Newham Autism Action Plan: Let's Talk Autism
Expert Resident Role Descriptions 2026/7

Newham Council values the meaningful inclusion of the perspective, experiences and input of residents directly impacted by its policies, programmes and decisions. Expert Resident Roles have been embedded in the Autism Programme to ensure that residents take a lead role in shaping and delivering the programme and to ensure their voices are heard and acted upon. More information about the Autism Programme and the Expert Resident Roles are detailed below.

Newham's Autism Action Plan

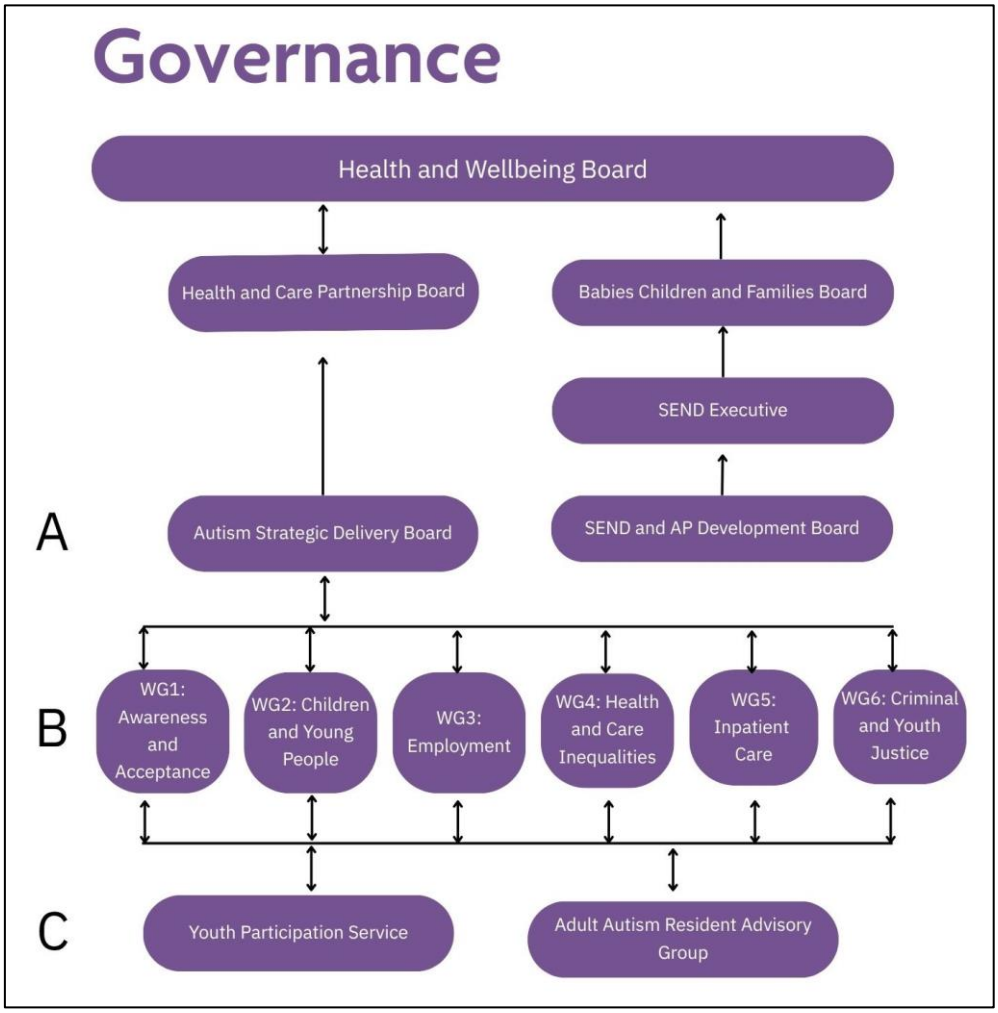
The purpose of the all-age Newham Autism Action Plan: Let's Talk Autism is to deliver outcomes against the **six priority areas** outlined in the National Autism Strategy in Newham:

1. Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society
2. Improving autistic children and young people's access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood
3. Supporting more autistic people into employment
4. Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people
5. Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
6. Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems

Governance

The Autism Strategic Delivery Board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Autism Action Plan. That Board sits within a governance structure, which ensures that progress is properly monitored and recognised. The governance structure is shown in figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Governance Structure



Key:

WG = Working Groups (these represent the six priority areas)

