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Autism Strategic Action Plan

2024 - 2027

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Foreword by Dr Veronica Price - Mother of young autistic adult, Chair of Portsmouth Autism Community Forum, Volunteer at Autism Hampshire Serendipity Social Group.

The new Portsmouth Autism Strategy 2024- 2027 is a benchmark, a road map, and a statement of intent for all those already identified as autistic and the many still waiting to be formally identified.

Much has changed in our understanding of autism since the previous strategy was written in 2021.

Many more individuals have been “diagnosed” and many more have self-identified as autistic, but still face the agonizingly long wait for formal recognition.

Both groups continue to encounter discrimination, stigmatization, barriers in education, employment, access to healthcare, treatment by the criminal justice system and every other aspect of life.

The mental health of autistic people is greatly impacted and the high suicide rate amongst these people is indisputable.

In co production with autistic people and those working with them PACF has identified priorities for the future. This has been corroborated by Clare Rachwal’s research published in her concluding document “If not now, when?” (2022).

These two pieces of work have clarified both the things that do not work for autistic people, but more importantly, what DO work.

We as fellow citizens, employers, public services, and support organizations must recognize our responsibility in ensuring that autistic people and their families feel understood, accepted, and supported by our communities and our service delivery.

Portsmouth Autism Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027

Our Vision

The development of this strategic action plan, started with a research paper "If Not Now, When?" which was written by Clare Rachwal (Deputy Head of Service - Carers and Neurodivergence) in 2022. This paper, embedded below, gave us huge insights to the lives, wants and needs of autistic people, and allowed us to develop the priorities for this action plan. This led to the vision of an "inclusive city", where autistic people can live safe, independent and happy lives, where they are included, supported and accepted by its citizens. The strategic action plan is based on five priorities to make this happen: Improving and understanding the needs and lives of autistic people, improving health and wellbeing, better care and support, appropriate housing options and accessing education and securing employment.

This strategic plan primarily focuses on adults over the age of 18, but the benefits of this strategic action plan will be felt by all autistic people.



if-not-now-when-autism-report-june-2022-accessible.pdf

Principles

This strategic action plan has the following principles:

- Co - production. This is a plan for autistic and neurodivergent people, and their involvement in the development and delivery of this plan is crucial. This plan has been created in collaboration with representatives from the Portsmouth Autism Community Forum. The forum will also provide the role of a critical friend in the oversight of this plan.
- Building relationships. This strategic action looks to build the necessary relationships and seek commitment from other services to ensure that the needs of autistic people are considered and included in future planning and commissioning.
- Commissioning. This plan sets out to increase the offer within services to autistic adults, and where necessary, commission additional services to ensure the needs of autistic adults can be adequately met.
- Safeguarding Adults. Autistic adults can experience abuse or neglect. Any disclosures of this, in the course of this work, will be treated according to the Safeguarding Adults Multi - Agency Policy, Process and Guidance.

What is Autism?

Autism and other neurodivergences are a diverse group of conditions related to the development of the brain. [The Autism Self Advocacy Network](#) advises that autistic and neurodivergent people may experience differences in the following areas:

- Thinking
- Sensory

- Movement
- Communication
- Socialising
- Activities of daily living

This is not an exhaustive list. Autism will be different for each person. We should seek to understand the experiences of everyone, and the strengths that they bring, whilst also considering any adjustments we can make. The support levels will vary between individuals, from 24/7 support provision to independent living. The key takeaway is to speak with the person, and value them as an expert in their own experience.

Language Definitions

Language, and the words we use are important and no more so than when communicating with and about autistic people and autism. The following terms will be used in this strategy:

Autistic Person: This refers to someone who is autistic. Autistic people have overwhelmingly shared that they prefer identity first language, as autism is an intrinsic part of the person.

Neurodiversity: Neurodiversity is about the differences in all of our brains.

Neurodivergent: This refers to when someone's brain does not process in the typically expected way.

