



Working in the Hospitality Industry

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Introduction



We believe the UK has an ‘undiscovered workforce’ of motivated and talented autistic people, who may never have been employed. Being in meaningful employment can provide a person with self-worth, engagement and purpose. Being in the right role and receiving the right support allows people to demonstrate their skills and be appropriately appreciated.

The recruitment process includes many potential challenges for autistic people, such as unwritten rules, hypothetical questions, group activities and panel interviews.

Our employment experts have produced this workbook to provide clear guidance and strategies that may help autistic people to find a job in the hospitality industry. Every autistic person is an individual, so not all of this information will be useful for everyone.

We have included quotes with the perspectives of autistic people throughout the book, to provide examples and experiences of other autistic jobseekers.

Preferred language to describe autism

The National Autistic Society operates on the principle of respect for diversity. It is important that people use the language and style of delivery that is comfortable for them; however there are some terms and practices that are likely to cause offence. In addition, language needs to be current and up to date, avoiding outdated terms and references.

The language we use is important because it embodies, and can therefore help change, attitudes towards autism. Consider using the following terms:

- is autistic
- is on the autism spectrum
- autism is a condition
- autism is a difference.

“I disclose my autism at the point of [job] application to be fully transparent and challenge your preconceptions about autism. My CV speaks for itself and I am more than my autism diagnosis. Get to know me and how I will be the best employee for you, and you will learn more about what autistic people can bring to your organisation. Please don’t think that I am disclosing in order to receive special treatment; a few reasonable adjustments can go a long way to help me succeed.”

Autistic adult, Essential Autism Handbook

What is autism?

Autism is a spectrum condition. All autistic people can share differences and difficulties, but autism will impact them in different ways.

A diagnosis of autism is made through a process of observation and in-depth interviews, often in a variety of settings. To be diagnosed on the autism spectrum, a person must show difficulties in social interaction/communication and may have rigid or repetitive interests. They may also have sensory processing differences.

A diagnosis does not encompass what it is to be autistic and to experience the world as an autistic person. Autistic perspectives can lead to unique ways of seeing the world, and individual talents and abilities. Some key difficulties associated with autism may be:

Social interaction

Difficulties interacting, for example, not sharing with others, not showing typical emotional responses, seeming lack of interest in others.

Social communication

Difficulties initiating and sustaining conversations, literal interpretation of language.

Restricted interests

Adherence to routines, repetitive physical mannerisms, preoccupations with parts of objects, highly focused or intense range of interests.

Sensory differences

Appearing to experience over- or under-sensitivity to external and internal sensations eg sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, balance and body awareness. People on the autism spectrum experience sensory information differently.



Working in hospitality



“Being autistic is something I bring to a role. It’s a different perspective. It’s a different way of working. It’s a commitment to working through any challenge.”

Autistic adult, Essential Autism Handbook

Role	Duties	Potential skills required
Porter/ Concierge	Collect and deliver guest luggage Be aware of hotel facilities and service Collect and deliver messages and goods for guests Use any relevant computer operating systems	Commitment to delivering a high level of customer service Communication skills – active listening, clarity, friendliness, open-mindedness Creating and keeping deadlines Goal setting and meeting goals
Housekeeping	Change linens Dust and polish furniture Clean floors and carpets Make beds Clean bathrooms	Decision making Managing appointments Making schedules Working within a team Personal care/high grooming standards
Waiting staff	Take orders for food and beverages Serve food and beverages to guests	High standard of cleanliness Positive and hard-working attitude Adaption to different sensory environments
Receptionist	Knowledge of hotel rates, packages, promotions and products Maximise and promote hotel services and facilities Liaise with management and staff to inform guest experience Knowledge of any relevant computer operating systems	Competent IT proficiency Communicate while under stress and demand from multiple guests

Routes into employment

It is common for many people starting work in the hospitality industry to gain experience by starting in an entry-level role and working their way up. There are many different part- and full-time positions available that require minimal experience but require you to have a strong desire to learn and commit to the role.

