

# Understanding Autism - Employment

Making Employment a positive experience for people living with autism in Derbyshire



Developed in partnership with



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## Purpose of this booklet

This booklet has been written to support potential employers improve the level of understanding of autism within their organisations.

The booklet highlights the barriers for people living with autism seeking or maintaining employment, and makes suggestions as to how employers can make reasonable adjustments.

It is appreciated that there are many terms used to describe people living with conditions as defined on the autistic spectrum.

The terms autism, autistic people and people living with autism will be used in this document to encompass all Autistic Spectrum Conditions (including Asperger's Syndrome).



# What is Autism?

**“Autism is a lifelong development disorder which affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them”**

**– National Autistic Society**

**A**round 1% of population are believed to be autistic, which means that there are over 700,000 people living with autism in the UK.

It is estimated there may be around 7,800 people in Derbyshire County and 2,500 people in Derby City living with autism.

Everyone on the autistic spectrum is different and unique, but all share three core social difficulties:

- Social interaction
- social communication
- social imagination

As a result people on the autistic spectrum can struggle in social situations. For example they may:

- find it hard to begin or carry on a conversation
- not understand how far to stand from somebody else
- find it difficult to make friends.

People with autism may also display restricted and/or repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities. For example they may:

- develop an overwhelming interest in something
- follow inflexible routines or rituals
- make repetitive body movements
- be hypersensitive to certain smells, tastes or sounds.

Autism is not a mental health condition; however, due to the social difficulties that people living with autism face, many may suffer with mental ill health.

Autism is not a learning disability, however, around half of people with a learning disability are also diagnosed as having autism. People with autism that do not have a learning disability may experience learning difficulties because of their autism, for example, they may find it harder to structure tasks.

Awareness of autism in society is good but understanding of the condition and the way the condition affects communication, sensory experience and behaviour, is not as good.

Too many myths about autism still exist, including the belief autistic people lack empathy or that everyone with autism is the same.

There are neurological differences between people with autism and people who are viewed as 'normal'. Autism is an example of neurodiversity. People without autism are often referred to as 'neurotypical' by people within the autistic community. Some people with autism use these terms to explain and make sense of the neurological differences that exist between them.

## Social communication

**M**any people living with autism have problems with communication, both verbal and non-verbal. They may find it hard to process language and could find it difficult to follow long or complex sentences, or to follow instructions. People with autism can find it difficult to interpret a person's tone of voice, their body language or their facial expression. They may also find it difficult to maintain eye contact with others.

In some cases, autistic people may have no, or very limited speech, but can understand what people say to them. They may prefer to use a different form of communication, such as symbols or sign language.

People with autism often take information very literally and they may not be able to understand sarcasm, jokes, hidden meanings, and figures of speech that people use in everyday life.

## Social interaction

**M**any people living with autism have difficulty in understanding social rules and interactions. They find it hard to recognise and understand the emotions that other people display, and find it difficult to communicate or explain their own emotions and feelings. They may also find it difficult to manage their emotions.

People with autism may appear to behave strangely or inappropriately due to the way they express feelings, emotions or needs. They may, for example, stand too close to another person, accidentally invading their personal space.

Many people with autism prefer to spend time alone or isolate themselves from others, they may not seek comfort from other people and may not show any interest in other people's opinions or interests. This can come across as rudeness, withdrawal from, or disinterest in the people they meet, making it hard for them to make and keep friends.

## Social imagination

**P**eople with autism can find it difficult to understand other people's intentions and behaviour.

They may find it difficult to imagine situations that are outside their own routine. They might find it hard to predict what will, or might happen if they are faced with change, so often limit themselves to only a small, repetitive range of activities.

Some people with autism may also have difficulty in understanding the concept of danger.

A lack of social imagination should not be confused with a lack of imagination. Many people with autism are very creative.

# Sensory differences

**M**any people with autism have sensory differences including heightened sensitivity (hypersensitivity) or under-sensitivity (hyposensitivity) to one or more sensory stimuli for example, sound, light, textures, smells and taste. These sensitivities can also make being touched difficult and can sometimes result in sensory overload.

