



Autism and Neurodiversity Delivery Plan Update April 2026

ASC Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 23rd April 2026

Lead director: Kate Galoppi

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All.
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- Report version number: 1.0.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The ASC Scrutiny commission received a report in March 2025 seeking feedback and endorsement on the new 'Leicester City Adult Social Care Autism Delivery Plan 2024-2026.
- 1.2 Following feedback from the Scrutiny commission the delivery plan has strengthened its focus on neurodiversity as well as autism. In developing and delivering this work it is important to recognise that individuals who experience neurodivergence experience it differently and may not wish to be defined by diagnostic labels. We need to recognise this whilst ensuring it does not limit our ambitions to create environments and support that are accessible and inclusive for everyone in the city. To achieve this, we ensure that people affected by Neurodivergence and autism are at the centre of what we are doing by working in co-production and partnership wherever possible.
- 1.3 This report presents to the commission progress made since the launch of the plan, with a particular focus on events and activities taking place across Leicester City to deliver on the first priority of the Autism and Neurodiversity Delivery Plan which is ***“to make sure that information, advice and guidance is easy to find and use, reliable and consistent for autistic and neurodivergent people.”***

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The ASC Scrutiny Commission is invited to comment on the progress of the delivery plan for Neurodiversity and Autism.

3. Background

- 3.1. Leicester City Autism and Neurodiversity Delivery Plan is grounded in a clear legal and strategic framework. It aligns with:
 - Care Act 2014 – ensuring fair access to information, advice, and support that helps people make informed decisions.

- Equality Act 2010 – embedding reasonable adjustments and accessible services so no one is disadvantaged.
- Autism Act 2009 – supporting early diagnosis, workforce awareness, and appropriate local services.

3.2 These duties provide the foundation for the Delivery Plan, ensuring all priorities are statutory-compliant while focusing on what autistic and neurodivergent people, and their carers, have told us matters most.

3.3 The Delivery Plan was launched on the City Council website in January 2026, and a project delivery group is now up and running to provide governance and direction for this work.

Data and evidence base

3.4 Strengthened data collection and analysis is central to planning. The revised Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has now been published and, includes separate chapters for autism and learning disabilities and autism only. This enables targeted, evidence-driven prioritisation.¹

3.5 The chapter for autism only is the first one in Leicester time which means that for the first time we will have data and recommendations broken down by these distinct groups enabling us to focus our work on areas for improvement more effectively.

3.6 There are several key recommendations and findings in the JSNA that have helped us to identify key areas for focused work. Leicester City has specific challenges for autistic and neurodivergent residents, particularly in areas of higher deprivation and within its large ethnic minority communities. Autistic adults experience higher rates of mental ill health, and national data shows significant growth in autistic mental health inpatients, especially those without a learning disability, highlighting increasing demand on services.

3.7 The JSNA and local engagement have identified key priorities, including improving access to culturally sensitive support, addressing health inequalities, supporting carers, and ensuring services, public spaces, and transport are more accessible for people who are autistic and/or neurodivergent.

Progress against Delivery

3.8 The Autism and Neurodiversity Delivery Plan has now been published on the City Council's website and shares our intention for this to be the first step towards Leicester becoming an Autism and Neurodiversity Friendly City along with the six priorities we are working on.

¹ [Adults' Joint Strategic Needs Assessments | Joint Strategic Needs Assessment | Leicester City Council...](#)

- 3.9 A Project Delivery group has been formed to provide governance and direction for the delivery of the Plan. Joint funding has been agreed for a part time 2-year fixed term Business Change Commissioning Manager post who will lead on the implementation of the Council's and Health's ambitions around autism, neurodiversity, and the development of short breaks.
- 3.10 For the Neurodiverse Friendly City blueprint initial benchmarking has taken place with Bradford City Council and further benchmarking is planned with Cardiff. The learning and evidence gathered from this benchmarking and the initial phase of the delivery plan will inform the first draft of the Blueprint, for consideration in June 2026.
- 3.11 Central to the Delivery Plan is co production and engagement with autistic and neurodivergent people, their families, and carers. As part of Autism Acceptance Month and Neurodiversity Celebration Week in the third week of March and the whole of April, we are delivering a series of community engagement events under the banner of "Leading Better Lives."
- 3.12 These informal sessions have been designed to improve accessibility, encourage open conversations, and strengthen links between the Council and the community.