Other key routes into the hospitality industry include NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) and apprenticeships. An apprenticeship lets you combine paid employment with training for specific hospitality jobs, so you can start a career without having to study full-time. You will also work towards a vocational qualification like an NVQ.

Applying for jobs

The hospitality industry has a wide variety of jobs that require lots of different skills. When you are thinking about the sort of job you would like, it may be important to consider:

- location – will you be expected to work across a number of different sites?
- working hours – what are the shift patterns and will they vary?
- day-to-day duties – will you be expected to cover for other roles in emergencies? eg staff illness
- working environment – will this change depending on the season/event (eg will you have outdoor restaurant service in the summer months)?
- entry requirements – do you need any qualifications, or will you have to complete any on-the-job training?
- salary – is this supplemented with tips or overtime payments?

Where and how to look for jobs

There are a number of different places to look for jobs and this will change depending on the type of job you are looking for.

- Online – many jobs are now posted online, either on job searching websites or on the company website. If you have a certain company or role you would like, try searching for ‘COMPANY NAME + careers’ or ‘ROLE TITLE + jobs’. You can also type ‘hospitality industry jobs + LOCATION’ into a search engine to look at different options.
- Word of mouth – you might find out about a job from a friend or family member who knows of a role where they work.
- Adverts in windows – these are becoming less common but for some jobs in smaller hotels, you may see a poster or a board outside advertising roles. Normally you will need to go inside to give them your CV and covering letter or ask for an application form.



Interviews

Most interviews take place in a quiet office with just you and one or two people from the company. But interviews can be in different formats or settings such as public cafes.

The face-to-face interview process may be a barrier for many. Remember that you can request reasonable adjustments at interview if you disclose that you are autistic – this is your right under the *Equality Act*. There are a number of reasonable adjustments that may be helpful for you such as:

- being provided with additional information pre interview eg maps, photos, details of tasks
- seeing the interview questions in advance
- being asked specific questions about your past experience instead of hypothetical ones (eg “Tell me a time you worked in a team”, not “Imagine working in a team – what would you do?”)
- prompting you and allowing extra time to answer
- telling you if you are giving too much information
- not negatively assessing body language or eye contact
- allowing you to take in a “translator” who can rephrase unclear questions or prompt for more information
- providing work trials or interviews based on portfolios instead of face-to-face questions
- ensuring that the interview room meets your sensory needs (eg having some of the lights off, booking a quiet room)
- having extra time for written elements or assessments.



Disclosure

It is always a personal decision whether or not you choose to share your autism diagnosis with your employer, but if you do, it protects you under the *Equality Act* and means that your employer has a legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustments for you.

When you’re planning the adjustments you would like, consider whether they are reasonable. For example, if you are working in a hotel restaurant, requesting the same shifts every week to manage a routine may be reasonable. However, working from home one day a week would not be reasonable as the role is reliant on you being on the premises.

If you choose not to disclose that you are autistic, it is important to consider that your employer will not have the same obligation to make reasonable adjustments for you and instead the focus may be that you need to change your behaviours.

If you choose to disclose, discuss with your employer (usually your line manager and/or HR department):

WHAT you do and don’t want your colleagues to know

For example, it may not be useful to share information about medications you may be taking to help manage any anxiety symptoms, but it may be helpful to your colleagues and managers to know that you need five minute breaks at regular intervals.

WHO will be told

It’s important to consider telling staff you communicate regularly with, but it may not be important to tell customers.

HOW they will be told and who will do the telling

For example, people could be told in a group, one to one, verbally, by email, or by using a disclosure document. How people are told will largely depend on how comfortable you are at communicating the information.

It may be helpful for you and your employer to keep a written record of what you have agreed about confidentiality and the sharing of information about your diagnosis.

Workplace expectations

“When my [employer] asks how I am doing, I used to answer things like ‘I have a headache’ or ‘I’m okay’... now I tell him three things I’m working on and wait if he has further questions. You see, I have so many things I could tell, but I don’t know what he wants, so it all wants to come out at the same time, which results in silence.”

