

## **Autism**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition with associated difficulties in social communication and interaction with other people, as well as, restricted and repetitive interests and behaviours.

[What is autism? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

The diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder lists two criteria of '**social communication and social interaction**' and '**restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities**'. These can present in extremely different ways in different individuals.

Read more about some aspects of Autism by visiting the National Autistic Society website, here:

[Communication \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

[Obsessions and repetitive behaviour \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

[Mental health \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

[Sensory differences \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

[Meltdowns and shut downs \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)



The level of functioning and/or impairment in each area is not consistent across all areas. Autism as a spectrum disorder has allowed for more individuality in diagnosis. It has broadened the perspective of what ASD is and how it is perceived. Seeing a whole person and their strengths and needs across all areas, can help to provide better support for each person.

### **ASD IS NOT:**

1. Due to 'Bad' or 'poor parenting'
2. A mental illness
3. Contagious
4. A result of social circumstances
5. Extreme shyness
6. Curable, although support can help someone manage the impact and difficulties associated with ASD

Potential Strengths	Potential Challenges
Attention to detail.	Grasping the 'big' picture.
Often highly skilled in a particular area.	Uneven set of skills.
Strong interests and in-depth study resulting in encyclopedic knowledge on areas of interests.	Difficulty in developing motivation to study subjects outside of areas of interests.
Tendency to be logical.	Difficulty perceiving emotional states -or expectations- of others.
Less concern what others may think of them.	Difficulty noticing unwritten rules of social interactions.
Visual processing (thinking in pictures).	Difficulty summarizing important information for a conversation.
Often very verbal.	Sensory integration problems; difficulty screening out background noise.
Direct communication.	Honest and blunt comments. Difficulty expressing empathy in ways that others expect or understand.
Nonjudgmental listening.	Executive functioning resulting in difficulties planning, organizing and structuring activities/tasks.

Research to date suggests that a combination of genetic and early environmental factors may account for changes in brain development. However, This is still much research needed to identify the exact causes of Autism Spectrum Disorder, read more here: [The causes of autism](#)

There is an Autism Act, that aims to help public sector services support adults with Autism: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/contents>