

# My plans for a new autism law in Wales

By Paul Davies, Assembly Member for Preseli  
Pembrokeshire



I want to know what you think. Please answer the questions by **20 November 2017**

This is an easy read version of 'Consultation on the proposed Autism (Wales) Bill'

August 2017

# How to use this document



This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.



You may need help and support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.

Some words may be difficult to understand. These are in **bold blue writing** and have been explained in a box beneath the word.

If any of the words are used later in the booklet they are shown in **normal blue writing**. If you see words in **normal blue writing**, you can look up what they mean in **Hard words** on page 23.



Where the document says 'me' or 'I', this means Paul Davies.

To get more copies contact:



Tom Jackson  
National Assembly for Wales  
Tŷ Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA



Phone: 0300 200 6565



Email: [Consultation.AutismBill@assembly.wales](mailto:Consultation.AutismBill@assembly.wales)



Hawdd ei Ddeall Cymru  
Easy Read Wales

This document was made into easy read by Easy Read Wales using Photosymbols.

# Contents

	Page
How to use this document	2
Introduction	4
What is autism	7
Aims of the Autism (Wales) Bill	8
Why we need the Autism (Wales) Bill	10
Getting a better way to diagnose autism	12
Improving the way people get support services	13
Autism training for staff	15
Jobs for people with autism	17
The definition of autism	18
How much money my Bill may cost	19
How my Bill might save money	21
Other things to think about	22
Hard words	23

# Introduction



My name is Paul Davies. I am an **Assembly Member (AM)** for Preseli Pembrokeshire.



The **National Assembly for Wales** has agreed to let me try to get a new law for Wales.



I want this new law to help children and adults in Wales who have autism get the support they need.



I am calling this law the **Autism (Wales) Bill** or the **Bill** for short.



I have until **13 July 2018** to write the Autism (Wales) Bill. It will then be looked at by other Assembly Members, who will decide if it should become a law.



I want to know what you think should be in the Bill. I want your thoughts and ideas please.



When the Bill is first written I will give everyone the chance to read it and have their say again.

In this document I have written about:



- what I want this Bill to do
- what I think should be in the Bill
- why I think we need this Bill.



There are questions for you to answer about each section. They are in a separate response form.



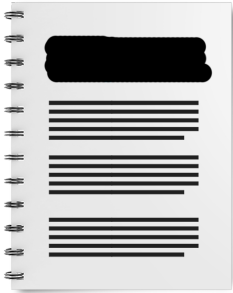
Please send your answers back by **20 November 2017**.



Your answers will be read by me and staff at the **National Assembly for Wales**.



I may also show other people what you have written by putting it on the internet - on the National Assembly for Wales website.



If you do not want your name to be shown please let me know.



We will look after your personal information. We will follow the law on keeping personal information.



If you have any worries or questions about how we are going to use your information, please contact: [Consultation.AutismBill@assembly.wales](mailto:Consultation.AutismBill@assembly.wales)



You can answer in English or Welsh.

Thank you for your time.

Paul Davies

Assembly Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire.



# What is autism

Autism is the short name given to a range of disorders known as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



Sometimes people with autism are known as autistic people.

People with autism may also have other things like:



- a learning disability



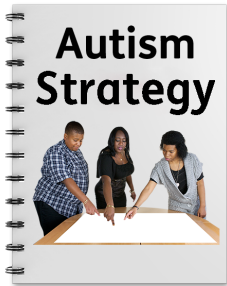
- a mental health condition.



In this document I will use the term ‘people with autism.’

# Aims of the Autism (Wales) Bill

I want the Bill to:



- Make the Welsh Government write an **autism strategy**. The **strategy** will say how services should meet the needs of people with autism in Wales.

A **strategy** is a plan that says what we will do to achieve our aim to get people with autism the support they need.



- Make the Welsh Government write **guidance** about how to follow the autism **strategy**.