Autistic adult, Essential Autism Handbook

When you are employed, you have a contract of work with your employer. There are expectations on you as an employee in order that the business can function well and deliver the service required. There are also expectations you can have of your employer, to ensure you are supported and informed within your role.

Some key expectations are for you to:

- be punctual
- be polite and courteous
- adhere to your organisation’s policies and procedures
- complete work to a set standard
- complete work on time
- dress according to the organisation’s dress code if there is one, and be clean and well presented
- keep social talk mostly to break-times and lunchtimes
- not to use your mobile phone or the internet unless you are on a break.

Some key expectations are for your employer to:

- pay you on time
- provide you with regular meetings with your supervisor or manager
- provide you with feedback and guidance from your supervisor or manager
- enable you to raise concerns or queries with your supervisor or manager
- allocate you holiday leave
- make the reasonable adjustments you need, if you have disclosed your condition
- give you regular breaks and a lunchtime while you are working.



Safety

Some jobs in the hospitality industry may involve starting or finishing shifts late at night or early in the morning (such as bar work or restaurant service). Others may also require you to work for periods on your own (housekeeping, reception staff, food delivery). Many roles require a considerable amount of contact with customers, the majority of whom are likely to be strangers.

Your employer should have processes in place to support employees' safety, but it is also important to be aware of any additional vulnerabilities you may have. These could include:

- difficulty accurately interpreting facial expressions and intentions, eg a customer asking if you live locally might be trying to find out if you are familiar with the area, or might be trying to find out more personal information about you
- seeking out quiet, less populated places in order to avoid sensory overload and being more vulnerable than when in a group or with a trusted friend
- being overwhelmed with information and taking longer to process if in a situation that is potentially harmful
- understanding other people's difficulties in accepting difference and potential misinterpretation of communication.

If you make your employer aware of your concerns, they may be able to provide reasonable adaptations to support you. This could include assigning you shift patterns at quieter periods or providing you with an allocated quiet space that is secure.

Self-advocacy

Being able to explain what is helpful and not helpful for you is a really useful skill to develop.

There may be times when you will need to ask for an adjustment to be able to effectively do your job, or to be able to manage your feelings so that you are productive.

For example you may need:

- a quieter working environment
- adjusted working hours or duties
- written instructions.

There may also be times when a situation becomes intolerable for you, meaning that you aren't able to effectively manage your anxiety and remain well – in these situations it is helpful for you to be able to communicate clear boundaries to your employers and colleagues. For example, you may not be able to:

- work overtime
- attend a work social occasion
- complete someone else's work.

Understanding how the workplace impacts on your autism, and how to communicate your strengths and difficulties, is a good start to being able to effectively self-advocate.

Consider using a 'script' and write down what you need to say. You could do this by using email or text. It is important to be clear, confident and respectful.



Workplace skills



“People with autism have some very valuable skills which can be applied in the workplace. They might have very good attention to detail, or be really good at sticking to routines and timetables. Therefore, they are likely to be very punctual and reliable. Everyone has different skills but there will always be something.”

Autistic jobseeker

The hospitality industry has many roles that require different skills. While some positions need employees to have good communication skills and the ability to work in stressful, busy situations, there are other roles that may be located in lower-arousal environments.

Key hospitality industry skills:

- good communication
- ability to concentrate under stress
- ability to work in noisy, busy areas
- working at a fast pace in food service areas
- customer service
- ability to interact with the public
- carrying out duties in a timely manner
- teamwork
- flexibility
- enthusiasm.

Organisation

Organisation is very important to many roles in the hospitality industry. Services are often dependent on customer satisfaction to build a good reputation and encourage repeat business. This requires staff to have the ability to effectively organise and plan so that things run smoothly and effectively.

