

September 2021

You can contact me by email Lucy.ellis@lscft.nhs.uk or phone 07866 063814 (Mon – Fri 9am-5pm) through the summer holidays for any queries about your child's ASD assessment.

Workshops

How to understand and support your child's behaviour

What this workshop covers...

- Functions of behaviour.
- Strategies to support the relationship with your child.
- Meet other parents/carers experiencing similar issues.
- Anxiety/mindfulness.

How to understand and support your child's sleep needs.

What this workshop covers...

- Reasons for sleep difficulties
- Effects on the family
- Sleep hygiene
- Expectations of sleep
- Sleep diaries
- Strategies that may help
- Structure and establishing bedtime routine

How to understand and support your child's sensory needs.

What this workshop covers...

- **What is sensory processing?** It is the way the nervous system receives sensory messages and turns them into responses
- **What is the central nervous system?** Processes all the sensory information and helps to organise, prioritise and understand the information.

If you are currently on the Autism pathway or have recently received a diagnosis for your child / young person, please get in touch, you will be put on a waiting list for the next round of workshops and will be contacted when dates have been set. If you would like to be added to the list for the next block of workshops please get in touch.

Family Connect Post Diagnosis Session

Family Connect sessions are an opportunity for parents / carers to ask members of the assessment team any questions **following the diagnosis for their child / young person**. We meet on Teams for an hour with a maximum of 6 families per session to allow time for questions. The information we share is around what support might be available local activities and how to discuss the diagnosis with your child / young person. We also share information about the This Is Me programme for young people and how to access advice and support from a range of services.

Sessions available are **6th October 10AM**, or **1st December 7PM**.

Please contact Lucy Ellis to book your place.



Autism diagnosis and employment



Ambitious About Autism have created a brilliant **toolkit for young people and employers** to make it easier to find employment. You can sign up to receive it here:

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/.../empl.../toolkits>

The resources will help employers to develop their awareness and understanding of autism. They will support the hiring and retaining of talented autistic young people.

These resources are also relevant for autistic young people, their parents/carers, teachers, and other relevant professionals to support a young person to make informed choices about their future employment opportunities.

A question I get asked quite a lot is “Will a diagnosis of Autism stop my child from getting a job when they are older?”

The answer to that depends very much on the individual and how they would cope in a work environment. More and more employers are finally coming round to understand Autism and the benefits of having autistic employees. However, there are still some careers that won't be accessible unless certain criteria is met first (see below).



ARMY

Army applicants with autism spectrum disorders are automatically disqualified, per Defence Department accession policy, though sometimes medical enlistment waivers are granted after a visit to a DoD behavioural health consultant, according to Ferguson.5 Sept 2019

<https://www.operationmilitarykids.org/can-you-join-the-military-with-autism/>

In addition, Army recruiters are often looking for bright, industrious recruits, and applicants with Asperger's often prove to fit the bill with their high IQ.

Even so, you might still need to apply for a military autism waiver.

The good news is that the probability of receiving a waiver is much higher in the army than any other branch of the military. <https://apply.army.mod.uk/how-to-join/can-i-join/medical>



RAF

Candidates diagnosed with autism or similar disorders by a specialist autism service are normally graded UNFIT. Candidates diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome by a specialist autism service may appear unremarkable on examination but should normally be graded UNFIT. If there is doubt about the diagnosis or the condition is mild and does not cause disability, candidates should be referred to the single Service occupational physician

responsible for Service entry. In cases of mild, entirely non-disabling Asperger's Syndrome, the single Service occupational physician may advise single Service recruiting staff psychiatric assessment is not required. This is because pre-entry tests of suitability for military life (e.g. selection interviews and tests) are as good a form of assessment as a psychiatric assessment.

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/648879/response/1552195/attach/3/20200324%20FOI02511%20RAF%20Policy%20on%20Autism%20Final.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1



POLICE

Autism and other neurodivergent conditions [are not automatically a bar](#) to being a police officer – each case is judged on its merits as these conditions affect everyone differently.

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You would typically be asked for a report from your GP or specialist as part of the medical screening process. Autism would be an additional hurdle to overcome during the [assessment centre](#) and initial training, which are significant challenges in themselves. Many neurotypical people are not cut out for a career in policing.

<https://www.npaa.org.uk/faq/>



NAVY

The second highest ranking officer in the Navy is Autistic.

The Navy is another branch of the military that has moderate policies as far as accepting autistics is concerned. In order to join the Navy with autism, you first need to visit a specialist to determine the spectrum of the condition. The medical examiner will be able to discern whether your condition can affect your productivity at work or not.

Candidates with Autistic spectrum disorder will be considered on a case by case basis.

https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/-/media/files/cnr-pdfs/20210201_eligibility-form_word_100621-update.pdf?la=en-gb&rev=9ff7c7a1431c4d66a3ba605f4051cb46&hash=E5687B0410E3BCD33B63A66A118E5E40

Employers actively seeking autistic employees



<https://cloud.google.com/blog/topics/inside-google-cloud/google-cloud-launches-a-career-program-for-people-with-autism>

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/inside-microsoft/cross-disability/neurodiversityhiring>



Driving and Autism

You must tell DVLA if your autistic spectrum condition (ASC) affects your ability to drive safely. This includes Asperger syndrome.

