



Department
of Health &
Social Care



Easy
Read

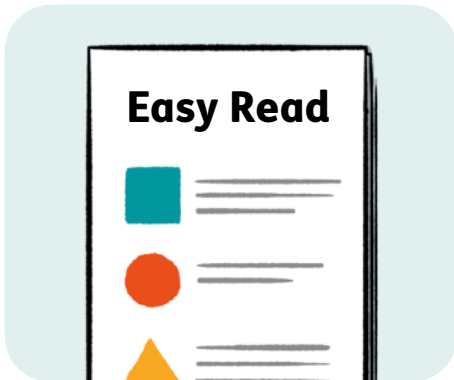
Looking into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism

What we have learned so far



**This is an Easy Read version of the Independent
review into mental health conditions, ADHD and
autism: interim report**

Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information.

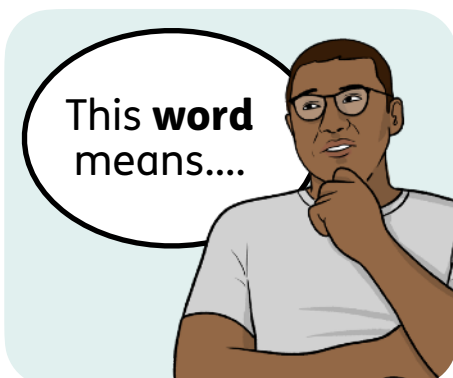
It uses easier words and pictures.



Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are **bold** to show they are important.



We explain bold words if they are hard to understand.

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About this report



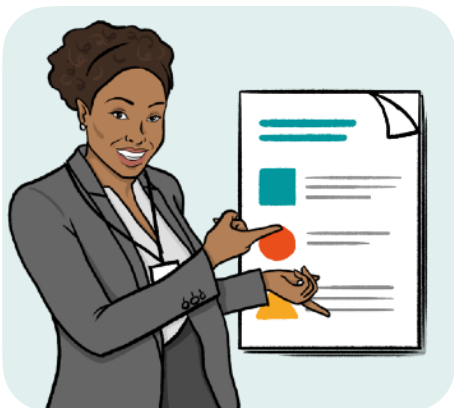
We are a group of people looking at the support, experience and the effect on their lives of people with:

- Mental health conditions.
- Health conditions like ADHD and autism.



The government asked us to do a **review** of support for people with these health conditions.

A **review** is where we look into something to find out how to make it better.



This report explains what we have found out so far.

We have not made any final decisions yet. We will do that in the final report.

The health conditions that we looked at

We wanted to find out more about:



- **Mental health conditions.**

These are illnesses that affect how you think, feel and behave.



- **ADHD.**

ADHD is short for **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**.

It is a condition that can make you find it difficult to focus on 1 thing.



- **Autism.**

Autism affects how you mix with other people, or how you think and feel about things.



2 of the most common mental health conditions are **anxiety** and **depression**.



Anxiety is a condition that makes you very worried or nervous a lot of the time.



Depression is an illness that means you have a low mood and may find it difficult to cope with everyday life.



Many people with mental health conditions, ADHD and autism are not getting the support they need.



When a doctor says that someone has a health condition, we say that they have **diagnosed** the person.



More people are being diagnosed with some mental health conditions, ADHD and autism than they used to be.

This could be for a lot of reasons.

It could be because of reasons like:



- There are more people with these health conditions than there used to be.



- Doctors were not diagnosing enough people in the past.

Support



Many people need support.



But it can be hard to get support unless you have been diagnosed with a mental health condition, ADHD or autism.



So a lot of people are trying to find out if they have a mental health condition, ADHD or autism.



This means that people who need support have to wait a long time to get diagnosed and get help.

Listening to people



Many people have ideas about mental health conditions, ADHD and autism.



Some people think that not enough people are getting the support they need.



Others are worried that some people are being told they are ill when they are not.

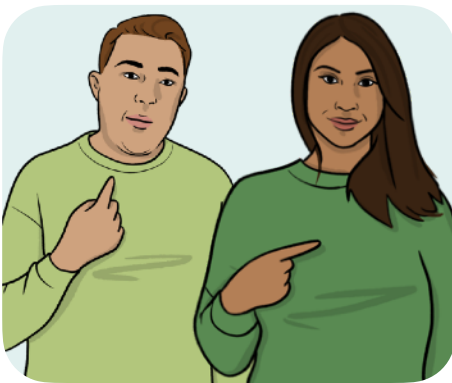


We wanted to understand what is really happening.

