

# Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Information and support  
across the lifespan

# Introduction

This booklet provides information and links to relevant services for individuals and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) living within East Dunbartonshire and Greater Glasgow. This booklet is divided into different age categories to help you find the page that is most relevant to you.

**0-5 years of age**

**5-16 years of age**

**16-18 years of age**

**18+ years of age**

*“Our vision is to support and empower individuals and families affected by autism. We will attempt to raise public and professional awareness of the condition and strive to help children and adults with autism to make choices and achieve independence in their home, school and community.”*

East Dunbartonshire Council Autism Strategy Mission Statement

## 0-5 years of age

If you are worried that your child may be showing some of the behaviours usually associated with autism, there are steps you can take which may lead to a formal diagnosis. You may decide that you do not wish to pursue a formal diagnosis; however a diagnosis may lead to additional support being put in place for both your child and you.

These are some of the things that you may see:

- Difficulties communicating socially
- Not drawing attention to objects or areas of interest
- Carrying out activities in a repetitive manner
- Resistance to change
- Exhibiting behaviours such as biting, self-harm and kicking

But remember that autism is a very variable condition, and this is not an exhaustive list. The first step is to contact your Health Visitor or GP.

### Health Visitor or GP

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It may be unlikely for a child to receive a diagnosis if they are under the age of two, however it is possible that children of toddler age may receive a screening interview via their GP and this can be a starting point to decide if a more formal diagnosis is required. Following on from an initial screening by a health visitor or GP they may:

- Refer you to agencies that can provide a formal diagnosis
- Put you in touch with the relevant Social Work team
- Advise you about other services or treatments such as Speech and Language therapists
- Signpost you to local self-help and carers groups
- Offer additional support with regards to transitioning to Primary School

The Health Visitor or GP will want to know about the specific events and behaviours that are worrying you. You may find it useful to keep a note of your concerns and how often they occur.

**Please see the back of this booklet for other useful contacts and links.**

## 5-16 years of age

If your child is aged between 5 and 16 years of age and you are worried that your child may be showing some of the behaviours usually associated with autism, there are steps you can take which may lead to a formal diagnosis. You may decide that you do not wish to pursue a formal diagnosis; however a diagnosis may lead to additional support being put in place for both your child and you.

These are some of the things that you may see:

- Using pre-learned phrases, rather than speaking in newly formed sentences
- Having difficulty understanding sarcasm, metaphors or figures of speech and instead taking what people say literally
- May have difficulty forming friendships
- Eye contact may be limited or avoided
- Some individuals may have repetitive mannerisms such as flapping their hands or rocking back and forth
- Some individuals may get upset if there are changes to their normal routine.

But remember that autism is a very variable condition, and this is not an exhaustive list.

The first step is to speak to a member of teaching staff in your child's school to establish what behaviours and activities your child is displaying which are causing you concern. The next step is to contact your GP.

## GP

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Following on from an initial screening, they may:

- Refer you to agencies that can provide a formal diagnosis (e.g. Children and Adolescent Mental Health Team – CAMHS, Glenfarg Child Development Centre)
- Put you in touch with the relevant Social Work team
- Advise you about other services or treatments such as Speech and Language therapists
- Ask for input from the Educational Psychologist
- Signpost you to local self-help and carers groups

The GP will want to know about the specific events and behaviours that are worrying you. You may find it useful to keep a note of your concerns and how often they occur. They will also want to liaise closely with your child's school.

Please see the back of this booklet for other useful contacts and links.

# 16-18 years of age

## Diagnosis

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If your child is aged between 16 and 18 years of age and you are worried that your child may be showing some of the behaviours usually associated with autism, there are steps you can take which may lead to a formal diagnosis. You may decide that you do not wish to pursue a formal diagnosis; however a diagnosis may lead to additional support being put in place for both your child and you.

These are some of the things that you may see:

- Using pre-learned phrases, rather than speaking in newly formed sentences
- Having difficulty understanding sarcasm, metaphors or figures of speech and instead taking what people say literally
- May have difficulty forming friendships
- Eye contact may be limited or avoided
- Some individuals may have repetitive mannerisms such as flapping their hands or rocking back and forth
- Some individuals may get upset if there are changes to their normal routine.

But remember that autism is a very variable condition, and this is not an exhaustive list.

The first step is to speak to a member of teaching staff in your child's school or college to establish what behaviours and activities your child is displaying that are causing you concern. The next step is to contact your GP.

## GP

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Following on from an initial screening, they may:

- Refer you to agencies that can provide a formal diagnosis (e.g. Children and Adolescent Mental Health Team – CAMHS, Glenfarg Child Development Centre)
- Put you in touch with the relevant Social Work team
- Advise you about other services or treatments such as Speech and Language therapists
- Ask for input from an Educational Psychologist
- Signpost you to local self-help and carers groups.

The GP will want to know about the specific events and behaviours that are worrying you. You may find it useful to keep a note of your concerns and how often they occur. They will also want to liaise closely with your child's school.


