Supporting people with autism
A guide for employment practitioners
Introduction
We’ve produced this guide in response to the growing number of young people and adults diagnosed with autism\(^1\) in the UK, who are trying to find work.

People sometimes assume that people with autism are unwilling and unable to work. This is now being challenged as more and more people on the autism spectrum are finding employment because they’re getting the right level of support. Someone with autism is capable of finding and keeping a job as long as they get the help and guidance they need. Employers play an important part in that support. They need education and training to be able to understand and support employees with autism, which will help them get the very best out of their staff.

However, there still seems to be a lack of information and support for employment practitioners who come into contact with people on the autism spectrum. These practitioners play a vital role as they are often the first point of contact for people with autism looking for work.

Although people with autism are often referred on to Prospects\(^2\) for more specialist support, it’s not always the most suitable way to address a person’s needs and you may need to consider alternatives. To make an informed decision, it’s important that you have a general knowledge of autism, and how you can help people with this disability to reach their full potential.

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1 In this guide, we use the term autism to describe all diagnoses on the autism spectrum, including Asperger syndrome, autism spectrum disorder and classic or “Kanner” autism.
2 Prospects is The National Autistic Society’s employment and training service for people on the autism spectrum. Find out more at www.autism.org.uk/prospects/glasgow
Aims of this guide

- Increase employment practitioners’ knowledge, understanding and awareness of autism.
- Provide employment practitioners with guidance and support in how to work with people with autism and prepare them for employment.
- Signpost employment practitioners and people with autism to more information and support.

Section 1 - What is autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects social and communication skills. People with autism find it difficult to make sense of the world around them and may find it hard to interact with people. In particular, people with autism may have trouble learning, understanding and interpreting the unwritten social rules that most people take for granted.

It’s not a physical disability and so autism is often invisible to the rest of the world. Whereas it’s easy to tell that a person in a wheelchair has a physical disability that needs support and understanding, people with autism can look just like anyone else. They may simply be regarded as ‘odd’ or eccentric because of their lack of ability to understand and react appropriately to social rules. Because of that, they may be ridiculed by their peer group.

People at work thought I was ‘weird’ and I’d often spend my lunch breaks alone. I just didn’t know the rules of what you were or were not supposed to do.

A person with autism
Supporting people with autism

The autism spectrum

Autism is a spectrum disorder which means that, while all people with autism share three main areas of difficulty, their condition will affect them in very different ways. Some are able to live relatively ‘everyday’ lives; others will require a lifetime of specialist support.

Each person with autism is different. Strengths and difficulties can vary from person to person, and on a daily basis.

Social communication

People with autism can have difficulty with language – both expressive (communicating with other people) and receptive (understanding what other people are communicating).

For example:

- finding it difficult to start or carry on two-way communication (losing interest quickly, talking on regardless of the listener’s interest or interrupting when another person is talking)
- interpreting facial expressions, tone of voice and body language
- understanding instructions literally (e.g. “pull your socks up”)
- making abrupt or insensitive comments
- finding it difficult to understand sarcasm, irony or metaphors
- using language which seems overly formal and stilted.

Social interaction

It’s often assumed that people with autism don’t want to interact with other people. Although this may sometimes be the case, most people with autism do want to communicate but lack the skills and understanding or are too anxious to do it. While social skills are something a lot of people take for granted, people with autism may not have these skills as they can find it difficult to interpret other people’s actions and intentions.

For example:

- appearing aloof and uninterested
- being unable to understand social rules (e.g. standing too close, not knowing how to greet someone or choosing an inappropriate topic of conversation)
- difficulty with taking turns and group work.

Three main areas of difficulty

People with autism have difficulty in three main areas which are sometimes called the triad of impairments:

- social communication
- social interaction
- social imagination.

Let’s look at each of these in more detail.

Some days I am so stressed that I cannot deal with small things like someone sitting next to me on the bus. I begin to start shaking and sweating.

A person with autism
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Social imagination
To say that people with autism have problems with imagination can be misleading when lots of people with autism have extremely creative imaginations. It might be better expressed as a problem with flexibility of thought, as people with autism may struggle to empathise with other people and to perceive their point of view. People with autism tend to be rigid thinkers and have problems thinking about hypothetical situations, so they can have difficulty predicting what will happen next in everyday situations.

