

World Autism Acceptance Week



World Autism Acceptance Week is approaching fast and this year it will be taking place between the 2nd – 8th April. Throughout the week thousands of people within schools, workplaces and local communities will be working together to raise vital funds and help to create a society that works for autistic people. Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world.

Autistic people face discrimination and barriers across all sectors of society – in the health and social care systems, in education, in employment, and everywhere in between. Autism acceptance week hopes to bring light to these issues and barriers and begin to break them down for a better future.

**Only
26%**
of autistic pupils
feel happy at
school.



**Only
29%**
of autistic people
are in any form of
employment.



70%
of autistic people
experience mental
health problems.



**There are over
150,000**
people on the waiting list
for an autism assessment
in the UK.



How many people are Autistic?

It is important to know how many autistic people there are for several reasons, including helping to provide support, as well as showing the sheer number and diversity of autistic people. This is also called “autism prevalence”. It is an estimate of how many autistic people there are in the UK. It is not the same as the number of autistic people who have a diagnosis as many autistic people might not have been identified or even know yet themselves. As autism understanding has grown, the estimated prevalence has also changed.

Government prevalence surveys last estimated that around one in 100 people are autistic. However, because these are estimates this is not definite. Other surveys and international estimates have come up with different prevalence estimates. Most of them suggest autism prevalence is higher. The National Autistic Society thinks the UK governments should do more research into autism prevalence to find an updated figure. Until that research is done, we believe that more than one in 100 people are autistic, which means more than 700,000 people in the UK.

Having an accurate prevalence figure is vital. We all need to know this to improve support and understanding, and to create a society that works for autistic people.

Some Famous Autistic People



Elon Musk



Greta Thunberg



Bradley Riches



Chris Packham



Susan Boyle

Autism is a spectrum condition and affects people in different ways. Like all people, autistic people have their own strengths and weaknesses. Below are some difficulties autistic people may share.

Social Communication

- Taking things literally and not understanding abstract concepts.
- Needing extra time to process information or answer questions.

Social Interaction

- Appear to be insensitive.
- Seek out time alone when overloaded by other people.
- Find it hard to form friendships.

Repetitive and restrictive behaviour - the world can seem a very unpredictable and confusing place to autistic people. This is why they often prefer to have routines so that they know what is going to happen. They may want to travel the same way to and from school or work, wear the same clothes or eat the same food for breakfast.

Autistic people may experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light, colours, temperatures, or pain. For example, they may find certain background sounds like music in a restaurant, which other people ignore or block out, unbearably loud or distracting.

Many autistic people have intense and highly focused interests, often from a fairly young age. These can change over time or be lifelong. Autistic people can become experts in their special interests and often like to share their knowledge. A stereotypical example is trains but that is one of many. Greta Thunberg's intense interest, for example, is protecting the environment.



"The greatest discomfort for autistic people can be the social one. For me, I was confused by the way people behaved."

Chris Packham, CBE and National Autistic Society Ambassador

More information can be found here - <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism>



Think you or someone you may know could be autistic, find out more about diagnosis here - <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis>



Further help and support can be found here, including an autism services directory - <https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/help-and-support>



Would you like to develop your knowledge and understanding of autism?

At Sysco Business Skills Academy we are currently offering a 12-week fully funded qualification – Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism. Further information on the qualification can be found here - <https://www.ncfe.org.uk/qualification-search/qualification-detail/ncfe-cache-level-2-certificate-in-understanding-autism-226>



To be eligible you must have been 19+ as of 31st August 2023 and live within the Liverpool City Region or within a 50-mile radius. For further information please contact aeb@sysco.uk.com .