



Broken Promises: how the Autism Act has failed to deliver for autistic people

The Autism Action response to the House of Lords
Autism Act Committee

June 2025

**Autism
Action** 



Based on a survey of over 5,000 people



Includes:

2,668 autistic people

3,247 parents and carers of autistic people (938 of those are also autistic)

946 parents and carers of autistic people with learning disabilities
(275 of those are also autistic)

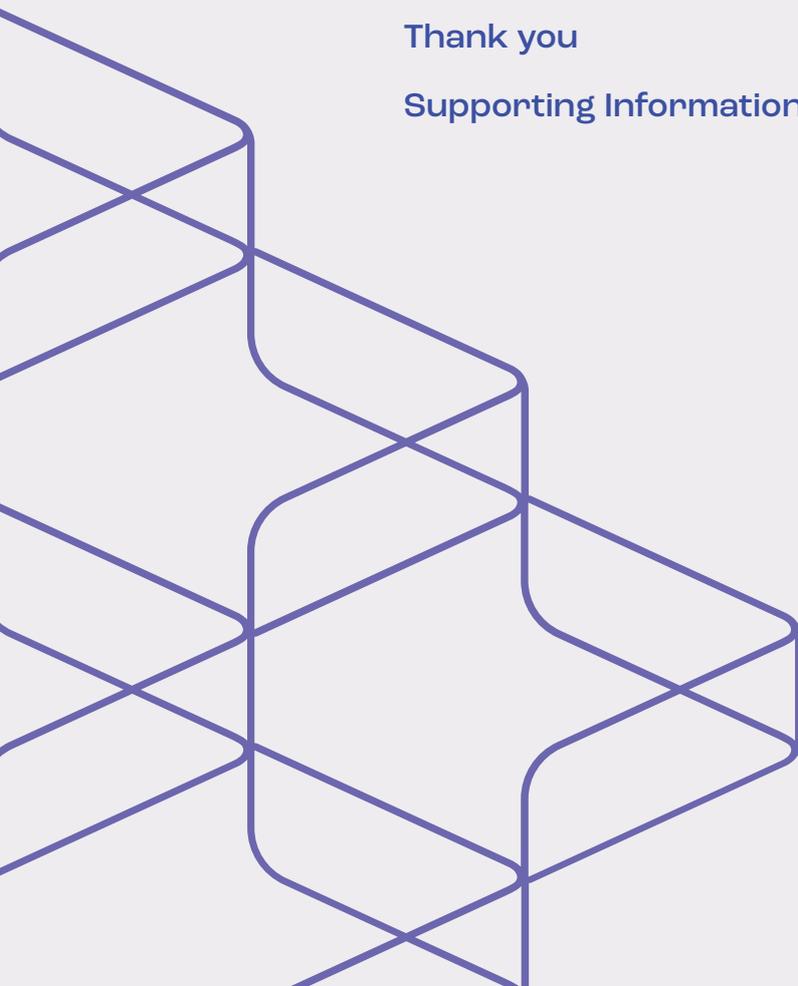
812 people who work in the field of autism

Content warning: This report discusses suicide.



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Key findings from over 5,000 people who shared their views



Thousands rated the following areas as bad or very bad over the last five years and many say they are getting worse.

- Autism Assessment
- Education
- Employment
- Criminal Justice
- Physical Healthcare
- Mental Healthcare
- Suicide Prevention

The highest priorities for action over the next five years:



- Mental health support
- Autism assessment
- Education
- Employment



Recommendation 1:

Always include autistic people



Recommendation 2:

Set achievable, measurable targets



Recommendation 3:

Ensure accountability is built in



Recommendation 4:

Ensure we have high quality data



Recommendation 5:

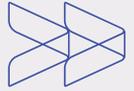
Provide clear legal protection



Recommendation 6:

Work towards accurate information about autism





Foreword

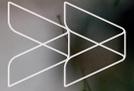
When the Autism Act was passed in 2009, many people assumed, with great delight, that a long battle was over. Here was an Act of Parliament to ensure the Government was meeting the needs of autistic people. It was now the law that autistic adults, long ignored, misunderstood and rejected by local authorities and the NHS, should have their needs met.

Sixteen years down the line, it is apparent that the battle was – and still is – far from over. The promise of the Autism Act, to guarantee autistic people could lead ‘fulfilling and rewarding lives’, has been broken. As our report shows, most autistic people and those who support them believe that things are bad or very bad, and that over the last five years they have actually got worse on the issues that matter to them most.

Crucially we have seen that the Act has not proven to be enforceable at any level – from individuals to ministers – and no person or agency has been made accountable for its delivery or, critically, its failure. We welcome the House of Lords’ scrutiny of the Autism Act and the related strategies and guidance. At Autism Action we have chosen to offer up our privileged platform to the people we are working to help. We believe that our report, reflecting as it does the experiences and views of more than 5,000 people, tells an important story – that the Government must focus their efforts on the priorities of autistic people and return to the original promise of the Autism Act.



Tom Purser
Autism Action CEO



Introduction

The Autism Act is a law created in 2009 to improve services for autistic people in England. It requires the Government to have a strategy for addressing the needs of autistic people by improving local authority and NHS services. It places a duty on the Secretary of State to issue guidance on implementing the strategy and it is the only law focused on one specific disability.

With such clear aims and focus, the Autism Act ought to have been a powerful driver of positive change over the last 15 years. Yet everything we hear from autistic people and their parents, carers and supporters suggests this has not been the case. Far too many autistic people are not getting the support they desperately need, are waiting years for an autism assessment, struggling in education and employment, battling for physical and mental health care, and many are dying preventable deaths including by suicide.

It shouldn't be this bad and it doesn't need to be. With the right support autistic people can thrive, living joyous, fulfilled lives.

The House of Lords Autism Act 2009 Committee is looking into how well the Autism Act and the Government's autism strategy are working. This report is the Autism Action written submission to the committee's call for evidence.



What we did

The House of Lords committee has invited written evidence from the public and is likely to receive many responses about what isn't working, as well as ideas for change. Even structured under the topics provided by the committee, such a large amount of written information will be a real challenge to analyse and interpret. We decided that we could best support the process via a structured and simplified approach – by gathering as many views as possible from people affected by the Autism Act, by focusing on the big issues, and by generating a small number of crystal-clear recommendations.

Our team, which includes autistic people, developed recommendations based on everything we've heard from people who know this topic well. That includes autistic people, their parents and carers, those with experience of supporting autistic people with learning disabilities and high support needs, researchers, and professionals across fields like health and social care. We then created a survey to find out whether people supported these recommendations. To ensure we would have the time and resources to analyse the responses of thousands of people, we limited the survey to multiple choice questions. We reminded people that if they wanted to provide detail of their own, they could do that directly via the committee's call for evidence.

Engaging autistic people and their supporters in this work

As well as being created by a neurodiverse team, the draft version of our survey was reviewed by 37 members of our Community Advisory Panel, including 31 autistic people, 13 parents, carers, or supporters of one or more autistic people, and 14 people who work with autistic people or in the field of autism (these groups overlap). Based on their feedback, we made 33 improvements.

'Yes, if...' responses¹

We have learned that many autistic people make very specific interpretations of language and may not know how to answer a question if they want to say 'that depends'. Comments on our previous surveys told us that people wanted to say 'yes', for example, but needed to make a point that it would only be yes if a certain condition were met. For this survey, we did not have the capacity to analyse thousands of free text responses of that nature, so we tested a new approach of offering a 'yes, if...' option, consisting of the most likely caveat (condition) we thought people would think of in each case.

