

Section 6: Finances, Employment and Education Self Help Resource Pack for autistic people

This pack has been put together from information available from specialist autism services, autistic people, and professionals working with autistic people.



Resource Pack created by NHS Lothian Adult ADHD and AUTISM Resource Team.

Managing finances

Some autistic people may need help and support in order to live independently in the community.

The law entitles all people who have care needs, to services appropriate to meet those needs. Most community care services are provided or arranged by local authorities through their social work departments.

If you think you may need support from your local social work department, you should contact them to request an assessment.

- If you live in Edinburgh, **Tel:** 0131 200 2324 **Website:** [Ask Social Care Direct for advice – The City of Edinburgh Council](#)
- If you live in Midlothian, **Tel:** 0131 271 3900 **Website:** [Health and social care | Midlothian Council](#)
- If you live in East Lothian, **Tel:** 0131 271 3900 **Website:** [Social care and health | East Lothian Council](#)
- If you live in West Lothian, complete a self-referral form
Website: [Contact Us - Health & Social Care Partnership](#)

If you are not able to make decisions about money then you may need someone to be appointed to manage your money on your behalf. The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act provides a range of options to help those who are or may become unable to look after their own financial affairs or welfare. Your social work department or lawyer will be able to explain this to you.

Will I be charged for the services I receive?

Local authorities may charge users for the services they receive (under the *Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968*). They should decide what services you need and then consider how these services are paid for. This means that your ability to pay should not influence the authority's decision over what to provide. People over the age of 65 years who need help with personal care cannot be charged.

What happens if I am not eligible?

If your local authority decides you are not eligible for services they should write to you and give reasons for their decision. They should provide you with details of other agencies that may be able to help you.

Managing your finances

Some autistic people can have difficulty managing their finances.

You might have difficulty with:	You could try this...
Keeping track of important letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sort your mail so that you keep important documents and those requiring action separate from catalogues and fliers• Set aside a specific time each week to read your mail and complete the tasks required from important documents
Remembering to pay your bills on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have bills sent electronically or set up a direct debit
Spending too much in the supermarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan your weekly meals in advance and use this to create a shopping list so that you don't buy on impulse• Don't go food shopping when you are hungry• Use online supermarket shopping – you can repeat last week's shop easily

The National Autistic Society has helpful information.

Website: [Financial help, money and benefits](#)

Making decisions

Once you reach adulthood at 18, the law presumes that you are able to make decisions for yourself, unless there is evidence that this is not the case. This means that legally no-one, including your parents or carers, has the right to make decisions on your behalf. Often, getting some help and advice from friends and family is a very good idea. This might be helpful with decisions about whether you should move house or change jobs. All adults need to talk through big decisions with other people sometimes.

For some autistic people, explaining what they need and want can be very difficult. Even people who are extremely able and independent may find it hard to get professionals or people offering services to listen to their point of view.

If this is the case for you, your parents or another family member may need to speak on your behalf. If you think your parents may not be listened to or may not have your best interests at heart, then you might want to find an independent advocate. A 'citizen advocate' is someone who gets to know you and is able to help you to say what you want or to say things for you.

Recommended websites and further reading- managing finances

- **National Autistic Society**

Information about welfare rights, managing money, community care

Website: [Financial help, money and benefits](#)

Website: [Advice and guidance](#)

Website: [Managing money](#)

- **Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living**

Can help with all aspects of self-directed support (SDS)

Tel: 0131 475 2350

Website: [Home - Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living \(LCIL\)](#)

- **Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance**

To find out about advocacy services in your area

Tel: 0131 510 9410

Website: [Home - Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance](#)

Employment

A 2006 survey estimated that there were over 46,000 autistic people in Scotland, then had a total population of around 5.5 million. Many adults can and want to work; yet research by The National Autistic Society found that only 30% of working-age autistic people are in employment.

Autistic people can experience a range of issues that make it difficult for them to find and keep a job. With the right support and training for both them and their employer and colleagues, autistic people have much to offer in the workplace. A combination of the right support and appropriate opportunities can make a real difference.

As is the case with all employees, it is important to match a person's particular skills to the requirements of the post.

What can your employers do to support you?

Your employer can make a number of reasonable adjustments to working practices to support you if you have a diagnosis of autism.

Some examples of supports and adjustments your employer can make include:

- Appointing a colleague to act as a mentor for you, to help with any issues that arise and if need be, represent your views
- Arranging general and specific autism awareness training for staff who work with the employee(s) with autism
- Bringing in help from external support organisations that offer job mentoring, coaching and general or specific job assistance to autistic people
- Using a job coach to help both employer and employee to establish a successful working partnership.

The National Autistic Society has further information on reasonable adjustments in the workplace for both employers and for autistic employees, including fact sheets for employers:

Website: [Employment](#)

Website: [For employers](#)

The main goal is to help promote the values and skills autistic individuals can bring to a business or organisation, which may not have been initially obvious.

You might have difficulty with:	You could try this...
Feeling stressed at work The lighting at work Where you have to sit The amount of work you have to do Coffee break and social groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to your employer about your needs and negotiate adjustments in your working space or your working pattern. A trade union representative may be able to help.• Find a quiet room or space that you can go to at work if you feel over-loaded• Sometimes a short walk in the fresh air at regular intervals can help • Take time to de-stress when you get home from work

Disability Discrimination: Autism and the law

The Equality Act 2010 aims to prevent discrimination against disabled people. The Act prohibits disability discrimination by employers against disabled people. Under the Act, a person is deemed to be disabled if he/she has or has had: **a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.**

An autistic person will be disabled if he/she satisfies the conditions laid down in this definition. Many autistic people will meet this definition.