Skills include:

- making decisions and judgements on the approach to take – eg your manner and attitude towards customers

- prioritising effectively – eg managing service for several different customers at once
- following procedures accurately – eg keeping health and safety, hygiene and your employer's ethos the focus of your delivery
- maintaining attention – eg remembering a customer's order
- multi-tasking – eg booking in a new customer, managing a busy phone-line and dealing with guests checking out
- finding the balance between accuracy and efficiency – knowing when a task is 'good enough' (particularly challenging for perfectionists) – eg not being so attentive to one customer that others become unhappy as they have to wait a long time for service
- time management – eg completing minor tasks when you have less energy, for example at the end of the day
- requesting assistance when required eg asking a colleague to assist you on reception while you deal with a complicated enquiry from a guest.

“Being autistic is something I bring to a role. It's a different perspective. It's a different way of working. It's a commitment to working through any challenge.”

Autistic adult, *Essential Autism Handbook*

Communication

Some people do a lot more of their communicating via body language and tone of voice than through their words. This may not be the case for others, who communicate directly through the words they use. Some people may also have broad patterns of how they expect to be communicated with based on how the general population communicates. This does not mean that you have to adapt your communication to be this way if it is not helpful for you – however, if you don't, you may need to explain to interviewers, colleagues and managers why and how it is different for you. This is a positive opportunity to explain how you best listen to other people's communication, and what this looks like for you.

You will build understanding relationships and develop communication with your work colleagues over time, however if you work with customers, they may have greater expectations of your communication as it is a short-term relationship. It is important to be aware of this so that you can seek support from your colleagues or manager if misunderstandings do occur.

Some common non-autistic communication expectations include:

- eye contact (eye contact is often taken as a sign of trustworthiness and interest)
- adjusting tone of voice to fit the situation (eg people often assume that a monotone voice is a sign of boredom)
- using body language to show meaning and interest (eg being turned towards someone to show you are listening)
- engaging in reciprocal conversation and small talk, such as about the weather or if someone is looking forward to their day. There may be an expectation of 'equality', meaning that someone will expect you to ask them about their interests as much as they ask you about yours.

Listening is an important aspect of communication. It tells someone that you think what they are saying is important, and the person can feel appreciated and respected.

Some ways that you can communicate you are listening are:

- nodding
- eye contact/looking at their face
- asking questions
- not interrupting or changing the subject
- leaning towards the person
- saying "mmm", "OK", "right", "yeah" etc. (these may be useful if you are on the telephone).

Small talk may appear to be boring or without purpose. However, it can play a very important part in social interaction and make some customers feel at ease and valued. It:

- may be a good way to start a conversation
- may help to maintain social relationships
- indicates friendliness
- can be a polite and safe way of talking to someone you don't know very well
- may lead into other conversations.

When communicating, it is important that information is clear and that it is understood. If you are following instructions, make sure that you pay attention and understand all the steps you need to take. This should reduce confusion and anxiety and make sure that you and your team work more effectively. You will feel that you have done a good, positive job.

Here are some tips to help you when you are giving or receiving information:

- stop what you are doing – this will help you concentrate on what is being said
- consider volume – if someone talks quietly, or there is a lot of background noise and you haven't heard what they are saying, you can ask them to repeat themselves
- clarify what has been requested of you if instructions are unclear – eg saying "so, you would like me to... [state your understanding of the instructions]"
- checklists can be useful as you can write out the steps in the task to make sure you follow instructions accurately. You can always show the list to the person who gave you instructions.



Starting and finishing conversations

As an example, Sam sees a few of the other bar staff in the back office during their break. One waves to him to come over. As Sam walks up, he hears them talking about the new payment system, complaining that it is too difficult to use. Sam finds it very easy to use. As he approaches, they all say "Hi". There is a pause in the conversation.

Things Sam could say to get involved in the conversation:

- "Are you talking about the new payment system?"
- "How are you finding it?"
- "I don't find it too difficult." (it is best that Sam does not say he finds it really easy as this may offend his colleagues)
- "I also found it hard at first but am used to it now."
- "I could help you to use it."

