

IRELAND'S **AUTISM** CHARITY

AsIAm Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030

An Overview



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AsIAM's Vision, Purpose and Values

Our **Vision** is an Ireland where every Autistic person is accepted as they are - equal, valued and respected.

Our Purpose: We support Autistic people across the life cycle and work to build an Ireland in which every Autistic person has the same chance.

Our Values:

Service. Who do we work for? Every Autistic person in Ireland and their families, friends and supporters. These are the people we serve, answer to and are motivated by every day.

Same Chance. What are we working towards? A fully equitable society which gives each member of our community the same chance as any other person to live, learn, work and play in the community.

Perseverance. How do we work? With energy and imagination, determination, empathy and ambition. By always striving for excellence, exemplifying endurance and radiating positivity, we can overcome any obstacle.



The current strategic context

Ireland, and our world, is experiencing a time of unprecedented challenge and change. Issues which can present barriers to all in society, more often than not, are exacerbated for our community. In recent decades, Autistic people and families have advocated for and achieved increased visibility, recognition and legal protections. But systems continue to fail our community. Old threats, fuelled by misinformation and a failure to centre the lived experiences of our community have re-emerged, and new threats, arising from a period of major social change, pose a barrier to our vision. Times of great change require rights-based responses and provide opportunities to create an Ireland in which Autistic people have the same chance.

Misinformation: There has been a sharp rise in misinformation on Autism, not only through social media but also through coarsening public discourse. This is contributing to stigma, a loss of support and significant public health concerns. The rapid pace of development of Artificial Intelligence also poses a risk to how Autism is understood. We must take an evidence-based, Autistic-led approach to tackling harmful and discriminatory messages and the rapidly changing public discourse.

Recognition: Increased clinical and public understanding of Autism is enabling more Autistic people to access diagnosis. This presents Irish society with a powerful opportunity to embrace difference and demonstrate a commitment to equality through investment in the support and services which our community needs. We must ensure that the growth in recognition of needs is matched by high-quality, responsive supports.

Demographics: A generation of Autistic children are aging out of school. Autistic adults face major barriers to accessing basic support in the community, including securing diagnosis. Our community is young and old, rural and urban. It includes people with additional disabilities or diagnoses and from every ethnic background living in Ireland. Autistic people need support and opportunities to contribute fully to Ireland's future. The specific needs of our community must be considered across the life cycle, across a range of policy areas including employment, housing, physical and mental healthcare and older people's services. As we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, already marginalised communities are most likely to be negatively impacted in national emergencies and where public resources are strained. The rights and specific needs of Autistic people must be part of the Government's plans to support people and communities through a period of rapid change in Irish society from the rise of artificial intelligence to the challenges of climate change. We must ensure that the lived experience of Autistic people is centered in Government policy and planning.

Autism-specific supports: We too often see a failure by Government to apply best practice policy and research to create Autism-specific, neuroaffirmative supports and services. Increased collaboration and innovation, alongside unyielding advocacy, will be needed to create sustainable support systems which vindicate the rights of our community. We must ensure the specific needs and experiences of our community are planned and provided for.

International Law: Our country has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹ Ireland now has clear international obligations to bring about an inclusive society for Autistic people. As an Autistic-led organisation, working with other Disabled Persons Organisations, we must hold Government to account and ensure that Autistic people are at the heart of national decision-making.

Over the next three years we will:

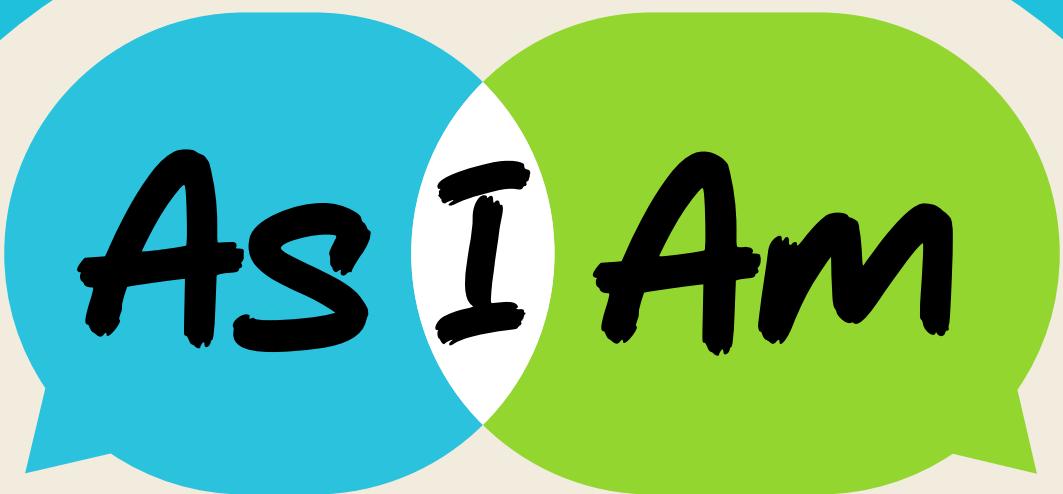
- **Protect** the rights of Autistic people and advocate for further legislative protections
- **Extend** the reach of our services to Autistic individuals and their families, centering lived experience and long term wellbeing
- **Build** the understanding of the wider community, to enable them to be advocates in the fields of employment, social inclusion, health and education
- **Co-create**, future-proofed solutions to existing and emerging barriers faced by our community in partnership with Autistic people, families and sector-specific leaders and progressive changemakers
- **Sustain** an organisation that is diverse, majority led by Autistic people and models a flourishing workplace that champions innovation and social impact

We will review our progress on these goals every 6 months.

We will work for an Ireland of 2030 where:

- ✓ A fair and robust new national Autism innovation strategy is agreed, and is in place on a statutory basis
- ✓ Every Autistic child in Ireland has access to a school place that meets their needs and enables them to thrive
- ✓ No Autistic person is more than 100 kilometers from an in-person AslAm service
- ✓ Employers embrace a roadmap to systematically and measurably increase high quality employment options for Autistic people
- ✓ Autistic people are empowered to participate, advocate and lead in every sector of Irish society
- ✓ AslAm is represented in key national conversations and fora to ensure Autistic people's needs and priorities are safeguarded
- ✓ AslAm reflects the diversity of Ireland's Autistic community in all its forms





IRELAND'S AUTISM CHARITY

Same Chance
As I Live, Work, Grow, Participate

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