People with autism may also engage in stimming (self-stimulatory behaviours), as a means of helping them to feel less anxious. Examples of stimming are flapping hands and tapping fingers.

**A**utism is a spectrum condition, which means that people with autism have a wide range of ways in which they may communicate and interact with people. They also have differing abilities, interests and difficulties, which can vary dependent upon the environment and stressors they are currently dealing with. Autism is sometimes called a “hidden” disability because not every person with autism presents with the same or with obvious characteristics. For example, people with autism can have good eye contact, be sociable and share normal interests. This can be particularly true in women or girls who may attempt to engage in social activity more frequently than males and may try to mask their difficulties by copying the behaviour of others. Problems may only become apparent when individuals are expected to be highly flexible and tolerate a lot of environmental demands.

It is important not to generalise or stereotype the behaviours of people with autism, otherwise we may expect and/or try to predict certain behaviours, which could have a detrimental effect on people living with autism in a number of different ways.

Remember that:

***‘If you have met one person with autism you have met one person with autism’***

## Adding value to the workplace

**P**eople with autism have many different talents and skills that will add value to companies and organisations.

Some of these talents and skills include:

### **Reliability, punctuality and loyalty**

People with autism are likely to be reliable employees and are proven to have the highest attendance rate of any other disability group within the workplace.

Often, due to a desire to follow strict, rigid structures and routine, an employee with autism is unlikely to be late for work or deter from time limits, for example breaks and dinner hours. Once the employee becomes familiar with their role, they are likely to stay in their job as many people with autism have a high degree of loyalty.

### **Honesty**

People with autism will often demonstrate higher degrees of honesty in the workplace than other employees. In addition, many people with autism can see areas for improvement in the work place due to their heightened level of attention to detail. This can have positive outcomes for the entire workforce.

### **Different and creative approaches to working**

People living with autism often develop different and creative ways to carry out and complete their work. These different approaches can bring positive changes to their workplace.

Autistic people are often credited for their creative flair, making many individuals suitable for employment in a variety of fields such as photography, art, drama and design.

### **High levels of concentration and commitment**

People on the autistic spectrum can be very committed employees and apply maximum effort to all their work. They often demonstrate high levels of concentration when focusing on specific tasks and like to see tasks through to the end.

### **Resourcefulness and a logical way of thinking**

Autistic people are often more likely to use a logical 'step by step' approach to dealing with problems. This means that they are less likely to rush a job, or miss any of the finer details.

### **Good working memory and knowledge around specialist areas**

People with autism can have the ability to remember and retain certain information, such as dates, statistics and facts. Many people with autism are considered to be 'experts' in their specialist areas of interest, having an in-depth knowledge or skills around the subject. This means they would be good candidates for jobs where these specialist skills and knowledge can be applied.

### **Respectful of rules and boundaries**

Many people living with autism like structure and routine in their lives, so it is important that employers are clear about expectations and boundaries.



The above are just a handful of reasons why people with autism can make exceptional employees in a variety of different working environments and job roles. People with autism should be recognised as 'assets' to the workforce, with skills that can be utilised.

## Challenges and barriers in employment for people with autism

**D**espite the array of skills, knowledge, qualities and attributes that many people with autism possess, the field of employment can still be full of barriers and challenges that many people struggle to overcome.

Sometimes employers do not recognise the difficulties that these barriers pose for many people with autism. This may mean that employers are unintentionally (or purposely) restricting employment opportunities for people with autism. In most cases, the barriers can be removed, or at the very least, reduced, through making 'reasonable adjustments' when necessary.

## What are reasonable adjustments?

**R**easonable adjustments are changes to the workplace or employment process, which enable disabled people carry out their job to the best of their ability.