Neurotypical: This is the term used to describe someone whose brain processes in the typical expected way.

This is a strategic action plan which focuses on autism, and neurodivergence but for succinctness, autistic people will be used throughout this document.

This is a very brief overview of the language used, but there are many other considerations and a full language guide by the National Autistic Society can be found [here](#). Whilst this is the widely accepted language, it would be best practice to check with any individual person what they prefer.

National policy

The Autism Act 2009 was followed by publication of the National Strategy in 2010, further updated in 2014 and 2021. Over the same period there has been an increased awareness of the limited research and good practice around autism and neurodivergence.

The National Strategy (*National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026.*) describes a vision for the next five years based around six areas of change:

- improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society
- improving autistic children and young people's access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood
- supporting more autistic people into employment
- tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people

- building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
- improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems

Local Progress

It is important to acknowledge the progress already made, below are some examples:

- Portsmouth Autism Community Forum has begun work with adult mental health services and housing departments to make adjustments to improve the experience and quality of service for autistic adults.
- If Not Now, When? Is a piece of research that was commissioned and completed by Clare Rachwal (Deputy Head of Service) to identify gaps in the provision of services for autistic people. This research has supported the development of this strategic action plan.
- Room One, Portsmouth's Autism Support Hub, was piloted in 2022. It became an official service in 2023. In June 2024, it moved to a larger, bespoke premise, where it is hoped that it can increase the offer of support for autistic people.
- Into Work - an employment support service commissioned to help autistic and neurodivergent adults into employment, and to support those already in employment to sustain this. This service concluded in March 2024, but will re - commence on 1st November 2024.
- Training for Professionals - a one hour training session comprising interviews with 6 local autistic adults talking about their lived experience was produced by Portsmouth Autism Community Forum and is available for any organisation to use as part of staff development.
- In 2022, Adult Social Care formed the Autism and Neurodivergent Transitions Team who can work with young people aged 14 - 25 on preparing for adulthood.
- In November 2023, a new Portsmouth City Council appointment was made: *Team Manager - Autism & Neurodivergent Transition Team and Transformation Lead - Autism & Neurodivergent Services*. This role will provide extra capacity and focus to the autism support and strategic development work provided by Portsmouth City Council.

Governance

In order to monitor the progress of this strategy, a board of key partners will be developed. The name and membership of which is to be determined, but will include the following:

- Autistic People (represented via Portsmouth Autism Community Forum)
- Transformation Lead
- Room One Autism Hub Facilitator
- Portsmouth Autism Community Forum Chair
- Engagement Lead
- Senior Management Team Member for Adult Social Care

The group will meet quarterly to discuss the progress, review the action plan and make any necessary amendments to the plans moving forward.

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1) Improving understanding of the lives and needs of autistic and neurodivergent people

"Awareness raising is not enough - we need everybody to really understand what it means to be autistic. Another positive would be people understanding that autism is life long and it does not have to be seen as a negative thing."

What do we want to achieve? Aims	What will we do? Actions	Who will be responsible?	When will this happen?	How will we know progress? Measurable Outcomes
1) Improve understanding of autism among professionals.	A) Promote use of Portsmouth Autism Community Forum training film.	Portsmouth Autism Community Forum	Years 1 - 3	Number of views on training video will increase. At time of writing, the current views are 402 views and 3 likes.
	B) Roll out of Oliver McGowan Training. This has started in health and social care partners. More infrastructure is needed to complete this.	All Partners	Years 1 - 3	All ASC staff will have completed the Oliver McGowan training within 3 years. This will be monitored via a Learning Management system.
	C) New autism training will be commissioned for Adult Social Care, to provide knowledge and skills whilst a training offer led by adults with lived experience is developed.	Transformation Lead, Principal Social Worker and Adult Social Care Workforce Development Lead.	Year 1	New training will have been commissioned by Adult Social Care. Attendance will be monitored via a Learning Management system. Feedback will be sought and reviewed for engagement and application.

