

Autism Act statutory guidance published

On 17th December 2010, the Government published statutory guidance for local councils and local NHS bodies setting out what they had to do to ensure they could meet the needs of adults with autism.

The publication of the guidance was a key duty of the Autism Act 2009. The Act was passed as a result of 3 years campaigning by autism charities, individuals and cross-party members in Parliament.

Statutory guidance

As this new guidance is *statutory*, local councils and local health bodies have a legal duty to implement it.

Where the guidance says that a local area *should* do something this means that they will have to do it by law, unless they have a strong reason. Lack of money will not necessarily be a strong reason.

The guidance sets out clear duties on local councils and local NHS bodies. It states that local authorities and local NHS bodies:

- 1) Should provide autism awareness training for all staff
- 2) Must provide specialist autism training for key staff, such as GPs and community care assessors
- 3) Cannot refuse a community care assessment based solely on IQ
- 4) Must appoint an autism lead in their area
- 5) Have to develop a clear pathway to diagnosis and assessment
- 6) Need to commission services based on adequate population data

To coincide with the launch of the strategy The National Autistic Society has launched an email action for campaigners to email their local council's elected lead on adult social care to highlight the publication of the guidance and to ask them what they are doing next. To take part in the action [click here](#)

More information can be found [here](#)

To find out more about the autism strategy that was published earlier this year click [here](#)