Some examples of reasonable adjustments may include:

- Allowing a guide dog into the workplace for an employee who is visually impaired
- Enabling an employee with mobility issues to work on the ground floor
- Providing a disabled employee with a disabled parking space in the workplace car park

## Pre-employment challenges and barriers

**F**or many people with autism, the barriers they face while looking for employment can be challenging.

Challenges can present at different stages of the pre-employment process and some of these are discussed below:

## Finding a 'suitable' job

Online job searches can often produce results that are misleading for people with autism, making it difficult for them to know whether the job is suitable. In addition, if information is vague. For example, withholding the name of the organisation, working hours or salary, it can be very off-putting as it could create uncertainty.

### What can you do?

- Make information easy to understand, including as much information about the job role, organisation, salary and working hours as possible. This should be backed up with a clear job description, including the responsibilities and duties a person will be expected to fulfil, as well as the skills and qualifications a person should have.
- Avoid the use of 'desirable' criteria as these can be unclear for people with autism.
- When advertising, use key words that are associated with the field of employment the job is in.
- When re-uploading job adverts, clearly state when and where the original advert was displayed.

## Disclosing their autism diagnosis

**F**or a person with autism, the idea of telling the employer about their diagnosis can be extremely daunting. Some of the common reasons for this include:

- Not knowing how an employer will react to the information
- Being unsure whether it may lead to discrimination and prejudice
- Not knowing whether it will reduce their chances of getting the job
- Being uncertain about what stage they should tell them, eg on the application or at interview.

Some employers will have a limited awareness of what autism is, or may have negative assumptions about autism in the workplace.

Many people with autism have had negative experiences with employers and employment, including discrimination, prejudice and bullying, so may feel cautious about going into work again.

The Equality Act (2010) aims to take steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles disabled workers and job seekers encounter. Employers have a legal obligation to make 'reasonable adjustments' when required.

### What can we do?

- State in job adverts that applications are welcomed from people with disabilities
- Become part of the 'two ticks' employment scheme endorsed by Job Centre Plus (this demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that disabled people are treated fairly and equally in employment)
- State employers credentials in relation to autism and/or disability; for example, whether employees and employers undertake mandatory autism awareness training, disability awareness training, equality and diversity training.



## Job applications

Job applications can present difficulties people with autism as the information required may appear unclear. For example, application forms may require people to provide 'additional information' or 'other relevant information', in addition to the expected 'personal details', 'educational background' 'employment history'.

“Filling in an application form can be a daunting prospect for most individuals, but especially for those with an ASD. So many boxes to tick and fill in, so many questions asking this, that and the other, and so much information to digest from job specifications to person specifications and more. All this information can overwhelm an individual on the spectrum and leave them feeling disheartened and feeling unable to fill the form in to the maximum of their ability” (Person living with autism)

Many people with autism who have not been employed before can find it difficult to explain 'gaps in employment'. Those who have been in employment but have had their employment terminated for some reason, can find it difficult to answer questions such as 'reasons for leaving'.

Sometimes job applications have short deadlines for application. This can make applying difficult for people with autism who find processing questions and making sense of what is required a challenge.

Some organisations still use application tools such as psychometric tests or personality tests. These are often unclear and people are not given much information and guidance about how to complete them. The strict time limits under which the tests need to be completed can also be challenging.

### What can we do?

- Be clear about how much information you want; for example, rather than asking an applicant to 'please write a summary of why you think you are the right candidate for the job', consider asking 'please write 2-3 paragraphs about why you think you are the right candidate for the job'.
- Be specific about what you expect the candidate to write in their answers; for example, instead of asking 'what skills do you have that would make you suitable for this role?' consider using, 'we are looking for an individual who is able to work independently, using their initiative to complete tasks in addition to working effectively as part of a team. Please give us an example of a time when you have used your initiative when working independently and a time when you have worked effectively as part of a team'.
- Ensure that there is a reasonable amount of time between the advert being published and the closing date for applications. It may be useful to allow candidates to save any progress they have made on their application as they progress, to allow them to complete the application form over a period of time.
- Avoid using small size fonts or colours which may trigger sensory difficulties for people with autism. It may be useful to produce an 'easy read' version of the application form, or a visual version which includes pictures to help explain questions.
- Avoid psychometric testing and personality testing wherever possible; if necessary, ask direct questions about a candidate's personality in the body of the application form.



