Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Live Well – Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodiversity Services

Market Position Statement

2026–2029

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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodiversity Market Position Statement for Bath and North East Somerset.

Bath & North East Somerset Council is committed to supporting people with learning disabilities, autism and neurodivergence to live good lives, in the place they call home, with the people and things that matter to them. This Market Position Statement sets out our strategic direction and intentions for the local Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodiversity care and support market between 2026 and 2029, reflecting growing demand, increasing complexity of need and our ambition to commission sustainable, high-quality, person-centred services.

Natalia Lachkou,

Assistant Director for Commissioning

B&NES Council

Introduction

This Market Position Statement is intended to provide information and guidance to current and potential providers of adult social care services supporting adults with learning disabilities, autism and neurodivergence in Bath and North East Somerset, as well as people who draw on support, and their families, carers, and advocates.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Share our vision and objectives for Adult Social Care in Bath and North East Somerset.
- Describe the local population and what helps people to live well.
- Explain how care and support services are currently used and where demand is increasing.
- Summarise our commissioning priorities and approach.
- Outline our expectations and standards for quality and outcomes.
- Describe the opportunities and challenges for the care market.

We hope that this document will help you to understand the current and future landscape of Adult Social Care in Bath and North East Somerset and how we plan to work with you to shape a diverse, sustainable, and high-quality market that meets the needs and aspirations of our local population.

We have also identified market opportunities, which are highlighted throughout this document, to help providers understand where there are gaps in our market and we would be happy to work with providers to help deliver in these areas. This document will be updated regularly as needs, evidence, and feedback change.

We welcome your views and comments on this document, and we invite you to engage with us in an ongoing dialogue to develop and improve adult social care services in Bath and North East Somerset.

For more information, you can contact us by email at commissioning@bathnes.gov.uk

Developing this Market Position Statement

This statement has been developed through analysis of local data, service use, population projections and engagement with providers and partners across the system. The focus has been on building a shared understanding of the current offer, identifying gaps and pressures, and shaping clear strategic ambitions for the future Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodiversity market in Bath and North East Somerset.

Drawing on this combination of data, learning and engagement, we brought together the evidence and strategic direction to shape this document. The resulting Market Position Statement sets out the Council's key intentions and aspirations and is intended to support planning, innovation and service development across the local care and support market, helping to ensure services continue to meet the needs of people in Bath and North East Somerset both now and in the future.

About Bath and North East Somerset

Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) is a unitary authority located within the South West of England with a population of around 201,000 people (as of 2024). This is expected to increase to 216,000 by 2034 with the largest increase in the over 65 population.

B&NES joined with Swindon and Wiltshire to form an Integrated Care System called BSW Together joining the local NHS services, local authorities, and stakeholder organisations in developing an Integrated Care Strategy for this region.

As well as the Integrated Care Strategy, B&NES Council has also produced a Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 that incorporates our responsibilities and plans around Adult Social Care.

B&NES Council is responding to financial pressures while continuing to prioritise support for residents. Our Medium-Term Financial Strategy explains how we are addressing this, which includes savings to be delivered within Adult Social Care.

In addition, the B&NES Health and Wellbeing Board, which includes representatives across different sectors working within B&NES, have produced a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2030. This strategy was informed by our Strategic Evidence Base.

ASC Vision and Strategy

Our vision for Adult Socia Care in B&NES is for people who draw on care and support to live in the place they call home, with the people and things they love, in communities where they belong, with the right support at the right time.

We will achieve this through three Commitments:

- Internal/Practice Offer: We deliver a service that empowers people to get the support that is right for them. We use a quality assurance framework to maintain high standards and learn from feedback.

- External/Community Offer: We recognise the value of the communities, assets, and resources available locally to support residents to be active and fulfilled citizens, including the vital role played by the Community Wellbeing Hub. We use our organisational influence to support fair and equitable access to opportunities for residents.

- Provider/Market Offer: We are focused on the delivery of high-quality support that helps people to progress and to lead enjoyable and meaningful lives. We will be bold, ambitious, innovative, and adaptable to support people to live the lives they want to lead.

This aligns with the wider Adult Social Care strategy and is underpinned by five principles:

- Safe – We will be bold in our decision making and empower staff to ensure the safe delivery of services and understand the impact of their decisions on people. We will work with partners to build a shared ethos of delivering quality services and safeguards people from harm.

- Effective – We will collaborate with stakeholders to co-produce services in response to population needs, learning and adapting our approach together. Our priority will to be to ensure services are delivered in the most effective way working with strength-based practice and person-centered assessments.

- Caring – We will enable people to live fulfilling and meaningful lives and focus on people as people. We will promote kindness and compassion by listening to understand their needs, wants and ambitions.

