

Strategy

[Learning Disability and Autism strategy and future developments](#)

Mersey Care NHS Trust's Learning Disability and Autism strategy and future developments brief.

Studies

[How to measure barriers in accessing mental healthcare? Psychometric evaluation of a screening tool in parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities](#)

The study illustrates that parents of children with IDD experienced various barriers when seeking mental health services. The PHBS scale shows a good reliability and validity and evaluates parents' barriers in four dimensions: support accessibility, personal belief, emotional readiness, and resource availability. Parents in rural and remote areas were likely to have more limited resources. Implications of the study include reinforcing time-flexible mental health interventions, improving financial support, and increasing service availability, and promoting equitable healthcare access.

[Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on family carers of those with profound and multiple intellectual disabilities: perspectives from UK and Irish Non-Governmental Organisations](#)

The reduction in services, coupled with ongoing historical problems with accessing supports, has increased the vulnerability of family carers of those with PMID. These families will continue to provide crucial care for their family members across the lifespan, sometimes to the detriment of their own health and well-being. Non-Governmental Organisations have provided ongoing support during the COVID-19 pandemic and are a trusted source of advice and information for carers. They are thus an important contributor to any efforts to design new, or adapt existing, services. Such services may be delivered in person or online with the caveat that family carers should also be involved.

[Non-suicidal self-injury and its relation to suicide through acquired capability: investigating this causal mechanism in a mainly late-diagnosed autistic sample](#)

Findings suggest that acquired capability for suicide, most notably reduced fear of death and mental rehearsal of suicide plans, partially mediates the relationship between NSSI (and specific forms of NSSI) and more numerous lifetime suicide attempts. While this finding is poignant given the higher levels of acquired capability in the autistic sample (along with weaker behavioural contingency with NSSI), the emergence of direct effects between NSSI and lifetime suicide attempts indicates that additional mechanisms underpin this association. In that relationships between NSSI, suicidality, acquired capability and other potential mediators may operate bidirectionally, longitudinal and/or computational designs may afford greater insight into stable and innate, accumulated and dynamic risk factors which could give rise to NSSI, suicidality and other deleterious outcomes in autistic people.

[Facial expression recognition is linked to clinical and neurofunctional differences in autism](#)

We identified a subgroup of autistic individuals with expression recognition difficulties and showed that this related to clinical and neurobiological characteristics. If replicated, expression recognition may serve as bio-behavioural stratification biomarker and aid in the development of targeted interventions for a subgroup of autistic individuals.

[Prevalence of autism and autistic traits in those who died by suicide](#)

Examines a recent mixed-methods study, which suggests that, in England, people with autism or autistic traits have a higher risk of suicide compared to the general population.

Report

[Children's Commissioner SEND report](#)

The Office of the Children's Commissioner has published their [report](#) into the SEND system in England. The report makes recommendations grouped into the three key ambitions:

- To ensure all children and young people get support that reflects their ambitions
- To ensure that all children are getting timely and effective support, locally, with a focus on early intervention
- To ensure that all children have consistent, excellent experiences wherever they are in the system

Statistics

[Number of autistic people in mental health hospitals: latest data](#)

The latest monthly Assuring Transformation NHS Digital data shows that October 2022:

- In total 2000 autistic people and people with learning disabilities are in inpatient mental health hospitals in England
- 1,240 (62%) of these people are autistic
- 95% of under 18s in inpatient mental health hospitals in England are autistic (180)

News

[Brain's memory center flags autistic adults at risk for cognitive decline](#)

Brain scans of the hippocampus reveal autistic people who are at increased risk of cognitive problems as they get older.

[The new history of autism, part II](#)

For decades, two figures have dominated the history of autism studies. Today, newly excavated documents are calling into question the primacy of these men as founders of the field. [Part III](#) (You can find [Part I](#) in our previous bulletin).