	D) Development of training offer, led by adults with lived experience.	Portsmouth Autism Community Forum and Transformation Lead	Year 1 - 2	New training, led and delivered primarily by autistic adults will be developed and rolled out. Feedback will be sought and reviewed for effectiveness and application.
	E) Development of competency framework for Adult Social Care to complement that produced by Children's Social Care	Transformation Lead	Year 2	A competency framework will have been co-produced and support the upskilling of the workforce. Review of effectiveness of impact after a period of embedding.
2) Improve understanding within wider population and private sector - dispel stereotypes, stigma and myths around autism.	A) Compliment the training completed by Children's Social Care for leisure providers.	Portsmouth Health and Care	Year 2	Qualitative feedback regarding spaces in the City that are inclusive and accessible will be collected.
	B) Development of a communication plan including use of social media	Portsmouth Health and Care	Year 1	Number of engagement will be monitored, including during rollout and publication (including likes, shares and for emails, amount opened).
3) Make information, advice and guidance available and accessible.	A) Review of the publicly available information held by Adult Social Care to ensure it is accessible to autistic people.	Adult Social Care	Year 1	Information, advice and guidance available via Adult Social Care will be reviewed, with autistic people and neurodivergent people.

				Feedback will be sought via Portsmouth Autism Community Forum around autistic people's ability to access relevant information.
4) 'Change the narrative' - encourage positive view of autistic people and use of clear non medicalised language	A) Create a language guide which has do's and don'ts for words.	Transformation Lead and Autism Hub Facilitator	Year 1	Staff will feel more educated and confident to use language related to the autistic community.
				Feedback from Room One regarding professionals use of language.
				Audit of Care Act assessments for use of language.
5) Develop a better understanding of the experiences and additional challenges for autistic people from other marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+, ethnic minority communities and across the age span.	A) Plan and carry out scoping activity with autistic people from marginalized groups to understand what support they need.	Transformation Lead and Autism Hub Facilitator	Year 1	Scoping work will have been carried out, evidenced by a variety of means such as surveys, focus groups and ad - hoc feedback.
	B) Review plans, documentation and this strategic action plan with a better understanding of the challenges and experiences of autistic people from other marginalized communities.			This strategic action plan will be updated, where relevant, with the information we have learnt and the areas it impacts from the scoping work.
	C) Ensure co - production groups for autism services are inclusive and representative.			All co-production groups will be reviewed for their inclusivity and representation.

6) Support Portsmouth University to produce local research.	A) Link in with Portsmouth University to develop a plan for working together	Portsmouth Autism Community Forum and Health and Care Portsmouth	Year 1	Research completed with autistic people from Portsmouth, will be published.
7) Development and promotion of 'This is me passports'	A) Develop 'This is me' passports	All partners	Year 1	The number of autistic adults who use 'This is me' passports will have increased.
	B) Share widely and promote use including encouraging Health and Care professionals to complete with autistic people	All partners	Year 2	The number of professionals aware of these will have increased.

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2) Improving Health and Wellbeing

"Getting access to health care is very difficult for autistic people. We all know that the health outcomes for autistic adults are not good. There are some easy changes that could help this and some more difficult ones. We should aim for both."

What do we want to achieve? Aims	What will we do? Actions	Who will be responsible?	When will we do this?	How will we know progress? Measurable outcomes
1) Support commissioners to ensure voice of lived experience informs commissioning of future diagnostic service.	A) Support requests for co - production, and advocate for the voice of lived experience in commissioning processes.	Commissioning	Year 2 - 3	Expertise of people with lived experience will be heard and recognised within the commissioning process. This will be seen via co-production.
1) Provide clear, accessible and practical support for adults waiting for an autism or neurodivergent assessment.	A) Develop offer from Room One around pre and post diagnostic support. This will be based on early work and feedback from people with lived experience. This will include establishing a funding source, and appropriate 6 - 8 week programme.	To be confirmed	Year 2	There will be a programme of support for pre and post diagnosis at Room One. Feedback will be sought on its effectiveness.
	B) Share and promote needs led approach, so people can access support in a timely way whilst waiting for a diagnostic assessment.	All partners	Year 1	Autistic People and professionals working with them will understand what is meant by a needs led approach and be focused on delivering support in this way.

