



# Real Change for Autistic People and their Families

Easy Read Version

June 2023

# What is this about?

The Autism Alliance is a partnership of charities from across the UK that support autistic people and their families.

The Autism Alliance wants to see things get better for autistic people and their families.

This document sets out some of the ways the Government could make things better.

It asks the Government and Members of Parliament to look at these ideas before the next General Election, so that their policies have the best chance of working.



# Why is this needed?

In the past fifteen years, the Government has done many things to improve autistic people's lives, including:

- Making a law specifically for autistic people that commits the Government to having a national strategy to improve autistic people's lives.
- Publishing strategies that tell autistic people what the Government will do to make things better.
- Launching initiatives, like better training in autism for staff in hospitals and care homes.

However, so far autistic people's lives haven't got better in the ways the Government wanted them to.

Autistic people haven't seen Real Change.

# What isn't improving?

Too many autistic children aren't enjoying school because some schools aren't very good at meeting their needs.

Autistic young people don't get enough support if they want to get a job or carry on training when they become adults.

The number of autistic adults who have jobs is lower than almost any other group.

There isn't enough help for autistic adults to live well in their communities, close to their family and friends.

There are too many autistic people in mental health hospitals, when they should be able to live in their communities.

Some autistic people are still being mistreated in mental health hospitals.

# Why aren't things improving?

Autistic people sometimes get good support from services in education, care, and the NHS. But this isn't always the case.

Things aren't improving because the Government's policies haven't addressed the really important barriers that can stop progress from happening.

These important barriers include:

- How strongly services are expected to improve autistic people's lives, and what happens if they don't.
- How money from the Government is used to buy the services that autistic people need to help them thrive and live in their communities.
- How people in services, and also in wider society, think about autism and how important it is to them to meet autistic people's needs.

# What does the Autism Alliance think?

The Autism Alliance thinks that:

- The consequences for services if they don't meet autistic people's needs, aren't strong enough.
- The way that services are funded means there isn't enough of the right kind of support for autistic people.
- The motivation to really understand autistic people and meet their needs isn't strong enough across all services.



# What does the Autism Alliance want?

The Autism Alliance wants to show Government that they can make things better.

- To do this, the Government will need to make different policies that help services get better.
- They will need to look at why services are not getting better for autistic people.
- They will need to invest more money so that autistic people have the services they need.
- They will need to help people in services really understand autistic people's needs, and how to meet these needs.
- They will need to make sure they are measuring the things that autistic people say are most important to them, to check they are improving.

# How will autistic people be involved?

The Autism Alliance thinks that:

- Everything the Government does to make things better for autistic people, should be discussed and agreed with autistic people.
- The Government will need to tell autistic people whether their policies are working.
- If the Government's policies are not working, autistic people will be able to tell the Government to get better, and expect that the Government will listen.





# Ideas for better policies

The Autism Alliance also has some ideas for new policies that could help make things better for autistic people, and wants the Government to think about these ideas.

These ideas include:

- A national programme to make sure families have the best information about autism, and the best help to make choices about the right services for autistic children, young people and adults.
- A new way of funding autism assessment services so that people don't have to wait years to get an autism diagnosis.
- A new way of funding services that help autistic people live well in their communities, so there is enough support for all autistic people that need it.
- An independent review to end cruelty to autistic people in mental health hospitals.

(More ideas on the next page)

# Ideas for better policies

- Making sure that every person that works in a school or hospital has had training to understand autism, and that they are committed to meeting autistic people's needs.
- Helping families to help other families learn about autism so that society is more accepting of autistic people.
- A person employed by the Government to uphold autistic people's rights, and also the rights of people with learning disabilities. This person would be called a Commissioner for Autism and Learning Disabilities.

# What should the Government do?

The Autism Alliance thinks the Government should set up a new programme to improve autistic people's lives.

- The new programme would be called 'Real Change for Autistic People and their Families', because that is what it would aim to do.
- This new programme would be the next version of the Government's current programme. The current programme is called the National Strategy for Autistic Children, Young People and Adults.
- The new programme would be led by one Government Minister who is responsible for making things better for autistic people.

The Autism Alliance wants the political parties in the UK to promise they will make things better for autistic people, and include this promise – and the new programme above – in their plans for the next General Election.



The Autism Alliance is campaigning for Real Change for Autistic People and their Families. You can find out more about our work at [www.autism-alliance.org.uk](http://www.autism-alliance.org.uk)

You can email us at [hello@autismalliance.org.uk](mailto:hello@autismalliance.org.uk)

We will continue to do our best to influence policy and champion the ideas and best practice that can help autistic people's lives get better.