Who took part

For full details of the 5,096 people who completed our survey, please see Supporting information. That section explores characteristics such as autism diagnosis, self-identification of autism, learning disabilities and parents/carers of autistic people with learning disabilities, gender, ethnicity, level of education and employment status.



What we learned

To be as relevant as possible to the House of Lords committee, this section is limited to views about England.

The impact of the Autism Act to date

We asked people to tell us how things are for autistic people right now and whether they have changed for autistic people over the last five years. The totals in this section vary, because not everybody felt able to comment on every area, instead selecting the 'don't know' option.

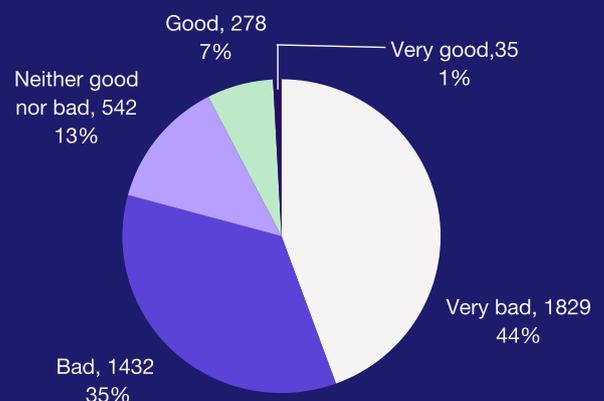
Autism Assessment in the NHS:

79%

say it's bad or very bad and most think it's getting worse

79% of 4,116 people who expressed an opinion felt that autism assessment in the NHS is bad or very bad and 70% of 3,470 who expressed an opinion about whether this has changed in the last five years said it had got worse.

Autism Assessment in the NHS
(4,116 people expressed an opinion)





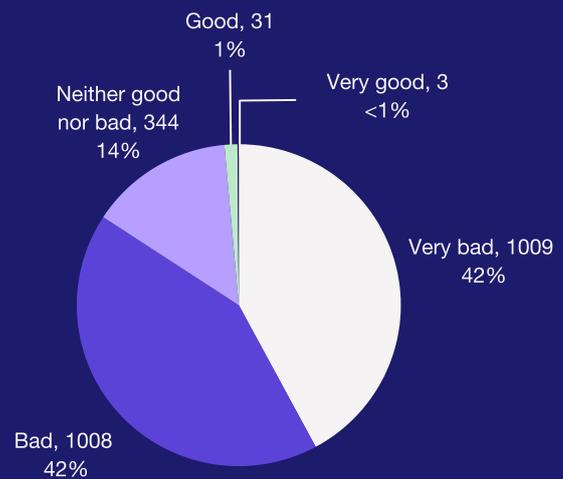
Criminal Justice System:

84%

say it's bad or very bad and most think it's either not changing or getting worse

Fewer people (2,395) expressed an opinion about the criminal justice system. This is expected because fewer people will have had direct experience in that area when compared to autism assessment or healthcare, for example. 84% of those felt that the criminal justice system in relation to autistic people is bad or very bad. 1,766 expressed an opinion about whether this has changed in the last five years. Of those, 51% said there had been no change and 45% said it had got worse. Only 4% said it had got better.

Criminal Justice System:*
(2,395 people expressed an opinion)



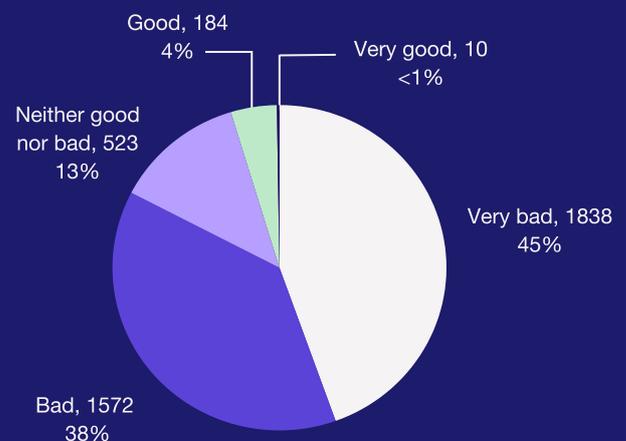
Education:

83%

say it's bad or very bad and most think it's getting worse

83% of 4,127 people who expressed an opinion felt that education in relation to autistic people is bad or very bad and 58% of 3,538 who expressed an opinion about whether this has changed in the last five years said it had got worse.

Education:*
(4,127 people expressed an opinion)



*Throughout this report, figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number and may not total exactly 100%.



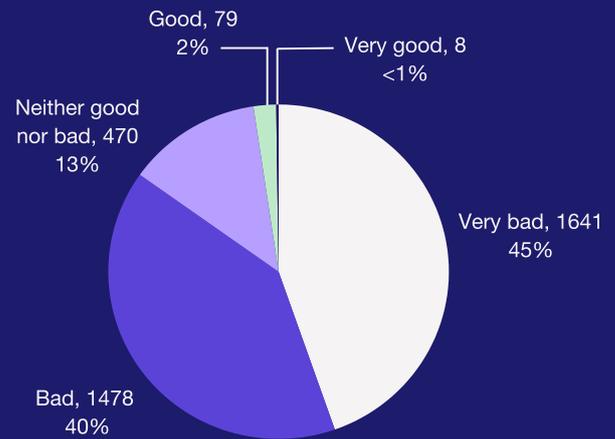
Employment:

85%

say it is bad or very bad and most think it's either not changing or getting worse

85% of 3,676 people who expressed an opinion felt that employment in relation to autistic people is bad or very bad. 46% of 3,009 who expressed an opinion about whether this has changed in the last five years said it has got worse, 43% said it has not changed and 11% said it has got better.

Employment:*
(3,676 people expressed an opinion)



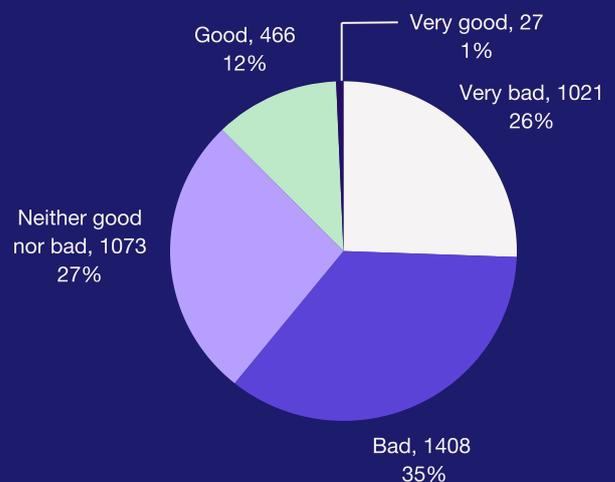
Physical health care in the NHS:

61%

say it is bad or very bad and most think it's either not changing or getting worse

61% of 3,995 people who expressed an opinion felt that NHS physical healthcare in relation to autistic people is bad or very bad. This is the area with the most 'good' ratings, at 12%, while 27% said it was neither good nor bad. 48% of 3,329 who expressed an opinion about whether this has changed in the last five years said it has got worse, 45% said it has not changed and 7% said it has got better.

