

WHAT IS AN AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION?

Autism or Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is a neurological and developmental disorder that affects how a person interacts with others, communicates, learns, and acts. It can be diagnosed at any age, however, symptoms are often evident in the first 2 years of life but may not always be recognised until later in life.

Some common traits include:

- Differences with communication and interacting with others
- Have limited but specific interests
- Repetitive behaviours (such as stimming, hand flapping, rocking etc.)

These traits often have an impact on an individual's ability to function in school, work and other areas of life and have always been present for a person, for them to receive an Autism diagnosis.

It is known as a "spectrum" condition which means each individual experiences ASC in their own way. Some people might have high-support needs and a severity of symptoms, and others may have low-support needs with less obvious symptoms. Some autistic people have average or above average intelligence, and some may have associated learning needs.

Although males are more likely to be diagnosed than females, ASC can be diagnosed in all genders, races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds. It is a lifelong condition, but treatments, services, support, and adjustments can improve an individual's symptoms and daily functioning.

Additional traits may include:

- Finding it hard to understand how others think or feel
- Sensory sensitivity such as an aversion to bright lights, strong smells, or loud noises
- A strong preference for routine and consistency.
- Anxiety about unfamiliar situations, people, places, and social events.
- Some strengths of those with ASC can include:
 - A high attention to detail
 - Creativity
 - Excellent memory skills
 - Direct and honest communication
 - Thinking in a visual way

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Autistic individuals can often have other conditions such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), dyslexia, anxiety, depression, or epilepsy, and may need additional supports to overcome some challenges and stresses of everyday life. Other individuals have or need limited support and have found their own ways to navigate their condition in everyday life.

The important thing to remember is no two people with autism are the same, it is a unique condition that affects each person differently, therefore it is critical to get to know the individual and find out what works and does not work for them.

To find out more or to access our services: Visit: www.autismplus-employmentservices.co.uk
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