	A) Scope agencies that require a diagnosis (health, universities) and consider what support we can offer to make these more accessible.	All partners	Year 2 - 3	We will have a better understanding of what services require a diagnosis and will have a plan for working with them to increase accessibility.
2) Easier access to multi-disciplinary services to consider and treat co-occurring conditions appropriately.	A) Create multi-agency forum to develop joint working and common understanding of co-occurring conditions.	To Be Confirmed	Year 2 - 3	A multi-agency forum will be in place and working together to understand and support autistic people with co - occurring conditions.
3) Offer support to ensure services in Portsmouth are neurodivergent friendly including mental health, housing and substance misuse.	A) Offer visits and feedback regarding environment, staff training and meeting their requirements under the Equality Act, similar to work completed with Talking Therapies.	Room One and Portsmouth Autism Community Forum	Year 1 - 3	There will be records of the service who have been provided advice and guidance, and the advice given.
	B) Develop a pro - forma for visits and providing feedback to ensure consistency.	Room One and Portsmouth Autism Community Forum	Year 1 - 3	A pro-forma will be available for visits, and advice given. It will be reviewed for its effectiveness after a period of use.
4) Ensure autism or neurodivergence is appropriately identified on health and care recording systems.	A) Work with Integrated Care Boards, commissioners and primary care providers to ensure process for flagging autistic status is clear and understood by all staff.	To be confirmed	Year 1	A process for appropriately identifying autism and neurodivergent on health and care recording systems will be developed.
	B) Arrange to meet with TPP (Social Care Recording) to influence coding of autism on System1 NOTE: This action may change, when the System1 (TPP - Social Care	Health and Care Portsmouth	Year 1	There will be a clear way to identify people who are autistic and neurodivergent on health and care recording systems.

	Recording System) expires, and a re-tendering process takes place. This will then involve ensuring the needs of autistic people are considered in the commissioning of any system.			
5) Annual Health checks	A) Advocate for the implementation of annual health checks for autistic people.	To be Confirmed	Year 3	Autistic people will have better access to annual health checks. This can be measured by the number of people who have these.
6) Support the work on Hospital Passports	<p>A) Link in with the Learning Disability Hospital Liaison service at Queen Alexandra Hospital to understand the work they are undertaking on hospital passports.</p> <p>B) To seek feedback from autistic people on whether these will be useful.</p> <p>C) If they are found to be useful, to promote the use of hospital passports.</p>	Transformation Lead	Year 1	There will be a meeting with Learning Disability Hospital Liaison service at Queen Alexandra Hospital and there will be more understanding around the use of hospital passports.
				Feedback, via a variety of means such as surveys, ad hoc feedback and groups will have informed whether this is something autistic people want to use.
				If, they are something autistic people want to use, these will be promoted and we will know this has happened as the number of autistic people using hospital passports will have increased.
7) Produce 'what's it like' films with key services.	A) Approach services where these videos will be helpful, with offers of support to create these.	All Partners	Year 2 - 3	There will be a record of the services contacted regarding videos and

				whether one is to be produced or not.
	B) Build a bank of videos that can be shared with autistic and neurodivergent people when accessing services.	All Partners	Year 1 - 3	There will be produced videos that can be viewed by autistic people, before interacting with a service so they know what to expect. Their levels of engagement including views, likes and comments will be monitored.
	C) Find a storage solution for the created videos, so they are easily accessible.			
9) Develop a pathway for autistic and neurodivergent young people's profiling tool to come with them into adult services.	A) Scope the number of young people who will have a profiling tool who may require the support of Adult Social Care	Neurodiversity 0 - 19 Team Lead and Transformation Lead	Year 2	There will be data available as to how many young people with a profile that may require support from Adult Social Care.
	B) Promote understanding of the profiling tool within Adult Social Care and Adult Mental Health for increased awareness.			Professionals will tell us, via questionnaires that they understood the profiling tool and how it can support adults.