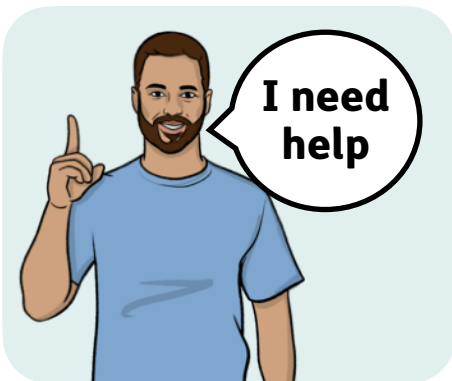


We did not want to just look at numbers about how many people have mental health conditions, ADHD and autism.

We also wanted to find out:



- How people's health conditions affect their lives.



- Whether people ask for help.



- How much help they need.

We have listened to many people when doing our review.

We spoke to:



- People with mental health conditions, ADHD and autism.



- Doctors, charities and scientists.



This has helped us to learn about people's lives.



We will keep talking and listening to people.

This will help us when we write our final report.

Mental health conditions



More people are being diagnosed with mental health conditions now than they were 20 years ago.



Before, older people were more likely to be diagnosed with mental health conditions than young people.



But now, young people are more likely to have some mental health conditions than older people.



They are most likely to have anxiety or depression.

Young people

Young people are most likely to have trouble with how they feel. They might have trouble with:



- Feeling lonely.



- Having enough energy or wanting to do things, even things they enjoy.



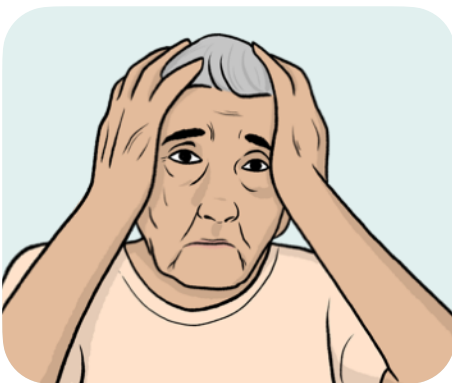
- Sleeping.



This is causing them a lot of problems in their lives.

Like making it harder to do well at school, university or work.

Older people



Many older people also have mental health conditions.



But they do not always know that they have mental health conditions.



So they might not ask for the support they need.

Serious mental health conditions



Some types of mental health conditions can be very serious.



Eating disorders are serious mental health conditions that stop people from eating well.

They are becoming more common.



But other types of serious mental health conditions, like **psychosis**, are not becoming more common.

Psychosis means you might see and hear things that are not real, or believe things that are not true.

What we will do next



We want to know why more people are being diagnosed with some mental health conditions.

We will look at:



- What can cause these mental health conditions.

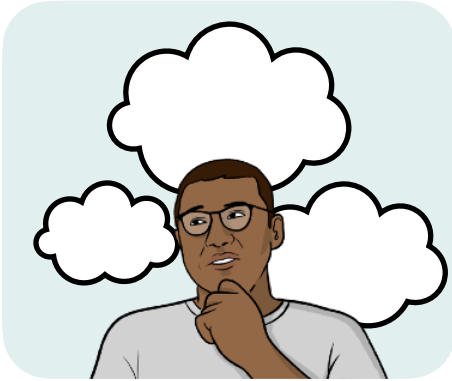


- How people with mental health conditions get support from health and care services.



- What these services can do better to support people.

ADHD



Remember, **ADHD** is a health condition that can make you find it difficult to focus on 1 thing.



More people are getting tested for ADHD.



But many people are having to wait longer to get tested.



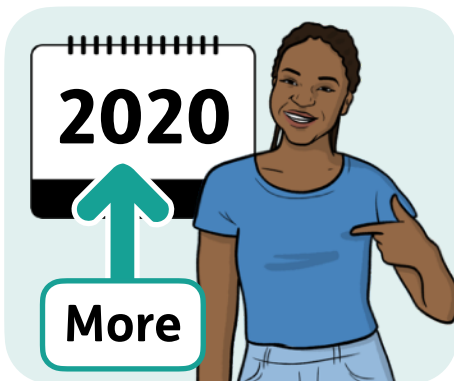
By the end of 2025, 270,000 people were waiting to get tested.



