



**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige**
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Autism Innovation Strategy - What the Public Said



**This is an Easy to Read version of the
report.**

April 2023



What is this report about?



In April 2022, the Minister for Disability, Anne Rabbitte, started a public consultation.

A consultation is when people are asked to give their views on something.



The consultation was about a new plan called the Autism Innovation Strategy.



This report will tell you what people said during the consultation.



One thing people said is that they prefer to use the words 'Autistic person' instead of 'a person with autism'.

We will use 'Autistic person' in this report.



What is the Autism Innovation Strategy?



The Autism Innovation Strategy is a new plan for autism supports in Ireland.



The Strategy will look at the challenges and barriers faced by Autistic and Neurodivergent people.



Neurodivergent means having a brain that works differently to other people so you have different strengths and challenges.



The Strategy will look at ways to get over challenges and barriers.



What is the Autism Innovation Strategy?



The Strategy will look at areas that are not covered by other policies, such as the National Disability Inclusion Strategy or the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.



How many people took part in the consultation?



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The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth got 51 responses during the consultation.

A response is when a person or organisation sends in their views.



Around 20 of these responses were from Autistic or Neurodivergent people.



There were responses from parents of Autistic and Neurodivergent people.



There were responses from professionals.
Most of these professionals work in health or education.



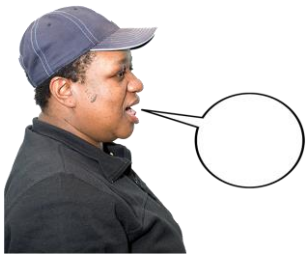
How many people took part in the consultation?



Some disability organisations and public sector organisations sent their views to the Department.



Some responses were anonymous – this means the person or organisation did not give their name.



What did people say?



Autistic people want to live in a country where they have the same chances as everyone else.



Autistic people experience a range of barriers and challenges in their daily lives.



People expect the Autism Innovation Strategy to change how people think about autism in Ireland.



The barriers and challenges



There are not enough supports for Autistic people that want to communicate in ways other than speech.



There is not enough information to show how many Autistic people are living in Ireland.



This means it is hard to plan the right services and supports for Autistic people.



The right education supports are not there for Autistic people.



The barriers And challenges



There are not enough work opportunities for Autistic people.

This makes it hard to have enough money to live on.



There are not enough health services and supports.



The public can have a poor attitude towards Autistic people.

Some people think that autism is a negative thing rather than a positive difference.



New ideas and good ways of working



People gave examples of good supports and ways of working.



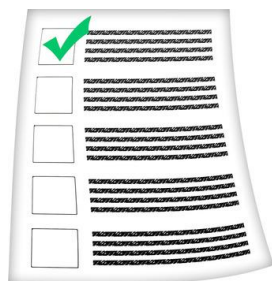
Some people said what services and supports they would like to have.



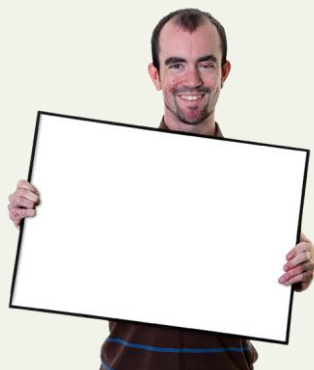
A lot of the ideas were about learning, jobs, or health.



People said that it is important to check if new services and supports work well for Autistic people.



What people think the Strategy should do



Use the words 'Autistic person'.



Say how Autistic people will help to put the Strategy together.

Say how Autistic people will check that the Strategy is put into action and is working well.



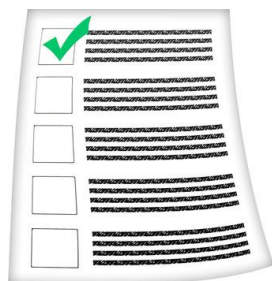
Move to a rights-based and person-centred approach.

This would support each Autistic person to make their own choices and decisions, and be themselves.



Some of the issues raised by people were about services and supports now.

For example, Assessment of Need, early learning, or supports in schools.



What people think the Strategy should do



People shared their views on how society could be more positive towards autism.

Autistic people must be part of any local or national plans to help the public learn about autism.



People said that we need to deal with bad information or thinking about autism.

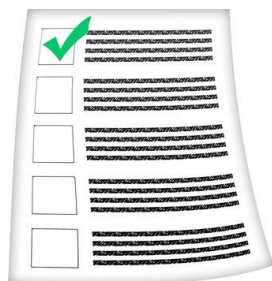
We need to help the public to understand autism better.



The Strategy should support different types of communication for Autistic people.



The Strategy should encourage people to move to therapies which are based on rights and allow the person to be their Autistic self.



What people think the Strategy should do



Adults should be able to get an autism diagnosis in the public services.



There should be a framework for education and health which shows autism as a positive difference.



The Strategy should say how important Universal Design is.



It should say how we can collect the right information about autism.



More information



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Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

This information was put together by the
Department of Children, Equality, Disability,
Integration and Youth.



ACE Communication helped with this Easy
to Read information.

Experts by Experience helped to put this
booklet together.