3) Better Care and Support

"There are lots of autistic adults who live isolated, lonely and unhappy lives. The numbers of autistic suicides highlight this. Some improvements to social care, more advocacy and more social groups could make a real difference."

What do we want to achieve? Aims	What will we do? Actions	Who will be responsible?	When will this happen?	How will we know progress? Measurable outcomes
1) Increase number of autistic adults getting access to Care Act social care assessments	A) Establish formal care pathway for autistic adults referred to Adult Social Care.	Transformation Lead - Portsmouth Adult Social Care	Year 2 - 3	Number of autistic adults having Care Act assessments will have increased and data will be available through Adult Social Care teams.
2) Improve the knowledge and skill base of adult social care service.	A) Establish 'Autism champions' in all adult social care teams.	Transformation Lead - Portsmouth Adult Social Care	Year 1	A champions network will be set up and active with a specific terms of reference.
3) Develop and enhance the range of support available at Room One.	A) Seek the support of agencies such as substance misuse, mental health and housing to provide drop ins to Room One	Room One and Transformation Lead - Portsmouth Adult Social Care	Year 1	Drop ins by various agencies will be in place. They will be reviewed after a period of embedding to ensure effectiveness and attendance.
	B) Complete scoping for what additional support autistic people want from Room One.	Room One and Transformation Lead - Portsmouth Adult Social Care	Year 1 - 3	Feedback will have been gained through surveys, focus groups and ad - hoc opportunities that informs us what support they want Room One to provide.
	C) Create a plan for the commissioning of any viable support options	Room One and Transformation Lead - Portsmouth Adult Social Care	Year 1	Plans will be devised for the support autistic people have informed us they want. These will be taken to the Room One oversight group for discussion.

<p>4) Improve and expand availability of peer support and specialist advocacy services for autistic adults.</p>	<p>A) Explore funded training programmes via the IMRoc Programme (training provider). If not eligible, consider other funding routes and training to bring more peer volunteers/workers on board</p>	<p>Room One, Transformation Lead and Commissioners</p>	<p>Year 1 - 2</p>	<p>Further training will have been commissioned Volunteers will be in place There will be increased numbers of people supported by Room One</p>
<p>4) Develop an offer of life skills programmes for autistic people.</p>	<p>A) Develop independent living skills programmes that include budgeting, cooking, cleaning amongst others, using NHS England funding sourced for this purpose.</p>	<p>Room One and Transformation Lead</p>	<p>Year 2</p>	<p>Life skills groups will be ran on a regular basis. People will fill out a questionnaire before and after. Scores will indicate that autistic people feel able to be more independent.</p>
<p>5) Create a directory of opportunities for services, social and friendship groups available to autistic adults.</p>	<p>A) Produce a searchable directory of services, social and friendship groups.</p>	<p>Room One and Transformation Lead</p>	<p>Year 1 - 2</p>	<p>Directory will be created, with regular updates. Increased number of views, or people will be accessing the directory.</p>
<p>6) Autistic people will be able to access direct payments to purchase their support.</p>	<p>A) Transformation Lead will join Adult Social Care direct payment work.</p>	<p>Transformation Lead and Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Year 1 - 3</p>	<p>Number of autistic adults with direct payments will have increased.</p>
	<p>B) Autistic people will be offered direct payments as an option to purchase their preferred support</p>	<p>Transformation Lead and Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Year 1 - 3</p>	<p>Feedback will be sought about direct payments, and this will let us know if it is working for autistic adults.</p>
<p>7) Support the Adult Social Care agenda around developing micro commissioning</p>	<p>A) Link with Direct Payments project to ensure work on micro commissioning</p>	<p>Transformation Lead and Adult Social Care Commissioning Manager</p>	<p>Year 3</p>	<p>There will be more services available to support autistic people.</p>

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4. Appropriate housing options

"For some autistic people their housing situation is a big part of their anxiety. Some people's lives can be transformed with a change of accommodation."

