

Fulfilling and rewarding lives for adults  
with Autistic Spectrum Conditions  
living in York

A Joint Strategy for 2013-15

*A working strategy*

## **Summary of this strategy**

This is the first joint strategy for York which aims to put the national guidelines as set out in 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' into the local context of York. The five main outcomes within 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' are:

- Increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals
  - developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment
  - improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need to live independently within the community
  - helping adults with autism into work, and
  - enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities.
- Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives.<sup>1</sup>

This first joint strategy for York is an initial response to the changes required by the national guidance and aims to work towards these guidelines and the vision of 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' whilst putting it into a local context. It is not complete and will need to be reviewed on a regular basis. York, like many areas, does not know enough about prevalence, need and what works well and is working towards addressing this gap in knowledge. To this end this strategy is a living, changing document that will evolve and expand.

## **Introduction**

This strategy is the first strategy for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) in York. It takes into account the individual, complex and diverse nature of autism and responds to this. As a document it does not stand alone and links in with the Children's Autism Strategy and the Learning Disabilities Commissioning Strategy.

In developing and implementing this strategy it must be noted that unlike other legislative developments no ring-fenced funding was provided by central government to support this. Local Authorities and NHS partners

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<sup>1</sup> "Fulfilling and rewarding lives" *The strategy for adults with autism in England*, Department of Health, (2010)

are expected to meet the needs of adults with autism through existing budgets.

It must also be acknowledged that an outcome of the comprehensive spending review and resulting savings within the public sector mean that there are reduced public sector budgets at a time when adults with autism should expect to benefit from legislation and policy directives.

Partners want to work with people with autism, their families and carers and be as innovative as possible to create positive changes for people with autism in York. As 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives states:

“Autism is sometimes described as a ‘hidden disability’, not only because it has no physical signs, but also because adults with autism are some of the most excluded, and least visible, people in the UK. All adults with autism should be able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives in a society that accepts and understands them.”  
Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives<sup>2</sup>

A key aim of the strategy is to increase awareness of autism and make all services accessible for people with autism because everyone should be able to have their needs met in the best place for them.

This strategy is for adults but we will work in partnership with children’s services to learn from the work they have already done and to smooth the path of people in transition from children’s to adult’s services.

### **Definition of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)**

Autism is a condition that affects an estimated 1% of the population. People with autism are often described as having a ‘triad of impairment’; social communication, social interaction and social imagination. Increasingly there is evidence of the importance of sensory differences in people with autism – either hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity.

Autism is often referred to as an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). The word spectrum is used because whilst all people on the spectrum will share three main areas of difficulty their condition will affect them in different ways hence the often quoted:

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<sup>2</sup> “*Fulfilling and rewarding lives*” *The strategy for adults with autism in England*, Department of Health, (2010)

“If you’ve met one person with autism – you’ve met one person with autism.”

Some people with autism will live independent lives whilst others will require a lifetime of specialist support. Whilst those with less severe symptoms and no learning disability may appear to ‘get by’, they are often subject to less obvious difficulties such as social exclusion, isolation and bullying.

**Aspergers Syndrome:** is commonly described as a 'hidden disability'. People with Aspergers also have a ‘triad of impairment’. Whilst there are similarities with autism, people with Asperger syndrome have fewer problems with speaking and are often of average, or above average, intelligence. They do not usually have the accompanying learning disabilities associated with autism, but they may have specific learning difficulties. These may include dyslexia and dyspraxia or other conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and epilepsy. They may also have difficulty in learning social rules.

**Autism and Learning Disability:** People with autism can also have a learning disability, which can affect all aspects of their life, from studying in school to learning how to wash themselves or make a meal. *The estimated prevalence of autism among adults with learning disabilities in England (2010)*<sup>3</sup> concluded,

We estimate that between 20% and 33% of adults known to Councils with Social Services Responsibilities as people with learning disabilities also have autism.

For the purposes of this strategy the definition of autism will cover everyone on the autistic spectrum.

Many people with autism also have particular strengths which they can bring to the workplace. They are good at following instructions, abiding by rules, sticking to structured programmes; and they can have good technical skills.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Estimated Prevalence of Autism among Adults with Learning Disabilities in England*, Eric Emerson & Susannah Baines (2010)

## How many people have autism in York?

The numbers of people with autism in the general population are not well understood. It is estimated that more than half a million people have autism in the UK which equates approximately to 1% of the general population having autism<sup>4</sup> as estimated in the 2001 census.

