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NHS Foundation Trust**

Our Neurodiverse Voices at the Heart of Care

Supporting autistic people and the wider
neurodivergent community



Neurodivergent means your
brain works in a different way
to most people.



**Easy
read**

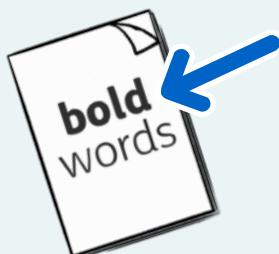
Easy read



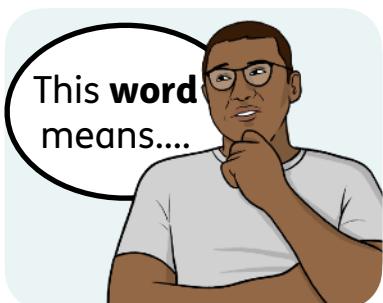
This is an easy-read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



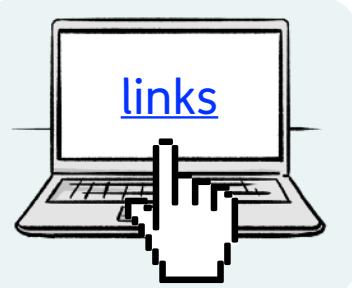
This easy-read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker.



If a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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About this booklet



Guy's and St Thomas'
NHS Foundation Trust

This information is from Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.



We want to give excellent healthcare services to everyone, including **neurodivergent** people, such as autistic people.



Neurodivergent means your brain works in a different way to most people.



We have written a plan to make our healthcare services better and easier for neurodivergent people to use.



Please read this booklet to find out more about our plan.

About our plan



Our plan is mostly about how we will support **autistic people**.

Autistic people have a condition called autism. It affects things like communication, being with other people, or how you think and feel about things.

Our plan will also help people with other neurodivergent conditions. These include:



- **ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).**

ADHD is a condition where you find it hard to focus on 1 thing. It may also be hard to keep still or be quiet.



- **Dyslexia** - this is a condition where you find it hard to read and understand words or letters.



- **Dyspraxia** - this is a condition where you find it hard to plan and control your body movements.



We talked to neurodivergent people, their carers and their families to help us understand how to support them.



They told us about the problems neurodivergent people face when they use healthcare services.



We used what we learned to help us write this plan.

Our 6 priorities



Our **6 priorities** are the most important things that we should do first.

Priority 1: Making services easier to use



Our healthcare services do not always give neurodivergent people the support they need.



This can make it harder for neurodivergent people to get good healthcare.



Priority 1 is about making it easier for neurodivergent people to use our healthcare services.

We will do our best to make it easier for neurodivergent people to use our services by:

- Having **flexible appointments** - this is where patients have more control over when appointments happen.

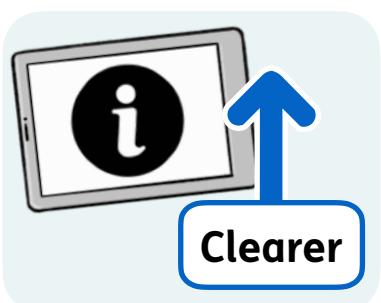


- Having healthcare places that are not too bright or noisy.



- Finding staff who already work here who can support **healthcare advocates**.

Healthcare advocates are staff members who can help neurodivergent people get healthcare services.



- Having clearer hospital signs and online information about healthcare.



- Making a care plan for each patient. This will explain what they need and how they want to talk with staff.

Priority 2: Understanding neurodivergent people



Many health workers do not understand how to support neurodivergent people.



This means that many neurodivergent people have bad experiences of healthcare services.



Priority 2 is about making sure that staff understand neurodivergent people better, so they can give the right support.



We will do this by:

- Giving staff training about how to support neurodivergent people.



- Making it quicker and easier for staff to check if a patient is neurodivergent.

We will also help staff understand neurodivergent people better by:

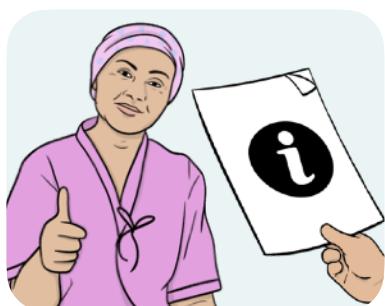


- Using **Reasonable Adjustment Flags**.

A **Reasonable Adjustment Flag** is information on your health record that tells staff if you need any **reasonable adjustments**.



Reasonable adjustments are changes that a service can make to help neurodivergent or disabled people get the support they need.



- Giving patients information in a way they can understand.



This includes easy-read information and information with pictures for people who cannot read.