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## Additional Factors

It is recognised that this period of time in a young adult's life is particularly challenging. Young adults may feel pressure with regards to exams, choosing further educational courses, finding suitable employment and thinking about becoming more independent.

It is also a point where individuals may be moving from a structured environment, such as a local school, to less structured further education or employment settings.

If your child is becoming increasingly anxious or worried about the transition process, your first contact should be your GP. In addition, there are agencies that will be able to provide additional support to your child and you at this potentially difficult life-stage.



# 18+ years of age

## Diagnosis

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If you are concerned that you or an adult family member are displaying some of the behaviours usually associated with autism there are steps you can take which may lead to a formal diagnosis. You may decide that you do not wish to pursue a formal diagnosis; however a diagnosis may lead to additional support being put in place.

These are some of the things that you may see:

- Using pre-learned phrases, rather than speaking in newly formed sentences
- Having difficulty understanding sarcasm, metaphors or figures of speech and instead taking what people say literally
- May have difficulty forming friendships or have no interest whatsoever
- Eye contact may be limited or avoided
- Individuals may flap their hands, flick their fingers in a repetitive manner
- Individuals may get upset if there are changes to their normal routine

But remember that autism is a very variable condition, and this is not an exhaustive list. The first step is to contact your GP.

## GP

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The GP will want to know about the specific events and behaviours that are worrying you. You may find it useful to keep a note of your concerns and how often they occur.

It is recognised that autism is a life-long condition that may impact on a number of areas of adult-life. This will include working life, relationships and an individuals' social life.



## Working life

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People with autism can often have

- Good attention to detail
- Attachment to routine and logical processes
- Regular and punctual habits

These are qualities that are valuable to employers, and support may be available to help overcome other difficulties within the work environment. Both employer and employee can be supported with:

- Developing Communication (aiming to be clear, unambiguous and precise)
- Minimising anxiety (planning work, maintaining well-planned and realistic deadlines and a low-pressure environment)
- Assertiveness training to improve communication and reduce anxiety
- Regular mentoring and coaching for the employee and their Manager

## Relationships and Social life

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Communication skills, emotional literacy and social awareness contribute to successful relationships and can be developed and practiced in safe autism-friendly environments to help build social competence and reduce isolation.

Suggested activities/groups may include:

- Interest-specific outings, (such as attending Comi-cons)
- Circles of Support and friendship circles
- Clubs for like-minded enthusiasts
- Sports and games groups
- Art, film, photography, music and writing groups
- Groups for young people/teenagers

There are agencies which may also provide additional support in relation to the work environment and with your relationships and social life.

**Please see the back of this booklet for other useful contacts and links.**

## Other useful contacts

### **National Autistic Society**

[www.autism.org.uk/scotland](http://www.autism.org.uk/scotland)

### **Scottish Autism**

[www.scottishautism.org](http://www.scottishautism.org)

### **Ceartas (advocacy)**

[www.ceartas.org.uk](http://www.ceartas.org.uk)

### **Carers Link Support**

To look into guardianship, emergency care planning and offering support to you and any other carers in the family, including young carers.

[www.carerslink.org.uk](http://www.carerslink.org.uk)

Support to look into guardianship, emergency care planning and offering support to you and any other carers in the family, including young carers.

### **Local Area Coordinators**

Signposting, developing social skills and life skills for people over the age of 14. [www.carerslink.org.uk/events/autism-parent-carer-forum/](http://www.carerslink.org.uk/events/autism-parent-carer-forum/)  
0141 578 2142

### **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

Support with income maximisation, benefit applications and the rights of vulnerable people.

[www.cas.org.uk/bureaux/east-dunbartonshire-citizens-advice-bureau](http://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux/east-dunbartonshire-citizens-advice-bureau)

### **ENABLE**

Employability, job-seeking skills, and job-coaching [www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk)

### **Social Work Adult Intake team**

0141 355 2200

### **Social Work Children's Intake team**

0141 777 3000

### **East Dunbartonshire Association for Mental Health (EDAMH)**

0141 955 3040



## Other formats

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or onto CD and can be translated into other community languages. Please contact the Council's Communications Team at 12 Strathkelvin Place, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 1TJ Tel: 0300 123 4510

本文件可按要求翻譯成中文，如有此需要，請電 0300 123 4510 。

اس دستاویز کا در خواست کرنے پر (اردو) زبان میں ترجمہ کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ براہ مہربانی فون نمبر 0300 123 4510 پر رابطہ کریں۔

ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0300 123 4510 ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Gabhaidh an sgrìobhainn seo cur gu Gàidhlig ma tha sin a dhìth oirbh. Cuiribh fòn gu 0300 123 4510

अनुरोध करने पर यह दस्तावेज़ हिन्दी में भाषांतरित किया जा सकता है। कृपया 0300 123 4510 पर फोन कीजिए।