- Change the subject eg "Are you going to the Christmas party?" or "Did you get up to anything last night?"

After a few minutes of chatting, Sam looks at his watch and realises he is due to start serving again in five minutes. He always likes to be ready at least five minutes before he starts work.

Things Sam could say to excuse himself from the conversation:

- "It was nice talking to you, see you later."
- "I'd better get going, got loads to do today!"
- "Sorry, but I've got to get going – maybe we can have lunch together?"
- "I'm really busy today, let's talk another time"
- "Right, I'm back to the bar but let's catch up soon."
- "I start work in five minutes – I better get going! Speak to you soon."

Teamwork

Many jobs in the hospitality industry require you to function as part of a team. Good relationships with colleagues are essential. People who are able to work as part of a team are always valued by employers and appreciated by colleagues. It is important for you to think about how you can establish and maintain good working relationships with your colleagues and managers.

These tips may support you to be a good member of a team:

- be prepared to help colleagues when asked, however if the task is something you are not trained to do, or would find difficult, then it is okay to say you won't be able to help and explain why eg saying "I'm sorry, I can't help because [give reason]"
- if you need help, politely ask colleagues for assistance and thank them afterwards
- make allowances for colleagues having 'off days' when they might make mistakes or be short-tempered (remember everyone has days like this!)
- show colleagues that you are listening by stopping what you are doing, responding to their conversation or making eye contact (if you feel comfortable to)
- avoid gossiping about colleagues even if others do so
- be friendly and try to engage in small talk or social activities if it will not cause you anxiety or stress
- offer informal help such as making drinks during break times.

Relationships in the workplace

Supportive working relationships can make a big positive difference to your wellbeing in work.

You may experience relationships with:

- customers
- colleagues
 - in your immediate team
 - in your wider team, department and company
- senior manager
- reception staff
- security staff
- cleaning/maintenance staff
- suppliers/contractors
- HR staff
- union representatives.

Put effort into communicating effectively with your manager and talking with them so that they are able to understand you better and get to know you. With a trusted manager, you can explain what you find difficult. The relationship with a manager is different to that of a colleague or friend. They may be very friendly, but there will still be occasions when they need to advise and guide you when things go wrong with your work or relationships in work as they have a duty to support all of their employees to be safe and well in work.

You may benefit from developing friendships with your colleagues at work that are based on shared interests such as a hobby, children, pets, music, a shared ideology or approach to life.

You may feel you need to 'mask' some of your natural way of being in order to mix and fit in with people at work. It is important to remember that if this is causing you to feel anxious or unwell (because you may be exhausted from the effort) then consider:

- ways to increase your colleagues' or managers' understanding of your needs
- if you can remove the expectation to mask
- asking for formal adjustments in the workplace eg flexibility around dress code.

Sensory needs

Sensory differences are individual to every person. The different sensory systems are:

- sight (visual)
- sound (auditory)
- touch (tactile)
- taste (gustatory)
- smell (olfactory)
- balance (vestibular)
- body awareness (proprioception)
- inside body (interoception).

Processing sensory information can result in certain skills, such as:

- a good eye for detail
- spotting patterns where others might not
- accuracy and ability to focus intently
- scientific talent
- skills in engineering
- skills with written words, such as proofreading
- musical and artistic talent
- interest and attention.

When there is too much information, we can all feel overwhelmed and find it hard to function. You may find it particularly difficult to process the sensory world, even if the environment is not particularly busy. Calm or quiet environments may still be overloading, particularly if you are hyper-sensitive to sensory stimuli.

Sensory processing differences may impact your levels of interest and attention and can result in a hyper-focus toward pleasurable and interesting sensory experiences. You might find this focus gives you skills requiring an eye for detail, or in recognising complex patterns and arrangements.

It is important to be aware of the environment you will be working in so that you can support any sensory needs you may have. Environments may vary at different times (eg a bar may be very quiet in the afternoons, and busy and noisy with

people in the evenings), which could impact the shift patterns you request to work.