The Projecting Adults Needs and Information System (PANSI) uses this estimate to locally project that the numbers in the 18-64 age group within York with autism and a learning disability in 2012 are 1,287 rising to 1,306 by 2020 and to 1,339 by 2030<sup>5</sup>. The detailed breakdown is seen in the table below.

<b>People with a learning disability and are on the autistic spectrum</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>
People aged 18-24 predicted to have autistic spectrum disorders	279	275	255	283
People aged 25-34 predicted to have autistic spectrum disorders	295	312	318	292
People aged 35-44 predicted to have autistic spectrum disorders	245	239	256	294
People aged 45-54 predicted to have autistic spectrum disorders	255	260	244	239
People aged 55-64 predicted to have autistic spectrum disorders	213	211	233	230
<b>Total population aged 18-64 predicted to have autistic spectrum disorders</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>1,296</b>	<b>1,306</b>	<b>1,339</b>

The Projecting Adults Needs and Information System (PANSI), York, February 2013

It should be noted that estimates of the proportion of people with autism and a learning disability vary considerably and therefore an accurate figure is unlikely however an estimate would be under 50%.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.autism.org.uk/about-autism/myths-facts-and-statistics/statistics-how-many-people-have-autism-spectrum-disorders.aspx>

<sup>5</sup>

<http://www.pansi.org.uk/index.php?pageNo=392&areaID=8640&loc=8640>

This could mean that over 50% of people with autism have an IQ in the average to high range and a proportion of these will be very able intellectually. As The National Autistic Society states,

Some very able people with autism may never come to the attention of services as having special needs, because they have learned strategies to overcome any difficulties with communication and social interaction and found fulfilling employment. Other people with autism may be able intellectually, but have need of support from services, because the degree of impairment they have of social interaction hampers their chances of employment and achieving independence.

The National Autistic Society<sup>6</sup>

There are no reliable estimates on prevalence of Aspergers Syndrome, studies only go so far as to suggest around half of all those with autism also have a learning disability and the other half are likely to have high functioning autism including Aspergers Syndrome.

There are currently approximately 180 adults with a diagnosis of autism known to social services, either through the Learning Disabilities Community Team or through the Long Term Care Management Team. There will also be other individuals who are currently receiving support from social services but who have never had a formal diagnosis of autism.

We know that within York over the next 5 years there will be approximately 90 people who have been diagnosed with autism leaving school, including both mainstream and specialist schools.

These figures do not reflect people who have never had a diagnosis and / or have not come to the attention of social services or health during their adult life in York. There is still work to be done with regards to getting a clearer picture of actual figures of people with autism in York.

As stated, in York at present there is not a full and detailed picture of the number of adults with autism within the York area.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.autism.org.uk/about-autism/myths-facts-and-statistics/statistics-how-many-people-have-autism-spectrum-disorders.aspx>

With regards to autism and mental health The Health & Wellbeing in York Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2012 puts as a recommendation:

We recommend that work be undertaken to establish a full and holistic picture of mental health needs across the whole population and in relation to specific groups of people (including the Gypsy and Traveller community, looked after children, teenage mothers, people with autism, parents experiencing stress, people misusing substances, people who are unemployed, older adults including those with dementia and carers) in order to inform future planning and commissioning activity.

The Health & Wellbeing in York Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2012<sup>7</sup>

Although this only looks at one aspect with regards to people with autism and mental health it does mean that information on people with autism will need to be gathered and this might give us a better understanding of mental health and autism.

As acknowledged work still needs to be done with regards to collating and working towards getting a clearer picture of autism figures in York and this will form part of this action plan.

### **The bigger picture – national policy context**

There are key themes which link strongly to the messages we hear from people with autism and their carers. People want good information, staff who are trained to understand their specific needs; services which respond to individual need; and a joined-up approach between health, social care and other support.

**The Autism Act (2009)** identifies the collective commitment to improve the lives of people with autism and their families. It was the first ever legislation to focus on a particular disorder and ensure the government made a commitment to improving service provision and support for those with autism.

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<sup>7</sup> The Health & Wellbeing in York Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2012

The Act made two key provisions; that the Government produce an adult autism strategy by 1 April 2010, and that the Secretary of State for Health issue statutory guidance for local authorities and local health bodies on supporting the needs of adults with autism by 31 December 2010.