- Responsive – We will support a positive approach to managing risk avoidance to support people to build on their capacity and strengths to manage risk. We will work with partners to develop a supportive network, working as one team, which will learn together.

- Well Led – We will be building on our organisational culture to embed our workforce culture built on mutual respect and shared values. We will ensure our staff continue to feel supported and empowered, which delivers our organisational values.

These principles guide our expectations of providers and our commissioning approach.

Our Commissioning Pledges

We have developed commissioning pledges that are aligned to our vision and strategy, as well as with national policies and legislation such as the Care Act 2014, the NHS Long Term Plan, the Social Care Reform White Paper and the Adult social Care Priorities for Local Authorities (2026-2027) policy paper.

- We will keep the residents of B&NES at the centre of our thinking.
- We will follow the commissioning cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review.
- We will listen to as many views as we can and build them into our plans.
- We will work with and across the Council and Integrated Care Alliance and, where appropriate, Integrated Care System joining Swindon and Wiltshire.
- We will be looking for best value outcomes for the whole system.
- We will tackle today's challenges looking towards solutions for the future.
- We believe in doing things together and will seek ways to make that real.

About Adults with Learning Disability and Autism in B&NES

Population and Prevalence

- An estimated 3,953 adults in B&NES have a learning disability (around 2% of the population)
- Around 1,444 adults have a GP-recorded diagnosis, and more people may benefit from access to assessment and diagnosis, particularly for people with mild learning disabilities.
- Approximately 1,248 adults are estimated to be autistic, with prevalence expected to grow.
- Number of adults aged 18–64 with learning disabilities is predicted to increase by 8.4% over the next 20 years.
- Number of adults aged 18–64 with autism is predicted to increase by 10.8% over the same period.
- As people live longer, services will continue to adapt to meet changing needs, with the largest proportional increases forecast in people aged 45–54 and 65+ for both learning disability and autism.

Market Overview

- Nearly 500 people with learning disabilities and/or autism are supported by adult social care in B&NES.
- 28 specialist learning disabilities and autism providers deliver 52 specialist services to nearly 350 people in B&NES.
- A further 45 specialist learning disabilities and autism specialist providers are delivering 87 services out of area, supporting nearly 100 people.
- 8 of these providers deliver services both in and out of area.
- Community based preventative services include supported housing for 8 adults with autistic spectrum disorders and community support services which are delivered by 3 providers to over 50 adults in B&NES with learning disabilities and autism.

- Specialist providers support 92% of adults with a learning disability and/or autism who have care and support needs.

Preventative services

Preventative services are available to individuals who do not have eligible care and support needs.

Living support networks and floating support services are designed to promote individuals' well-being, independence, and quality of life through the delivery of tailored support within people's homes and community settings.

- 2 providers deliver these flexible support services to almost 50 individuals.

Supported housing provides short term housing with on-site or visiting support, for people transitioning to independent living as part of a pathway.

- An 8-bed supported housing service in Bath provides temporary accommodation (up to two years) for adults with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

Community Based Support

Shared Lives connects individuals requiring support with approved carers within their local community. The person receiving support lives in the carer's home on a full-time basis, which may be for a few months or on a longer-term arrangement.

- Shared Lives supports people aged 19–81, including 5 long-term placements.

Community-based day opportunities are structured daytime activities that promote skills, social inclusion, and wellbeing outside the home.

- Day opportunities support 177 people across 5 services.

Outreach provides support to enable individuals to live in either their own flats or shared accommodation.

- Outreach supported living delivers over 4,000 hours of support annually.

Direct Payments could offer people more choice, control, and flexibility in the way their support is provided and managed.

- 116 people receive direct payments (March 2026), supporting choice and control.

Supported Living (Accommodation based)

Supported Living is any scheme where housing and care and support services are provided as an integrated package. This support will comprise a level of core/daytime support and/or an element of sleep-in and/or wake-in and/or additional hours.

- Over 100 people live in specialist supported living placements in B&NES.
- Supported living accounts for 94.6% of all specialist accommodation-based services.

- The age of people supported ranges from 22 to 83.

Extra Care Housing

Self-contained properties let on assured tenancies with a range of communal facilities. Suitable for people aged 55 or over who do not need 24-hour supervision but can no longer live on their own. There is 24-hour support on site, if required.

- 20 people with learning disabilities and/or autism live in extra care housing (14% of all council extra care beds)
- Extra care is increasingly important for older adults with disabilities and/or autism.

Care Homes

Care homes are a residential facility providing 24/7 personal care and support and respite.