Physical health care in the NHS:*
(3,995 people expressed an opinion)





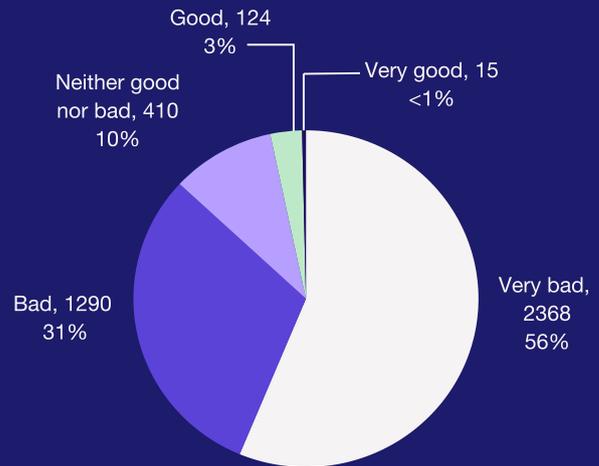
Mental health care in the NHS:

87%

say it's bad or very bad and most think it's getting worse

87% of 4,207 people who expressed an opinion felt that NHS mental healthcare in relation to autistic people is bad or very bad. 70% of 3,716 who expressed an opinion about whether this has changed in the last five years said it has got worse.

Mental health care in the NHS:*
(4,207 people expressed an opinion)



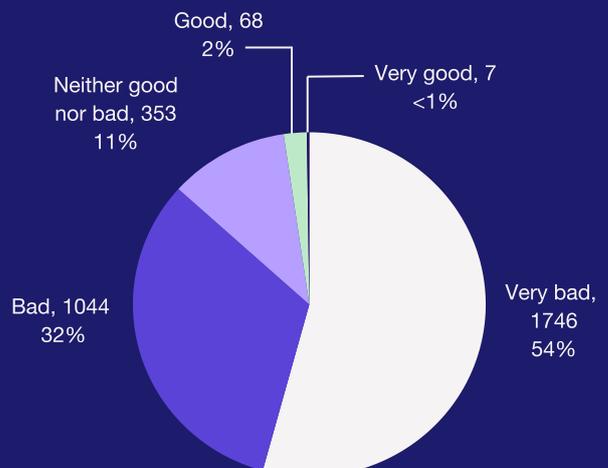
Suicide prevention:

86%

say it's bad or very bad and most think it's getting worse

86% of 3,218 people who expressed an opinion felt that suicide prevention in relation to autistic people is bad or very bad. 60% of 2,637 who expressed an opinion about whether this has changed in the last five years said it has got worse. *This is likely related to the similarly bleak results about mental healthcare and is particularly concerning given the already elevated suicide rates in autistic children and adults.*

Suicide prevention:*
(3,218 people expressed an opinion)





Priority areas for action over the next five years

Stretching resources too thinly will only continue the trends described above of a worsening picture across the board, especially against a backdrop of resource constraints and limited public money.

Given this we believe the Government must focus its efforts on improving a relatively limited number of priority areas.

To help guide that, we asked for the three most important issues for the Government to focus on over the next five years, offering the following options:

- Improving autism assessment in the NHS
- Improving the benefits system for autistic people
- Addressing problems in the way the criminal justice system interacts with autistic people
- Addressing education system failures for autistic young people
- Reducing barriers to employment for autistic people
- Improving physical health care in the NHS for autistic people
- Improving mental health care in the NHS for autistic people
- Suicide prevention for autistic people

Overall, the issues most often selected as top priorities were autism assessment, education and mental health support. This was true for most groups, including parents/carers of autistic people with learning disabilities. The notable difference is that the top 3 priorities for formally diagnosed autistic people were mental health support, education and employment. It is not surprising that fewer of those who have already accessed a formal autism diagnosis flagged autism assessment as one of their top 3 priorities. Instead, they highlighted employment.

From comments on the draft version of the survey, we believe that when asked to choose only three top priorities, suicide prevention was often not selected because it was seen to be addressed under mental health support.

Finally, it is vital to remember that the other issues in the above list are all important. This result simply highlights the issues that this group of respondents thought were of highest priority.

Top 3 priorities overall

Autism
Assessment

Education

Mental health
support

Note: Employment was the next highest priority

Top 3 priorities for formally diagnosed autistic people and people with learning disabilities

Mental health
support

Education

Employment



Our recommendations

This section reports on results from England. It is not separated into groups such as autistic and non-autistic, because initial inspection of the data suggested minimal variation between groups.

There is overwhelming agreement with our recommendations – all have over 90% agreement. However, there is informative nuance in the details and in the minor variations in agreement. In particular, some recommendations received more conditional agreement than others. This is where we provided a ‘yes, if...’ option, consisting of the most likely caveat (condition) we thought people would think of in each case, as explained on page 4. There is also variation in the number of ‘not sure’ responses. Both of these suggest that our participants were not simply agreeing but were giving thought to each recommendation.



Recommendation 1:

Always include autistic people

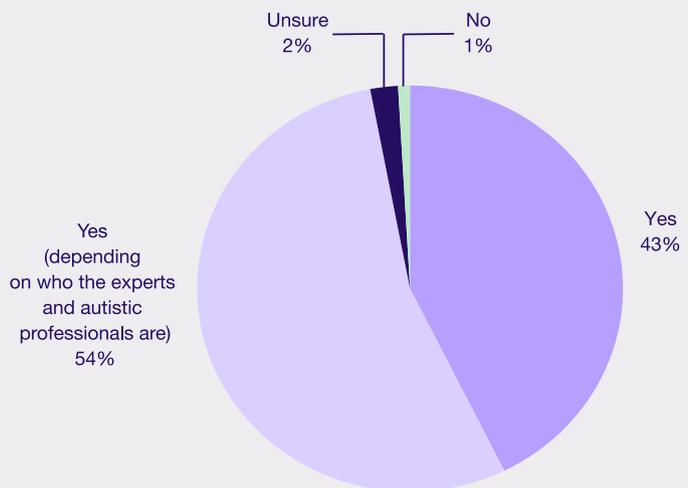
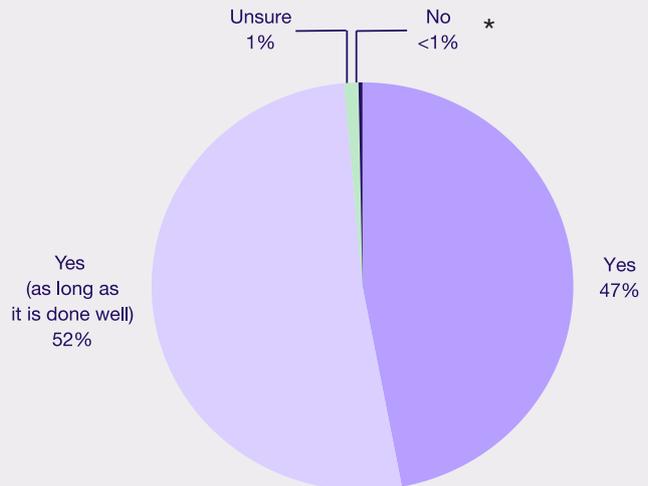
“The Government must include autistic people and their supporters in all their autism-specific work and publish details about how they have done this.”

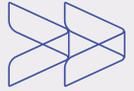
99% of those who responded agreed with this recommendation. Around half added the caveat ‘as long as it is done well’, consistent with a view we hear often: tokenistic involvement is not good enough.

Decisions around autistic services and policies also need to be informed by autistic people who are experts/professionals within the field.

