

Information for Adults Following Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Section 6

Finances, Employment and Education

This pack has been put together from information available from specialist autism services, autistic people, and professionals working with autistic people.

Funding for this resource pack was kindly provided by the Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation, an operating name of the Lothian Health Board Endowment Fund, Scottish Charity Number SC007342

This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.

Managing Finances

Some autistic people may need help and support in order to live independently in the community.

The law entitles all people who have care needs to services appropriate to meet those needs. Most community care services are provided or arranged by local authorities through their social work departments.

If you think you may need support from your local social work department, you should contact them to request a community care assessment.

If you live in Edinburgh, the telephone number is 0131 200 2324

If you live in Midlothian, the telephone number is 0131 271 3900

If you live in East Lothian, the telephone number is 01875 824309

If you live in West Lothian, the telephone number is 01506 282252

If you are not able to make decisions about money then you may need someone to be appointed to manage your money on your behalf. The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act provides a range of options to help those who are or may become unable to look after their own financial affairs or welfare. Your social work department or lawyer will be able to explain this to you.

Will I be charged for the services I receive?

Local authorities may charge users for the services they receive (under the *Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968*). They should decide what services you need and then consider how these services are paid for. This means that your ability to pay should not influence the authority's decision over what to provide. People over the age of 65 years who require help with personal care cannot be charged.

What happens if I am not eligible?

If your local authority decides you are not eligible for services they should write to you and give reasons for their decision. They should provide you with details of other agencies that may be able to help you.

Managing Finances

Managing your finances

Some autistic people can have difficulty managing their finances.

You might have difficulty with...	You could try this....
Keeping track of important letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sort your mail so that you keep important documents and those requiring action separate from catalogues and fliers• Set aside a specific time each week to read your mail and complete the tasks required from important documents
Remembering to pay your bills on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have bills sent electronically or set up a direct debit
Spending too much in the supermarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan your weekly meals in advance and use this to create a shopping list so that you don't buy on impulse• Don't go food shopping when you are hungry• Use online supermarket shopping – you can repeat last week's shop easily

The national autistic society has helpful information on its website:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/managing-money.aspx>

Managing Finances

Making decisions

Once you reach adulthood at 18 the law presumes that you are able to make decisions for yourself, unless there is evidence that this is not the case. This means that legally no-one, including your parents or carers, has the right to make decisions on your behalf. Often, getting some help and advice from friends and family is a very good idea. This might be help with decisions about whether you should move house or change jobs. All adults need to talk through big decisions with other people sometimes.

For some autistic people, explaining what they need and want can be very difficult or even impossible. Even people who are extremely able and independent may find it hard to get professionals or people offering services to listen to their point of view.

If this is the case for you, your parents or another family member may need to speak up on your behalf. If you think your parents may not be listened to or may not have your best interests at heart then you might want to find an independent advocate. A citizen advocate is someone who gets to know you and is able to help you to say what you want or to say things for you.

Recommended Websites and Further Reading

Managing Finances

- **National Autistic Society**

Information about welfare rights, managing money, community care

<http://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/welfare-rights.aspx>

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/benefits-care/community-care/adults/scotland.aspx>

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/benefits-care/managing-money.aspx>

- **Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living**

Can help with all aspects of self-directed support (SDS)

Phone: 0131 475 2350

Website: www.lothiancil.org.uk/

- **Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance**

To find out about advocacy services in your area

Phone: 0131 524 1975

Website: <http://www.siaa.org.uk/>

Employment

A 2006 survey estimated that there were over 46,000 autistic people in Scotland, which has a total population of around 5.2 million. Many adults can and want to work; yet recent research by The National Autistic Society found that only 15% of autistic adults were in full-time employment.

Autistic people can experience a range of difficulties that make it difficult for them to find and keep a job. With the right support and training for both them and their employer and colleagues, Autistic people have much to offer in the work place. A combination of the right support and appropriate opportunities can make a real difference to many autistic people.

Why employ an autistic person?

Autistic people can make effective and highly valued employees. As is the case with all employees, it is important to match a person's particular skills to the requirements of the post. Autistic people can be very focused and have considerable skills in specific areas, which can include attention to detail, a methodical approach, strong research skills, good long term memory and excellent record-keeping.



What can your employers do to support you?

Your employer can make a number of **reasonable adjustments** to working practices to support you if you have a diagnosis of autism.

Some examples of supports and adjustments your employer can make include:

- Appointing a colleague to act as a mentor for you, to help with any issues that arise and if need be represent your views;
- Arranging general and specific autism awareness training for staff who work with the employee(s) with autism
- Bringing in help from external support organisations that offer job mentoring, coaching and general or specific job assistance to autistic people
- Using a job coach to help both employer and employee to establish a successful working partnership.

Employment

The National Autistic Society has further information on reasonable adjustments in the workplace for both employers and for autistic employees, including fact sheets for employers:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/employers/information-for-employers.aspx>



The main goal is to help promote the values and skills autistic individuals can bring to a business or organisation, which may not have been initially obvious.

You might have difficulty with...	You could try this....
Feeling stressed at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to your employer about your needs and negotiate adjustments in your working space or your working pattern. A trade union representative may be able to help.• Find a quiet room or space that you can go to at work if you feel over-loaded• Sometimes a short walk in the fresh air at regular intervals can help• Take time to de-stress when you get home from work
The lighting at work	
Where you have to sit	
The amount of work you have to do	
Coffee break and social groups	

Employment

Disability Discrimination: Autism and the Law

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 aims to prevent discrimination against disabled people. Part 2 of the Act prohibits disability discrimination by employers against disabled people. Under the Act, a person is deemed to be disabled if he/she has or has had: **a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.**

An autistic person will be disabled if he/she satisfies the conditions laid down in this definition. Many autistic people will meet this definition.