Doctors are diagnosing a lot more people with ADHD.



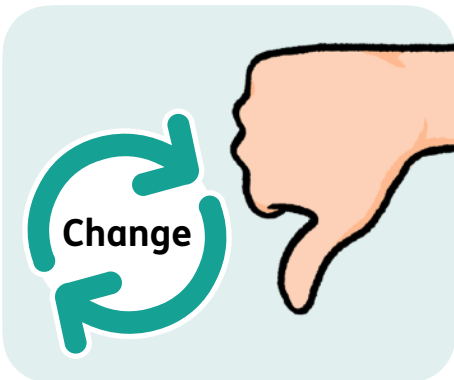
This could be for a lot of reasons. For example, because more people know about ADHD and are asking to be tested.



Doctors have diagnosed a lot more young women with ADHD now than they did before 2020.



Some organisations have done surveys of lots of people in the UK.



These surveys say that the number of people with ADHD has not changed.



There could be many people who have ADHD, but have not been diagnosed.

They could be missing out on support that would help them.

What we will do next

We are going to look at:



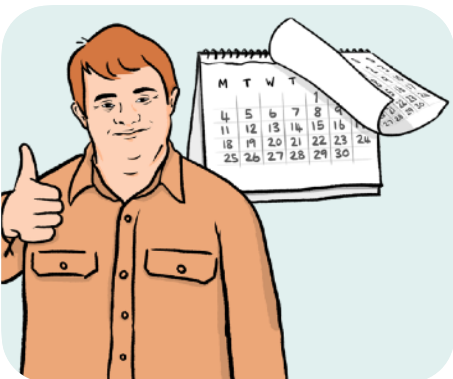
- Whether the tests for ADHD work.



- How different doctors do these tests.



- Whether people take medicine for ADHD.



We will think about how people can get support without having to wait a long time to be diagnosed.

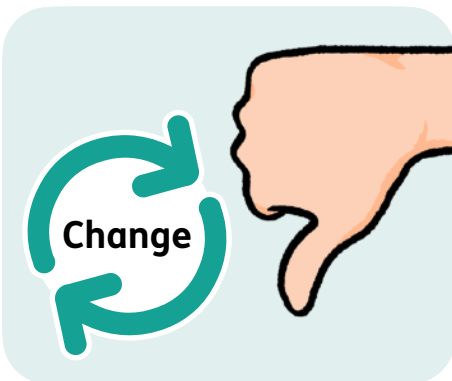
Autism



Remember, **autism** affects how you mix with other people, or how you think and feel about things.



Doctors are diagnosing more people with autism.



But surveys of the whole country say that the number of people with autism has not changed much.



This could be for many different reasons.



More parents are saying that their children have autism.



This shows that more people are learning about autism.



In schools, there are more children who have been diagnosed with autism than there used to be.



Many of these children are girls and children without a learning disability.



Surveys across the whole of the UK say that about 1 in every 100 adults is autistic.



But we will need to understand these surveys.



Doctors find more autistic men than women.

But they are diagnosing a lot more women with autism than they used to.

Experience of health services



Some people are more likely to get tested for mental health conditions, autism and ADHD than others.

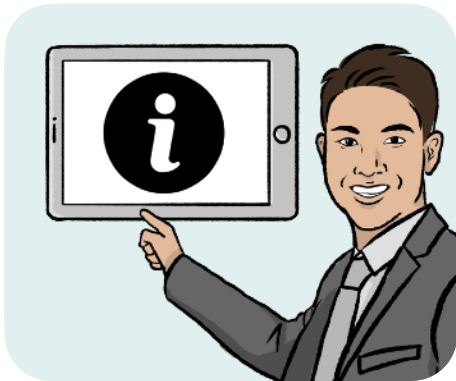


This could be because of where they live, or the colour of their skin.



We need to learn more about this.

What we will do next



There is a lot of information about mental health conditions, autism and ADHD.



But it does not all say the same thing.

So we need to find out more.



We especially want to learn more about how autism affects people's lives.



What do you think about this Easy Read booklet?

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