



Department
of Health &
Social Care



Easy
Read

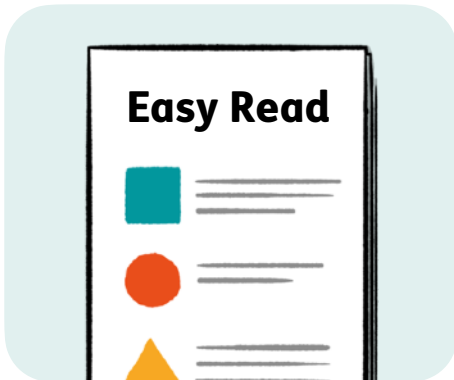
Looking into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism

What we have learned and what
should happen next



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

Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information.

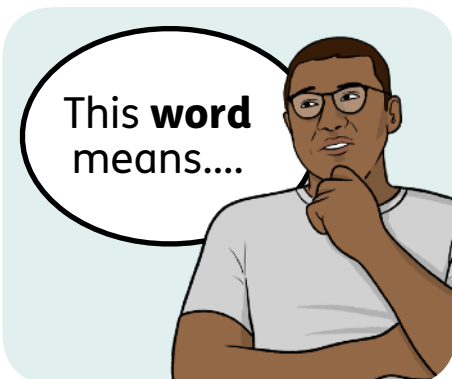
It uses easier words and pictures.



Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **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 experts and people with lived experience looking into:



- **Mental health conditions.**

Mental health conditions affect how people think, feel and behave.



- **ADHD and autism.**

ADHD and autism are **neurodevelopmental conditions**.



Neurodevelopmental conditions affect people's brains.

These conditions affect how people live, learn and spend time with others.

The government asked us to look at:



- How many people have mental health conditions, ADHD or autism.
- How to make support better.



This report explains what we found out.

What we wanted to find out

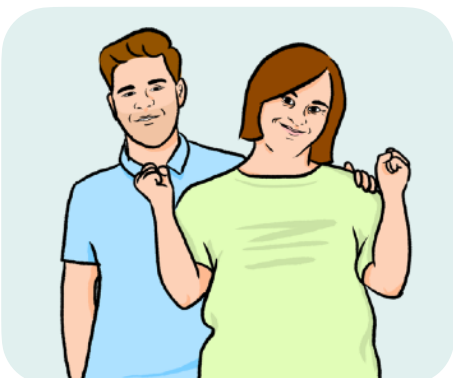
We asked:



- Are more people living with mental health conditions, ADHD and autism?



- Why are people asking for support, and what happens when they ask?

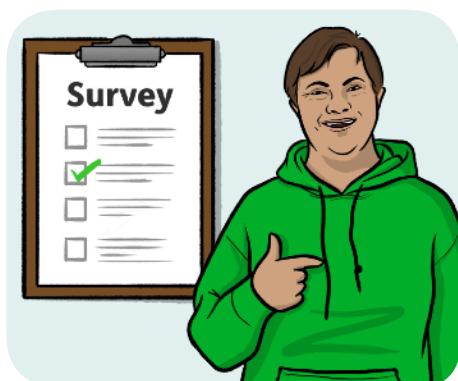


- How can support services work better and be fairer for everyone?

Are more people living with mental health conditions, ADHD and autism?



There are different ways of finding out how many people have health conditions.



There are surveys of people in England to find out how many show signs of mental health conditions, ADHD or autism.



We can look at how many people have asked for support for these conditions.



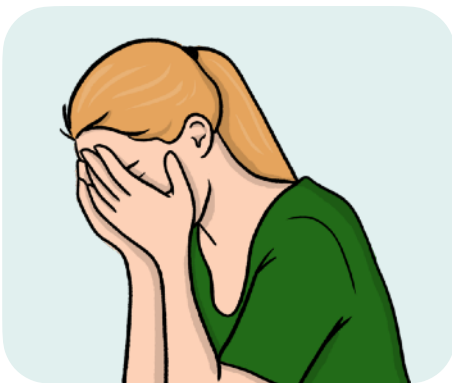
We can look at how many people have been **diagnosed**.

