

NORSACA

NORSACA was established in 1968 by parents concerned by the lack of appropriate education for children with autism. It is still led by parents and friends of people with autism.

The services we provide include:

- **Support and information for families and individuals**
- **A specialist day school**
- **A specialist Further Education college**
- **Adult residential units**
- **Day services for adults**
- **Outreach respite services for adults**
- **Support for independent living**
- **A diagnostic and assessment facility**
- **Training for parents, carers and professionals**

NORSACA is based in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Our services also extend to neighbouring counties. Each year NORSACA provides support to hundreds of people with autism and their families. We reach many more people, both locally and nationally, through the information and training we provide.

NORSACA works in partnership with many organisations, including local authorities, housing associations, health authorities and colleges.

Useful contact details

NORSACA

Park Hall Autism Resource Centre
Park Road
Bestwood Village
Nottingham
NG6 8TQ

Tel: 0115 976 1805

Email: norsacaadmin@btconnect.com

Adult and Further Education Services

Eastwood House
10 Mill Street
Clowne
Derbyshire
S43 4JN

Tel: 01246 810 101

Email: info@norsaca.org.uk

Sutherland House Children's Services

272 Longdale Lane
Ravenshead
Nottinghamshire
NG15 9AH

Tel: 01623 490 879

Email: ravenshead@sutherlandhouse.org.uk

www.norsaca.org.uk

NORSACA is the working name of the Nottingham Regional Society for Adults & Children with Autism, a registered charity, no. 517954, and a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in England, no. 2053860.
Registered office: Park Hall Autism Resource Centre, Park Road, Bestwood Village, Nottingham NG6 8TQ

What is Autism?



NORSACA
quality of life for people with autism

What is autism?

Imagine a world where you could not understand why other people were laughing, why someone was smiling at you, why someone was shouting or crying, and where language sometimes seemed to make no sense at all. Imagine how hard it would be to know how to behave, to talk to people and to make friends. Would you feel isolated, anxious and frightened? This is how the world seems to many people with autism, as they struggle to make sense of people, places and events.

Autism is a spectrum condition, sometimes referred to as an autism spectrum disorder. The term 'spectrum' means that it varies in severity and impact from person to person. Some people with autism are able to live independently with little or no support. Others need specialist care throughout their lives. Many people with autism have additional learning difficulties.

Each person with autism is an individual, with different needs and abilities. The common characteristics of autism are:

- Difficulties with social interaction, making friends and in understanding others' feelings and experiences
- Difficulty with communication, including not fully understanding facial expressions, gestures or tone of voice
- Difficulty in thinking flexibly and understanding abstract ideas

Everyday life can be confusing and frustrating for people with autism. They may find it difficult to cope with changes in routine. Many develop repetitive behaviours that help them to feel safe. Frustration may sometimes lead to people with autism getting upset and angry. This can be difficult for other people to understand and can have a big impact on families and carers.

Autism is a condition that affects people throughout their lives.

Sensory sensitivity

The senses of people with autism can be much more or less sensitive than is typical, which can make day-to-day activities confusing or even painful. For instance, in a supermarket people are talking, music plays, cash registers beep, babies cry, doors whoosh open and closed, bags rustle and the lighting hums. These noises can seem unbearably loud, leading to discomfort and anxiety.

People who are under-sensitive may not feel pain when they injure themselves. They may also flap their hands or rock from side to side to stimulate sensation.

People with sensory issues may also find it harder to be aware of where their bodies are and how they are positioned. This can make walking around obstacles and carrying out precise activities such as tying shoelaces more difficult.

Some facts

- **Asperger syndrome is a form of autism, used to describe people at the more able end of the spectrum**
- **Over 500,000 people in the UK have autism (including Asperger syndrome) – around one in every 100 people**
- **Autism affects all races, nationalities and social classes**
- **Autism is known to affect four times as many boys as girls**

Source: National Autistic Society

What causes autism?

The causes of autism are still being investigated, but it seems that it does not result from a single cause. There is strong evidence to suggest that autism can be caused by a variety of physical factors which affect brain development. There is also evidence to suggest that genetic factors are responsible for some forms of autism. Autism is not due to emotional deprivation or the way a person has been brought up.

Diagnosis

A diagnosis of autism is usually made by a professional like a psychologist or paediatrician based on a formal assessment of an individual.

It is important to get early diagnosis as this will enable the child and the family to receive the right help and support. Structured support, education and care can really make a difference. They can help the person with autism to live as full and independent a life as possible.

For various reasons some people do not get a diagnosis until later in life. This can still be useful. It helps the individual and their family to learn more about themselves, understand why they may experience certain difficulties and how they can overcome them. A diagnosis can also help adults to access support.

NORSACA's mission

NORSACA aims to advocate, provide and develop high quality services, information, and support, in partnership with others, for all those whose lives are affected by autism.

We aim to recognise and respond to the needs of the individual, enabling people with autism to live their lives with dignity, choice and independence.