## Interviews

The idea of attending a job interview is something that most people find quite daunting. It is extremely difficult to anticipate the kind of questions which may be asked, or even the format of the interview. This uncertainty can be particularly distressing for people with autism.

These might include:

- Who is going to be interviewing me?
- What is the environment going to be like?
- How many people are going to be interviewing me?
- Is the interview formal or informal?
- What if I can't find where I am supposed to be going?
- What am I supposed to wear to the interview?
- How long will be the interview last for?
- Will I be expected to complete any tests?

The interview process relies on a person's ability to show their social and communication skills in a way that will enable a candidate to promote themselves as the right candidate for the job.

*"Another problem area is that of eye contact and non - verbal communication. Merely looking at someone with Asperger's after asking a question may very well not elicit any response and give the impression that the interviewee is rude or does not understand that there is more information wanted by the interviewer. This is far from the case and some communication prior to the interview by both parties has the potential to resolve any embarrassing situations." (Person living with autism)*

It may be difficult for a person with autism to portray their skill sets to an employer, as the interviewing process itself can be challenging. Interviewees are expected to display certain accepted forms of social and communication behaviours which may not be possible for someone with autism. Examples of areas of difficulty for some people with autism may include:

- Reading an interviewers body language and displaying 'appropriate' body language in the interview setting
- Maintaining eye contact with interviewers
- Initiating conversation with interviewers
- Anticipating how much information is required for each question
- Picking up the interviewers verbal and non-verbal cues
- Engaging in formalities e.g. handshaking, appropriate tone of voice
- Answering indirect and hypothetical scenario-based questions

Awaiting the outcome of an interview can also be very stressful for someone with autism. This can feel even more stressful if an employer has not been clear about 'what happens next' and can lead to unanswered questions for the candidate, such as:

- When will I find out if I have been successful?
- What happens if I haven't been successful, will I find out why?
- If I am successful, when will I start?
- What will I be expected to do next before I can start my job?

## What can we do prior to the interview?

- Be clear about what kind of interview style they will have; for example, is it a formal or group interview and will a presentation be required?
- Consider whether adjustments can be made, or whether an alternative format could be considered; for example, a work based trial may be a better option for someone who finds it difficult to sell their skills and abilities through communication
- Include as much information as possible about the location of the interview, the environment in which the interview will take place, what candidates are expected to wear, how long the interview is expected to last and if any tests are included
- Provide candidates with materials that may help them to prepare for the interview, such as copies of the company aims and values
- Try to make sure that the interviewer is known to the applicant
- Be prepared to make alterations to the interview environment if necessary; for example provide a fan if the room is particularly warm and the candidate has sensory difficulties around temperature.

## What can we do during the interview?

- Avoid gestures such as shaking hands unless initiated by the applicant
- Avoid open ended questions and try to be as specific as possible when asking questions to give candidates a better idea of what information is required
- Avoid hypothetical questions, instead ask questions about a person's past experiences so that they have a basis for their answer
- Give the candidate the option to have a supporter present
- Allow enough time for the person to process information and questions in the interview
- Be prepared to reword questions if necessary, for clarity.

## What can we do post-interview?

- Make sure you are consistent - if you tell an applicant you will let them know the outcome by the end of the week, you need fulfil this promise.
- If candidates have not been successful, always offer feedback on why.
- If candidates have been successful, be clear about what is expected of them next; for example about providing references and completing an induction programme.

## Challenges and barriers once in employment

Success at the application and interview stages alone may not be enough to reassure a person with autism that they have the skills, knowledge and experience to do the job. They will face other challenges and barriers within the working environment. This section outlines some of the difficulties that employees with autism may experience.