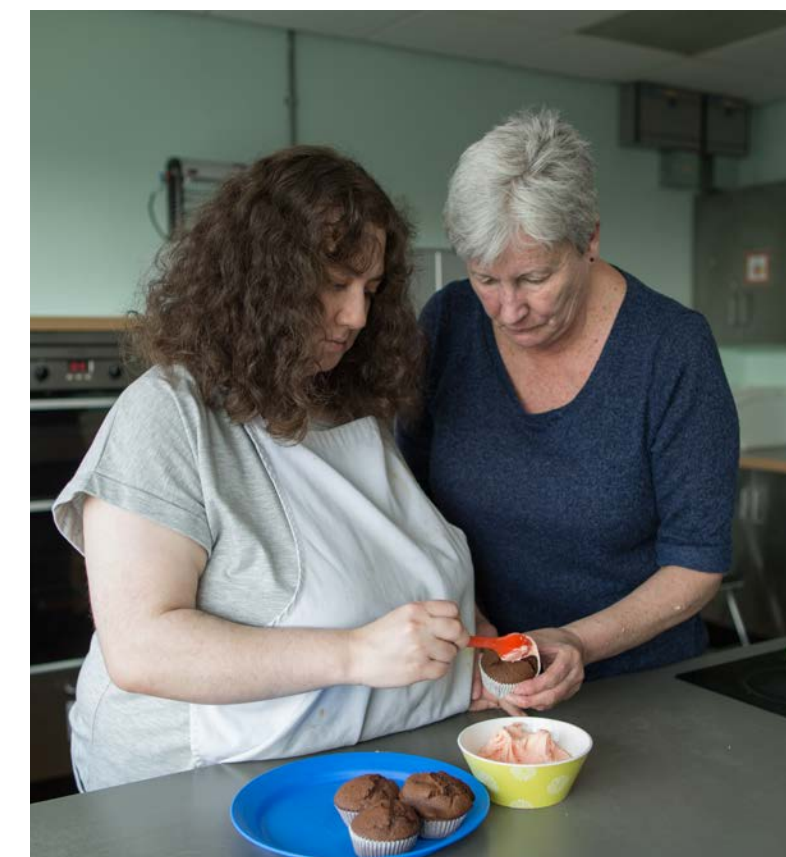
While many jobs within the hospitality industry may require you to be part of a busy, noisy environment, there are roles that may be more low-arousal. Consider what environments you function well in, and what may be more challenging for you to manage.

Potentially high-arousal/high stimulation environments:

- peak service times (lunch, evening, weekend) – restaurant, bar
- kitchen and food preparation space
- hotel front desk
- management.

Potentially low-arousal/low stimulation environments:

- hotel service roles (housekeeping, porter, concierge, room service etc.)
- off-peak service times (morning, early afternoon) – restaurant, bar.





Some roles may enable you to have more control over your environment. For example, if you have a housekeeping role, you may be able to adjust the lighting of the rooms when you are servicing them. Others may be more restricted (eg a restaurant may play music and have fixed lighting to create a specific mood). Even if there are restrictions, there may still be adaptations your employer can make to be aware of and support your sensory needs. Consider whether the following may be helpful:

- a screen across your desk could help block out visual distractions
- wearing ear plugs or playing soft music through headphones, or using noise-cancelling headphones to block out background noise
- placing photos or pictures on your desk or on your locker to help you find it easily

- communicating by email if you find this easier than by telephone or in person
- when meeting or talking with your manager or colleagues, asking to move to a quiet area so you can concentrate.

"Offer to turn one of the lights off, shut a door to make it quieter, that would be a huge help."

Autistic adult, Essential Autism Handbook

Anxiety and stress

"I try to manage my stress levels to reduce anxiety. I have found that being overstimulated or on sensory overload will push me into a heightened state of anxiety. I therefore try to prevent this from happening by engaging in relaxing activities every day and creating/maintaining better habits to reduce overstimulation and sensory overload. Although I doubt I will ever completely eliminate my anxiety, I am much calmer now than I was in the past."