Theory of Mind
People with autism often lack theory of mind – the ability to recognise other people’s thoughts, feelings and agendas and the fact that these differ from their own. It means that people with autism may be less able to empathise with others and may struggle to understand other people’s feelings.

Example:
Joe has autism and works for an IT company in Glasgow. He has a dentist appointment one Wednesday afternoon at 12pm. When it’s time to go, he gets up and leaves the office without saying anything to his boss or colleagues, as he assumes that they will know where he’s going. When he arrives back two hours later his boss is very angry as he didn’t know where Joe had gone.

It may also be harder for people with autism to recognise and judge other people’s intentions and this can make them more vulnerable to bullying and exploitation.

Central coherence
Central coherence is the ability to bring together lots of smaller details to form a whole picture of a situation, or to ‘read between the lines’. People with autism are often described as having a weak central coherence system as they have difficulty doing this.

For example, if you walked into a meeting room and saw a group of people in suits having a discussion and taking notes, you’d probably assume that a meeting was happening. In contrast, a person with autism may walk into the same room and focus on one particular detail, like the fact that the carpet in the room is blue.
Executive function

Executive function gives people the ability to organise and plan actions, routines, thoughts and behaviour in a logical and rational way. People with autism may struggle with executive function and find it difficult to decide how to carry out tasks. Even if they have been told how to carry out a task before, they may find it hard to apply that knowledge in a new but similar situation.

Sensory issues

Although sensory issues are not part of the ‘triad of impairments’, they may still present difficulties for people with autism. Quite often people with autism can find that their senses are either intensified (over-sensitive) or underdeveloped (under-sensitive). This means they may experience unusual sensation in any of their sensory systems including sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, balance and body awareness. For example, they may find a sudden, loud noise stressful and even painful.

I cannot stand strip lighting. The lights give off a low buzz which is painful to my ears.

A person with autism

Change in routines

One of the biggest challenges that people with autism face is dealing with changes in routine. This is because of the difficulties they have making sense of the world around them.

These difficulties in judging situations and knowing what will happen next can cause people with autism to become very anxious and stressed. This can be very difficult for people with Asperger syndrome, when people assume they can cope with changes because they often have an average or above average IQ.

Section 2 deals with the difficulties that people with autism may face when looking for work and some of the ways you can support them.

Related conditions

People with a diagnosis of autism may also have other related conditions, such as:

› dyslexia
› dyspraxia
› attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

It’s worth noting whether your client has any related conditions, and if they are getting other forms of support for them. It’s helpful to know who else is supporting your client so that each agency’s support role is clear.
Tips for working with people with autism

› Try to avoid using sarcasm, irony and metaphors (e.g. “he bit my head off”).
› Don’t be patronising – having autism doesn’t mean that someone lacks intelligence.
› Follow the six-second rule: after you ask a question, allow a six-second pause for a response (it takes some people that long to process the question and develop a response. It can seem like a long time but sometimes it’s necessary).
› Don’t assume that what you have said has been understood, check that it has.
› Keep questions/sentences simple and direct – avoid open questions where possible (e.g. instead of asking “When are you free?” you could ask “Are you free at 10am on Wednesday?”).
› Use visual/written timetables to help plan and organise daily tasks if necessary. People with autism tend to be visual learners, and can find visual means of communication helpful.
› Allow ‘time out’ breaks and, if possible, create a relaxing area where clients can take a break.
› Be aware of the environment and how it may impact on sensory sensitivities (e.g. strong lighting, noise levels).
Supporting people with autism

Assessing someone’s needs

It’s important to establish a relationship of trust and respect with your client from the start so that they feel comfortable and confident working with you. If they don’t feel comfortable, they may not reveal the full extent of their difficulties and you won’t be able to give them the support they need.

Because people with autism tend to have sensory sensitivities, it’s a good idea to adapt the meeting environment to make it ‘low-arousal’. For example, you could choose an area that you know will be quiet, without distracting background noise.

