



# Autism

# Employment &

# Reasonable

# Adjustments



**Statistics about Autism in the Workplace**

**Benefits of having Autistic Employees**

**Barriers for Autistic Individuals in the  
Workplace**

**Reasonable Adjustments that can support  
Autistic Applicants and Employees**

**Employment Law**

# Statistics about autism in the workplace

22% of autistic adults are in full-time employment, compared to 82% of non disabled adults

40% of autistic adults who work part-time want to work more hours

77% of unemployed autistic adults want to be employed

Only 2% of autistic adults felt that their employers pro actively supported seeking and implementing reasonable adjustments

87% of autistic people felt that Reasonable adjustments would make a critical difference to their performance

# Barriers for autistic individuals in the workplace

Bullying or discrimination in the workplace

Lack of flexible employers

Lack of autism knowledge

Access issues in the work environment

Gaps on a CV due to health, social or education related issues

Low expectations or stigma from employers

53% of autistic adults felt unable to ask for reasonable adjustments, they were refused, or the adjustments requested were poorly implemented

# The benefits of having autistic employees

## Why autism is a strength in the workplace

### Difference of perspective

Personal experience to draw upon

Intense special interests

### Efficiency

Good organisational skills

Ability to work independently

Enhanced productivity

### Cognitive abilities

Logical & systematic

Creative & innovative

Attention to detail

Good pattern recognition

Very good memory

Sustained & intense focus

### Personal Qualities

Strong sense of social justice

Honest and trustworthy

Dedicated

Increased empathy

# Employment Law

You should only ask about health and disability if:

- There are necessary requirements of the job that cannot be met with reasonable adjustments
- You are finding out what the applicant needs for an interview
- You are using positive action to recruit a disabled person

To prevent discrimination in the workplace:

- Provide reasonable adjustments
- Allow flexible working requests
- Ensure equality, equity and rights at work

# Examples of reasonable adjustments

Challenge	Reasonable adjustment
<p><b>Sensory challenges</b></p> <p>Many autistic people can be hyper, or hypo sensitive to changes in the environment. This could be changes in the visual environment, such as lights and noise. Such as door slamming, movement or smells.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a quiet room</li> <li>• Providing a quiet room to complete any assessments or tasks that require concentration or focus. This can help reduce distractions and sensory overload.</li> <li>• Support the use of noise cancelling headphones</li> <li>• To reduce auditory distractions when completing assessments</li> <li>• Provide a scent free environment</li> <li>• Ensuring interviewers do not wear perfume, or conduct interviews in a kitchen area</li> <li>• Allow individuals to wear sunglasses</li> <li>• To reduce the effect of LED lights or glares from other lights</li> <li>• Consider flexible/hybrid working</li> <li>• Shorter more frequent breaks</li> <li>• Use of extra equipment: Such as headphones, sunglasses and computer tech. I.e. A screen filter for a laptop or PC monitor</li> </ul>

Challenge	Reasonable adjustment
<p><b>Communication style</b></p> <p>Many autistic people may experience challenges with spoken communication, especially when under pressure or in situations that cause anxiety. This can cause someone to lose focus or not be able to develop their responses fully.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request written communication, such as using emails. This can help to communicate thoughts and responses more effectively, as well as to use as reference if needed</li> <li>• Offer extra time for processing</li> <li>• If someone struggles with verbal communication they may struggle in a high-pressure scenario.</li> <li>• Extra time can be used to process questions and/or provide responses.</li> <li>• Give notice of meetings in advance to have time to prepare</li> </ul>

Challenge	Reasonable adjustment
<p><b>Social interaction</b></p> <p>Autism can really impact social interaction. Especially when so much of our interaction is based on neurotypical preferences, such as keeping eye contact and shaking hands.</p> <p>Many autistic people may experience challenges understanding social cues, nonverbal communication and initiating professional social interactions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having virtual meetings where possible, this can be less intimidating and provide a more comfortable environment for social interaction.</li> <li>• Using written communication, this could be email or text message instead of a phone or in person communication. This can be less stressful and give more time to process and respond.</li> <li>• Providing clear instructions</li> <li>• Providing clarity about things can help reduce anxiety and confusion, making it easier to navigate the workplace and know what to expect. This could include the expectation of the role, work processes, HR processes and line management.</li> <li>• Allocated desk, rather than hot desking</li> <li>• Flexible hours</li> <li>• A working pattern to suit the needs and bodyclock of an autistic employee</li> <li>• Exemption from team meetings and social gatherings</li> <li>• Giving permission to miss team building exercises, non-essential meetings, brain storming sessions or team nights out without the need to justify.</li> </ul>



Challenge	Reasonable Adjustment
<p><b>Executive function</b></p> <p>This is what is needed when we must do something with information, such as remembering questions, carrying out steps, or instructions or engaging in mental arithmetic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being given written instructions in addition to verbal instructions. This enables autistic employees to refer back to the instructions as needed and can reduce the demand on working memory</li> <li>• Giving extra time to complete tasks or assessments. This allows time to process and respond to information.</li> <li>• Asking for breaks. Breaks give our brain time to rest and recharge</li> <li>• Using memory aids. Such as a notebook, checklist or other tools can help to remember important information.</li> <li>• Visual aids to help us to understand complex information, such as diagrams or flowcharts</li> <li>• Time management and project management apps, to help with scheduling tasks and know what is happening day to day</li> </ul>

Challenge	Reasonable adjustments
<p><b>Processing differences</b></p> <p>Some autistic people may hyper focus which can cause difficulties when moving between tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistive technology, this can help with efficiency and keeping to schedule</li> <li>• Ensuring regular breaks</li> <li>• Ensuring access to a quieter environment</li> <li>• Less stimuli helps to alleviate distractions</li> <li>• A clear point of contact to communicate with</li> <li>• Using the individuals preferred method of contact</li> <li>• More frequent supervision using an appropriate supervision form to include a review of reasonable adjustments already in place and any changes needed.</li> <li>• Access to a digital recorder to record meetings particularly if there are actions to be completed</li> <li>• Back up of verbal instructions with an email</li> </ul>

# Useful Links

- NAS

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/employment/support-at-work/autistic-adults>

- Employment autism, resources to support getting into work/retaining work and managing in the work place.

<https://employmentautism.org.uk/>

- Working well, Occupational health service in Gloucestershire

<https://www.workingwellglos.nhs.uk/>

- ACAS, advice on rights, rules and best practice within the workplace

<https://www.acas.org.uk/>

- Forwards, employment support

<https://www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk/11-service/>

- NAS, reasonable adjustments for employers and employees

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/employment-adjustments-tips>

- Scope, asking for reasonable adjustments

[https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/asking-for-reasonable-adjustments?](https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/asking-for-reasonable-adjustments?gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMItrzaycKPhwMVL6eDBx1GWDWjEAMYASAAEgIsJvD_BwE)

[gad\\_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMItrzaycKPhwMVL6eDBx1GWDWjEAMYASAAEgIsJvD\\_BwE](https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/asking-for-reasonable-adjustments?gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMItrzaycKPhwMVL6eDBx1GWDWjEAMYASAAEgIsJvD_BwE)

# Notes