### Induction

For a person living with autism, being told that they have been successful in securing a job can be both an empowering and overwhelming experience. Before starting any job, it is likely that the person will have to complete a variety of formalities. This may include signing contracts, completing forms, providing bank details for payment, background checks and requests for references. If these processes have not been explained fully, these tasks can be stressful.

After successfully securing the job, the employee may have many questions and uncertainties, which can cause significant anxiety.

Examples of the questions a new employee may have include:

- What are my colleagues like?
- Where am I going to be working and what environment will I be working in?
- What will my working hours be?
- What is the dress code?
- How long will I get for breaks?



## What can we do?

- Be clear about 'what happens next' and provide clear guidelines about how to complete the next steps. Ensure that deadlines allow enough time to be completed.
- Try to provide as much information about what a person can expect in their new job role, including information about working hours, location of work, parking and any other key information.
- Offer the person the opportunity to visit the workplace prior to starting the job; this may involve introducing them to the team they will be working with, and where they will be expected to work. This will enable the new employee to understand what is expected of them, and allow the employer to make any necessary adjustments prior to the start of employment.

## Settling in to a new role

Like everybody else, settling in to a new job role can take time; we all need time to adjust to new tasks and responsibilities and to get used to office routines and dynamics.

It is important that the person feels welcomed as part of the team and that any adjustments that have been previously identified have been made. This ensures that any potential barriers or challenges can be avoided, or at least reduced.

For people with autism, it is important that instructions are given in their preferred method of communication. Some people may prefer spoken instructions, whilst others may want instructions to be in writing. It is important that instructions are clear and concise. It may be necessary to provide each instruction separately to enable the person to process information and complete what is expected of them in a 'step by step' way. For some, a physical demonstration of how to complete a task may be the best way to communicate requirements and instructions.

*“I worked in accountancy for 22 years and often found that my choices were limited due to clumsiness and poor spelling. Some of the difficulties I found were particularly around not being understood, not having enough time to complete tasks and dealing with conflicting demands. I found work overwhelming and the overall impression I got was that I did not matter, only as a cog in a machine” - (Person living with autism)*

It is also important to realise that the social norms of the workplace may present difficulties for employees with autism. People are expected to engage with other employees and participate in social interaction. This may be challenging for people living with autism and it is important that other employees respect this. Social rules are taken for granted in the workplace but may be unclear for people with autism; for example seeing another employee making a drink at a time that is not a regular break time may be confusing for a person with autism, and they may think this is unacceptable behaviour. It is important that these situations are anticipated as far as possible and fully explained.

### What can we do?

- Identify preferred methods of communication and develop a plan for delivering instructions, managing and prioritising tasks and general communication.
- Assign a mentor to provide guidance and support to the employee so that they have a person they can go to when experiencing problems.
- Ask employees to produce personal profiles of themselves, explaining what their role is and a bit of information about themselves.
- Identify clear guidelines on 'what is acceptable' and 'what is not acceptable' during the work day; for example, whether it is acceptable to make a coffee and take it back to your desk whilst you carry on working or not, or whether it is acceptable to go across the road and get a coffee and take an unauthorised break.

## Workplace environment

**F**or many people with autism, it can be their working environment that can cause anxiety, rather than the tasks and responsibilities associated with their job roles.

People with autism may experience sensory differences which may be hard to accommodate in the working environment. Noise, lighting, temperature and colours can all result in sensory overload, causing significant anxiety and distress, and potentially preventing the person from doing their job.

For example, a person is expected to work in a communal office space may find this environment busy and noisy; this may affect their ability to concentrate on a given task and cause stress and anxiety. It may be more beneficial for the person to work in a quieter area of the workplace, where staff members are familiar and noise levels are stable.

*“I need to have a manager who is proactive in looking out for my needs. I have this at the charity shop where I volunteer, and it makes a massive difference. For example, if things are busy and noisy she assigns me work somewhere quieter. And she checks that I'm OK from time to time. I may not be able to seek someone out to tell them I'm finding things hard, so this is vital” - (Person living with autism)*

The workplace can be constantly changing. Many people with autism need structure and routine in their daily lives, including the workplace. Unplanned changes or changes which occur without warning should be minimised as far as possible. It may be helpful for an employer to accompany an employee with autism on a visit to new office premises prior to any move. This will give the employee time to adapt and plan their approach to their new working conditions.