IntoWork

IntoWork is an employment support service which helps people with a disability to reach their employment goals, including autistic people.



They offer advice, guidance, training and on-going support to employers and employees in the following way:

Stage 1: Job Readiness

The person with disabilities is eager to find work and engage with IntoWork

Stage 2: Vocational Profile

A tool to get to know the client, establish skills and abilities, needs and goals

Stage 3: Job Search/Job Development

Searching for jobs and matching skills to employers' needs

Stage 4: Employer Engagement

Introduce client to employer, break down barriers, job analysis, negotiate job description, disability awareness to managers and co-workers, enter a contract with the employer about what support/job coaching will be provided

Stage 5: On/off the job support

Job coaching, support, monitoring visits, phone calls, peer support

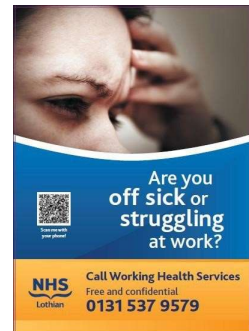
Working Health Services Scotland

Working Health Services provide occupational health support for people who are unable to access this through their employer. They can offer advice, support and treatment to help you stay at work or get back to work.

You can ask your GP to referral you or refer yourself by calling

Tel: 0800 019 2211.

Website: [Access to Working Health Services Scotland - Keeping people in work - Healthy Working Lives - Public Health Scotland](#)



Lothian Work Support Services

This is a service led by NHS specialist Occupational Therapist for those currently in work and living in Lothian, struggling with their mental or physical health at work or want help to return to work. In order to self-refer you need to be in a company with less that 250 employees or self-employed. If this is not the case contact your GP or another health professional to refer.

Tel: 0131 537 9579

Email: loth.vocrehab@nhs.scot

Recommended websites and further reading- employment

- **National Autistic Society**

Advice for autistic people looking for a job or already in work

Website: [Employment](#)

- **IntoWork**

Provides advice and support including specialist autism

advisors **Tel:** 0131 475 2600

Website: [Homepage - Into Work](#)

- **Prospects**

Employment and Training service run in Glasgow by National Autistic Society

Tel: 0141 248 1725

Website: [Hi-hope](#)

- **Iwork4me**

Support autistic people who wish to become self-employed

Website: [Free Business Mentoring for Autistic People in Scotland |](#)

[IWORK4ME](#)

Further and higher education

Applying to university or college

The National Autism Society (NAS) has information on their website for autistic people who are considering applying to a university or further education college.

UCAS is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses that are offered at universities and colleges in the UK.

Disability Rights UK has further information on applying to higher education.

Sharing information about a diagnosis of AUTISM

Many people worry that disclosing their disability when applying to university may lead to discrimination against them. Universities and colleges have a legal requirement to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that students with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage. An example of a 'reasonable adjustment' could be to provide copies of the lecture notes for a student who finds note-taking during lectures difficult.

What supports are available?

You will need to contact the disability support staff at the university or college to find out about support services they offer and for a chance to talk about the support that you feel you may need whilst studying. It is useful to make contact with the support services before starting university or college so that the support is in place from the beginning of the course.



Disabled Students' Allowance

You may be eligible for a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), awarded through SAAS (Student Awards Agency Scotland). These grants are available to help with costs that

students may incur as a direct result of their disability. Unlike a loan, these do not have to be paid back.

SAAS gives information about what you can claim under DSA, how to apply and contact details.

Recommended websites and further reading- Further and higher education

- **National Autistic Society** Information and support for students.

Website: [starting college or university](#)

- **Disability Rights UK Student helpline**

Tues and Thurs 11am-1pm

Tel: 0330 995 0400

Email: students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Website: [Helplines | Disability Rights UK](#)



- **Lead Scotland**

Helpline open 2 pm-4pm Mon, Wed and Thurs, 10am-12pm Tues and Fri

Tel: 0800 999 2568

Email: enquiries@lead.org.uk

Website: [Transforming Futures - Lead Scotland](#)

- **UCAS**

This organisation is responsible for managing applications to higher education.

Tel: 0871 468 0468

Website: [Choose your future | UCAS](#)



- **Student Awards Agency Scotland**

Scottish Government agency giving financial support to eligible students

Website: [Student Awards Agency Scotland - SAAS - Funding Your Future](#)

Individual higher and further education institutions

Individual universities and colleges provide further information on their websites about the support they can offer students with disabilities and support needs including Autism. Some local institutions are referenced below.

- **Edinburgh University support information:**

Website: [Students | Disability and Learning Support Service | Disability and Learning Support Service](#)

- **Heriot Watt University support information:**

Website: [Health and wellbeing | Heriot-Watt University](#)

- **Edinburgh Napier University support information:**

Website: [Disability & Inclusion](#)

- **Edinburgh College support information:**

Website: [Get in touch | Edinburgh College](#)

- **Scotland's Rural College support information:**

Website: [SRUC | Student life](#)

- **Newbattle Abbey College support information:**

Website: [Home - Newbattle Abbey College](#)

- **Borders College support information Website:** [Borders College | Your College, Your Future | Education and training in the Scottish Borders](#)