As people with autism find it difficult to cope with change and new situations, it’s important to explain the support process to make sure they don’t get over-anxious. This may include discussing what is expected of them (eg how often to keep in touch or go into the office) and what they can expect from you (for example, contacting them every week with job updates). It may also be helpful to show them around the office to help them feel more familiar with their surroundings.

Visual and/or written timetables can be helpful for some clients as it gives them an exact plan of when sessions will happen, what they will involve and how long they will last.

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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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In getting to know your client you’ll discover what types of things and situations make them anxious and nervous. If you can recognise when your client is getting agitated, angry or upset, you can create strategies to deal with it as soon as possible, before they get too distressed.

Please bear in mind that working with someone with autism may result in helping them in more ways than just finding work. Sometimes you may find that they want to talk about more personal issues, such as problems they are having at home, bullying, or even sexual issues. This can be difficult and the best option is to try and steer them to the most appropriate source of help, such as information leaflets, websites or other agencies.

You may find that your client already gets support from other agencies, or that they would benefit from a service like befriending, counselling, housing or advocacy support. You can find details of other organisations and services in the ‘Useful information’ section at the end of this guide.
Working alongside other specialist agencies will make sure your client gets a holistic package of support which is tailored to their needs.

**Communication skills**

Some people with autism are extremely chatty whereas others are extremely quiet. Clients who are quiet may have low self-esteem or lack confidence in speaking, or they may find it hard to understand what has been said and to formulate a response. Clients who are extremely chatty may seem easier to work with. However, a talkative client may talk about one particular topic they are interested in, and find it difficult to attend to anything else that is being said to them.

Whatever the client’s skills and communication style, it’s important to let them know they can ask questions if they don’t understand what has been said. Depending on their level of ability, they may find it useful to take notes on any points they don’t understand or want to go over again. You may also want to give your client clear, written information on what you have discussed so they can take it away as a reference.

Your client may need training in communication and social skills so that they feel more able and confident when they deal with other people. These skills are vital to finding and keeping a job. Please see the ‘Useful links and contacts’ section to find specialist organisations that may be able to provide this support.

Things to work on may include:

- appropriate conversation topics
- forming relationships
- listening skills
- body language
- facial expressions.

You can find more information on interviewing people with autism on page 27.

**Time management**

Time management can be a problem for some people with autism, and they may turn up to appointments extremely early or extremely late. They may need some extra support and advice on time management as well as encouragement to be on time.

An alarm clock or personal digital assistant may help to remind someone with autism of when they need to attend meetings. It may also be useful to go over the reasons why it’s important to be on time for appointments and jobs as they may not fully understand this. You could also talk through a time plan, focusing on how long it takes to get ready (shower, get dressed, breakfast, etc) and how much travel time to allow so they understand how much time they need to get to work/appointments.
Summary
- It’s important to establish a relationship of trust and respect with your client, to find out their particular areas of need and if there are any other issues that may be affecting them.
- Clients have different communication styles and abilities and it’s important to interpret and respond to them appropriately.
- Make sure your client is aware of time management issues.
- Encourage your client to plan and organise their daily activities and use an alarm clock/personal digital assistant where necessary.

Building confidence and self-esteem

People with autism are particularly vulnerable to mental health problems like depression, especially in late adolescence and early adult life. This is often because a lack of communication and social skills leaves them feeling isolated from their peer group. Research suggests that approximately one in 15 people with Asperger syndrome experiences depression at some point in their lives.

Although people with autism may want to interact with people, they may lack the understanding, skills and confidence to do it. As a result, other people may tease or bully them and sometimes they may even be taken advantage of if they misinterpret someone’s intentions.

People with autism tend to strive for perfection and may find it difficult to understand that it’s natural to make mistakes sometimes. So they may get stressed and upset if they happen to make one. Criticism can also be difficult for people with autism to accept.

In these cases it’s important to explain that mistakes are natural and that the consequences aren’t really bad. If you need to give them feedback, try to focus on the positives and choose how to phrase your comments. For example, rather than saying, “That’s not the way you do that, you’re doing it wrong” you could say, “You’re doing really well so far and I’m impressed with your progress. This new technique may help you to do the job even better.”