*“Sometimes the most damaging problem with issues of communication are assuming the level of natural ability an autistic person has and that they can adopt this behaviour for different situations. When it is assumed that because a person appears to be Neurotypical and can function just like everybody else does, this leads to the assumption that they are like everybody else and can communicate much the same as a Neurotypical person. Whilst there are many instances when this does occur, this is because in the main the autistic person has either prepared for this situation well in advance or has been through this situation many times before and has a prepared knowledge and expectation of what will happen. It is when this changes unexpectedly and the changes are not noted in advance to the Autistic person or if the situation is new in content and environment, that this can cause problems for them in new or unprepared for situations” - (Person living with autism)*

### **What can we do?**

- Work with the person to find out what their difficulties are and look for ways for overcoming or reducing these; for example, provide a fan for an employee with sensory difficulties associated with heat.
- Prepare people for change and unpredictable situations in advance; for example, explain or demonstrate what they will be required to do to evacuate the building in the event of a fire.

### **Providing feedback and reviewing performance**

Providing feedback to employees and reviewing their performance is a standard and expected aspect of all employees' employment. For many people with autism, this is particularly important.

If a person with autism is not given feedback about their performance, it may cause them to feel anxious. Issues relating to self-esteem and confidence may leave the

person feeling like they are not doing the job properly. It is important to reassure them that they are managing the work and doing a good job, if this is the case.

On the other hand, an employee with autism may experience work-based problems or difficulties, and they may not feel confident in seeking help or talking to others about their concerns. It is important that a person with autism is encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have. It is important to review performance and provide feedback regularly to make sure that any potential issues are addressed quickly and support can be offered. This may need to be offered more frequently than to other employees.

Feedback will need to be sensitive, direct, constructive and understood. If an issue has arisen in relation to performance, it is important that this is dealt with promptly but clearly. It is essential that employers do not assume that any issues will be resolved automatically after discussing these with the employees, but rather, provide support and guidance in order to do this. People with autism often require clear guidelines and instructions about how to overcome difficulties. For example, if the issue is that tasks are not being completed quickly enough, an employee could develop an action plan with the person to address this. An employer's response could be:-

'The quality of your work is good and we appreciate your commitment to completing tasks to the best of your ability. However, in order for us to meet targets as a company, it is important that we are able to complete tasks in a set timescale. For example, X task needs to be completed in Y amount of time for us to do this. In order for you to manage your time effectively we can work together to identify strategies which will help you to do this. What have you done in the past to help you with prioritising your time effectively?'

### What can we do?

- Make sure that employees understand what to expect and what the purpose of the review process is
- Make sure that performance reviews are planned in advance to help the employee to prepare for these meetings
- Try to make sure that the same person is responsible for doing all performance reviews to maintain consistency
- Ensure that employees understand policies and procedures, for example annual leave and sickness policies
- Make sure that the person knows who to go to should they have any problems in between performance reviews, making sure that a 'chain of command' is outlined, for example senior manager, team manager, team leader, employees

- Identify resources that can be used to improve performance, for example daily planners and timetables could be used to manage time and tasks effectively.

## Lack of understanding and raising awareness

A lack of understanding of autism in the workplace can cause difficulties for people with autism. People may be less likely to disclose their diagnosis of autism if they believe that their condition will not be understood by other employees. Many people with autism have been victims of prejudice and discrimination in previous employment due to a lack of understanding.

Autism is often referred to as a 'hidden disability' and without the knowledge of the condition or willingness to try and understand how an employee's autism affects them; employees do not often receive the support they need from others.

To help raise awareness and understanding, employers can provide autism awareness training and general disability awareness training. In addition, managers could attend diversity events in their local and extended communities to increase their understanding of disabilities and share this information with the rest of the workforce. Having a disabled employees network and a nominated 'disability champion' could improve the workplace for all employees in addition to promoting equality and diversity.

