

# Information

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## for County Councillors

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To:	All County Councillors
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## Somerset Autism Strategy and Library Collections

### Somerset Autism Strategy

The first national autism strategy for adults, *Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives*, was published by the Department of Health in 2010, and was updated with a refreshed strategy, *Think Autism*, in 2014. The Strategy sets out a clear framework for all mainstream services across the public sector to work together for adults with autism. Following on from this, updated statutory guidance for local authorities, NHS bodies and NHS Foundation Trusts was released in 2015, which directs organisations in the actions that they must be undertaking to meet the needs of people with autism in their local area.

Nationally it is estimated that just above 1 in 100 people in the general population may have an autistic spectrum condition, upon which basis there are approximately 5,400 people in Somerset.

In response to the national agenda and needs of the local population, work has been led locally by Somerset County Council and NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group to develop a Somerset Autism Strategy. A decision was taken that the strategy would provide the strategic direction for all people with autism and their carers/families in Somerset, irrespective of age and so Children and Young People's services and Adults services worked together to develop the draft document, with support and input from other multi-agency partners. Following a robust consultation period, the strategy was amended and has now been agreed by the Joint Commissioning Board, Clinical Operational Group and SEND Board. The final strategy will be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board on 26<sup>th</sup> November.

The Somerset Autism Strategy Group will be responsible for oversight and implementation of the Autism Strategy and will be providing support through four working sub-groups covering the following areas:

- a. Children and Young People
- b. Living with Autism
- c. Workforce Development
- d. Identification & Diagnosis

A copy of the final strategy will shortly be added to the Somerset County Council website.

To mark the new autism strategy and library collections, BBC Somerset will be presenting a programme on autism on morning of 12<sup>th</sup> November, with the aim to raise awareness about autism and the work being undertaken by Somerset County Council in partnership with other organisations.

### Library Collections

Autism library collections are being launched in libraries across Somerset. Consisting of a range of books and DVDs about autism, they will provide a dedicated information resource for people with autism and their carers and families following a diagnosis, as well as professionals working with individuals living with autism. They will also provide a resource to the general public who wish to find out more about autism.

There will be five large collections in Taunton, Yeovil, Frome, Bridgwater and Williton libraries and then 31 smaller collections in the other Somerset Library locations.

In addition, there will be a number of smaller collections being provided on a long term loan basis to voluntary and community organisations and groups, as well as social care and health teams across the county. The aim of these collections is that they can be used by staff when working with people with autism and their carers and families.

The collections have been funded through the Department of Health and thanks goes to partner organisations, including those who represent people with autism and their carers and families, in developing the collections.

For more information about the books within the collections, please visit [www.somerset.gov.uk/autismcollection](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/autismcollection)

All titles are available to reserve free of charge from any Somerset library, or at [www.librarieswest.org.uk](http://www.librarieswest.org.uk)

There will be a formal launch taking place on 12<sup>th</sup> November in Taunton Library and all councillors are invited. To find out more and to book a place, please contact Rhian Bennett on the details below.

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