



Adult Autism Service in North East Lincolnshire

This leaflet gives information about Autism with no associated Learning Disability (LD) and the Adult Autism Service within North East Lincolnshire (NEL). If you are unsure about anything within this leaflet, please ask a member of staff.



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What is Autism (no-LD)?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people communicate and interact with the world. There are approximately 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK.

Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people. If you are autistic, you are autistic for life; autism is not an illness or disease and cannot be 'cured'. Often people feel being autistic is a fundamental aspect of their identity.

Autism is a spectrum condition. All autistic people share certain difficulties, but being autistic will affect them in different ways. Some autistic people also have Learning Disabilities (LD), Mental Health issues or other conditions meaning that people need different levels of support. All people on the autism spectrum learn and develop. With the right sort of support, all can be helped to live a more fulfilling life of their own choosing. (Source NAS www.autism.org.uk)

The Adult Autism Service in NEL is for people with Autism who do not have a Learning Disability. If you have a Learning Disability and Autism, you will be supported by the Adult Learning Disability Services (ALDS).

The different words used to describe people with Autism can be confusing. Other words you may have heard include High Functioning Autism, Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), Childhood Autism, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Asperger Syndrome (Asperger's), which is another form of Autism. Some of these words are historical and are not used anymore, and some people still use them. In this leaflet, we use Autism to represent all of these words.

The difficulties commonly experienced by adults with Autism fall into three main areas:

- **Social Interaction**
- **Communication**
- **Restrictive, repetitive behaviour**

You must have been experiencing these difficulties since childhood in order to meet the threshold for a diagnosis of Autism.

What does the Adult Autism Service (AAS) in North East Lincolnshire offer?

The AAS is able to offer a full range of services for Adults with Autism, including specialist Autism Diagnostic Assessment for adults who, for a variety of reasons, may not have been diagnosed as a child, and support to enable adults with autism to live the life they want.

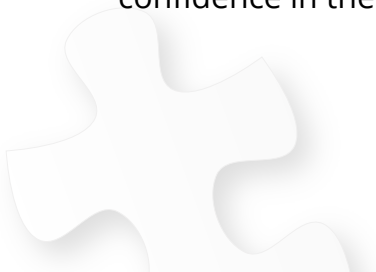
The support we provide for adults with Autism is person-centred and needs-led. Generally, this means that you decide what support you would like from us and you can access it whenever you need it. We work as a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT), which makes it easier for us to work together in providing the support you need. MDT working also means that your initial needs assessment and subsequent reviews within our service involve several people at the same time.

We know that being in a room with several people and meeting people for the first time, in a place you probably haven't been to before, can be extremely anxiety provoking, but we have found that it gives you the best chance of finding out about how our services work and the experience is never as bad as you think it might be – the thought of it is the worst bit! However, being a person-centred service also means that if you would prefer there to be less people in the room, we will ask some of the people to leave – it's not a problem at all.

The following is a summary of the services offered by the Adult Autism Service in NEL:

- **Diagnostic Assessment** – we offer specialist Adult Autism Diagnostic Assessments following NICE Guidance, which means that there are a number of professionals involved in diagnosing Autism. The Assessment process can be quite daunting as it involves several visits to come and see different people, so we try and make this easier by letting you know what's happening next and how long it is going to take.
- **Support with Diagnosis** – if you've recently received a diagnosis of Autism, we can help you to understand what this means for you and others around you. Sometimes a diagnosis of Autism in adulthood makes a lot of sense and just knowing this is helpful for people. For others, it can turn their whole life upside down and make them question everything they've previously known. For these people, we offer 1:1 support with the same person on a regular basis until they feel like they understand what their Autism diagnosis means for them and their life going forward.

- **Emotional Support** – we offer individual talking therapy for people with Mental Health problems associated with their Autism and where their Autism may make it difficult for them to access mainstream Mental Health Services. This includes Anxiety, Depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and simple Phobias where your social anxiety or the way you process information means that you need us to adapt therapy to meet your needs.
- **Support with Medication** – we have Consultant Psychiatrists and Mental Health Practitioners working in the Adult Autism Service so that they can provide you with information about any medication that may help to alleviate your Anxiety or associated Mental Health issues. They can also prescribe and monitor medication to make sure that you receive the right treatment for the difficulties you are experiencing.
- **Support to Access Local Services** – Autism Support Workers can help you to access local services, including Employment Services, Benefits Support, Health Services and other mainstream services until you are confident to access these services on your own.
- **Walk the Walk** – this is what we call the practical 1:1 support to help you to manage your anxiety in social situations and in the community. As well as talking about different coping strategies, an Autism Support Worker will literally ‘walk-the-walk’ with you too to help you to put into practice the coping strategies you find helpful and to build your confidence in the situations that you find difficult.



- **Support the Supporters** – often the people close to you need some support to understand how your Autism affects your relationship with them. This is why we offer information and advice for those who are supporting you if they would like it. This includes: family members, partners, and even employers to help them to make the reasonable adjustments you need at work.
- **Special Interest Groups** – the people who use our services have told us that they want to be able to meet like-minded people who share the same interests and passions. This has led us to develop a variety of social groups at Queen Street Centre where you can do just that. Groups set up so far include a Games Group, YuGiOh! and a Film Club. We are happy to support anyone with a special interest to set up a group so they can share this with others.
- **Adult Autism Forums (AAF) and Autism Cafés** – these are available to anyone with Autism to attend, whether or not they are in receipt of any other services from the Adult Autism Service. The Forums are used to discuss issues relevant to people with Autism and the Cafés are themed around people's special interests. The AAF Members decide the topics and themes each year. You can attend one, some, or all of the Forums and Cafés and you can bring anyone you want with you for support, although parents are generally not allowed on a regular basis because the Forums and Cafés are for you, not them!

We are interested in growing and developing the Adult Autism Service to meet the needs of the people who use it, so welcome any ideas, suggestions and feedback from you.

Further Information

There are lots of helpful resources available online which could be useful in developing a better understanding of Autism for you and those around you.


We recommend that you visit the National Autistic Society's website www.autism.org.uk, which has lots of useful information about Autism, including the Autism Services Directory. *'The Autism Services Directory is the UK's most comprehensive directory of services and support for autistic people, their families, and people who work with them'*. (See www.autism.org.uk)


If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact us. Our Contact details are on the back page of this leaflet.


We have an open referral process

Anyone (individuals, family, friends, professionals) can refer to the service by completing a referral form and returning it to the Adult Autism Service using the contact details on the back page.



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