It is important to note that all adults with autism are now formally recognised as having a disability by the Autism Act (2009). This is a slightly stronger position than that of the Guidance published in 2006 to accompany the Disability Discrimination Act which makes it clear that the definition of disability can cover people with all forms of autism, including Aspergers Syndrome. This is especially relevant given the difficulties people with autism report in accessing mainstream services in health and social care. It gives added weight to the legal duties on the NHS bodies and local authorities, for example to ensure access to diagnosis, assessment, information and advice.

In 2010 “**Fulfilling and rewarding lives**” **The strategy for adults with autism in England**<sup>8</sup> was published with the key aim of improving the lives of people with autism and their families. Following on from this the first year delivery plan<sup>9</sup> was published in April 2010. The new government has consulted and published guidance for implementing Fulfilling and rewarding lives<sup>10</sup>, indicating it continues to be seen as important policy.

In 2011 **Improving access to social care for autism**<sup>11</sup> was published. These guidelines from the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) give a number of key recommendations for practice, including:

- Greater understanding of autism among the social care workforce is really important, but it needs to go hand in hand with in depth knowledge of the individual with autism
- Better awareness of autism in the social care sector can help people get a diagnosis of autism and get timely and appropriate support when they are diagnosed

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<sup>8</sup> “*Fulfilling and rewarding lives*” *The strategy for adults with autism in England*, Department of Health, 2010

<sup>9</sup> *Towards “Fulfilling and rewarding lives” The first year delivery plan for adults with autism in England*, Department of Health 2010

<sup>10</sup> *Implementing Fulfilling Rewarding Lives*, Department of Health, 2010

<sup>11</sup> *Social Care Institute for Excellence (2011). Improving access to social care for adults with autism*. SCIE, October 2011



- Staff supporting people with autism need to make adjustments in how they work, plan and communicate with people with autism and with each other, so that services can be more accessible to people with autism
- Managers and commissioners of services also need to be flexible, creative and collaborative in how they meet the needs of people with autism.
- Good support is vital when people with autism experience significant life changes
- Multidisciplinary specialist autism services can provide good outcomes for people with autism. Professionals should offer carers support in their own right and work in partnership with them to provide the best possible assessment and service provision

In June 2012 **NICE Clinical guideline: Autism: recognition, referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum**<sup>12</sup> was published. This guideline gives key priorities for implementation; General Principles of Care (All staff working with adults with autism should; working partnership with adults with autism, offer support and care respectfully and take time to build a trusting, supporting and non-judgemental relationship as an essential part of care), Identification and Assessment, Interventions for Autism, Organisation and Delivery of Care.

### **Aims and Objectives**

Fulfilling and rewarding lives identifies 5 key areas, as stated above, and those will form the basis of the key priorities on which the action plan will be based.

New funding for commissioning activities to fund the strategy is unlikely given the current financial position within the public sector. This means a greater focus will be placed on ensuring existing services are fit for purpose and enhancing experiences of mainstream services.

The priorities are:

1. increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals;

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<sup>12</sup> *Autism: recognition, referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum*, NICE clinical guideline 142, June 2012

2. developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment;
3. improving access to the support that adults with autism need to live independently within the community;
4. helping adults with autism into work;
5. enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities.

### **What people with autism and their parents / carers tell us**

City of York Council has been seeking to engage with people with autism and their families. The primary aim continues to be to engage with as many people as possible, both those known to services and those not, to better understand what is and is not working for people and families. Various approaches have been undertaken with questionnaires being sent out through various means, commissioners going to known groups and by attending an event undertaken by a local group.

Messages to date that are coming back through peer support groups, talking to people with autism and their carers, attending a Lives Unlimited event and through a questionnaire tell us very clearly that people want to live in their communities with the appropriate support that enables this to happen.

“Remember we want the same thing as everyone else –  
home, education and a job. Not separate, not different”  
Lives Unlimited Event, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2012

The top 3 priorities identified by people in York who responded to the questionnaire were:

1. More information about what support is available
2. More opportunities for social inclusion and befriending
3. More help with finding employment and more job opportunities

Consultation with regards to this strategy is ongoing and Commissioners will continue to go to groups to gain feedback. The emphasis remains that this document is a working document which will continue to evolve.

