our measures be?



How will we measure improvements?



What does good look like? (this needs to be led by the autistic community for each area?)



How do we support organisations , business and public sector services to become autism inclusive and affirming?



How do we support other initiatives via connecting to other public strategies across and the local authority and ICB initially to include workforce, transport, housing, L&D etc?



Action plan to include what does good look like for each theme of the strategy which will need to be led by/ informed by autistic people.



# Thank you again to everyone involved

**case**

**healthwatch**  
Kingston upon Hull

 **Hull**  
City Council

**chcp**  
Excellence • Compassion • Expertise

 **autism plus**  
ADDING VALUE TO LIVES

**Kids** Disabled children  
say we can

 **Hull  
Parent  
Carer  
Forum**

**Matthew's  
Hub**

**NHS**  
Humber and  
North Yorkshire  
Integrated Care Board (ICB)

  
**avocet trust**  
supporting vulnerable people

  
**AIM HIGHER**

**NHS**  
Humber and  
North Yorkshire  
Integrated Care Board (ICB)

  
**his ability  
Project**

  
**Find**  
for individual futures

# Have a question?

Email:

[adultsdeliveringdifferently@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:adultsdeliveringdifferently@hullcc.gov.uk)

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**Thank  
You.**