

TOTAL TOPICS



TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Autism

AUTISM

What is it?

Autism is a lifelong neurodivergence that affects how people experience and interact with the world. For a diagnosis, individuals with autism must show differences in thinking, feeling, and communicating compared to non-autistic people.



Only

30%

of autistic people are in any type of employment.



Only

26%

of autistic pupils feel happy at school.



8/10

of autistic people experience mental health problems.



UK Statistics



More than **1 in 100 people** are autistic and there are at least **700,000 autistic adults and children** in the UK. These numbers are not the same as the number of people with an autism diagnosis. They are based on research about the true figure, which is likely to be higher. More research is needed to know for sure.

AUTISM

The Spectrum

Autism is understood as a spectrum, meaning each autistic person has a unique combination of characteristics, strengths, and challenges. The visibility of these characteristics can vary greatly between individuals and change over time or in different situations. It's crucial not to make assumptions about an autistic person's skills, abilities, or support needs.

"**Stories from the Spectrum**" is a series where individuals with autism and their families share their experiences of life on the autism spectrum. These stories highlight diverse and unique perspectives, covering a range of topics from self-advocacy and creativity to challenges and triumphs.

Read "Stories from the Spectrum" [here](#).

Characteristics of Autism

Communication: Individuals with autism may have different communication styles and preferences compared to non-autistic people, including varied use of words, tone, and body language. Some may have limited or no speech and use alternative methods like writing, sign language, gestures, sounds, or AAC devices to communicate.

Behaviours and interests: Restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests (RRBIs) must affect everyday functioning for an autism diagnosis. Many autistic individuals view these behaviors positively, as ways to self-regulate and stay calm. RRBI examples include focused interests, repeated movements, and a preference for order and routine.

Sensory Processing: Individuals with autism can have varying sensitivities to sensory inputs like sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, as well as balance, spatial awareness and internal states. Sensitivity levels can differ by type of input and situation. These sensory processing differences are considered part of restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests (RRBIs) during diagnosis due to the reactions they cause.

AUTISM

Diagnosis

To diagnose autism, a specialist team must confirm that an individual shows lifelong differences in communication, behaviors, and interests compared to non-autistic people. These core characteristics are essential for an autism diagnosis.



Find out more about diagnosis of autism [here](#).



World Autism Acceptance Month 2025, observed throughout **April**, aims to promote acceptance, raise awareness, and create a supportive society for individuals with autism. This year's theme, "**Celebrate Differences**," is about recognising and valuing the unique qualities of each person.

The month kicks off with **World Autism Awareness Day** on **April 2nd** and includes various events and activities to promote understanding and inclusion.

The focus is on moving beyond awareness to active acceptance, ensuring that people with autism are supported, understood, and empowered in all areas of life. Whether at home, school, or work, everyone is encouraged to participate and make a positive impact.



Find out how you can get involved with World Autism Acceptance Month [here](#).



Health and wellbeing are crucial for individuals with autism, encompassing both physical and mental health. Individuals with autism often face unique challenges in accessing healthcare and may have higher rates of co-occurring conditions like anxiety and depression.

Physical Health

Co-occurring conditions: Autism often occurs with other conditions such as epilepsy and sleep disorders.

Sensory sensitivities can lead to problems with eating, sleeping, and other daily activities, impacting physical health.

Access to Healthcare: Individuals with autism may experience barriers to healthcare access, requiring tailored support and understanding from healthcare providers.

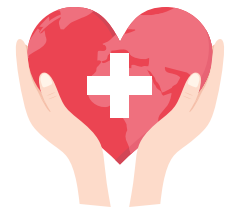
Individuals with autism should be encouraged to advocate for their health needs and communicate openly with healthcare providers. Connecting with local autism organisations can provide valuable resources and support networks.

Mental Health

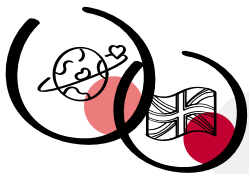
Co-occurring Conditions: Many individuals with autism have co-occurring mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression due to social communication difficulties and sensory overload which can affect the ability to form and maintain relationships.

Support and Resources: Access to mental health support, including therapy and counselling, is essential. Resources like the National Autistic Society provide guidance on mental wellbeing.

Find out more about mental health and autism here.