We explained that this could be an autistic person who is an expert/professional in the mental health system but may not have experienced mental health problems themselves. These people can bring both their perspective as an autistic person AND in-depth understanding of the way services and decision-making work in that area.

97% of those who responded agreed with this recommendation, again with around half adding the caveat, which this time was ‘depending on who the experts and autistic professionals are’.



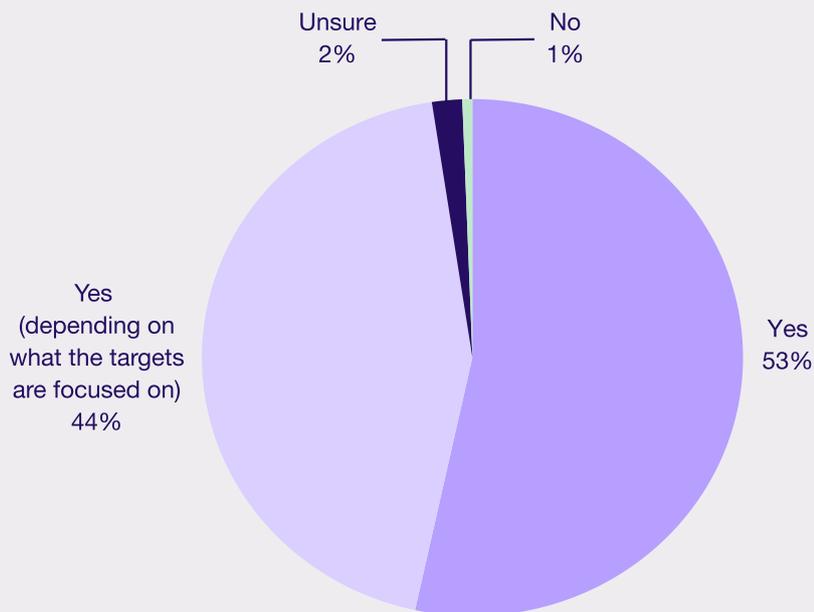


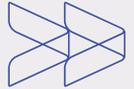
Recommendation 2:

Setting achievable, measurable targets

“When the Government writes strategies about services and support for autistic people, it must always set achievable and measurable targets. Autistic people must be involved in setting those targets.”

For this recommendation, we added the caveat ‘depending on what the targets are focused on’. Overall, 98% agreed with this recommendation, with slightly more than half using the definitive yes, without that caveat.



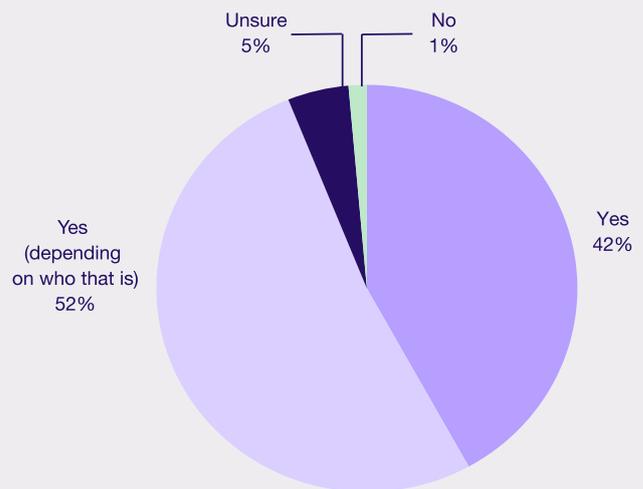


Recommendation 3:

Accountability

“The Government must appoint a national autism lead, to take immediate responsibility for all autism initiatives (for example services and policies for autistic people) and for providing public updates.”

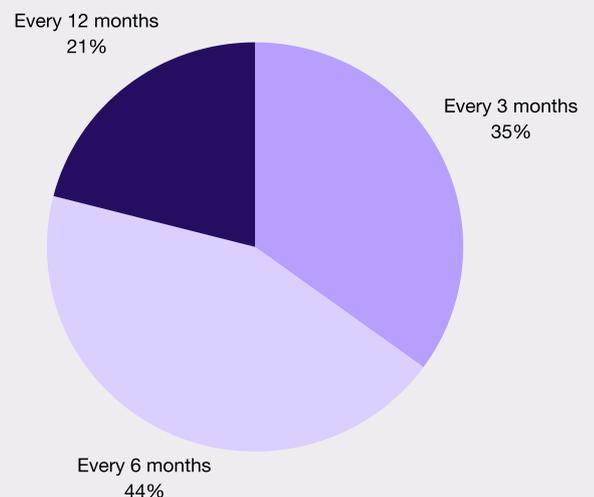
This recommendation had slightly lower agreement overall than the others, though still 94%. Slightly more than half of the agreement was via the caveat option ‘depending on who the lead is’. This is consistent with discussions we’ve had whereby strong feelings have been expressed about this needing to be ‘the right person’. It will therefore be vital to include autistic people in the decision-making around that.

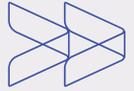


Frequency of public updates

“How often should the national autism lead publish updates about progress?”

Public updates are vital, since in many cases it has been impossible to identify how much of the Government or NHS’s plans related to autism have actually been delivered. The most popular suggestion for frequency of these updates is every six months (44% of 3,985 who suggested a timescale).





Recommendation 4:

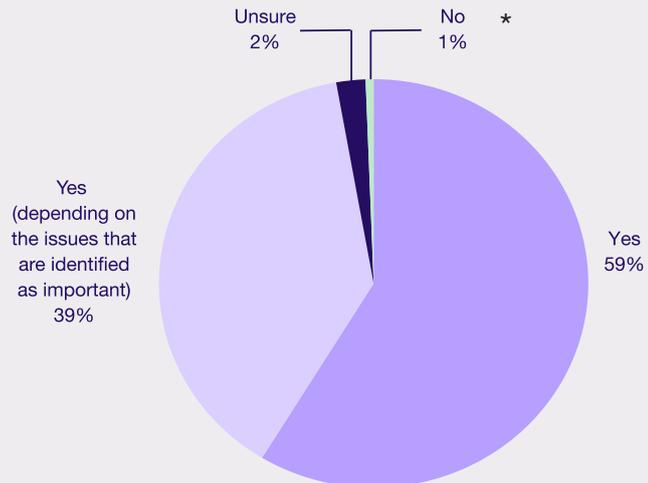
High quality data

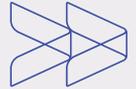
“The Government must make sure that clear and accurate statistics are collected and published on issues that are of importance to autistic people.”

A lack of data relating to autistic people is a fundamental problem. If high quality data were in place, it would be clear exactly what impact the Autism Act has had – or not – on the lives of autistic people. We’d be able to report autistic people’s engagement with different services, their outcomes in education and employment, compare their physical and mental health to that of non-autistic people.

In reality, we cannot even state how many autistic adults die by suicide each year. That means we would have no way of knowing if that number increased or decreased in the next year.

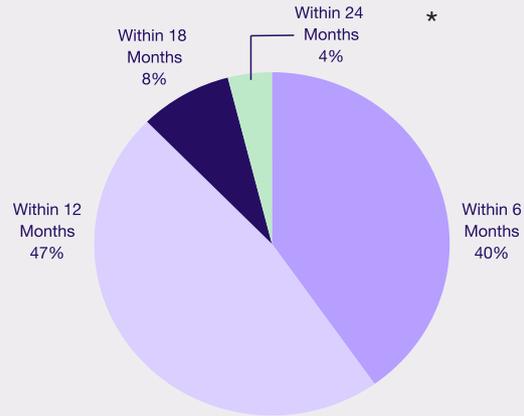
97% agreed that the Government should address this. Among those who suggested a timescale, the most popular view of how soon this should be collected and published was ‘within 12 months’ (47%), with a large minority believing the issue is more urgent than that and should be addressed within 6 months (40%). 54% thought that once in place, the statistics should be updated annually, and 32% thought it should be every six months.