A-C = Levels in the governance structure

To ensure that autistic people's voices and their needs are meaningfully reflected in the development and delivery of the Autism Action Plan, we have established an Autism Residents Advisory Group (ARAG). The Youth Participation Service works directly with young people and feeds into this structure. There are ten (10) dedicated roles for Expert Residents (Experts by Experience) to participate in developing and delivering our agreed priorities. These individuals bring valuable lived experience and insights to help shape the development and direction of the Autism Action Plan. These ten (10) roles and their position in the governance structure is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Expert Resident Roles and where they sit in the Governance Structure

A	Autism Strategic Delivery Board	1x Expert Resident Co-chair
		1x Expert Resident Carer
		1x Expert Resident Young Person
B	Working Groups	6x Expert Resident Working Group Member
C	Autism Resident Advisory Group	1x Expert Resident Co-chair

See also Figure 1: Governance Structure - A, B, C

What is the Autism Strategic Delivery Board (ASDB)?

The Autism Strategic Delivery Board includes representatives from the Council, NHS and local community organisations and expert resident representation. Its role is to:

- oversee the delivery of the Action Plans;
- ensure appropriate resident and stakeholder contribution across the delivery of the Action Plans;
- identify synergies between the Action Plans and wider programmes across the Council, its partners and north east London footprint;
- identify and address obstacles, dependencies and risks to the delivery of the Action Plans;
- identify and incorporate further related areas of work into the Action Plans, as appropriate.

What are the six (6) Working Groups?

The six working groups represent each of the six priority areas for the National Strategy, as detailed above - see Figure 1, row B above. The working group's purpose is to bring together individuals with specific expertise to focus on a particular task or project linked to the relevant priority. Their role is to provide recommendations or solutions and deliver the actions identified in the plan. The working groups have representatives from the NHS, Local Authority, Voluntary and charitable sectors, including Expert Residents.

What is the Autism Resident Advisory Group (ARAG)?

The ARAG is a forum for any Newham residents that are 18+ years old and who have been

diagnosed with autism, are on a waiting list to be diagnosed or has self-diagnosed as autistic. Its role is to:

- Share ideas and give views on the issues affecting autistic people
- Advise the Autism team and take part in shaping future actions
- Share information about services, activities and events
- Take part in consultation exercises
- Participate in the co-design of services and products
- Support the design and delivery of Autism Action Plan

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Autistic Expert Resident Roles

As an Expert by Experience, you will be recognised and respected for your contributions in this role. You will serve as a representative of autistic residents in Newham, bringing forward a collective voice. This role is not centred on individual experiences alone, but on advocating for the broader needs and perspectives of the autistic community. Experts will be compensated for their contributions to leading the delivery of the Autism Action Plan and supporting governance implementation.

As an Expert Resident you will work with the Newham Autism Strategic Lead and other autism professionals to deliver the Autism Action Plan for up to 24 months. After this period a new Expert Resident will be given an opportunity to take on the role.

Note: All Experts are expected to attend the ARAG - attendance is required on a voluntary basis, with the exception of the ARAG Co-chair, who will receive compensation for their role in shaping and delivering the ARAG.

Who can be an Autism Expert Resident?

There are ten (10) expert roles available – see Table 1 above. To apply for one of these roles you must meet the following criteria:

- A Newham Resident;
- Aged 18+ with an autism diagnosis. Specifically:
    - *The Young Person Rep must be aged 18-25 years inclusive
    - *The Carer Rep must be an adult carer for an autistic individual
- A member of the ARAG;
- Must attend a minimum of 2, preferably 4, ARAG meetings in a year;
- Must serve as a representative of autistic residents in Newham, advocating for the broader needs and perspectives of the autistic community*; and
- Able to commit to the role for a minimum of twelve months.

You **do not** need any previous experience or any qualifications relating to these roles. We

will support you in the role. (see more details below)

*Both the Carer and Young Person must belong to a relevant autism specific Newham group and represent the needs of this group. The Co-chairs represent ARAG members.

Role details

Why become a Co-Chair?

As the resident Co-Chair you will have the opportunity to:

- Gain skills from chairing a group of professionals and reps including leading meetings, facilitating discussions, and managing group dynamics;
- Gain valuable leadership experience;
- Influence decision making at the Delivery Board level;
    - Shape and improve services for autistic residents and improve their health and wellbeing;
    - Help make Newham a place where autistic residents are empowered and supported;

Note: the Co-chair of the ARAG and Co-chair of the ASDB cannot be the same person.

What will I have to do as Co-chair?

As co-chair, you will:

- Ensure the meetings cover the aspects of the Autism Action Plan that are most important to ASDB or ARAG members. This will involve, at least, a one hour-long online meeting every three months;
- Attend the Autism Delivery Board or ARAG meetings (online or in-person). There will be a minimum of four meetings a year;
- Read the documents for each ASDB or ARAG meeting before the meeting;
- Help lead discussions at the ASDB or ARAG meetings, making sure all members are heard, helping the group to make decisions and providing constructive challenge where necessary;
- Where necessary, attend other meetings to provide updates.

