

What is autism?

Autism (including Asperger Syndrome) is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. The three main areas of difficulty are:

> Difficulty with social interaction

This includes recognising and understanding other people's feelings and managing their own. Not understanding how to interact with other people can make it very hard to make and keep friends.

> Difficulty with social communication

This includes using and understanding verbal and non-verbal language, such as gestures and facial expressions. People with autism can therefore find it incredibly hard to make sense of the world. Everyday life can feel confusing, meaningless or even frightening. Understanding and communicating with others is particularly difficult - which can leave people very isolated.

> Difficulty with social imagination

This includes the ability to understand and predict other people's intentions and behaviour and to imagine situations outside of their own routine. This can be accompanied by a narrow repetitive range of activities.

People with autism may also experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, taste, smells, lights or colours.

The National Autistic Society is the leading UK charity for people living with autism

Autism Helpline: 0845 070 4004 (Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm)

Minicom: 0845 070 4003

Website: www.autism.org.uk

The National Autistic Society is a company limited by guarantee registered in England (No.1205298) and a charity registered in England and Wales (269425) and in Scotland (SC039427), registered office 393 City Road, London, EC1V 1NG

Cover illustration by Oliver Quinn, a member of our Bath Out of School Club.

Out of School Clubs



Accept difference.
Not indifference.

Out of school clubs

Our Out of School Clubs provide a safe environment where children and young people with autism can come and develop friendships, try out activities and have fun. Our clubs are run by an experienced Project Leader and supported by a team of trained volunteers.

"The club taught me to accept myself. This is the only place that would accept me for who I am. I usually have to pretend to be normal, this place feels like home."

The clubs run weekly, fortnightly or monthly in different locations. Activities include cooking, sports and craft nights as well as trips out to the cinema or for a meal. There will be a planned timetable of activities each week and the children and young people are supported to take part and socialise.

There are a number of different clubs in the South West, these are listed below.

- > Bristol
- > Bath
- > South Gloucestershire
- > Cheltenham
- > Devizes
- > Trowbridge
- > Chippenham
- > Salisbury
- > Shepton Mallet
- > Nailsea
- > Frome
- > Yeovil
- > Bridgwater

I am interested in joining an out of school club

"It's the one part of the week I look forward to and it is also a place I can express my feelings freely and meet new kids just like myself. It is a place I can enjoy myself"

Children and young people can join one of our clubs if they:

- > are aged between 8 -18 years
- > have High Functioning Autism or Asperger Syndrome
- > are accessing few other play or leisure facilities
- > would benefit from a group environment.

Consideration will be given to the child's age and particular circumstances.

If you would like more information or are interested in joining one of our Out of School Clubs then please contact:

National Autistic Society
Anderson School
Rookery Lane
Pilning
Bristol
BS35 4JN

Tel: 01454 632532
Email: OOSC@nas.org.uk