Being **diagnosed** means a doctor has **assessed** them and then told them they have a health condition.



Assessed means that the doctor has looked at information about the person to decide if they have a condition.

We found that:

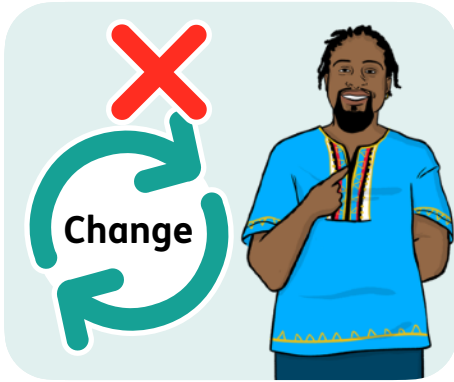


- Many young people are finding life hard.



- The number of people with mental health conditions has gone up a lot.

We also found that:



- The number of people with ADHD and autism has not changed as much.



- The number of people asking for support for ADHD and autism has gone up.



- More people are waiting for an assessment or a diagnosis.

This means that it is taking longer for children and young people to get support they need.



- We need more up to date surveys of ADHD and autism.



When we talk about **young people**, we include people aged 0-25.

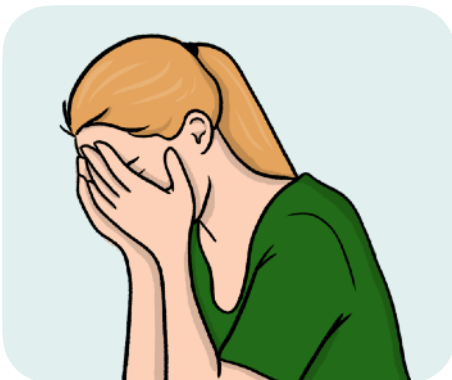
Mental health



More adults and young people are living with common mental health conditions like **depression** and **anxiety** than before.



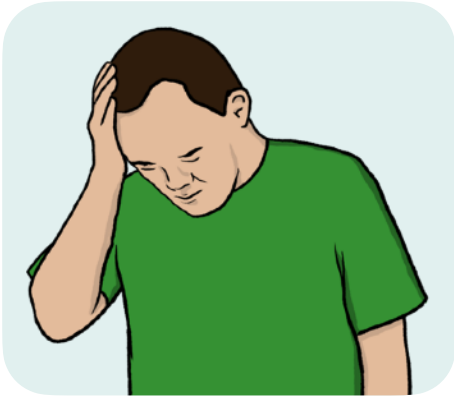
Anxiety is a mental illness. People with anxiety have a feeling of worry that does not go away.



Depression is a mental illness. People with depression may feel very unhappy and unable to enjoy things.



Young women are the group who are most likely to have a common mental health condition.



Some types of serious mental health conditions are not becoming more common.

But too many people are not getting the care they need.

ADHD



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

It is a condition that can make it hard to focus on 1 thing, and may also make it hard to keep still or be quiet.



More people are getting assessed and diagnosed with ADHD than before.



Many people have to wait a long time to get assessed for ADHD.



Right now, ADHD services are not able to support everyone who needs help.

Autism



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



Loud noises or bright lights can feel very strong or loud to autistic people.

Many autistic people prefer routines and patterns to feel safe and calm.



More people are getting assessed and diagnosed with autism than before.



Autism services are supporting people with many different needs.

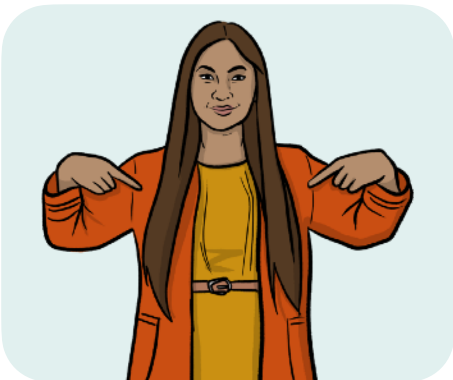
ADHD and autism



In the past, doctors did not think that people could have both ADHD and autism.