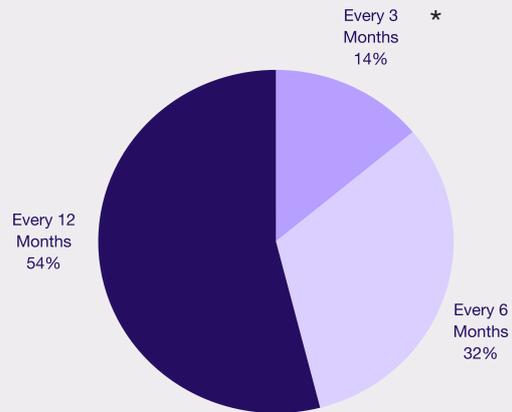
Urgency of initial data gathering

“Collecting high-quality data takes time. While this should be done as fast as possible, speed should not undermine accuracy. Once it has been agreed that statistics are needed on a key issue, how quickly do you think the information should be collected and published?”



Frequency of public updates

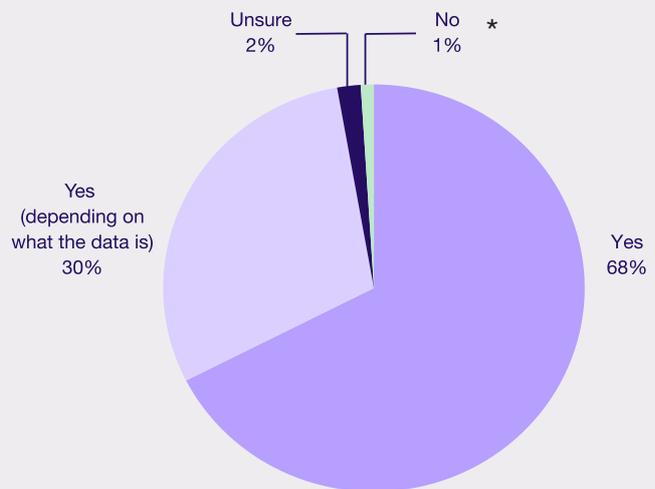
“Once the initial statistics have been published, how often do they need to be updated?”

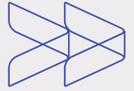


Data must not be misused

“The Government must ensure that the data about autistic people is not misused or shared inappropriately. Exactly what this means should be determined with autistic people and those who support them.”

Overall, 97% agreed with this recommendation. Compared to other questions, noticeably more people used the definite yes in response to this question, as opposed to the conditional yes. This suggests that the importance of preventing data misuse is clear to more people than the other issues. This is unsurprising given the clear and longstanding concerns of many people about the potential for eugenics (attempts to prevent autistic people being born). It is even more pertinent given recent news from the US, whereby an autism register and even use of wearable data is being discussed in the context of ‘curing autism’. Including autistic people and those who support them is always vital, but its importance cannot be overstated in relation to data use and data sharing.





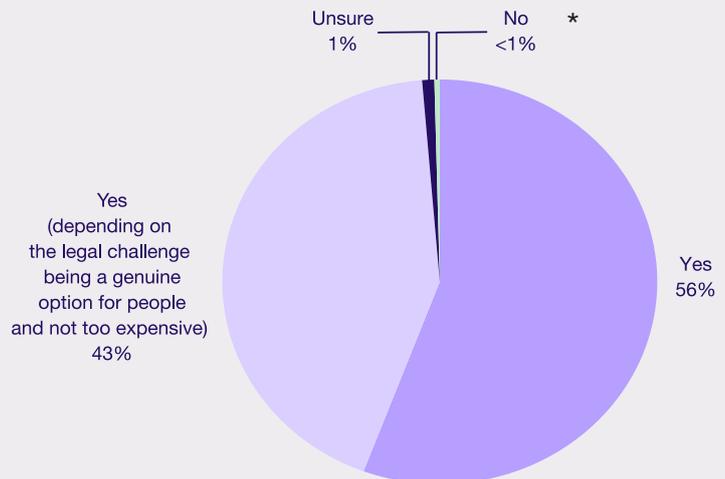
Recommendation 5:

Clear legal protection

“The Government must make the Autism Act enforceable. This means making it clear to autistic people and carers what rights the Autism Act gives them, and how they can make a legal challenge if they are not getting the services, education, or care that they have a right to.”

A law that provides no legal protection and no process to make a legal challenge is useless to autistic people. 99% of people agreed with the recommendation.

At present, the clearest example of this issue is in education, where parents have been able to use the tribunal system to challenge failures relating to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The committee will be aware of the extremely high number of EHCPs being challenged in relation to autistic children and young people and the high proportion of those challenges that are successful. At present, even this legal protection is in question, as the current Government has reportedly declined to rule out replacing EHCPs. Legal enforceability across all areas – such as the right to mental health care – is critical if we want the Autism Act to drive change.

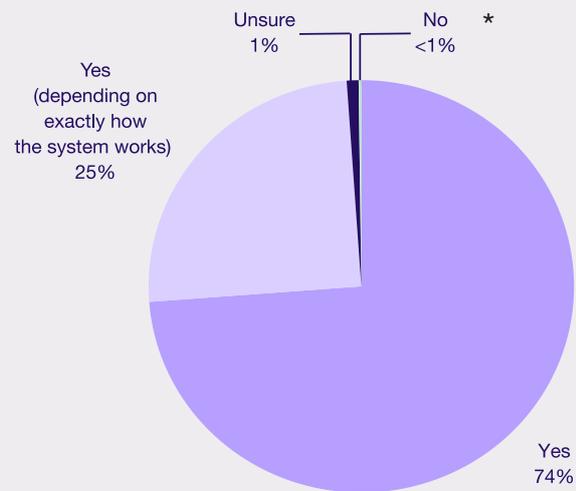




A process to enable serious concerns to be raised

The Government must also make it possible to raise concerns quickly in high-risk situations where local systems don't appear to be listening, such as autistic people being actively suicidal, being refused access to mental health support or social care, or being at risk of inappropriate inpatient detention.

We often hear from autistic people and those who support them when they are in crisis, for example at risk of suicide, being sectioned under the Mental Health Act, losing their home, unable to access education, or struggling with the criminal justice system. Often, they have exhausted all available avenues and still do not feel heard even when they have notified Safeguarding teams, the Chief Executives of relevant organisations or the Care Quality Commission. At its worst, this lack of a clear system to escalate concerns is contributing to preventable deaths, including by suicide, as the committee is likely to have heard all too often in the many submissions to its call for evidence.



A clear process to raise concerns above and beyond local systems is vital and 99% of people agreed with this recommendation. A comparatively huge 74% agreed unequivocally, without the caveat.