### **Partnership Working**

We are committed to working in partnership and close collaboration with:

- Individuals with autism, their families and carers
- Children 's Services - Health and Community Services
- Health Provider Services
- Health Commissioning Services
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Providers of support for people with autism

BUT we still need to achieve engagement with wider stakeholders to ensure that all of this strategy can be delivered and the everyday experiences of people living in York with autism are improved.

## What we will do

### **Priority 1: increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals**

Failing to understand autism, and the implications for adults with autism, mean that many individuals with autism do not receive the appropriate support from public services and therefore sometimes fail to access them. This may increase a sense of isolation and lead to physical and mental problems that will only be treated once those problems have reached crisis point. Increasing awareness amongst frontline staff about autism will mean that there is more likelihood of better support and less people reaching crisis before getting or asking for support.

*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives* makes it clear that the most fundamental step towards improving services for adults with autism is to increase awareness and understanding of autism across all public services. Increased awareness and understanding of autism will provide the foundations for the broader changes sought to the way services are provided, planned and delivered.

Implementing Fulfilling Rewarding Lives<sup>13</sup>

Every health or social care service should be ready to provide services to people with autism, or to their families or others who care for them.

Skills for Care and Skills for Health, 2011<sup>14</sup>

### **What we will do:**

- Raise public awareness and understanding of autism and promote a positive image and attitude towards everyone on the autistic spectrum.
- Work towards including autism within key policies and procedures.
- Work with people with Autism to develop / plan / be involved in training of professionals and ensuring this is linked in to all actions.

<sup>13</sup> *Implementing Fulfilling Rewarding Lives*, Department of Health, 2010

<sup>14</sup> *Autism skills and knowledge list, for workers in generic health and social care services, Part of the 'Better social care and health outcomes for people with autism' series*, Skills for Care and Skills for Health, 2011

- Establish a group who will identify and report on gaps in awareness training and will report on this and work towards getting the gaps in training filled.
- Ensure the Health and Wellbeing Board is well briefed on the autism strategy and is clear about leadership and commissioning implications.
- Within the first year Autism will be an agenda item on the Health and Wellbeing Board, Without Walls Strategic Partnership, the York Fairness Commission.
- Discuss with City of York Council's Workforce Development Unit with regards to facilitating an autism awareness course for next year's module and ensure this training is ongoing.
- Review on line materials and local programmes to identify best practice alongside City of York Council's Workforce development Unit who will promote to partners and professionals the e-learning opportunities / modules that have been developed specifically for Autism nationally.
- Improve training and autism awareness among front line public sector staff (can be included in general equality and diversity training across all public services).
- Participation in training and awareness training is actively promoted and encouraged by senior managers across all health and social care provision and more widely across all sectors.
- Provide specialist training for GPs and workers in social care and health care settings who regularly come into contact with people with autism.
- Work closely with children's services to ensure there is good understanding of issues for young people with autism as they become young adults. In particular, ensure the York Transition Team have a good understanding of the needs of young people with autism.

## **Priority 2:**

**developing a clear, consistent pathway for diagnosis in every area, which is followed by the offer of a personalised needs assessment**

Better Services for People with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder<sup>15</sup> reported that many people with autism and their families found that a diagnosis of autism was helpful in understanding the support needed by an individual. *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives* suggests:

... diagnosis is not a goal in itself. Instead, it is one part of an integrated process which should lead to adults with autism being able to access the services and support they need.

*Fulfilling and rewarding lives*<sup>16</sup>)

For adults with autism in York obtaining a diagnosis of autism often means going out of area for an assessment although a diagnosis is only part of the journey in getting the right support for their particular needs.

### **What we will do:**

- Identify a lead professional in Health.
- Develop a clear and consistent pathway for people with autism from diagnosis to social care assessment.
- Work towards developing within the existing team a social work resource with specialist knowledge.
- Develop post diagnostic information and signposting.
- Collate more accurate inter agency, (housing, social care and health) data to provide appropriate services and support for young people as they move to adulthood
- Ensure there is a clear pathway for young people as they move from children's to adult services

<sup>15</sup> *Better services for people with an autistic spectrum disorder*, Department of Health,(2006)

<sup>16</sup> *"Fulfilling and rewarding lives" The strategy for adults with autism in England*, Department of Health, (2010)

- Develop York’s Education, Health and Care plan, commonly known as the ‘single plan’. The plan is to coordinate assessment and provide a single action plan, agreed by health, education and social care, as appropriate. It is aimed to support young adults with autism and special educational needs, who would benefit from continuing their education beyond school leaving age, and up to a maximum of 25 years.

