

All Age Autism

Summary from Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2026

Why is this important?

Autistic people see higher prevalence of poorer physical and mental health outcomes; higher prevalence of eating disorders and are significantly more likely to die from suicide. In terms of life experience, autistic people see much lower rates of employment and are over-represented in prisons, safeguarding and youth offending service populations..

Key Facts and Figures

Autism is the main primary need for Educational Health Care Plans for Lewisham children



The national employment rate for people with autism is low at **29%**

Long term conditions such as asthma and epilepsy are over-represented in the autistic population



472

Lewisham adults were waiting for an autism assessment in 2024

Of those with a formal autism diagnosis 70% are male



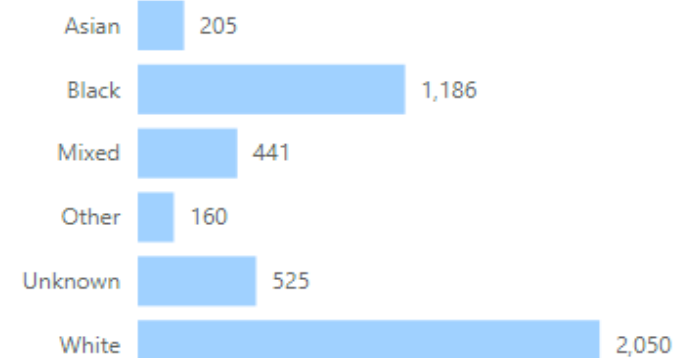
49% of those with a formal autism diagnosis are under 18

What is happening nationally?

The National Strategy for autistic children, young people and adults 2021 to 2026 is the first national strategy to consider autistic people of all ages. National Autistic Society - Vision to Reality Strategy (2023-2026) aims to transform society by building understanding, acceptance and respect for all autistic people.

What is happening locally?

Lewisham Autism Strategy 2023-28 (All Ages) has eight priorities. These focus on improving understanding of autism, access to education, diagnosis, health and care, and reducing inequalities. They also aim to support employment, improve mental health care, strengthen justice system support, and enhance experiences for carers.



Count of people of all ages registered with a Lewisham GP who have a confirmed diagnosis of autism by ethnic group

What needs to be done?

Improved awareness of autism, with training to be offered to all staff in public services, not just those working in SEND roles.
Improved data recording, with a focus on ethnicity, to support understanding of the population profile of people with autism.
Creation and communication of information for parents/carers or adults themselves of how the assessment and diagnosis pathway works, including up to date (likely) waiting times.