High levels of anxiety can also contribute to low confidence and lack of self-esteem. For lots of people with autism, coping with change and managing social interaction are major causes of anxiety. There are lots of other things, like sensory sensitivities, that can cause anxiety as well. If a person with autism is not managing their anxiety levels, it can affect their ability to cope with everyday situations, and if these feelings are not dealt with, it can lead to emotional meltdown.

To help people with autism deal with negative feelings, you could encourage them to keep a list of positive things in their lives to look at when feeling down. In more extreme cases, counselling may be more appropriate.

Dealing with change

This is one of the biggest problem areas for people with autism. Changes can be nerve-wracking and frightening for most people. For instance, think about when you started your first proper job – how did you feel? Perhaps you were nervous meeting new colleagues, worried you wouldn’t
fit in or that you couldn’t pick up the work quickly enough? It can also be overwhelming trying to learn new procedures and remember names. By the end of the day you might feel completely exhausted and irritable. However, most people can predict the types of scenarios that this situation will bring and work through reactions and solutions in their heads.

People with autism don’t have these forward-thinking and planning skills, which exacerbates their anxious feelings as they can’t predict what will happen. It’s like going on holiday but not knowing where you are going, how to get there, what you will be doing when you get there or how to speak the language.

Unexpected changes are particularly stressful for people with autism as they’re unable to figure out what will happen next, what is expected of them and how they should react. This may lead to severe distress which can in turn lead to an extreme behavioural reaction.

Your client may benefit from talking through different scenarios and possible outcomes, and what to do in situations which are unpredictable. You can encourage them to ask an appropriate member of staff if they are unsure or anxious about a situation. Timetables and calendars will help them to know what will happen next and where they are expected to be. A pocket diary or a written list of instructions may be more discreet if they feel embarrassed carrying a planner around.

Help and encourage your clients to examine and talk through their worries, looking at specific problems affecting them and how these can be overcome. You may also want to go over stress management and breathing techniques, visualisation or muscle relaxation. You can find more information on these methods by contacting Prospects (see the ‘Useful information’ section) who will be able to give you more advice or suggest other appropriate solutions.

Finally, help your client to keep things in perspective and see the positive things associated with change rather than the negative ones. Reinforce the point that they can ask other people for advice if they are unsure of what is expected or how to react. It may also be helpful to give your client a list of important contacts with an outline of their roles and responsibilities.

Summary
- People with autism are more vulnerable to depression and low self-esteem than those without autism.
- High levels of anxiety can affect a person’s ability to cope with everyday situations and particularly their ability to interact with other people.
- Make sure that there are minimal changes to the person’s routine and inform them of any sudden changes to minimise stress and anxiety.

Job searching

Job searching for people with autism can be challenging because of the varying nature of the disability. A good starting point is to look at the different elements that a job requires. Certain tasks are more difficult for people with autism, so it may be appropriate to avoid jobs where those
Supporting people with autism

Types of tasks are central to the role.

**Tasks that people with autism may find difficult include:**

- telephone work
- dealing with members of the public
- doing lots of different tasks at once
- loud and noisy environments
- liaising with lots of people
- flexible/unstructured work.

Please remember that, although these may be areas of difficulty for some people with autism, it’s important not to generalise. Some clients working with Prospects have ended up doing jobs including teaching, telesales and childcare.

**Suitable jobs**

Make sure the jobs your client is looking for are achievable. For example, for most people, including a person with autism, becoming an astronaut is unlikely!

The suitability of a job for someone with autism depends on their ability to cope with the social aspects of the job, changes in routine and changes in expectations.

Because of the sensory sensitivities that your client may have, it’s important to consider the physical work environment as well, for example noise levels (open-plan layout, lots of employees) and lighting (bright strip lights).

People with autism tend to be better suited to jobs offering a higher degree of routine and a lower level of social interaction. Common strengths of people with autism are that they can be very focused and less easily distracted and they may be content to work on a specific task for long periods.

