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Bild charity welcomes new Autism Strategy, but calls for further investment to meet the needs of autistic people

The Government's 2021-26 Autism Strategy, released on 21 July, has been welcomed by the Bild charity as a positive development towards understanding and accepting autistic people within society. The first of its kind to include children and young people, and the largest investment in autism to date, the move represents a step in the right direction – one that is long overdue.

Lindsey Allen, Bild's Learning Disability Manager, shared her thoughts on the announcement: "The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for everyone, but especially for autistic people. It's great to see this strategy address some of the core issues, and seek to embed inclusion for autistic people in all areas. It's also heartening to see the identification of autistic women and girls as a key area for more support – an issue that has been long overlooked.

"Historically, there have been gaps in identifying and supporting the education of autistic children and young people. I'm reassured to see Government placing the onus on services and institutions to better understand and accommodate learners, rather than placing blame or responsibility on the autistic person to change who they are. We must invest in building the right support for autistic people in long-term care. The disturbing independent report, published this week from Baroness Hollins, has highlighted yet again the failings of our system to support autistic people and protect their human rights adequately.

"We hope the strategy will make a real and meaningful difference in the lives of autistic people and their families, but note that – despite the strategy's five-year timespan – the government have only committed funding currently for one year. We want to see autistic people live long, happy, healthy lives, and it is crucial now that the aims of this strategy are realised. We are calling for continued investment across all five years of this strategy – and well beyond."

Autistic activist Alexis Quinn, author of memoir *Unbroken* and Manager of the Restraint Reduction Network – Bild's sister charity – added: "It's critical that we change attitudes to the way autistic people are seen. We need to be viewed as assets, not problems; full of skill, potential and capability. This is crucial in developing community-based services, and moving people from long-stay institutions into homes.

"As autistic people, we go about our days trying to fit in, trying to make ourselves something we are not – always to fall short when we're not accepted. I would love to have seen the strategy reflect this reality. The issue is not simply about awareness. Autistic people need *acceptance*; to be met half-way. It isn't for us to make all the adjustments. Society must do this too. As always, I wait to see the details of how the strategy will be implemented."

For further updates from the Bild community, follow us on Twitter [@BILD_tweets](#) or like us on Facebook [@ukbild](#)

To view the full details of the Autism Strategy, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026>

To read Alexis Quinn's response to the Baroness Hollins report, visit:

<https://restraintreductionnetwork.org/uncategorized/restraint-reduction-network-responds-to-baroness-hollins-thematic-review-and-recommendations-into-long-term-segregation-its/>

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Media contact

If you have a media query, or would like to speak to a Bild or RRN representative, please contact Laura Smith at lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk or call 07467945848.

Notes to Editors

- Bild exists to champion the rights of autistic people and individuals with learning disabilities.
- Since 1971, Bild's mission has been to improve support in the community, and develop the skills and culture necessary to better understand and meet people's needs in education, health, social care settings and workplaces. It seeks to improve life quality, and bring about lasting change through evidence-based approaches.
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