Why become a Working Group Member?

We are looking for six (6) Expert Residents, one for each of the six working groups (see page 1). As a Working Group Member, you will have the opportunity to:

- Influence and shape future actions;
- Deliver on actions identified in the plan;
- Provide advice and direction to professionals for more well-rounded and informed decisions.

What will I have to do as a Working Group Member?

As one of the six working group members, you will;

- Attend regular virtual working group meetings, up to 6 meetings per year;
- Input into shaping actions and Identify actions to deliver independently;
- Work closely with the Working Group Lead to shape future actions.

Why become a Carer or Young Person Rep?

As a Carer or Young Person Rep you will have the opportunity to:

- Influence decision making at the Delivery Board level;
- Provide advice and direction to professionals for a more well-rounded and informed decision;
- Ensure carers and young people's voices are being heard.

What will I have to do as a Carer or Young person Rep?

As a Carer or Young Person Rep, you will;

- Attend the quarterly ASDB meetings;
- Attend the ARAG meetings;
- Feedback on issues affecting Carers or Young People.

What support will I get to help me in the role?

As one of the ten (10) Expert Residents you will be supported by the Autism Strategic Lead who will hold regular meetings to bring the 10 experts together to share any learning and identify support required.

In addition:

- The Co-Chairs will be supported by the Autism Strategic Lead who will prepare the documents and agenda for the ASDB or ARAG meetings; the documents and agenda will be agreed by Co-chairs at a pre-meeting;
- As a working group member, you will be supported by the Working Group Leads;
- As a carer or young person rep, you will be supported by the Carer's Commissioner or the Youth Participation Service respectively.

Do I get paid?

Yes. In line with the Council's Co-Production Reward and Recognition Policy, you will receive London Living Wage (currently **£15** an hour) in exchange for your time.

The Autism Strategic Lead will review and pre-approve all hours and provide final approval for all invoices. Whilst there is no set minimum or maximum number of hours required from Experts, all hours are subject to prior approval. Applicants are expected to demonstrate commitment to the role and take responsibility for attending meetings as representatives of their respective groups. As an example, Table 2 below outlines the possible levels of commitment to these paid roles.

Table 2: An example of the hours of commitment for each role

Co-Chair Role:	**Working Group Role:**	**Carer/YP Role:**
4x 2-hour meetings/year	6x 1-hour meetings/year	4x 2-hour meetings/year
4x 1-hour pre-meetings/year	6x 1 hour project work/year	--
4x 1-hour preparation meeting	--	--
4x 1-hour shared learning and support session		

Please note, although a prerequisite, attending resident meetings will not generate payment

e.g. ARAG attendance, with exception of the Co-chair, Carer or Young Person resident meetings.

Where a resident may need longer to process information (due to English as a second language, a Learning Disability or a Learning Difficulty such as Dyslexia) – additional time will be considered.

If you are in receipt of benefits, please ensure that this will not affect your entitlement before claiming Reward and Recognition. It is your responsibility to check with the relevant authority or advisory. We can provide a letter for Job Centre Plus or the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) explaining your service user involvement role. You can find more guidance on the Social Care Institute for Excellence HERE or the Disability Rights UK HERE. You can also check with our Newham Money: Benefits and Income Maximisation – Newham Council

How do I apply?

Please email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk and answer the questions below to apply. You can write up to **600 words** in total. We will not read anything over 600 words.

1. **Which role are you applying for?** (this will not count towards the word limit)
   Please write the name of the job or position you want e.g. ARAG Co-chair role or Priority 4 Working Group Member

2. **Why do you want this role?** (200 words)
   Explain what interests you about the role or why it feels like a good fit for you.

3. **What life experiences do you have that would help you in this role?** (200 words) You can include things like work, volunteering, education, hobbies, or personal experiences.

4. **What skills do you have that are useful for this role?** (200 words)
   Think about things you are good at, like problem-solving, organizing, communicating, or working with others.

You can ask a family member or friend If you need help to do this. If you need help and there is no one to give you support, please email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk to outline the support you require.

The **deadline** to submit your application is **15th of the month** until post has been filled. However, should there be vacancies after this date, we will continue to advertise and highlight the roles through the ARAG meetings and monthly newsletters until these vacancies are filled.

Successful applications will be shared and announced at the relevant groups e.g. ARAG and, if there are more than two applying for the same role, members of the ARAG will be asked to vote. We look forward to hearing from you.