Recommendation 6:

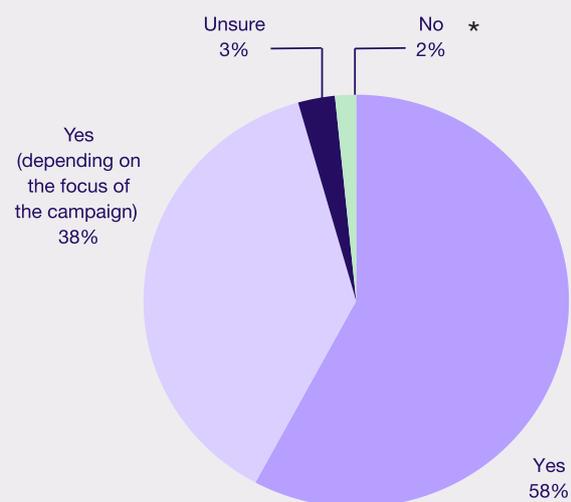
Accurate information about autism

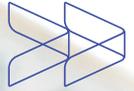
“The Government must run campaigns to help everybody understand autism and autistic people better, as a step towards improving acceptance and inclusion.”

There is a growing problem of misinformation about autism, including the idea that ‘everybody thinks they’re autistic these days’ and that ‘most of the people who say they’re autistic don’t really need any support’. It is particularly concerning that many people seem to believe that most of the 200,000+ people awaiting autism assessment do not really need that assessment or any support when in fact data about child deaths suggests this group is particularly vulnerable to suicide.

It is vital that the Government works to address autism-related misinformation, because a prevailing negative public attitude will make life more difficult for autistic people and undermine efforts to drive positive change. If employers adopt these attitudes, autistic people will have an even harder time finding and remaining in work. If healthcare professionals adopt them, autistic people will be even less likely to receive reasonable adjustments when accessing vital health services.

96% of people agreed with this recommendation.



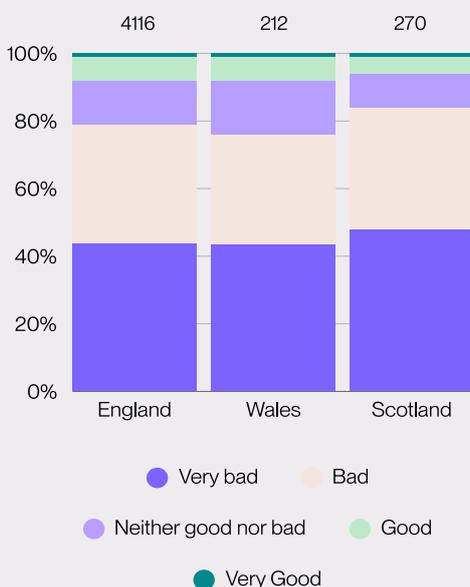


The bigger picture across the UK

As well as 4,504 responses from or about England, we received hundreds of responses from other parts of the UK: Scotland (291), Wales (229) and Northern Ireland (72). Those smaller numbers make comparison across nations less robust. We may be able to supplement this data in future. For now, we present the general picture about how things are now in each area, for England, Wales and Scotland. Because numbers for Northern Ireland are so low, and therefore less likely to give an indication of the true picture, we have chosen to omit them. The charts indicate broadly similar ratings for each country, with minor variation.

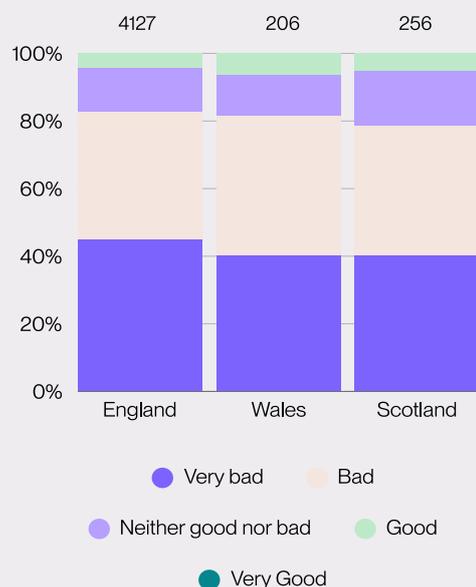
Autism Assessment

Total who expressed an opinion about each country



Education

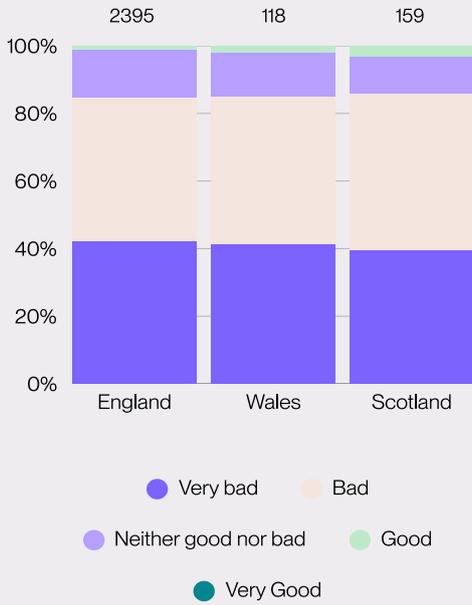
Total who expressed an opinion about each country





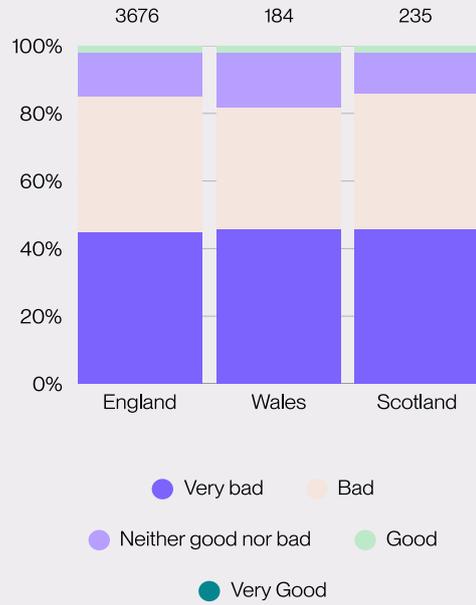
Criminal Justice

Total who expressed an opinion about each country



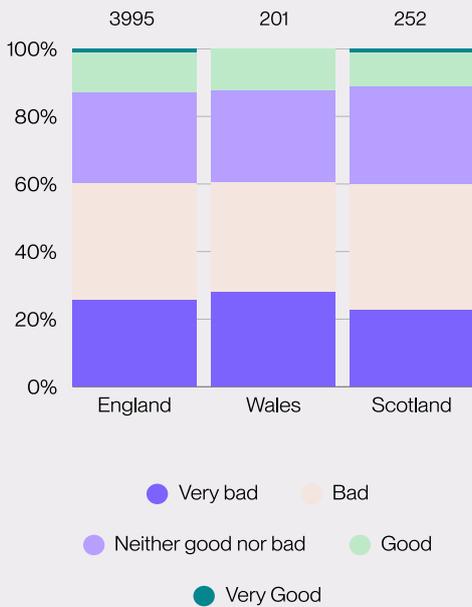
Employment

Total who expressed an opinion about each country



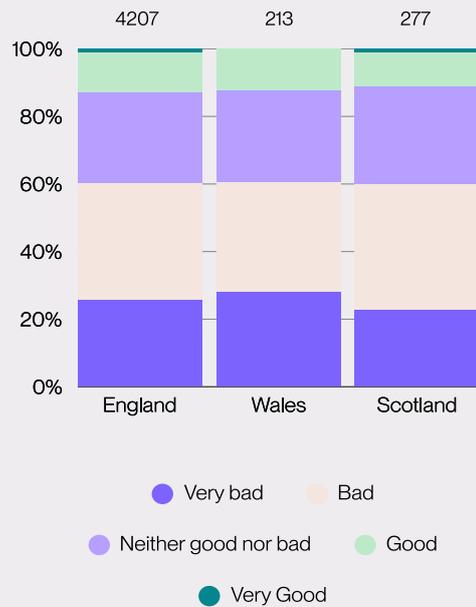
Physical Health

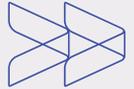
Total who expressed an opinion about each country