EDI & British Values



Achieving equality and inclusion for individuals with autism involves addressing various systemic barriers and ensuring fair access to opportunities and resources.

Gender Differences: Autism is about three times more prevalent in males than females and this disparity is thought to partly be due to diagnosis biases and the way autism presents in females.

Gender Diversity: People who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth are three to six times more likely to have autism compared to cisgender individuals. This includes identities such as transgender, non-binary, and gender fluid.

Autism documentaries such as "Inside our Autistic Minds" and "Our Family and Autism" play a crucial role in raising awareness and understanding of autism by providing valuable insights into the diverse experiences, challenges and strengths associated with autism. These documentaries help to dispel myths, promote acceptance and contribute to a more inclusive and informed society.

Christine McGuinness, a well-known TV personality, was diagnosed with autism in her early thirties after recognising her own traits in her children.

In 2023, she featured in the BBC documentary "**Christine McGuinness: Unmasking My Autism**," which explored her personal experiences and highlighted the challenges faced by autistic women and girls. The documentary emphasised the concept of **masking**, where autistic individuals suppress their natural behaviours to fit in socially, often at a significant emotional cost.



Safeguarding & Prevent

Safeguarding individuals with autism presents several challenges. Communication barriers can make it difficult for them to report abuse, while traits such as repetitive behaviours or social withdrawal are sometimes misinterpreted as signs of abuse, neglect or even radicalisation. Additionally, individuals with autism may be more vulnerable to abuse or radicalisation due to their reliance on caregivers, difficulties in understanding social cues and desire for acceptance.



Find out more about safeguarding at TTP here and how you can report a concern.

Resources and support for safeguarding include guidelines and protocols from organisations like The National Autistic Society, which provide essential resources for effective safeguarding and Autism Bedfordshire who offer anti-radicalisation policies and strategies tailored to the needs of individuals with autism. Building a supportive community around autistic individuals, including family, friends, and professionals, is essential. Collaborative efforts with local authorities, healthcare providers, and community organisations further enhance safeguarding measures.

AUTISM

Digital



Digital technology has had a significant impact on the lives of individuals with autism, offering both opportunities and challenges. Here are some key points:

Challenges

- Screen Time Concerns:** Excessive screen time, especially in young children, can lead to what some researchers term "virtual autism," where developmental delays are linked to high levels of screen exposure.
- Accessibility and Training:** There is a need for better accessibility and training for educators and caregivers to effectively use these digital tools.
- Sensory Overload:** Some digital environments can be overwhelming due to bright lights, loud sounds, or complex interfaces, which can be challenging for individuals with sensory sensitivities.

Opportunities

- Communication Tools:** Apps and devices designed to aid communication, such as speech-generating devices and apps like Proloquo2Go, help non-verbal individuals with autism express themselves more effectively.
- Educational Support:** Digital platforms provide tailored educational content that can be adjusted to suit the learning pace and style of students with autism.
- Social Skills Development:** Virtual reality (VR) environments and social skills training apps can help individuals with autism practice social interactions in a controlled, safe setting.
- Routine and Structure:** Apps that help with scheduling and task management can provide the structure and predictability that many individuals with autism find comforting.

It's important to strike a balance between leveraging the benefits of digital technology and mitigating its risks. Ensuring that screen time is purposeful and supplemented with real-world interactions is crucial for healthy development.





Stephen Lawrence Day

Stephen Lawrence Day 2025 will be celebrated on **22nd April 2025**, and commemorates the life of Stephen Lawrence, an 18-year-old black teenager who was murdered in a racially motivated attack in 1993. The day aims to honour his legacy by promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and by inspiring positive change in society.



The Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation organises various events and activities to raise awareness about racial injustice and to support marginalised communities. The day serves as a reminder of the ongoing fight against racism and the importance of creating a fairer, more inclusive society.

[Find out more about Stephen Lawrence Day here.](#)

APRIL 2025

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1 April Fools Day 	2 World Autism Awareness Day 	3	4 Walk to Work Day 	5	6
7 World Health Day 	8	9	10 National Siblings Day 	11 World Parkinson's Day 	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 Good Friday 	19	20 Easter Sunday
21 Easter Monday 	22 Stephen Lawrence Day 	23 St George's Day 	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	Stress Awareness Month Allergy Awareness Week (22nd - 28th)			