At each session, we are providing:

- Information about Autism Space and how families can access helpful information and support about autism and neurodivergence.
 - Information on wider health-related services
 - Signposting to relevant voluntary and community sector groups
 - Information on local organisations and peer support networks that autistic and neurodivergent (ND) individuals may find helpful.
- 3.13 In addition to providing information, we are using these sessions as an opportunity to gather feedback from autistic and neurodivergent individuals, families, and community members on what they would like to see in a more ND-friendly city as a part of the longer-term Autism ND Delivery plan. This feedback will help inform future planning, service development, and partnership work.
- 3.14 We have already delivered our first two sessions at the Brite Centre in Braunstone and the Eyres Monsell Children's and Young People's Club. Both sessions have been well attended and already given us helpful insights about what people who live in the city want to see in place to make the city more neurodivergent friendly.
- 3.15 In attendance so far, we have had Social Workers, representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Violence Reduction Network as well as VCSE organisations. Our aim is to build a network of people with lived experience and professionals who want to have an influence

in the city, and first indications from the drop ins is that this would be welcomed.

- 3.16 We are also working in partnership with a small local organisation called “A Different Human Design”. This organisation provides information and awareness of all neurodivergent conditions and is run by people with lived experience. They aim to equip people with information and do this in innovative ways including a “book/information bus” that travels around to different venues. A Different Human Design are delivering an event on the 11th and 12th April at the High Cross called “Beat the Odds” which has brought together a wide variety of providers, activities and initiatives across Leicester which aim to improve mental health, with a focus on Neurodiversity. Leading Better Lives are sponsoring this event and will have a stall all weekend at the event in the old Top Shop space. ([See appendix A for leaflet](#)).
- 3.17 The ADHD Support Service contract is currently being mobilised, which will replace the support provided by ADHD Solutions that unfortunately ceased trading at the end of 2024. This will be a 12-month contract initially with the option to extend for a further 12 months pending further funding being available from the ICB. The reach and impact of this new service will be closely monitored to ensure effective use of funding and evidence of the demand for preventative support in the future.

Partnership working and alignment with related work.

- 3.18 We have strong partnerships across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, including the LLR Autism Partnership Board, the Learning Disability and Mental Health Collaboratives, the Mental Health Partnership Board, and the Neurodiversity Subgroup to ensure consistent and effective regional collaboration.
- 3.19 Through **Leading Better Lives**, we will be improving neighbourhood-level access to information and support in formats suitable for autistic and neurodivergent people and their carers.
- 3.20 Our work with **Leicestershire Partnership Trust** is enhancing digital information and guidance through Autism Space and the Joy app.
- 3.21 We are building partnerships with the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations such as **A Different Human Design** who work in a neuro affirmative way to build trust and confidence with people in the community.

Governance and accountability

- 3.22 Governance and guidance are being provided through the **Autism Partnership Board**, with co-production from the **Participation Service / Lived Experience Group** and input from **Leicester Voices Together**, ensuring decisions are informed by lived experience.

3.23 The six workstreams will run from January 2026 to June 2027, with a **proactive review at the end of the programme**, and a **June 2026 update to Leadership** to demonstrate progress and present proposals for the **Autism and Neurodiversity Friendly City Blueprint**, informed by pilots, benchmarking, and wider LLR engagement.

5. Financial, legal, and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance
13 April 2026

5.2 Legal implications

There are no apparent adverse or significant implications from a commercial legal perspective.

The report mentions engagement with various third parties, from other local authorities to working in partnership with a local organisation called "*A Different Human Design*". These seem to have been set up as part of the Delivery Plan. If any of these arrangements have not been procured formally or documented, it may be worth running the details past the Legal and Procurement teams to ensure that the relationships are regulated so as to be in accord with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's own internal Contract Procedure Rules.

Emma Young, Senior Lawyer
13 April 2026

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications associated with this report.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2246
April 13 2026

5.4 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This report seeks approval for the final draft of the delivery plan and steps across six priority areas to improve services and outcomes for autistic and neurodivergent people in Leicester. The plan aims to reduce health inequalities which are often amplified for disabled groups.

The most relevant equality implications primarily relate to the protected characteristic of Disability, as autism and most forms of neurodivergence are covered under the Equality Act 2010 where they have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The successful implementation of this Delivery Plan should lead to a measurable improvement in the experiences and outcomes for autistic and neurodivergent people across all relevant protected characteristics. There may be actions arising from the plans which would benefit from further consideration of the equality's implications and possibly a full equality impact assessment in certain circumstances.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148
Date 13 April 2026.

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:
7. Summary of appendices:

[Appendix A](#)- Beat the Odds leaflet

Appendix A- Beat the Odds Health and Wellbeing festival



Health & Wellbeing Family Festival

Neurodiversity • Mental
Health • Community

Saturday 11th
& Sunday 12th April 2026
At Highcross Shopping Centre
Leicester

Do you know where to turn for support?

As waiting lists get longer & pressure increases on health services, we are showcasing the wonderful initiatives serving Leicestershire.

Find the perfect match to support you & your family with community groups, advice, coaching, inspiration & more!

Expect information stalls, uplifting talks, interactive activities, sampler sessions, exclusive discounts and raffle.

For a full list of exhibitors 

This list will continue to be updated, so keep checking back for more!
Get in touch if you would like to get involved.

busdifferent.com & Riverconsultants.co.uk



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