Amy - aspfied.com quoted in Essential Autism Handbook

Many autistic people experience uneven levels of stress, anxiety and arousal. Anxiety can affect both the mind and the body and produce a range of symptoms.

Some characteristics associated with autism can cause some people to be particularly vulnerable to experiencing stress or anxiety. These include:

- understanding communication
- communicating with others
- emotions
- environment
- sensory differences
- other people
- planning and preparation
- new experiences, unfamiliar situations and unexpected change
- masking autism
- catastrophising.

You may find it difficult to be aware of your own anxiety levels, if you struggle to interpret or make sense of related signs in your body eg stomach churning, fast heart rate. You may also have difficulty describing any symptoms you experience.

The hospitality industry can be fast-paced and changeable. This means that there can be high demand on employees to manage unpredictable situations, and these need to be dealt with in a calm and professional manner, particularly if the role is customer-facing.

Consider how you may be able to cope with the following challenging situations:

- a customer complains that they have been waiting over 30 minutes for their food and says that they will post a complaint on social media about the restaurant service
- you are working behind the bar and run out of a barrel of beer in the middle of a busy service
- three people arrive at the hotel at the same time and need checking in, and you are the only one working at the front desk
- there is a lot of staff sickness and you don't know who will be working with you tomorrow or what jobs you may be asked to cover
- a local business has booked the restaurant for a work party and you have been asked to work two hours longer than your usual shift which means you will miss the last bus home.



It may also be useful for you to think about whether there are any particular forms of stress that you experience. This can help you to identify if different roles may be more appropriate for you, and how you can be supported to manage different stressors if they do occur.

Time stress

Includes worrying about being on time, about not having enough time to get a particular job done or how you're going to fit all the things you have to do into a limited time frame. Most hospitality roles require you to have good timekeeping. This may be because they need to make sure there are enough staff on shift to ensure smooth customer service.

Anticipatory stress

Describes stress that you experience concerning the future. Sometimes the anxiety comes from not knowing what to expect, and sometimes it comes from the thought of a specific event or situation itself eg not knowing how busy the restaurant service will be on a Saturday night.

Situational stress

May arise during events you have little control over. It could be a situation that causes you to feel uncomfortable, or that involves conflict or a loss of status in the eyes of your group eg someone complaining to you about the cleanliness of their bedroom in front of other guests.

Encounter stress

Revolves around people. You experience encounter stress when you worry about interacting with a certain person or group of people – you may not like them, may fear that they do not like you, or you might find that they are unpredictable eg a table of guests that are rowdy and disturbing other customers.

Support for anxiety and stress

- **Communication** – raise any difficulties or concerns with an appropriate person to reduce the burden of coping on your own.
- **Prevention** – consider if it is possible to make adjustments to your role or working practices such as working a different shift to avoid using public transport during the rush hour or replacing certain duties with others (responding to phone and email enquiries rather than face-to-face).
- **Preparation** – the provision of information in advance or opportunities to practise and learn about a situation may help to minimise anxiety eg an itinerary before a team meeting or additional training on areas of difficulty.
- **Relaxation** – strategies may include taking time away from the situation, using breathing techniques and muscle relaxation, exercise and healthy living, sensory stimulation such as calming smells, fabrics, coloured lights, gentle swaying and favourite familiar objects or activity.