But now, many people are being diagnosed with both of these conditions.



Many of these people are women and girls.



Many people say that they have ADHD or autism.

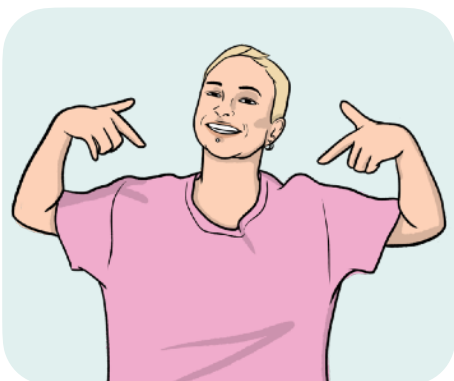
People with more than 1 condition



Many young people with a common mental health condition also have signs of autism or ADHD.



Many support services will only help people with just 1 of these conditions.



But people with more than 1 condition need support for all their needs at the same time.



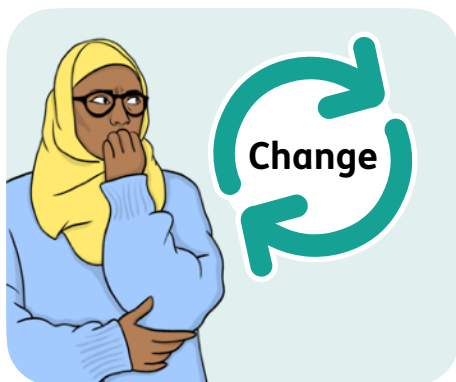
When people who need support do not get it, it is harder to take part in school, work, family life and their local communities.

Why are people asking for support and what happens when they ask?



More people are asking for support with mental health conditions, ADHD and autism.

This is for many reasons.



Changes in people's lives are affecting their mental health.



This includes:

- Feeling worried about school.
- Spending more time alone.
- Seeing upsetting things online.



More people are learning about these conditions.

This can help them to understand that they may have mental health conditions, ADHD or autism.



Health and care services have learned a lot about these conditions.

This means that they are better at assessing people.



Some services that assess people for ADHD and autism are not run by the NHS.

The NHS pays for many of these services.

No one checks how good these services are. We think someone should.



Some people are worried that people are getting diagnosed with conditions they do not really have. This is called **overdiagnosis**.



We could not decide if lots of people are being diagnosed with conditions they do not have, based on the information we looked at.



But some people are being told they have one condition when a different condition is causing their difficulties.

This is called **misdiagnosis**.



We think there is a danger that this could happen more.

What matters most is that people can get help when they need it, without having to wait to be diagnosed first.

How well do support services work?



Support services do not always give people help when they need it.

People have to wait a long time to get support.



When people are waiting a long time, they can become more unwell and unhappy.

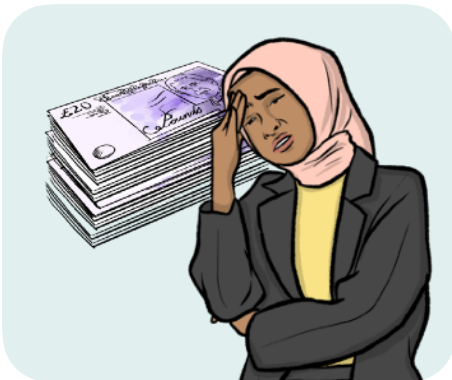


Different support services often do not work together well.

NHS services should work with care services and services that help people in school and work.



Even when people are diagnosed with a condition, they do not always get the help they need.



This is because support services do not have enough time, money and staff to help them.