What do we want to achieve? Aims	What will we do? Actions	Who will be responsible?	When will this happen?	How will we know progress? Measurable outcomes
1) Learn about the housing needs of autistic people with a view to particularly understanding upcoming needs, for example autistic people currently living with their parents.	A) Work with autistic people to understand their housing needs.	Transformation Lead	Year 1 - 3	Using a range of sources, such as surveys, focus groups and ad hoc feedback, autistic people and the important people in their lives will tell us what housing needs they have.
	B) Scope upcoming needs via Children's Social Care and 0 - 19 Neurodiversity Team.	Transformation Lead	Year 1 - 3	Recording systems and the team's knowledge will inform us of the needs young autistic people have for housing. From this, we can develop a plan to ensure these needs can be adequately met.
2) Work with housing colleagues to ensure a range of housing options for autistic people including a	A) Work with the temporary housing team to understand the temporary housing offer, how it works and what influence we can have on future commissioning.	Transformation Lead	Year 1 - 3	Transformation lead will meet with the temporary housing team to understand the temporary housing offer and discuss future commissioning. A plan will be developed from this meeting.

temporary accommodation offer.	B) Work with housing on future planning and commissioning to ensure housing that meets autistic people's sensory needs is considered.	Transformation Lead	Year 1 - 3	A plan for including autistic people in the future of commissioning housing will be developed.
	C) Work on developing support options for those in temporary accommodation, including developing their support networks.			There will be support available to autistic people in temporary housing. We will receive qualitative feedback that indicates they feel more supported.
3) Work with housing colleagues to improve the experience of autistic people seeking accommodation.	A) Encourage housing department to create autism champions.	Transformation Lead	Year 1 - 3	Housing department will have autism champions that have been upskilled via training to work with autistic people.
	B) Arrange housing drop ins with Room One to enable people to access support in a preventative way.	Transformation Lead	Year 1 - 3	Regular drop-ins will be provided by the Housing Department. These will be reviewed after a period of time to ensure effectiveness and attendance.
4) Work with housing Occupational Therapist to understand how we can utilise this role for the benefit of autistic people.	A) Meet with Occupational Therapist to understand their role and the support they can provide, as well as identify areas of upskilling.	Transformation Lead	Year 1 - 3	There will be an identified plan for how the housing Occupational Therapist will support autistic people. Autistic people will provide feedback on how this has benefited them.

5. Accessing Education and Securing Employment

"The percentage of autistic adults in long term employment is very low. With greater understanding, some adjustments and flexibility, lots of employers could tap into some really talented people with great potential."

What do we want to achieve? Aims	What will we do? Actions	Who will be responsible?	When will this happen?	How will we know progress? Measurable outcomes
1) Grow the employment support offer for autistic people	A) Develop links with Job Centre Portsmouth to establish what support they can offer.	Transformation Lead and Autism Hub Facilitator	Year 1 - 2	A meeting will have taken place with Portsmouth Job Centre and a plan for collaborating will have been developed.
	B) When the current contract expires, a co-produced tender process will take place to review support.	Commissioners	Year 3	A co-produced tendering process will be devised and take place, resulting in the tendering of a employment service.
2) Promote use of various Vocational Profiles.	A) Gain an understanding of the various vocational profiles and undertake any relevant training.	Transformation Lead, Autism and Neurodivergent Transition Team and Autism Hub facilitator	Year 1 - 3	There will be a record of the staff who have completed the vocational profile training.
	B) Increase usage where appropriate.	Transformation Lead, Autism and Neurodivergent Transition Team and Autism Hub facilitator	Year 1 - 3	There will be a number of completed vocational profiles that can be audited for quality.
	C) Promote use to other services working with autistic people	Transformation Lead, Autism and Neurodivergent Transition Team and Autism Hub facilitator	Year 1 - 3	A variety of services will be aware of the vocational profile, and using within their services.

