

**AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION (ASC):  
AN INTRODUCTION**



INFORMATION SHEET

For your autistic employees to feel supported, you will need a neuro-inclusive work environment. When you prioritise neuro-inclusion, **your entire workforce will feel supported**, and you will experience enhanced employee retention, productivity, and well-being.

While there are many coping strategies that neurodivergent adults can put into place, neuro-inclusion is intended to be **a collective**, not a solo **effort**.

## What is ASC?

Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is a neurodifference **present from birth**. Although it can be diagnosed in childhood, **many** autistic individuals **reach adulthood before being diagnosed**. Every autistic individual is unique, but some common traits include:

- Misunderstandings and differences when communicating with peers (verbally and non-verbally). Many within the #actuallyautistic community have expressed a desire for others to learn how they communicate and double-check what's being said rather than make assumptions
- Over or under-sensitivity to sound, light, taste and smell; everything from the buzzing of fluorescent lights to other open office environment noises may interfere with productivity if not appropriately accommodated; certain stimuli can be a source of distraction, anxiety, and difficulties processing, communicating and reacting to a specific environment
- Understanding social cues and a tendency to interpret things literally

If someone in your organisation has informed you that they are autistic or their diagnosis is suspected, they must not be met with stigma or discrimination. Being aware of the support an autistic individual may require will empower them in the workplace, but you don't have to be an ASC expert.

This information sheet will help you understand how Lexxic can help autistic employees thrive in the workplace.



## What talents do autistic individuals bring?



- Logical and detailed ideas as well as independent learning and thinking
- Highly visual thinking and great long-term memory
- Honest and direct feedback and non-judgemental listening skills
- Persistence, accuracy, attention to detail and technical ability
- Can spend time concentrating for extended periods of time on tasks that appeal to them





## Supporting the individual How can you help?

### 1. Screening or a diagnostic assessment

If someone you work with suspects that they have ASC **but have not been formally diagnosed**: a screening or a diagnostic assessment is suitable.

**1a. Purpose of the screening assessment** - indicates whether the individual is demonstrating tendencies of ASC, but it does not provide a complete diagnosis.

The standard assessment process includes the following:

- **A pre-assessment questionnaire** - to gain a detailed understanding of an individual's strengths, early development, and educational history. In this part of the process, you'll explore social communication and interaction differences, sensory sensitivities, and managing change
- **A 1.5-hour assessment using an ASC screening tool** - to gather information on developmental history and challenges in several life and work areas
- **The creation of a report** - outlining strengths, challenges, and concludes whether the individual demonstrates tendencies of ASC. It does not provide a complete diagnosis
- This can help to inform the next suggested stage, the workplace needs assessment

**1b. A diagnostic assessment** - confirms whether an individual is autistic.

**This 2-hour diagnostic can also be helpful** if the individual requires adjustments for formal examinations (e.g., extra time).

The standard diagnostic assessment typically involves the following:

- The gathering of information **about the individual's background, childhood, and experiences**
- Several questionnaires - ideally completed **by a parent or close family member and a partner or friend** to obtain objective evidence for the assessment
- This assessment includes a clinical interview and questionnaire discussion with a practitioner. Practitioners vary but commonly include clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental health professionals.
- **The creation of a report** - that concludes whether the individual does or does not have ASC

### 2. A workplace needs assessment

**A workplace needs assessment** - builds upon the assessment process and provides bespoke advice of adjustments.

The standard assessment process includes the following:

- **A discussion with the individual** - to explore their work environment, daily tasks, strengths, challenges, and current adjustments
- **A discussion with a line manager or HR representative** - to understand the individual's job role, strengths, challenges, and current adjustments
- **The creation of a report** - that outlines the assessment's conclusions and supports the individual and employer in **implementing the recommendations**

**Adjustment recommendations can be implemented at little or no cost.**

Here are a few of the most standard adjustments for autistic employees:

- Specialist equipment e.g., noise cancelling headphones
- E-learning
- Line manager awareness training
- Assistive technology
- One-to-one coaching

### 3. One-to-one coaching

A coach will help individuals develop strategies that work for them. One-to-one coaching sessions **teach soft skills that could be applied to the workplace** and environment.

Individuals can **embed the skills learned in the session** into their work, which can help increase the following:

- Productivity
- Confidence at work
- Retention

Coaching topics that may be helpful for an autistic individual include:

- Communication – verbal and non-verbal
- Managing change
- Organising, planning, and prioritising
- Confidence at work

## 4. Co-coaching

Co-coaching **builds healthy working relationships**. It also brings together Autistic employees and their line manager in a joint coaching session with a psychologist.

Co-coaching is a helpful tool for developing the following:

- Mutual understanding
- Good communication
- Clear goals
- **A safe space** for honest conversations

Building healthy relationships increases collaboration and productivity while fostering a comfortable environment.



**As a team  
How can you help?**

## 5. ASC awareness training

ASC awareness training: **educates line managers and colleagues** working with autistic individuals. It also builds healthy working relationships, which will help individuals flourish.

Through this training, your staff will:

- Gain a **greater appreciation for autistic co-workers**
- **Increase their level of understanding** of ASC in the workplace

The aim of the training is the following:

- Learn to **challenge stereotypes** and misconceptions
- To learn about **the unique talents that autistic individuals bring** to the team
- To provide **advice about adjustments** that can be implemented to support colleagues

## 6. Implement practical solutions at work

Practical solutions that your team can put in place to support an autistic individual include:

- Ensuring one-to-one meetings and routines are **on the same day and at the same time** each week
- **Promoting structured, clear training or mentoring** to help the individual understand the expectations of the job and its unwritten rules
- Ensuring any **instructions are clear, concise, and avoid ambiguity**. For example, suppose the instructions are “send this version of the document to everyone”. In that case, the individual may take this literally and send it to the whole company at a date later than intended. Instead, the instruction should be specific, “send version 3 of this document to Kevin and Bryony by email before 5 pm today.”
- **Providing sensitive but direct feedback** when something goes wrong. Instead of implying that there may be a problem, provide honest and constructive feedback that explains what to do next time



### Why Lexxic?

We are proud leaders in empowering neurodiversity in the workplace. With over 15 years of experience, our in-house psychology team has **extensive expertise** across a wide range of professions.

We pride ourselves on working in partnership with employers. At Lexxic, we bring together business and employee needs so that **everyone**, regardless of job title or neurotype, **can thrive**.

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