



Autism (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

2022 CHAPTER 13

An Act to amend the Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. [26th April 2022]

BE IT ENACTED by being passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly and assented to by Her Majesty as follows:

Autism strategy: consultations and data

1. In section 2 of the Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (autism strategy)—
 - (a) in subsection (2), after “consult the Northern Ireland departments” insert “, and such other persons as the Department considers appropriate,”,
 - (b) after subsection (3) insert—

“(3A) The data on prevalence must include data on prevalence in adults and prevalence in children.”.

Additional components of autism strategy

2. In section 3 of the Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (content of the autism strategy), after subsection (4) insert—

“(4A) The autism strategy must set out how training (including accredited training) is to be provided to the staff of Northern Ireland departments and other public bodies on how to best address the needs of—

 - (a) persons with autism, and

(b) the families and carers of persons with autism.

(4B) The autism strategy must set out how the Department is to make provision for an autism support and early intervention service.

(4C) The autism strategy must set out how the Department is to make provision for an autism information service which is accessible (both in person and remotely) by—

- (a) persons with autism,
- (b) the families and carers of persons with autism, and
- (c) professionals working with persons with autism, and their families and carers.

(4D) The autism strategy must set out how the needs of adults with autism will be addressed, including in particular their needs in respect of—

- (a) lifelong learning,
- (b) employment support,
- (c) recreation,
- (d) physical health,
- (e) emotional and mental well-being,
- (f) supported living, and
- (g) housing.

(4E) The autism strategy must set out how the Department will reduce waiting times for autism assessment and treatment services provided by HSC trusts.”.

Methodology of the autism strategy

3. After section 3 of the Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 insert—

“3A Methodology of the autism strategy

(1) The autism strategy must take into account best international practice on autism.

(2) The autism strategy must take into account that persons with autism, and their families and carers, have individualised needs.

(3) The autism strategy must take a multidisciplinary and cross-departmental approach.

(4) The autism strategy must set out how consistency of practice is to be achieved across—

- (a) HSC trusts, and
- (b) education services.