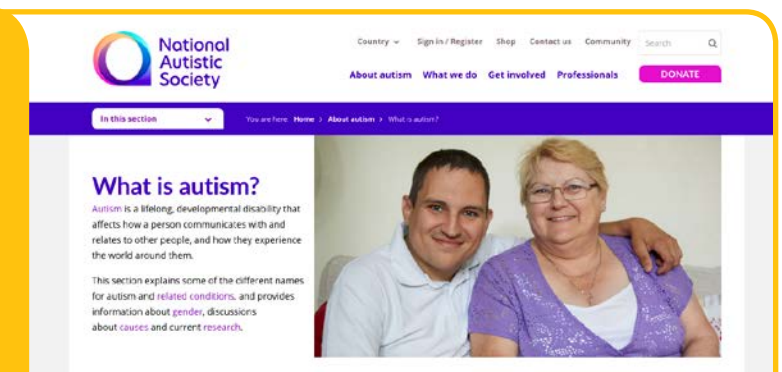
Further sources of support and information



The National Autistic Society's website has information on a wide variety of autism-related topics for autistic people, their parents and carers, as well as for autism professionals and anyone encountering autistic people during their working life. You can visit the website at: www.autism.org.uk.

You may find the following information pages particularly helpful:

- What is autism?
- Social skills for adolescents and adults
- What is Asperger syndrome?
- Anxiety in adults with an autism spectrum disorder.



Information for employers

You can find information for employers on what autism is, recruiting an autistic employee, and managing an autistic employee at:

 www.autism.org.uk/employers

You can also call our **Autism Helpline** on **0808 800 4104** and ask for the information sheets to be sent to you.

Online Community

The National Autistic Society's Online Community is a place for autistic people, carers, relatives and professionals to share their thoughts and experiences.

 Visit: <https://community.autism.org.uk/>

Employment training

We offer a variety of scheduled training events and courses run at your venue, tailored to your organisation's needs, a consultancy service that works with you to find creative solutions and a comprehensive range of online training modules.

Our **Employment Training Team** supports businesses to develop accessible employment opportunities for autistic applicants and retain the autistic talent they have in their organisation through raising awareness and implementing effective reasonable adjustments. All of our training and services are developed in close consultation with autistic people and 50% of our Employment Training Team have an autism diagnosis.

 Visit: www.autism.org.uk/professionals/training-consultancy/employment/meet-the-team

Brain in Hand

Brain in Hand gives personalised support when and where it's needed, via an app on your phone. A diary; notes and reminders to ensure you never forget what's important in your day; easy access to your best coping strategies to help reduce anxieties; and a traffic light system help you to monitor your anxiety or request additional help from the National Autistic Society if needed.

Visit: www.autism.org.uk/braininhand

Network Autism

A UK-wide community of autism professionals
with international reach:

- connect with professionals in similar situations
- share expertise and knowledge
- access useful resources
- develop and contribute professional skills.

Visit: <http://network.autism.org.uk/welcome>

You can join the specific group 'Managing employees with autism - training participants' to access ongoing support and materials.

Support services

The National Autistic Society's Autism Helpline provides impartial and confidential information, advice and support to autistic people and their families.

The helpline can:

- answer general questions about autism, which includes Asperger syndrome
- talk through options available to autistic people
- talk through support options available to family members
- provide information on local services and other relevant organisations.

The contact details for the helpline are:
Phone: **0808 800 4104** (open 10am-4pm,
Monday-Thursday, 9am-3pm Friday)
Email: **autismhelpline@nas.org.uk**

Visit: www.autism.org.uk/helpline

Notes

Notes

The National Autistic Society is here to transform lives, change attitudes and create a society that works for autistic people.

We transform lives by providing support, information and practical advice for the 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK, as well as their three million family members and carers. Since 1962, autistic people have turned to us at key moments or challenging times in their lives, be it getting a diagnosis, going to school or finding work.

We change attitudes by improving public understanding of autism and the difficulties many autistic people face. We also work closely with businesses, local authorities and government to help them provide more autism-friendly spaces, deliver better services and improve laws.

We have come a long way but it is not good enough. There is still so much to do to increase opportunities, reduce social isolation and build a brighter future for people on the spectrum. With your help, we can make it happen.

Find out more at:
www.autism.org.uk



**National
Autistic
Society**

The National Autistic Society is a charity registered in England and Wales (269425) and in Scotland (SC039427) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England (No.1205298), registered office 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG Job No: 3670_170119