It is also important that employers and employees are aware of the rights and responsibilities of people with autism, to ensure that these are recognised in the workplace. Employers should make positive adjustments and changes in a meaningful way to allow the person with autism to carry out their job.

*“I have had some problems with some managers not understanding my condition, including some who think it is 'fake'. There are some who believe the social model of disability and others who are only interested in the medical model, and even some who doubt that I have a diagnosis at all. As mine [autism] is a so called 'hidden impairment' my managers are unsure as to how to deal with it legally and make reasonable adjustments. I work in a 500 person call centre and have problems with noise which makes it difficult for them to make changes. Some think I'm a problem, they don't know what to do with me and so think they should get rid of me. However, some managers are good with me and display appropriate behaviours. My employers are accessing some awareness training soon and I am hoping that this will help to improve my situation” - (Person living with autism).*

## What can we do?

- Identify and regularly review training opportunities available to employees
- Ensure that employees are aware of autism and, if appropriate, the support

needs of people with autism in their workplace

- Develop and use tools which can aid awareness in the workplace, such as one-page profiles that provide information about the employee.

## Further information

### Clear Kit

The Clear Kit website is an online resource providing advice and information regarding the recruitment of individuals with a disability.

It provides case studies and advice for recruiters regarding interviewing people living with autism and successful employment stories.

Web: [www.clearkit.co.uk](http://www.clearkit.co.uk)

### Autism Connect

Autism Connect has produced four PDF documents under the employment heading, addressing autistic individuals and potential employers regarding advice for job interviews and applications, disclosure, the working environment and expectations held by employers.

Web: [www.autism-connect.org.uk](http://www.autism-connect.org.uk)

### Work Choice

Provides an overview of the work choice programme, how to apply, eligibility criteria and what it can assist with/provide.

Web: [www.gov.uk/work-choice/overview](http://www.gov.uk/work-choice/overview)

### Specialist Employability Support

Outlines the eligibility criteria, support available and application process for access to the specialist employability support.

Intensive training and support for short periods of time as well as long term assistance is offered.

Web: [www.gov.uk/specialist-employability-support](http://www.gov.uk/specialist-employability-support)

## **Derbyshire Autism Services – Professional services**

Derbyshire Autism Services provides a variety of services to working professionals who may engage with autistic individuals in a variety of settings.

Contact details are available in order for people to enquire.

Web: [www.derbyshireautismservices.org/services/professional](http://www.derbyshireautismservices.org/services/professional)

## **Derbyshire Autism Services – Adults**

Derbyshire Autism Services provides support for job searching and work experience.

Web: [www.derbyshireautismservices.org/services/adults](http://www.derbyshireautismservices.org/services/adults)

## **Linkage – Employment Services**

Assists with identifying and securing paid employment.

The website also provides information regarding their work-related employment packages; information, advice and guidance (IAG); job-coaching; benefits guidance; and support within the workplace.

Web: [www.linkage.org.uk/employment](http://www.linkage.org.uk/employment)

## **Derbyshire County Council Disability Employment Team**

Provides support for disabled people to find training, work experience, voluntary work and paid employment.

Web: [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/des](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/des)

## **Government Disability Confident Employer Scheme**

Guidance and resources about employing disabled people and how the Disability Confident Employer Scheme can help your business.

Web: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign)

- Derbyshire County Council: [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/adultswithautism](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/adultswithautism)
- National Autistic Society: [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)
- Derbyshire Autism Services: [www.derbyshireautismservices.org](http://www.derbyshireautismservices.org)
- NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/Autistic-spectrum-disorder](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Autistic-spectrum-disorder)

The Adult Care Information Promise, a **FACT** you can rely on.

**We promise to provide you with:**



Free information  
Accurate information  
Clear information  
Trustworthy information

If you think we have broken our **FACT** promise, please let us know so we can make improvements.