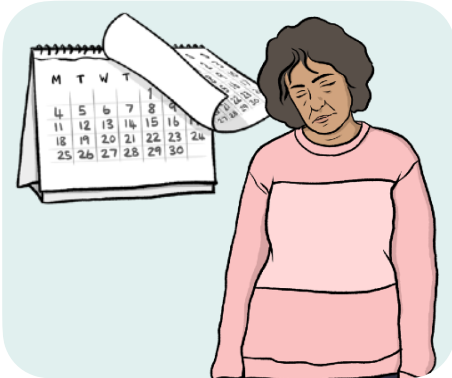
Not everyone gets the same chance to get support for their mental health condition, ADHD and autism.

Some groups of people may find it harder to get support than others.

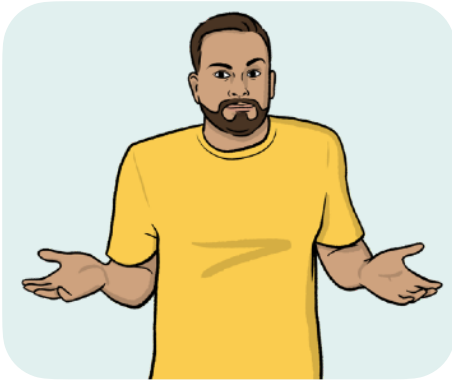


People are more likely to get help and support if they can afford to pay for it themselves.

What we think should happen



People wait too long for support for mental health conditions, ADHD and autism.



The main way to get support is to get diagnosed.

We think this should change.



Both of these problems need to be fixed at once.

We have ideas for how the government can make support services better:



1. Help the public have better mental health.



2. Give people the support they need to live a good life when they spot a problem, without having to wait to be diagnosed.



This should be better matched, so it gives young people early support that is right for their needs.



3. Support should be closer to where people live, like in schools and local communities.

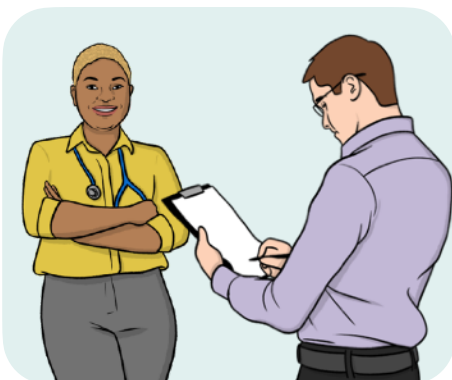


Support services should work together so children and young people do not have to ask for help from lots of different places.



4. Make sure that everyone has a fair chance to get the help they need.

People with serious conditions should be able to get special support if they need it.



5. Check that all services that assess people for ADHD and autism are good enough, whoever runs them.



The government should stop companies from making adverts for services that the NHS pays for.

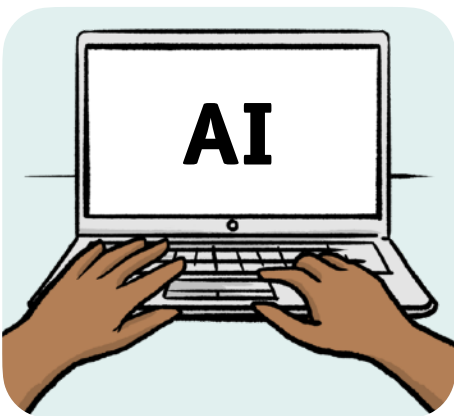


6. Train and support the people who work in these support services so they can do their jobs well.



7. Use computers to share information safely and AI tools to help services to do more.

This will mean services can work together to support people.



AI stands for **artificial intelligence**. It is when computers can do things that normally need a human.



8. Get more up to date surveys about who has mental health conditions, ADHD and autism. The government should learn more about what help they need and what works.



9. Give the public more information about these conditions.

There should be a website where people can get advice and support.

This website should help people even if they have not been diagnosed.



10. Write a plan to say what the government will do to make mental health better in England.

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