



National
Autistic
Society

Autism Specialist
Award Accredited



The National Autistic Society's

Autism Accreditation Specialist Award



**Award
criteria**

Our framework of best practice



Support should be:	What does this mean?
Person centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each autistic person receives support that is uniquely tailored to them as an individual. • Autistic people or where appropriate their family/advocates are actively involved in shaping the support they receive in ways which are meaningful to them.
Evidence informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches employed to support autistic people should be informed by credible research that they can produce positive outcomes for autistic people together with practitioner expertise and the lived experience of autistic people. • Approaches should be regularly evaluated to show they are achieving intended outcomes and changes made if they are not. • Whilst approaches can be those which are widely established within the field of autism, they should be adapted according to what will work best for the individual. • Where an approach may be less well established, they are delivered by, or supported by, appropriately qualified and experienced professionals, are based on a good understanding of autism and closely monitored to ensure that they are not ineffective or harmful.
Strengths based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strengths based approach begins with a holistic assessment not just of an individual's needs and challenges but their skills, interests, preferences and strengths. • Support first and foremost seeks to build upon these assets which the individual already possesses and making changes to the environment to help them overcome societal barriers.
Directly promotes wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is based around activities which each autistic person finds enjoyable, relaxing or engaging and provides them with a sense of achievement and purpose. • Approaches are identified which help maintain the well-being of each autistic person including where appropriate proactive and preventative strategies to avoid anxiety or distress and to help them understand and regulate emotions and sensory reactions. • Consideration is given to what changes need to be made to the environment or the way staff engage with the autistic person to support their well-being and engagement.

Our framework of best practice



Support should be:	What does this mean?
Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autistic people are supported to actively take part in purposeful and meaningful activity rather than simply being present or passively aware of what is happening.• Autistic people are taught relevant skills in communication, independent living, problem solving and decision making to empower them to have greater control, autonomy and purpose in their lives.• The ultimate aim of active support should be to give autistic people greater control, autonomy and purpose in their lives. It should also enable them to be actively involved in and contribute to the communities they live in and directly impact on their quality of life.

Award criteria



Aspiring

- The service meets some of the criteria to be Accredited but there are one or more gaps or inconsistencies related to fundamental principles of good practice in supporting autistic people. These areas of improvement directly impact on outcomes for some of the autistic people supported by the service and require a significant amount of work to address.

Accredited

- Staff have a working knowledge of evidence-informed approaches associated with good autism practice.
- They can adapt these specialist approaches so that support is personal-centred and tailored to individual qualities, abilities, interests, preferences and challenges.
- Adaptions are made to the environment to support individual well-being and self-reliance.
- Each autistic person develops skills and confidence in communicating with others and engaging in a range of rewarding social activities.
- Each autistic person develops skills and confidence in carrying out tasks independently and in being empowered to make their own decisions leading to them having greater control and self-autonomy in their lives.
- Each autistic person enjoys an increasing range of sensory experiences whilst developing regulation strategies to help them avoid sensory overload.
- Support enables autistic people to take part in activities which are purposeful and engaging and which promotes their emotional well-being and social inclusion.
- Proactive and preventative strategies are employed to help each autistic person avoid anxiety or distress and to help them understand and regulate their emotions.
- Feedback from autistic people and/or where appropriate those that represent their interests is overall good, confirming that the majority are happy with the support given and how they are involved and consulted.
- Whilst there may be some gaps or inconsistencies related to fundamental principles of good practice in supporting autistic people these can be addressed quickly and in a relatively short period of time, within the provision's existing resources and capabilities.

Award criteria



Advanced

- The service meets all the criteria to be Accredited at a high level of quality and consistency.
- Feedback from autistic people and/or where appropriate those that represent their interests is excellent, confirming that an overwhelming majority are happy with the support given and how they are involved and consulted.
- There are no or very limited gaps or inconsistencies related to fundamental principles of good practice in supporting autistic people.

Beacon status

- The provision has received an Advanced Award within the last 18 months.
- The provision can demonstrate exceptional work done to impact on knowledge and understanding of autism amongst families, external professionals and the local community.
- A provision will only be considered for a Beacon Award on submission of an application form to our independent panel of professionals with considerable expertise in the field of autism.



Case studies

Case studies provide examples of positive outcomes achieved through individualised support and initiatives taken to improve practice, provisions are encouraged to submit these to enhance the evidence within the assessment process. Submission of case studies is also strongly recommended for those that wish to be considered for an advanced Award.

Surveys of autistic people and/or families

Autism Accreditation values feedback from autistic people and where appropriate those representing their best interests. Provisions, especially those hoping to achieve Advanced status, are expected to take reasonable effort to support as many autistic people as possible to participate in our confidential survey, taking steps to make it more accessible where necessary.

- For an Accredited Award, we would normally expect to receive at least 10 % returns from surveys with over 50 % of these returns rating support as always or mostly good.
- For an Advanced Award, we would normally expect to receive at least 33 % return from surveys with over 75 % of these returns rating support as always or mostly good, with more in the always good category. The rest should be in the ok category with maybe the exception of one or two responses in the poor category.

These guidelines will be applied with discretion according to context.

Statutory inspections

Award decisions will be primarily based on observations, interviews and scrutiny of support plans, alongside feedback from autistic people and their families. However, Committee decisions will take into account evidence from statutory bodies that a provision does not fully meet regulatory standards.

- Accredited award will be withheld if the provision fails to meet statutory requirements related to wellbeing of autistic people,
- Advanced award/Beacon Status will be withheld if the provision enquires improvement or does not meet statutory requirements related to well-being of autistic people.

For further support to enhance your practise please [visit our Autism Accreditation pages](#) to find out more about our Accredited Autism Specialist Award.