Mental Health

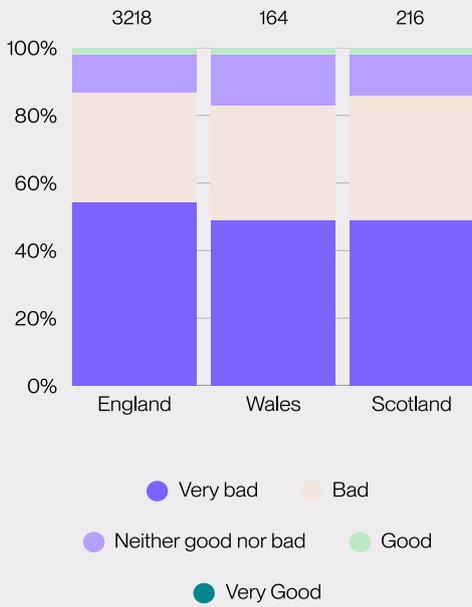
Total who expressed an opinion about each country





Suicide Prevention

Total who expressed an opinion about each country





Conclusions

The Autism Act has not proven to be enforceable and has not delivered on its promises. Current provision for autistic children and adults was rated as bad or very bad across the board by the majority of over 5,000 people. The majority also said that all areas had either got worse or stayed the same over the last five years. Those who responded were either autistic themselves or people who support or work with autistic people.

The highest priorities identified for government action over the next five years are mental health support, autism assessment, education and employment.

Finally, all of our recommendations were overwhelmingly supported by those who took part:

Recommendation 1:

Always include autistic people

Recommendation 2:

Set achievable, measurable targets

Recommendation 3:

Ensure accountability is built in

Recommendation 4:

Ensure we have high quality data

Recommendation 5:

Provide clear legal protection

Recommendation 6:

Work towards accurate information about autism



Thank you

We hope this work, which reflects the views of so many people, will help drive the positive change that autistic people need and deserve.

We would like to thank everybody who has contributed to this work and particularly those who completed the survey. We are also grateful to the House of Lords committee for carrying out this vital review of the Autism Act 2009 and for considering this report as part of that work.





Supporting Information: Who took part

The online survey was open from May 8th until May 22nd, 2025, and was shared with our networks and with the general public via social media advertising. 5,096 survey responses are included in our results. This includes 4,504 people who either live or have lived in England.

Overlap with other submissions to the committee

Overall, 3,992 people said they had not responded separately to the committee (other than via our survey), 890 said they might do that in future, and 72 said they had already responded via the committee's official process. 38 said they had responded via another option (which may be via another organisation or group that has collected views). The remaining 104 people preferred not to say or could not remember.

Including people who don't have an autism diagnosis

Because so many people are struggling to access an autism assessment, and because this can be even worse for minority groups, if we only included information from or about formally diagnosed autistic people, we would generate a biased set of results and would miss the needs of all those currently undiagnosed. We know that this group of people is really struggling. In fact, from data about child deaths, we believe that group is at particularly high risk of suicide¹. We therefore also welcomed responses from people who consider themselves autistic but don't have an official diagnosis. We will include this group whenever we report the results of autistic people. For full transparency, we will report results separately wherever we note disagreement between those with and without a formal diagnosis.

¹Read more via our website <https://bit.ly/AutismActionNCMD>



Diversity

Some groups of autistic people are too often excluded from discussions about and work relating to autism. This includes autistic people with learning disabilities, autistic people who don't speak out loud, those who don't use spoken language at all, autistic people from ethnic minority groups, and those with minority gender identities. Many people belong to more than one minority group, for example being Black and autistic, or Asian and autistic with a physical disability. This is sometimes referred to as 'intersectionality' and is an important consideration. We will follow up this report with additional detail, including any insights into intersectionality that are possible from our results.

The Autism Action team is working hard to improve how we include the views and needs of those often-excluded groups in our work and we have recently appointed a new member of staff to do just that. Our first step is to identify how many members of each group participate in the work we carry out already, and so we asked about these characteristics in our survey. We are grateful to everybody who was willing to share this information. As the summary below will show, we have had reasonable responses across gender and have included a good number of views about autistic people with higher support needs such as learning disabilities and those who don't use speech to communicate. However, inclusion of non-white ethnic groups remains a challenge, with white people making up 93% of this sample. This is an issue that Autism Action will continue to actively work on. Our results should be considered limited in terms of what they can say about the needs of non-white autistic people. We hope that the House of Lords committee receives a large number of responses from non-white people in its other submissions.

In total, 5,096 people are included in our data. 4,504 said they live in England, 229 in Wales, 291 in Scotland and 72 in Northern Ireland. To be as relevant as possible to the House of Lords committee, this report focuses mostly on the views of those commenting on the situation in England. We will be clear where we have included responses from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Additional results about those nations will be reported publicly at a later date and we may seek additional responses to make comparison across nations more robust.



Quick summary of people who responded

		Total (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland)	England
Autistic people	All autistic people	2,668	2,338
	Formally diagnosed	1,805	1,596
	Undiagnosed/self-identifying	863	742
Parents, carers and supporters	Parents/carers and supporters of autistic people	3,247 (938 are autistic themselves)	2,897 (836 are autistic themselves)
Professionals	People who work in the field of autism	812 (287 are autistic themselves)	736 (260 are autistic themselves)
People with a learning disability	People with a learning disability	539 (425 are autistic themselves)	478 (375 are autistic themselves)
	Parents/carers of autistic people with a learning disability	946 (275 are autistic themselves)	824 (233 are autistic themselves)
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	Parents/carers of autistic people who use AAC	173 (58 are autistic themselves)	154 (51 are autistic themselves)
	People who said they use AAC themselves	114 (82 are autistic themselves)	96 (68 are autistic themselves)
		It is likely that some of the people who said they use AAC themselves were referring to doing so as part of supporting somebody else. We will therefore combine these groups to refer to anybody with experience of AAC.	
	Everyone with experience of AAC	287 (140 are autistic themselves)	250 (119 are autistic themselves)