You can be fined up to £1,000 if you do not tell DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving. You may be prosecuted if you're involved in an accident as a result.

If you're applying for your provisional (learners) driving licence

You do not need to tell DVLA about your condition unless you think that it may affect your ability to drive safely.

Ask your doctor if you're not sure if your condition will affect your driving.

Car or motorcycle licence

If you already have a car or motorcycle licence you need to tell DVLA if:

- there is a change to your condition that may make you an unsafe driver
- you are prescribed medication that causes side effects that will affect your driving

<https://www.gov.uk/asc-and-driving>

Learning to drive advice from the National Autistic Society

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/transport/driving/england>



Driver & Vehicle
Licensing
Agency

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Local Autism Friendly Activities



Lancashire &
South Cumbria
NHS Foundation Trust



Disability Friendly sessions at Jump Rush Thursdays 4.00-5.00

£6.00 per jumper (carer jumps for free) siblings welcome, music turned down, fewer people booked in. No proof of diagnosis needed. During these sessions we bring down our level of sensory and auditory stimulation with appropriate sound and lighting, and also have a "quiet room" where people can go if they need the space to rebalance and

process. We also have a wheelchair lift up to the trampoline area though it is not permitted to take wheelchairs onto the trampolines sorry.

We welcome both children (from aged 2) to adults to this session. To view the latest timetable for disabled friendly activities at our trampoline park, [view our timetable page](#). A parent or carer is admitted free of charge but they must be booked in at the same time as booking for the jumper. Carers must not leave the individual to bounce unattended. You MUST arrive 20 minutes before your jump time to allow time to get through check in and safety briefing.

www.jump-rush.com

X Height Climbing Wall Salt Ayre Lancaster Thursdays 5.00-5.50 / 6.00-6.50 £6.00 per child aged 5+. Siblings welcome. No proof of diagnosis needed.

This session is for children with Special Educational Needs. We use fun sensory activities on the wall to improve climbing ability and confidence. This is also a session that helps to give a comfortable place in which to socialise and raise confidence. Suitable for 5+ years. All children must be accompanied by an adult (Parent guardian/ Carer), non-climbing.

<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/salt-ayre-leisure-centre/xheight-gravity/xheight>



Reel Cinema Morecambe Autism Friendly Screenings every other Saturday morning (Starting 28/8/21) No proof of diagnosis needed. Siblings welcome.

Films and times vary. Posters with details added to NLDG facebook page a few days before <https://www.facebook.com/NLDGAdditionalNeedsSupport> which can also be seen on the homepage of NLDG website www.northlancsdirectionsgroup.com if you are not on Facebook.

Vue Cinema Lancaster Autism Friendly Screening last Sunday of the month morning. No proof of diagnosis needed. Siblings welcome.

Films and times vary. Posters with details added to NLDG facebook page a few days before <https://www.facebook.com/NLDGAdditionalNeedsSupport> which can also be seen on the homepage of NLDG website www.northlancsdirectionsgroup.com if you are not on Facebook.



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Other useful links



C.H.A.T.S Carers Help Advisory Training and Support, or C.H.A.T.S, is a Morecambe and Lancaster based peer support group. For parents and carers of children and young people experiencing emotional problems or those with mental health concerns. They have virtual and face to face meetings for parents to join which are supported by the CAMHS primary mental health workers. For dates and enquiries please email them on the address below or request to join the group.

Private group to ask questions and share support.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/598047137613422>

chats_123@yahoo.com



As the new term starts, some parents may be struggling to get your children to school without incident. Some of your children won't be going to school as they are home educated. Some of your children will be happy to go to school, or have struggled to go to school for other reasons. Whatever your story, it's important to recognise and celebrate the small wins. Small wins to us parents of children with additional needs could be that they licked a carrot! They wore socks for a whole hour! They wore a new school uniform for their first day back! They told me about something that made them smile at school! They have kept a fidget toy in 1 piece for a week without destroying it!

It's really important for their self-esteem and yours to recognise these positives, if they can handle the praise. Let them know they have done something incredible. Be guided by them as to how much you can praise them for it but know that **WE** get it!

Being a parent carer can be isolating at times as other parents who don't have children with additional needs don't always understand how massive it is for our children / young people to accomplish things after battles they have no clue about. Find your tribe, lean on them and celebrate together. The NLDG facebook group is a safe place to do that too.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NorthLancsDirectionsGroup>



If you feel you are struggling and need support for your own mental health, please speak to your GP.

For urgent advice and support call 0800 953 0110

For a range of mental health support charities please go to <https://www.northlancsdirectionsgroup.com/mental-health> or <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

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