

Autism

What is Autism and where to find help and support?

'Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. One in 100 people are on the autism spectrum and there are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK.' - The National Autistic Society

Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a medical diagnosis of a number of needs that are likely to affect a person's ability to read other people's body language, to express themselves, through words and actions, and behaviours. There are lots of different views about what autism is and people tend to think of it being a range of needs with people have some autistic tendencies to others whose needs make it difficult to do everyday things. It can be seen as positive and negative - many people who have autism have found ways to adapt life to work well for their skills and strengths whilst for others it interrupts their everyday lives and is difficult to manage. More recently, people have started to talk about people with autism as being 'neurodiverse' - simply thinking differently.

How do I know if my child is autistic ?

There are a number of common things that you might see in children who go on to have diagnosis of autism. but some of these things can be seen in children with other needs too. Common examples that may suggest autism include: difficulties reading and understanding other people's body language and words / emotions.; repeated body movements that are used to calm themselves like hand flapping or rocking; over or under sensitivity to stimulation; highly focused interests; anxiety; meltdowns and shutdowns. Some of these things are also seen as children develop and it can be difficult to be certain which are lifelong and which are delayed development. This is why some children do not get a diagnosis until it becomes clear this is not just a delay in developing skills. It is, therefore, important to ensure that children get support with their early development and where there are delays that extra advice and help is sought..

Who can help?

- If your child is not yet at school, talk with your health visitor, paediatrician or GP about what is worrying you. They can help you get extra help for your child.
- If your child is 5- 16 years, start with your child's teacher or SENCo and tell them what is worrying you. They can check a number of things to see if they can work out what your child finds difficult. They may seek further help from an Educational Psychologist, or refer you on to the Pediatrics Team / School Doctor who can make a diagnosis if its needed.
- The best thing you can do is to talk to the professionals and work together to help your child learn and develop.
- Our Handy Guide on a ASD Assessments will give you more information.

Where to find out more on website:

www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk and look under Useful Information