# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Laying of the Statutory Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services** |
| **DATE**  | **24 March 2021**  |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language** |

It is so important that the way in which autistic people and those with other neurodiverse conditions communicate and interact with the world is understood. We need to create a kinder, more sensitive society that can respond positively and support autistic people, their families and carers. Today we have laid the Statutory Code of Practice on the delivery of Autism Services delivering on a Welsh Government commitment to publish the Code in this Senedd term. It will support the delivery of our on-going improvement programme set out in our autism strategy published in 2016. The Code describes how services and support should be planned and delivered to meet autistic people’s identified needs and to ensure services are accessible in local communities.

The [Code](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsenedd.wales%2Fsearch%3FPageSize%3D4%26Page%3D1%26Culture%3Den-GB%26ViewModelType%3DAll%26IsSubSearch%3DFalse%26SiteHomePageId%3D0%26SearchTerm%3D%26DateFrom%3D%26DateTo%3D%26Members%3D%26IncludeLaidDocuments%3Dtrue&data=04%7C01%7CRachel.Brown%40gov.wales%7Cb4b9bb496b434a82d8ea08d8eea3d9c3%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637521734780464667%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=uhCwo5TBJMlHNmgiIrAav8tbZUiywU2Qt9BSzDdPMig%3D&reserved=0) and [accompanying guidance](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fcode-practice-provision-autism-services-supporting-guidance-working-draft&data=04%7C01%7CRachel.Brown%40gov.wales%7Cba700a5a0b494c4e950f08d8ee0a34ad%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637521074881337921%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=w9X1fet9okzCfcyTf9RUo27L%2FY2aVKnYhgFdj45i88M%3D&reserved=0) have been developed in partnership with our stakeholders, most importantly autistic people and their parents and carers, and with third sector organisations, practitioners and services providing support. We held two public consultations on our proposals and organised technical briefings to discuss the detail of the Code. We have sought engagement with all stakeholders across Wales, seeking their views on the services and support they want to see. I want to thank all those who took the time to work with the Welsh Government, providing advice and guidance on the priorities for the Code.

This Code and guidance will re-inforce and strengthen existing duties to support autistic people contained in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the NHS (Wales) Act 2006. Its aim is to inform autistic people about the support they can expect to be available, to raise awareness of the needs of autistic people and their parents and carers to enable them to live fulfilling lives. The Code and guidance also provides direction for statutory services on how they should plan to ensure autism services are available and how they are delivered and monitored.

Subject to the will of the next Senedd, the Code will come into force from 1 September 2021 and will be supported by an updated delivery plan for the autism strategy, which will be published in the new Senedd Term. The delivery plan will acknowledge the enormous pressures faced by services as they recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Early priorities will be on raising awareness of the Code and to support Regional Partnership Boards we are providing a grant of £4,000 per region to assist in developing an autism infrastructure from which they can build sustainable improvement. Regions will also be supported by the National Autism Team, and local autism leads, which working in partnership with autistic people will directly support the implementation of the Code, providing advice, training and resources.

Our strong commitment to improving the lives of autistic people and others who are neurodiverse will continue and develop. We are also publishing the [annual report](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fautistic-spectrum-disorder-asd-strategic-action-plan-delivery-plan-annual-report-2019-2020&data=04%7C01%7CRachel.Brown%40gov.wales%7Cba700a5a0b494c4e950f08d8ee0a34ad%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637521074881347876%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=Kw8IoEdgUgkBbVkZKxIazOtWVp5jnBUSt4ouyiyCAkE%3D&reserved=0) for the delivery of the autism strategy 19/20 which summarises the progress we are making. Although we have achieved significant improvements we recognise gaps in provision remain we need to gather new evidence and best practice as it emerges. Therefore this year we are undertaking a demand and capacity review of all age neurodevelopmental services. This will help us understand where we can build on existing services which are working well and where we need to take action to address identified gaps to create a sustainable system of support across sectors.

We will achieve this by continuing to work in partnership with autistic people and their parents and carers and with services across Wales over the next Senedd Term.