- 10 specialist learning disabilities and autism care homes support 26 people in B&NES.
- 75% of people with a learning disability and/or autism are supported in out of area specialist care homes.
- Local provision in B&NES is in high demand, with limited vacancies.

Commissioning Intentions

Strategic aims for services to support people with learning disabilities and/or autism in B&NES are to:

- Embed personalisation, choice and control, and co-production into service delivery, including through Individual Service Funds where appropriate, so people shape how their support is designed, delivered and reviewed.
- Expand community-based support that enables independence, strengthens community connections and supports people to live the lives they choose, building on people's strengths and local networks to help prevent needs from escalating.
- Develop innovative, technology-enabled and person-led approaches that promote independence, self-directed support and fulfilling lives, helping people build or regain skills and confidence through enablement and assistive technology where appropriate.
- Increase access to flexible housing, care and support options that help people remain independent and adapt to changing needs and aspirations, including mainstream housing, supported living and extra care, through stronger relationships with housing, planning and provider partners.
- Move away from spot purchasing arrangements towards long-term commissioning frameworks that promote innovation, flexibility and sustainable service models, building strategic provider relationships and enabling care delivery to adapt as people's needs change.

These areas represent clear market opportunities where we welcome provider engagement and collaboration to shape future plans.

Market Opportunities

Market Opportunity 1: Supported Living Expansion

We are seeking to collaborate with providers to develop new supported living capacity within B&NES to reduce reliance on out-of-area placements, particularly for:

- People with learning disabilities and/or autism who may need more support.
- People living with ageing carers.
- Young people transitioning from children's services.

We are particularly interested in small-scale, community-based models that enable people to live independently with flexible support which can flex as people's needs and goals change.

Market Opportunity 2: Specialist and Inclusive Services

There is a clear gap in local provision for:

- People with a learning disability who use British Sign Language (BSL) as their first language.
- Ageing adults with learning disabilities and/or autism who are experiencing frailty, dementia, or long-term health conditions.
- Limited availability of Extra Care Housing for adults with learning disabilities and autism.

We welcome proposals from providers who can develop specialist, inclusive and culturally appropriate services that address these needs within B&NES.

Market Opportunity 3: Long-Term Commissioning Frameworks

B&NES Council intends to move away from spot purchasing arrangements and develop long-term Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodiversity commissioning frameworks from 2026 onwards.

Providers will have opportunities to:

- Engage in the design of future service models and specifications.
- Help shape outcomes-focused, flexible frameworks.
- Support market sustainability and workforce stability.
- Early engagement with the market will inform the scope and structure of future procurement activity.

Market Opportunity 4: Community-Based and Preventative Support

We are seeking to expand community-based and preventative support that:

- Increases use of direct payments and Individual Service Funds.
- Promotes independence, social inclusion, and meaningful activity.
- Uses assistive and enabling technology to reduce reliance on accommodation-based care.
- Providers who can demonstrate innovative approaches aligned to personalisation and prevention are encouraged to engage with us.

Co-production

We are committed to increasing co-production with people with lived experience, families, carers, and providers. Future commissioning activity will actively seek to involve partners in shaping service models, specifications, and outcomes.

B&NES Council is focused on working with stakeholders to deliver improvements in the way services are commissioned and delivered in future. We work with our commissioned providers to ensure that they regularly seek feedback from people receiving support to ensure services are person-centered and can deliver continuous improvement.

We seek to model these behaviors within our own practices, consulting with stakeholders during the commissioning process, having regular discussions with partner organisations and taking the time to speak to people who access the services we are responsible for.

We operate a You Said We Did approach to our engagement activities so that we can feedback on what we have heard and how we have acted upon on the feedback we have received.

As we move forward to the next round of commissioning activity, we will identify opportunities to co-produce this with all the partners and stakeholders involved so we can develop innovative solutions to the growing challenges we face.

Our Commitment to Providers

B&NES Council commits to:

- Work in partnership with providers in B&NES in a collaborative, honest and open way, which will ensure we deliver high-quality support for people in B&NES.
- Receive payment on time for services delivered. B&NES Council has invested in IT systems that support automatic payments, ensuring providers are paid correctly and in a timely manner.
- Providing free quarterly provider forums. There are separate forums for Live Well providers (including LD&A providers), care home providers, and home care providers, so that agenda items can be tailored appropriately and will be an opportunity for providers to engage directly with commissioners and other guest speakers.
- Access to dedicated support when required. Each provider and/or service will have access to a dedicated commissioner that they can contact for support when needed. Opportunities to shape future commissioning.
- Support from the Care Skills Partnership in accessing Workforce Development Funding.
- Support with the management of safeguarding issues.
- Provide opportunities to be involved in strategic projects that can help make a real difference to people's lives.