**Guidance** is advice and information. It will be written down. It will help to explain what the law is. And it will say how the autism **strategy** is to be followed.



- Make it easier to get an autism **diagnosis**.

A **diagnosis** is when a doctor looks at a person's health and behaviour and says whether they have autism or not.



- Make sure local authorities and health services help people with autism to get the support they need when they need it.





- Find a way of getting information about how many people have autism and what their needs are. This is to make sure support is planned properly.



- Make sure staff who work with people with autism have training.



- Make sure local authorities and health services give information about the services they offer for people with autism.



- Make the Welsh Government keep checking the autism **strategy** and **guidance** to make sure they are working.



- Help people to better understand the unique needs of people with autism.

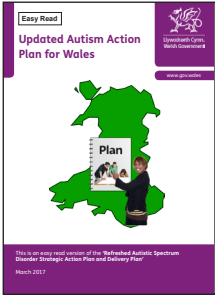


- Make sure adults with autism and parents and carers of children with autism take part in the making of the autism **strategy** and **guidance**.

# Why we need the Autism (Wales) Bill



There has been a lot of work done over the last few years to make services for people with autism better.



In 2008 Welsh Government wrote the **Autism Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan**. And they updated it in 2016.



A lot of good things happened because of this plan. But more still needs to be done.

I believe we need this new Bill so that local authorities and health services:



- understand what they need to do to give the best support for people with autism



- keep up the good work of the **Strategic Action Plan**. And keep making services better for people with autism



- have a duty under the law to make services better.



England and Northern Ireland already have laws that say their governments must write an autism **strategy** and **guidance**.



I believe that Wales should have a law that says Welsh Government must write an autism **strategy**.



This autism **strategy** would help to make sure that there will always be good services for people with autism in Wales.



I believe this law should also say that Welsh Ministers must write **guidance** to go with the autism **strategy**.



I believe that the law should say that local authorities and health services must follow this **guidance**.

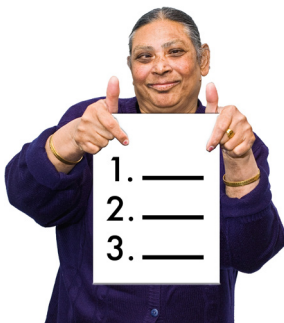
# Getting a better way to diagnose autism



For lots of people getting an autism **diagnosis** makes it easier to understand what support they need and get services.



I believe that if we have a law that says how we must organise getting a **diagnosis** for autism, people will be able to get a **diagnosis** easier. And they will get it when they need it most.



The law would say that local authorities and health services **must** organise a clear way of getting a **diagnosis**.

# Improving the way people get support services



People with autism usually get support from Learning Disability teams or Mental Health teams.



But autism is not a learning disability. And it is not a mental health problem.



Sometimes a person with autism may have a learning disability or a mental health problem.



But quite often people with autism are turned away from services because they do not have a learning disability or a mental health problem.



This often means that people with autism do not get the support they need.



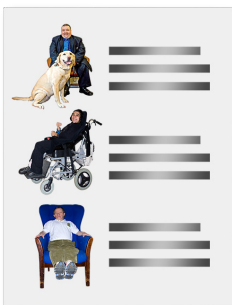
I want this law to stop this from happening. Services cannot turn people away because they have a high level of intelligence (IQ) for example.



I want this law to make sure local authorities and health services understand the needs of children and adults with autism and provide services that meet their needs.



At the moment local authorities and health services collect information about learning disabilities and autism in their areas.



They must keep a register of children with disabilities in their area. They may do this for adults too.



But this information might not be very reliable. And different information is collected in different ways in different areas of Wales.



There is also a risk that people with autism who do not have a learning disability will not get the right services.



I want this law to stop this from happening. I want local authorities and health services to collect information about people with autism separately. They must plan their services to meet these needs.