Problems are more likely to arise during quieter periods, breaks or between tasks and at these times clients can benefit from having a ‘key colleague’ who can suggest other appropriate tasks to keep them busy. While it may be natural for people without autism to pick up everyday routines (for example, getting up, going to work, having lunch, coming home, having dinner) and what to do in certain situations (like ordering a meal in a restaurant), people with autism often don’t know instinctively how to do these things. As a result they may need more prompting and a breakdown of tasks.

It’s important to assess skills and abilities of people with autism on an individual basis to consider whether they would be able to cope with the social interaction needed in a particular job.
Supporting people with autism

People with autism often have areas of special interest, in-depth knowledge and understanding, such as trains, computers or films. It benefits both the employer and person with autism to use these skills wherever possible, for example, a previous Prospects client with a specific interest in music managed to get a job working in a music shop.

Summary
When searching for jobs, make sure your client considers and assesses these aspects of a job:

- the level of social interaction required
- the level of unpredictability required
- the working environment (layout, noise)
- support an employer can provide.

Application forms
People with autism may struggle with the wording on application forms. It’s important to discuss questions with your client to ensure they understand the type of information they need to give. Your client may find open questions are too vague and confusing and find it difficult to anticipate the type of information required.

Most applications usually have a long ‘supporting statement’ section at the end which asks the person applying to explain why they feel they are the most suitable candidate for the post. Lots of people with autism find this section difficult as they find it difficult to know what to write or what an employer will want to know. You can help them to ‘sell’ themselves by talking through what the employer will want to know and the strengths and skills they have to offer.

It may be useful to split the statement into different sections to give an outline of how it should be structured.

Sections may include:

- **introductory paragraph** (e.g. ‘I think I am suitable for this post as I have the necessary skills and abilities to carry out the main roles of the job’)
- **professional skills** (which match the skills of the post, backed up with examples/evidence)
- **personal skills/qualities** (which would enhance the ability to carry out the job and benefit the employer)
- **summary** (e.g. ‘If given this opportunity, I would work hard to fulfil the responsibilities of the post to the best of my ability’).

Disclosing disability
Some people with autism may be reluctant to disclose their disability to other people, particularly potential employers, in case it singles them out and leaves them at a disadvantage to other employees. There could, of course, be both positive and negative consequences of disclosing a disability, but in general The National Autistic Society encourages the person to disclose their disability if they are comfortable with doing so.
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If employers have an understanding of the person’s disability it’s more likely they will make changes to accommodate their needs wherever possible. Changes like taking more time to explain things clearly and recognising that things like predictability are important. Under the Equality Act 2010, there is a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to support people with a disability in the workplace.

If an individual chooses to disclose their disability, it is important that they know how to explain their disability appropriately and also to emphasise their good points as well as the difficulties that they have. Remember that you will need to get your client’s consent to disclose their disability to other people. You may find it useful to get your client to write down a list of their good qualities (eg attention to detail, honesty, dependability) as well as any difficulties/areas of need (eg unable/unwilling to answer telephones) and to emphasise to employers that their disability does not stop them from being able to work. It is particularly important to emphasise that autism does not usually affect intellectual ability.

You can find out more about the Equality Act 2010 at: www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx

The interview process

Interview techniques for employers

Knowing how to interact with people who have autism can be difficult for professionals who don’t have much experience or knowledge of the condition.

› Allow time for the person to process the question (see the tips on page 13). Avoid asking the question again in different words as this will mean starting the process again from scratch.
› Use the person’s name when speaking to them, to gain their attention.
› Try to ask closed questions instead of open questions (eg “Tell me what you enjoyed about college/your last job” rather than “Tell me about yourself”).
› Be aware that the client may interpret language literally (eg “How did you find your last job?” could result in a response about how they looked in the paper, sent off an application, etc).
› If the client is talking non-stop, gently explain that you’d like to move on and talk about something else. Some people with autism may talk excessively about a topic as a way of calming down and reducing anxiety, so try to be aware of this. It may be helpful to let them talk about their interests for five minutes at the beginning or end of a session to help them relax. Let them know when this is acceptable.
› Avoid hypothetical questions (eg “How do you think you will cope with working if there are lots of disruptions?”) A better question would be “Think back to your last job/college course. Can you tell me how you coped when people interrupted your?”
Supporting people with autism

It may take a while for you to adapt your techniques to the needs of the client and this can involve trial and error, as each client is different and may respond to different techniques.