**Priority 3:  
improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need to live independently within the community**

All public service delivery is currently underpinned by the Equality Act 2010, which requires all organisations that provide a service to the public to make reasonable adjustments to those services to ensure they are accessible for disabled people. This includes making reasonable adjustments for people with autism.

Equality of access is a fundamental principle of UK public services. But it is clear that, too often, adults with autism are not currently able to access the services or support they need.

*Fulfilling and rewarding lives*<sup>17)</sup>

Many people with autism can, with access to the right support / services, live independently, often small adjustments to the immediate environment or to the way professionals engage with the person with autism can make the service accessible to the person with autism.

**What we will do:**

- Ensure that accurate data is available and is up-to-date with regard to the demography profile of all people on the autistic spectrum.
- Continue to develop, within the existing financial constraints, supported living opportunities for more adults with complex autism.
- Continue to develop, within the existing financial constraints, short-term and respite / short breaks facilities for people with autism.

<sup>17</sup> “*Fulfilling and rewarding lives*” *The strategy for adults with autism in England*, Department of Health, (2010)

- Work with Housing colleagues to promote awareness training among housing professionals, Estate Managers etc.
- Work with partners to help support people with autism in their own homes.
- Consider how we can build community capacity to support people with autism within their communities.
- Ensure that advocacy support will be available for people with autism when it is needed.
- The use of 'group' budgets will be explored to enable adults with autism to engage in 'autism friendly' group activities.
- Map all autism-specific and autism-friendly services in and around York.

#### **Priority 4: helping adults with autism into work**

We know that only 15% of adults with autism are employed nationally<sup>18</sup>. We also know that:

The ability to get, and keep, a job and then to progress in work is the best route out of poverty, and a central part of social inclusion. We know that adults with autism are significantly underrepresented in the labour market and we are committed to doing more to help adults with autism into work.

*Fulfilling and rewarding lives*<sup>19</sup>

People with autism are entitled to the same life chances as everyone and this includes employment.

<sup>18</sup> *I Exist*, National Autistic Society, 2008

<sup>19</sup> "*Fulfilling and rewarding lives*" *The strategy for adults with autism in England*, Department of Health, (2010)



### **What we will do:**

- Ensure that people with autism are represented and their needs addressed in City of York Council's Employment Strategy.
- Secure representation from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) onto strategy group.
- Consider wording of support specifications to potentially include employment support where appropriate. (day support to look at employment as a meaningful activity not just leisure / education pursuits).
- Ensure the new DWP work scheme considers the needs of people with autism.
- Work closely with children's transition services to promote work experience/volunteering within school and as an essential element of post maintained education personalised learning packages
- Work with post maintained education providers to offer work related learning courses to support young people with autism to be 'work-ready'.

**Priority 5:  
enabling local partners to plan and develop appropriate support for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities.**

We want to make it easier for adults with autism to access mainstream public services and to be fully included in society. We want to enable

adults with autism and their families to have greater choice and control over where and how they live

*Fulfilling and rewarding lives*<sup>20)</sup>

People with autism are entitled to the same life chances as everyone else in society.

**What we will do:**

- Establish a working group to scope how people can best live their life in their own community.
- Explore with the new advocacy service the potential interest in the development of an autism self advocacy group
- Assist in establishing a self advocacy group for people with autism to inform future planning.
- Identify the needs of older people with autism and work towards meeting those needs.
- Working group to provide reports to appropriate strategy partnership delivery body (LD and MH partnership board which reports to the health and wellbeing board?).
- Establish a wider stake holder reference group including people with autism to feed into the strategy group.
- Consider how information and signposting to relevant services happens and how to improve this experience.

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<sup>20</sup> *“Fulfilling and rewarding lives” The strategy for adults with autism in England*, Department of Health, (2010)

- Ensure that the Strategy Group is aware of services and networks locally that people with autism currently access, as well as any gaps there may be.
- Liaise with other Local Authority strategy groups to share learning and experiences.
- If a person is eligible for social care the Social Care Team will continue to ensure that personalised approaches continue to be undertaken.

### **Governance and implementation**

An action plan will be developed detailing the actions needed to deliver the key priorities alongside timescales for delivery and identifying who is responsible for making it happen. This will be overseen by the Autism Strategy Group.