# Autism training for staff



I want the law to make sure that the staff who need it get autism training.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

I know a lot of staff have already had autism training thanks to Welsh Government projects.



But I think that this law should make sure that staff get the same results from training.



I think that this would make it easier to set **standards** on their autism training. And to check that staff had the right **standard**.

A **standard** is a level of skill or understanding.



I think this would also help to make sure staff got ongoing training.



I think it is best for the **guidance** to say what the **results** of autism training should be. Instead of just saying what the training should be.



I think this will help services provide the right kind of autism training for their staff.



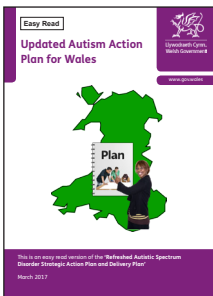


# Jobs for people with autism

The Welsh Government has been doing work to help get more people with autism jobs.



But still not many people with autism have jobs. We need to do more.



Under the new **Strategic Action Plan 2016-2020** the Government wants to improve education and work for people with autism. They plan to do this by:



- running a project called **Getting Ahead** to help young people with autism get work;



- becoming an autism friendly employer;



- working with bosses and support staff so they know more about autism.

# The definition of autism

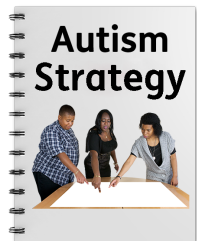


A **definition** of autism is an explanation of what autism is.

The **definition** could be written in:



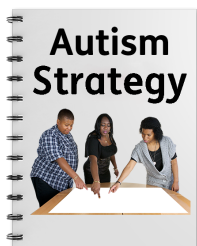
- the law (Bill) itself



- in the autism **strategy**



- or in the **guidance**.



I think the **definition** should be written in the autism **strategy**, so that it can be updated when needed.



If it is written in the Bill it would be hard to update it in the future.

# How much money my Bill may cost

Most laws cost money in some way. I think the things that will cost money in this law will be:



- getting information and writing an autism **strategy**;



- checking and updating the autism **strategy** and telling people about the changes;



- writing and giving out the **guidance**;



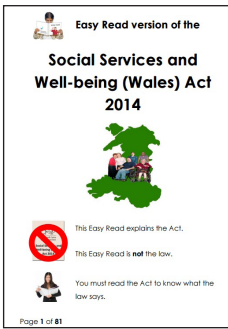
- the extra things local authorities and health services will need to do because of this law;



- finding a way to get information about how many people have autism and what their needs are;



- training for the staff who need it.



The **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** already says that local authorities must give people with autism and their families and carers:



- information services;
- advice services;
- support services.



Local authorities could give information about their services for people with autism as part of this. This would not cost much more money to do.



The **Refreshed Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Delivery Plan 2016-2020** also says that health services must give advice and support to all people with autism and families and carers.

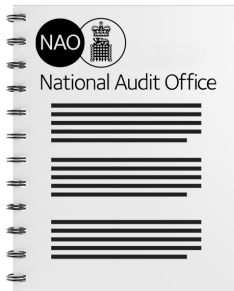


I do not think it would cost much more to include awareness raising too.

# How my Bill might save money



Sometimes new laws can help save money.



The **National Audit Office** wrote a report about supporting people with autism.



The report said that if people with autism had the right support, the Government could save money in the long term.

# Other things to think about



It is important that this Bill does not have a bad impact for people. I will look into how this Bill may affect:



- people with autism
- support services staff
- organisations
- other people.

# Hard words

## Definition

A definition of autism is an explanation of what autism is.

## Diagnosis

A diagnosis is when a doctor looks at a person's health and behaviour and says whether they have autism or not.

## Guidance

Guidance is advice and information. It will be written down. It will help to explain what the law is. And it will say how the autism plan is to be followed.

## Standard

A standard is a level of skill or understanding.

## Strategy

A strategy is a plan that says what we will do to achieve our aim to get people with autism the support they need.