Priority 3: Making sure people have a fair chance to get good healthcare



Neurodivergent people often have worse health than other people.



This is partly because it can be harder for them to get good healthcare.



They may also be more likely to face problems that make their health worse. For example, not having a job or a place to live.



Priority 3 is about giving neurodivergent people a fairer chance to get good healthcare.

We will give neurodivergent people a fairer chance to get good healthcare by:



- Having **health passports**.

A **health passport** is a document that tells staff about the healthcare and support that a patient needs.



- Letting the carers of neurodivergent patients stay with them as much as possible, if the patient wants this to happen and would find it helpful.



- Healthcare and support services will communicate with each other to make sure that care is joined up.

Priority 4: Supporting families and carers



Families and carers are very important for giving neurodivergent people support.



But families and carers often find it hard to help neurodivergent people get the right healthcare.



Priority 4 is about supporting the families and carers of neurodivergent people.

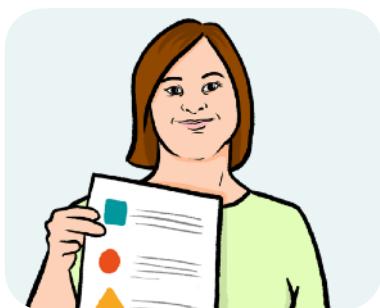


We will do this by helping families to understand how to use our services, and get reasonable adjustments for the patients.

We will also support families and carers by:



- Thinking about having trained volunteers to support families of neurodivergent people.



- Giving information in ways that are easier for some neurodivergent people to understand, like this easy-read booklet.



- Training staff on how to ask questions when they are worried about a neurodivergent patient's safety.



- Having clear information for parents about the changes in law when their child turns 16 to 18 years old.



- Agreeing with patients on how the carers or family of neurodivergent patients should take part in health appointments.

Priority 5: Supporting neurodivergent children and young people



This section is for young people, but it can also be used to support adults.



Turning 18 can be a stressful time for some neurodivergent people.

Child services



Adult services

This is because between the ages of 14 to 25 you move from child healthcare services to adult healthcare services.



This usually means getting healthcare from new people, and in new places you have not been before.



Priority 5 is about supporting neurodivergent children and young people.



We will make it easier for young neurodivergent people to move to adult healthcare services.



We will do this by:

- Talking to young people in a way they can understand.



- Making sure young people still get the care they need when they move to adult services.

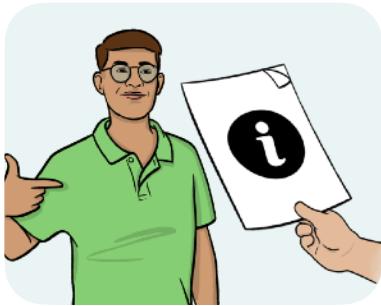


- Helping young people get used to new places and health services.



- Making sure that we give support that works well with our other plans.

We will also support neurodivergent children and young people by:



- Giving clear information to young people. This will help them understand what will happen when they move to adult services.



- Working hard to support neurodivergent children as early as possible.



We will work with healthcare services, patients and parents to make sure these plans work for everyone.

Priority 6: Supporting neurodivergent staff



Neurodivergent people often find it harder to get a job or get the right support at work.



If neurodivergent staff feel happy and included at work, this can help them do their jobs well.



Priority 6 is about supporting our neurodivergent staff.



We will work with neurodivergent staff to help us with this part of our plan.



We made these ideas for certain groups, but they can be used to help everyone.

We will support neurodivergent staff by:



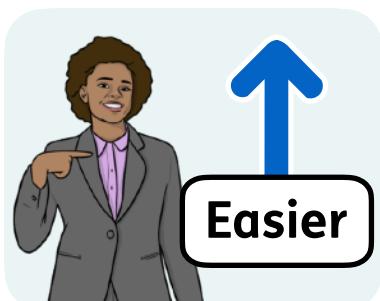
- Making it easier for neurodivergent people to take part in interviews.



- Sharing adverts for new jobs in a way that is clear and easy to understand, in places where neurodivergent people will see them.



- Letting people know that we support neurodivergent staff.



- Running programmes that help make it easier for new staff to start working for us.



- Making sure, where possible, that the workplace is suitable for individual needs.

We will also support neurodivergent people by:



- Giving managers training about how to support neurodivergent staff.



- Celebrating neurodivergent people and the different ways people think.



This could include running groups where neurodivergent staff meet with each other.

What happens next?

Here are the steps we will take next:



Step 1: Work with experts to find out how well our plan will work.



Step 2: Work with neurodivergent people, carers, families, and staff to help us decide how to follow our plan.



Step 3: Check if our plan is going well.



Step 4: Write reports about how the plan is going.