3) Working with local employers to understand the needs of autistic people in employment.	A) Promote use of employment video created by Portsmouth Autism Community Forum	Autism Hub Facilitator, Transformation Lead and Portsmouth Autism Community Forum	Year 1 - 3	Number of views on training video will increase. At time of writing, the current views are 402 views and 3 likes.
	B) Scope with autistic people what further resources they feel are needed and develop a plan to source or create these resources	Autism Hub Facilitator, Transformation Lead and Portsmouth Autism Community Forum	Year 1 - 2	Autistic people will be asked, in a variety of ways which resources they feel are needed to support employers to meet their needs.
	C) Promote how autistic people can be supported in their employment with employers	Employment Service	Year 1 -3	Guidance on reasonable adjustments will be developed and shared with local employers. This will be reviewed after a period of use.
4) Improve understanding and promotion of supported internships.	A) Autism Hub Facilitator and Transformation Lead to link in with Special Educational Needs and Disability Employment lead to understand supported internships.	Transformation Lead	Year 1	There will be an established link between autism services in Adult Social Care and Special Educational Needs and Disability Employment Leads.
	B) Work with Special Educational Needs and Disability Employment lead to promote use of supported internships where they meet people's needs.	Transformation Lead	Year 2	There will be a plan for the promotion of supported internships.
5) Improve understanding and promotion of supported apprenticeships.	A) Link with Portsmouth City Council apprenticeship team understand supported apprenticeship offer.	Transformation Lead	Year 1	There will be established links between autism services and the apprenticeship team.

	B) Develop a plan of promotion of supported apprenticeship opportunities where they meet people's needs.	Transformation Lead	Year 2	There will be a plan for the promotion of supported apprenticeships.
6) Source and promote for autistic people and employers information on creative reasonable adjustments	A) Scope information and guidance readily available on reasonable adjustments, and promote where appropriate.	Autism Hub Facilitator and Transformation Lead	Years 1 - 3	There will be a pool of resources around reasonable adjustments that can be shared with autistic/neurodivergent people and employers.
	B) Create resources for autistic people on identifying reasonable adjustments that could be made and how to ask for these	Autism Hub Facilitator and Transformation Lead	Years 1 - 3	There will be co-produced guidance on asking for, and suggested reasonable adjustments. This will be reviewed for its effectiveness after a period of use.
	C) Link with local unions to understand how they are supporting autistic employees with gaining reasonable adjustments	Autism Hub Facilitator and Transformation Lead	Years 1 - 3	There will be established links with local unions and autism services.
7) Development of the self-employment offer and social enterprises alongside agenda for micro commissioning.	A) Scope autistic people's views on self-employment and how this could be developed	Transformation Lead and Senior Commissioning Manager	Year 2 - 3	Autistic people will be asked, using a variety of means such as ad hoc feedback, surveys and focus groups, how they feel about self-employment and how it can benefit them.
	B) Consider what micro-commissioning is needed, and would benefit autistic people	Transformation Lead and Senior Commissioning Manager	Year 2 - 3	A co-produced plan for micro commissioning of services that autistic

	with the Adult Social Care commissioning manager	Senior		people feel will benefit them, will be developed.
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Appendix One: Feedback for Room One

"If I didn't have Room One, I'd probably still be housebound or with Crisis. I am able to learn new skills and I feel safe" - taken from feedback received in September 2023

All 13 pieces of feedback received in September 2023 noted the benefits of having an autistic person to lead Room One.