Age

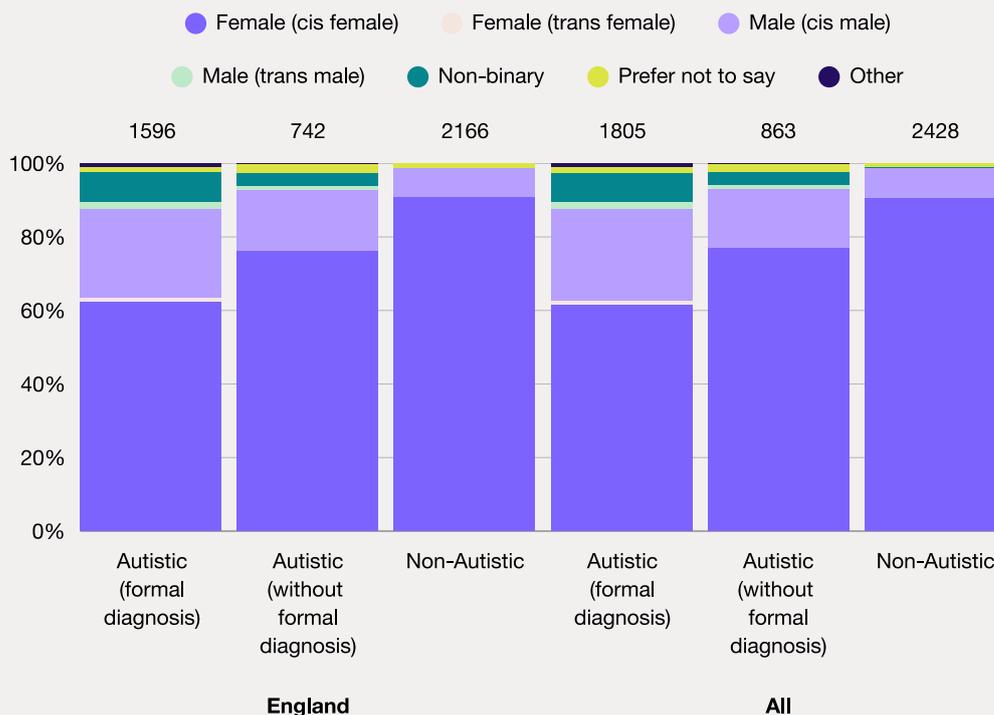
Ages ranged from ‘under 18’ (40 people) to 55 and over (2,177 people), with the rest spread between those categories.

Gender

We asked ‘What is your gender’ and ‘Is your gender the same as your sex assigned at birth?’ Gender categories offered were:

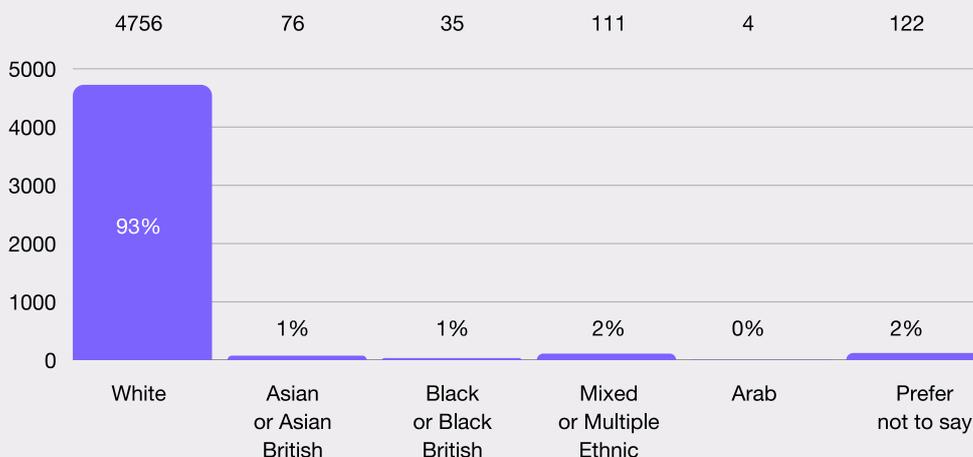


For clarity, we have reported those who said their gender is not the same as sex assigned at birth as ‘trans’, i.e. ‘trans female’ if they said their gender is female and this is not the same as sex assigned at birth and vice versa, though we recognise this may not be how some of those who participated might prefer to be identified. We have a high proportion of female respondents, which is as expected from online surveys. Around 90% of the non-autistic respondents were female, while the proportion of male respondents was highest in the formally diagnosed autistic group, likely reflecting the higher number of boys and men receiving diagnoses, with autistic females often being missed, misdiagnosed or diagnosed later in life.





Ethnicity



Parents/carers

Whilst we should always engage with autistic people directly, it is also important to hear the perspectives of those who support autistic people. This is particularly important to ensure we include the needs of autistic people who are not able to engage themselves, such as autistic people with severe learning disabilities.

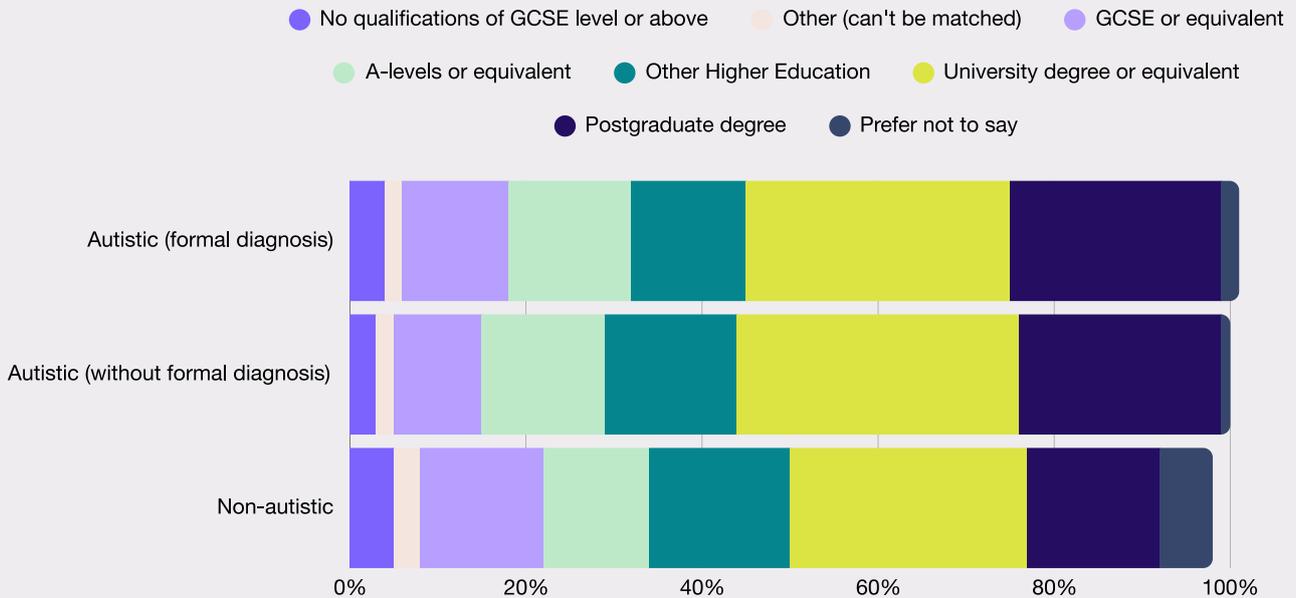
As shown in the main table, we have included 3,247 people who consider themselves a parent, carer or supporter of one or more autistic people, of which 938 reported being autistic themselves. People could choose more than one option to reflect their experience. This group has experience of supporting autistic children and adults, with and without learning disabilities, and some who do not use words to communicate and/or use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).

	Support one or more autistic children	Support one or more autistic adults	Support one or more autistic children AND one or more autistic adults	Support one or more autistic people with LD	Support one or more autistic people who do not use words to communicate	Support one or more autistic people who use AAC
England	1889	1458	465	824	359	154
Total	2107	1646	513	946	415	173



Education

We asked about highest level of education, to ensure we had included a range, and the pattern appears similar across autistic and non-autistic respondents. More detail and reflection on any group differences will be reported at a later date.



Employment

The survey asked about current employment status. For clarity, we have condensed the categories into paid work, volunteering, not working (which includes retired), and student. People could choose more than one option, for example students who also have paid work. More detail and reflection on any group differences will be reported at a later date.





Autism Action is the operating name of the Autism Centre of Excellence at Cambridge, a registered charity in England and Wales (1191599), which is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (12435820).

Follow the action:

