

Freedom of Information – Response – 27296

I am writing to request information regarding the authority's arrangements for meeting expectations set out in statutory guidance issued under the Autism Act 2009.

The statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS bodies (2015) sets an expectation that areas establish and maintain effective multi-agency partnership arrangements for autism, commonly operationalised through an Autism Partnership Board. The national autism strategy (2021–2026) further reinforces the expectation that local areas have active partnership arrangements of this kind.

In this context, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide the following information:

1. Please confirm whether the authority currently has:

- a) an Autism Partnership Board; or*
- b) an equivalent multi-agency partnership arrangement intended to meet these expectations.*

Yes (a).

2. If the authority does not have a dedicated Autism Partnership Board, please provide:

- a) a description of how the authority maintains effective multi-agency partnership arrangements for autism*

N/A

- b) an outline of how those arrangements have changed since 2015*

N/A

3. For any Autism Partnership Board or equivalent arrangement, please provide:

- a) Contact details*
- b) Terms of Reference*
- c) Membership, including how autistic people and/or family representatives are included*
- d) Copies of agendas and minutes for meetings in the last 24 months (or links where publicly available)*

The Partnership Board is currently on hold in its existing format pending the introduction of revised governance arrangements, under which an independent organisation will oversee and manage the Board, a function previously carried out by Suffolk County Council. The Terms of Reference will be updated and Board membership refreshed once these arrangements are in place.

The Board will continue to include autistic individuals and/or family representatives.

As no Partnership Board meetings have taken place during this period, meeting minutes are not available.

4. Please provide the specification for any work currently commissioned or provided by the local authority and/or local ICB that offers low-level support for autistic adults without requiring a Care Act assessment/eligibility.

Low level support could include, for example, short-term coaching, peer support, drop-in sessions or group learning, and may aim to:

- prevent or delay the need for longer term or more intensive support*
- improve wellbeing and independence*
- support autistic adults to develop skills and confidence in areas such as accessing the community, social/support groups, relationships, managing household routines, managing bills/paperwork, taking part in volunteering/employment etc.*

Suffolk County Council:

- Peer Support Service.*
- Short Term Enablement Service.*

If any part of this request is held jointly with other organisations (e.g. Integrated Care Boards), please provide the information held by the authority and indicate where responsibility is shared.

If the information requested is already publicly available, please provide direct links to the relevant documents.

Services commissioned by ICB will need to be obtained from the ICB.