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## **Other documents and policies which apply to adults with autism**

### **Access to Work, Department of Work and Pensions**

A specialist disability programme delivered by Jobcentre Plus, which provides work related practical advice and financial assistance.

### **Aiming High for Disabled Children (2007), Department of Health**

Introduced the Transition Support Programme which works to support local areas to improve transition arrangements across health and social care.

### **Bradley Review (2009), Department of Health**

Examines the extent to which offenders with mental health or learning disabilities could, in appropriate cases, be diverted from prison to other services, and the barriers to such diversion. The review makes a series of recommendations.

### **Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment (2009), Department of Work and Pensions**

Sets out Government plans to combat the effects of the recession and to help young people into jobs and training more quickly and to support older workers.

### **Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities (2008), Communities and Local Government**

Provides statutory guidance to local authorities and their partners on creating strong, safe and prosperous communities.

**Disability Discrimination Act (2005), Home Office**

Promotes civil rights for disabled people and protects disabled people from discrimination.

**Equality Act (2010), Home Office**

A commitment to provide an accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

**Health and Social Care Act (2012), Department of Health**

Primary Care Trusts will be replaced by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to purchase health services, thus placing General Practitioners (GPs) at the centre of commissioning. The voice of patients will be strengthened through the development of local HealthWatch organisations and Public Health England, will lead on public health at national level, and local authorities will lead at a local level.

**High Quality Care for All (2008), Department of Health**

The final report of Lord Darzi's NHS Next Stage Review. It responds to the 10 Strategic Health Authorities' strategic visions and sets out a framework for quality to be at the centre of the NHS.

**Improving Health, Supporting Justice: The national delivery plan of the Health and Criminal Justice Programme Board (2009), Department of Health**

This national delivery plan contributes to key Government initiatives around protecting the public, reducing health inequalities, reducing reoffending, and health improvement and protection.

**Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People (2005), Department of Health**

Examines how disabled people in Britain should have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life, and should be respected and included as equal members of society.

**Independence and Opportunity: Our Strategy for Supporting People (2007), Communities and Local Government**

The Department for Communities and Local Government vision on how it intends to improve housing opportunities.

**Independent Living Strategy (2008), Office for Disability Issues**

States disabled people who need support to go about their daily lives will have greater choice and control over how support is provided; and disabled people will have greater access to housing, health, education, employment, leisure and transport opportunities and to participation in family and community life.

**Mental Capacity Act (2005), Department of Health**

Provides a legal framework for people who lack capacity, placing people who lack capacity at the heart of the decision-making process; this includes people with autism and those who may not find it easy to express their choice in words. The Act requires an assumption that people have capacity to make decisions for themselves unless there is evidence to the contrary.

**National Service Framework for Mental Health: five years on (2004), Department of Health**

Key relevance is to continue tackling barriers creating social exclusion.

**New Horizons: Working Together for Better Mental Health (2009), Department of Health**

Aims are to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the population, and the quality and accessibility of services for people with poor mental health.

**Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: A New Direction for Community Services (2006), Department of Health**

All services should become more responsive, focusing on people with complex needs, and shifting care and support closer to home.

**Putting People First (2007), Department of Health**

Organisations to work together to provide information, advice and advocacy, early intervention and re-enablement, prevention and personalisation for people with learning disabilities.

**Roadmap 2025 (2009), Department of Work and Pensions**

Sets out how government departments are working towards disability equality by 2025.

**Safeguarding Adults: A Consultation on the Review of the ‘No Secrets’ Guidance (2008), Department of Health**

To safeguard and protect adults who may become vulnerable and enable them to live safely in their local communities and not be constrained by abuse.

**Valuing Employment Now: real jobs for people with learning disabilities (2009), Department of health**

Sets out the goal to radically increase the number of people with learning disabilities in employment by 2025.

**Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century (2001), Department of Health**

A White Paper, focusing on achieving fulfilling lives for people with learning disabilities aiming to redress inequalities.

**Valuing People Now (2009), Department of Health**

Restates the principles and priorities in the Valuing People White Paper (2001), and commitment to achieve its aims within 3 years.

**Work Choice, Department of Work and Pensions**

A pan-disability programme, introduced in October 2010, to help customers who face complex disability related barriers and have the highest support needs find and keep a paid job or progress while in work.