**Interview techniques for people with autism**

Due to the difficulties that people with autism have with communication and social interaction, your client may find attending interviews stressful and difficult. As we’ve already mentioned, open questions can be difficult for someone with autism to answer as they can be too vague and confusing. They may also get anxious and stressed as they don’t know what to expect during the interview.

It may be worth talking to the employer before the interview to see if they can adapt their questions to make them more specific. It’s also worth asking if you can have details of who will be on the interview panel (photos would be helpful if possible) and a copy of the interview questions beforehand so that the client knows exactly what to expect (some employers may be reluctant to do this and see it as giving the client an unfair advantage over other interviewees).

You may want to accompany the client to the interview so that you can rephrase any ambiguous questions and give them support. This is an example of the valuable support that you can provide as a professional working with your client.

It’s also worth practising some frequently-asked interview questions so that your client can answer as confidently as possible. It may be helpful to write a list of qualities and skills that your client has, both professionally and personally.

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<th>As a person</th>
<th>As a professional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>Knowledge of Microsoft Word/Excel</td>
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<td>Analytical mind</td>
<td>IT skills</td>
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<td>Quick learner</td>
<td>Experience of filing</td>
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Example of skills

Remember that your client should also give examples to back up these skills.

**Supporting group work**

People with autism may find group work hard because of difficulties with communication and social interaction.

› It’s a good idea to think carefully about group dynamics before putting a group together.
› Think about matching people in terms of personality, interests and skills.
› It’s a good idea to talk to people in advance about the types of people they can expect to meet in the group.
› Setting ground rules for any group work is usually very helpful. This can be done in a group setting to make sure everyone agrees on the ground rules.
› Ground rules can be referred to at any point during group work.
› Bear in mind that some people may need time out from the group. Make it clear that this is acceptable.
› It’s always helpful for group members to know that a group leader/staff member will be available for a one-to-one chat if necessary.
› Encourage participation but be mindful that some individuals may take longer than others to interact with the group.
Role play can be a great tool for practising real-life situations. Difficulty with social imagination may make this difficult for some people.

It’s helpful to write down any important points or questions and spend five or ten minutes at the end of a group session discussing them. This will make it easier to stick to any topic/agenda that is set for the day.

Summary
- It is important to check the client has understood what information each question on the application form is asking for.
- Remember to split the personal statement section into sub-categories, e.g., introduction, professional skills, personal skills and a summary paragraph.
- Make sure that you have consent to disclose your client’s condition when contacting potential employers.
- Get your client to practise answering potential interview questions so that they feel more confident and relaxed.
- Group work can be very beneficial if structured well.

Further reading


To buy these books through the NAS, go to [www.autism.org.uk/shop](http://www.autism.org.uk/shop)

Learning resources
Socialeyes is an innovative approach to learning social skills for people on the autism spectrum, developed with people with autism and Asperger syndrome, alongside leading professionals in the field.

It has been used in work preparation schemes, and is useful for disability work coaches or careers advisors running work preparation schemes for people with autism. [www.autism.org.uk/socialeyes](http://www.autism.org.uk/socialeyes)
## Organisations and services

### Autism Resource Centre (ARC)

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<tr>
<th>Suite 4 Abercromby Business Centre 279 Abercromby Street Glasgow G40 2DD Tel: 0141 276 7182 Email: <a href="mailto:SW_infoarc@glasgow.gov.uk">SW_infoarc@glasgow.gov.uk</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>Supports adults (16+) with autism and their families. Offers advice, information, emotional and practical guidance through the pre- and post-diagnostic process, advocacy, help with transition through educational settings, welfare/benefits advice and liaising with other agencies such as health workers, social work, etc.</td>
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### Centre for Education and Training in Autism (CETA)

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<tr>
<th>Scottish Society for Autism, New Struan School Alloa Business Park Bradbury Campus 100 Smithfield Loan Alloa, FK10 1NP Tel: 01786 471550 Email: <a href="mailto:ceta@autism-in-scotland.org.uk">ceta@autism-in-scotland.org.uk</a></th>
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<td>Provides a wide variety of training courses on autism and Asperger syndrome.</td>
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### Glasgow College of Nautical Studies Transitions Programme