Into Work



IntoWork is an employment support service which helps people with a disability reach their employment goals, including autistic people.

They offer advice, guidance, training and on-going support to employers and employees in the following way:

Stage 1: Job Readiness

The person with disabilities is eager to find work and engage with IntoWork

Stage 2: Vocational Profile

A tool to get to know the client, establish skills and abilities, needs and goals.

Stage 3: Job Search/Job Development

Searching for jobs and matching skills to employers' needs.

Stage 4: Employer Engagement

Introduce client to employer, break down barriers, job analysis, negotiate job description, disability awareness to managers and co-workers, enter a contract with the employer about what support/job coaching will be provided.

Stage 5: On/off the job support

Job coaching, support, monitoring visits, phone calls, peer support

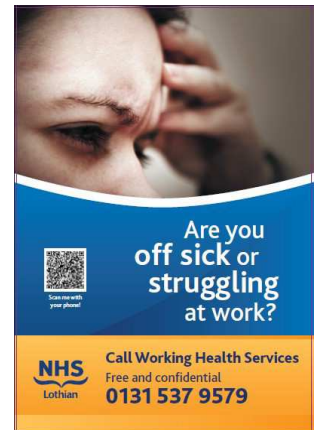
Employment



Working Health Services

Working Health Services provide occupational health support for people who are unable to access this through their employer. They can offer advice, support & treatment to help you stay at work or get back to work.

You can ask your GP to make a referral through SCI Gateway or you can refer yourself by calling the number above.



Fit for Work

Fit for Work Scotland is for people who have been off sick for four weeks or more. They help individuals, employers and GPs by providing:

- access to independent advice and a work-focused assessment
- a free and easy to use early intervention service
- recommendations on workplace adjustments
- help with developing a return to work plan
- assistance in managing your expectations about the impact of your condition on your work
- support around preventing absence

The advice line is open Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Recommended Websites and Further Reading

Employment

- **National Autistic Society**
Advice for autistic people looking for a job or already in work
www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/work
- **Fit for Work**
For people who have been off sick for four weeks or more.
Phone: 0800 0192211
www.fitforworkscotland.scot
- **IntoWork**
Provides advice and support including specialist autism advisors
Phone: 0131 475 2600
www.intowork.org.uk
 - **Autism Network Scotland**
Has links to events and local advice networks
Phone: 0131 475 2600
<http://employment.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk/>
- **NHS Lothian Working Health Services**
Occupational Health support for people in work
Phone: 0131 537 9579
- **Prospects**
Employment and Training service run in Glasgow by National Autistic Society
Phone: 0141 248 1725
hi-hope.org/directory/listing/national-autistic-society-nas-scotland-prospects
- **Iwork4me**
Support autistic people who wish to become self-employed
<http://www.iwork4me.org.uk/>

Further and Higher Education

Applying to university or college

The National Autism Society (NAS) has information on their website for autistic people who are considering applying to a university or further education college.

[UCAS](#) is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses that are offered at universities and colleges in the UK.

Disability Rights UK has further [information on applying to higher education](#).

Sharing information about a diagnosis of ASD

Many people worry that disclosing their disability when applying to university may lead to discrimination against them. Universities and colleges have a legal requirement to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that students with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage. An example of a 'reasonable adjustment' could be to provide copies of the lecture notes for a student who finds note-taking during lectures difficult.

What supports are available?

You will need to contact the disability support staff at the university or college to find out about support services they offer and for a chance to talk about the support that you feel you may need whilst studying. It is useful to make contact with the support services before starting university or college so that the support is in place from the beginning of the course.



Disabled Students' Allowance

You may be eligible for a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), awarded through SAAS (Student Awards Agency Scotland). These grants are available to help with costs that students may incur as a direct result of their disability. Unlike a loan, these do not have to be paid back.

SAAS gives information about what you can claim under DSA, how to apply and contact details.

Recommended Websites and Further Reading

Further and Higher Education

- **The National Autistic Society**

Information and support for students www.autism.org.uk/services/scotland/further-education.aspx www.autism.org.uk/directory



- **Disability Rights UK Student helpline**

Tues and Thurs 11am-1pm

Phone: 0800 328505

Email: students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Website: <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/helplines-0>

- **UCAS**

This organization is responsible for managing applications to higher education.

Phone: 0871 4680468

www.ucas.com

- **Disabled Student Allowance Quality Assurance Group**

www.dsa-qag.org.uk

<http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/students/find-your-disability-officer>

- **Student Awards Agency Scotland**

Scottish Government agency giving financial support to eligible students

www.saas.gov.uk



- **Individual higher and further education institutions**

Individual universities and colleges provide further information on their websites about the support they can offer students with disabilities and support needs including Autism Spectrum Disorder. Some local institutions are referenced below.

- **Edinburgh University** support information:
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service/student-support>
- **Heriot Watt University** support information:
<https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/health-wellbeing.htm>
- **Edinburgh Napier University** support information:
<http://www.napier.ac.uk/study-with-us/undergraduate/student-support/students-with-disabilities>
- **Edinburgh College** support information:
<http://www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk/Contact/>
- **Scotland's Rural College** support information:
https://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120176/student_support/132/students_with_additional_needs
- **Newbattle Abbey College** support information:
<http://www.newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk/additional-support/>
- **Borders College** support information:
<http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/current-students/student-support-services/>