"It has helped me go back to Football" - taken from feedback received in September 2023

"When I told one client about it, he became quite tearful, saying that he'd been struggling for so long and he was so glad that Portsmouth finally had a service like this. Another client told me that she'd felt different...like and outsider, her whole life and that a place like Room One was a great idea to help people finally feel connected." - Professional feedback received December 2023

"I wouldn't be alive without Room One" - taken from feedback received in January 2024

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Appendix Two: Co - Production

Room One is Portsmouth's autism hub. It provides support with peer mentoring, advice, guidance, information and signposting. All aspects of Room One have been co - produced, including the naming of the service, the decoration of the room in which it was based and the initial recruitment of the autism hub facilitators alongside the services it planned to provide.

Examples of Co - Production:

- Autistic and neurodivergent people were involved in the initial setting up of the service including; what the service would provide, the recruitment of the team but also practical aspects such as the colour of the walls and the name of the service.
- Room One has an oversight group, involving autistic people, Portsmouth Autism Community Forum (a community forum for autistic people, people who support autistic people including partners, relatives and carers and professionals supporting autistic people), Room One and the local authority, who come together on a bi monthly basis to develop the service and ensure good governance and quality service is provided.
- Room One team attends the Portsmouth Autism Community Forum, to update the wider autistic community and their supporters on the service and to seek feedback from autistic people around this service, to be used in future development. From this, the team have noted there is a call for a loved ones' group (this is to encompass all supporters of autistic people including partners, parents and siblings, and to also note that not all autistic people identify with having a carer). This group is being led by the parent of an autistic adult, and supported by Portsmouth's Carers Centre. When the group starts in December, they will produce how the group is run including how often, how it will function ie free discussion or topics and what services they may like to hear from.
- This service is led by autistic people for autistic people, so ensures that at all times autistic people's needs, views and wishes are central to this service and what is provided. The service provides peer support groups, that are around topics chosen by the people using the service including social media and autism, comfort items and focused interests.
- In 2024, an NHS England bid was completed based on what autistic people tell us they want from the service including additional peer support, better access to care and support and some groups around life skills and life organisation. The bid was successful and autistic people will be involved in the recruitment of 2 additional staff member and in the development of their roles via the oversight group.
- Room One is often contacted by other services for example health, who wish to co - produce services to support them to find volunteers to be involved. Room One actively supports this, and ensures that autistic people have the opportunity to be involved in this. Room One will also host events to facilitate this. For example, on 19th July, a workshop is being held by a research provider, to find out what areas of autism should be priorities for research.

Appendix Three: Case Study - Into Work (You Trust)

T was referred to the Into Work Service by the Transition Team. She was about to start her first shift and was very reluctant and anxious. After a discussion during her profile meeting she was encouraged to believe in herself and give her best to start her role.

On the first day on the job, T was accompanied to the workplace by the Into Employment Worker. She stood outside for a short while contemplating whether she was making the right decision to start working at The Cooperative Food. After more encouragement to understand the benefits of working, she was supported to enter the store for her induction. After a tour of the store she was presented with details on manual handling which was quite overwhelming for her to read. After bursting out into tears she was reassured that the Into Work Service can assist in breaking down aspects of the document to help her find clarity in it. A brief discussion with T and a staff member / manager explained that support can be given for e learning, however the team at the coop decided to support the client to complete this.

After a few weeks of frequently checking in with T and the employer it was evident that she was enjoying her job and was settling into her role very well. She was observed to be multi-tasking, serving customers and dealing with issues on the self-check. The manager had many positive things to say about her work. It was great to see the changes in the attitude of T towards her work.

Client Feedback: "The service has helped me by helping me keep my job. I sometimes feel listened to and work well with the service. The good thing about working with the service is that it helps you".