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<th>Student Advice Centre 21 Thistle Street Glasgow, G5 9XB Tel: 0141 565 2500 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@gcns.ac.uk">enquiries@gcns.ac.uk</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>Offers a transition course for young people with Asperger syndrome. It helps students explore the social aspects of college life and provides the opportunity to gain individual SQA modules and progress on to mainstream college courses.</td>
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### NAS Prospects Employment service

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<th>Prospects National Autistic Society (Scotland) 1st Floor, Central Chambers 109 Hope Street Glasgow, G2 6LL Tel: 0141 221 8090 Email: <a href="mailto:Prospects-Glasgow@nas.org.uk">Prospects-Glasgow@nas.org.uk</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>A unique employment service designed to help people with autism find and keep work. Prospects delivers the Job Centre Plus Personal Development Programme and Work Preparation course and helps with job seeking and the interview process. It also provides in-work support through the early days of a new job and awareness-raising for employers.</td>
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### NAS Student Support service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lee Gilson National Autistic Society (Scotland) 1st Floor, Central Chambers 109 Hope Street Glasgow, G2 6LL Tel: 0141 285 7104 Email: <a href="mailto:lee.gilson@nas.org.uk">lee.gilson@nas.org.uk</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student support service is for people with autism in further and higher education. Students are given support and guidance throughout their course. Training is available for teaching staff.</td>
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Supporting people with autism

**NAS Outreach Service**
- **Prospects**
- National Autistic Society (Scotland)
- 1st Floor, Central Chambers
- 109 Hope Street
- Glasgow, G2 6LL
- Tel: 0141 221 8090
- Email: lee.gilson@nas.org.uk

Provides individual support to people in their own home and in community settings. This can include individual support during college or university.

**Skills Development Scotland**
- **Alhambra House**
- 45 Waterloo Street
- Glasgow, G2 6HS
- Tel: 0141 285 6000
- Email info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

Provides information, support and advice to employers, learning providers and individuals.

**Websites**
- [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)
  - The National Autistic Society (NAS) website contains a range of information on autism and Asperger syndrome.
- [www.autism.org.uk/prospects](http://www.autism.org.uk/prospects)
  - The NAS Propsects supported employment scheme website.
- [www.autism.org.uk/studentsupport/glasgow](http://www.autism.org.uk/studentsupport/glasgow)
  - The NAS Student Support service website.

### Section 4: Funding

Here’s some other funding and support that may be available to people with autism.

People can contact their local social services department, which may be able to offer advice and links to support services: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/HealthAndSupport/ArrangingHealthAndSocialCare/DG_4000436](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/HealthAndSupport/ArrangingHealthAndSocialCare/DG_4000436)

People with autism may be able to get support through the Independent Living Fund (ILF). They need to discuss this with their social worker: [www.ilf.org.uk/making_an_application/application_form/](http://www.ilf.org.uk/making_an_application/application_form/)


Some people may apply for a community care grant: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOtherSupport/Caringforsomeone/DG_10018921](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOtherSupport/Caringforsomeone/DG_10018921)

People studying at HNC level or above may be entitled to funding from the Disabled Students Allowance. The NAS Student Support Service gives people with autism support at college and university, which is often funded through this grant: [www.saas.gov.uk/student_support/special_circumstances/disabled_students_allowance.htm](http://www.saas.gov.uk/student_support/special_circumstances/disabled_students_allowance.htm)

People keen to enter education may be able to fund or part-fund a course through Independent Learning Account: [www.ilascotland.org.uk/ILA+Homepage.htm](http://www.ilascotland.org.uk/ILA+Homepage.htm)
The National Autistic Society is the UK’s leading charity for people affected by autism.

Over 500,000 people in the UK have autism. Together with their families they make up over two million people whose lives are touched by autism every single day. Despite this, autism is still relatively unknown and misunderstood. Which means that many of these two million people get nothing like the level of help, support and understanding they need.

Together, we are going to change this.