

Autism NI is Northern Ireland's main autism charity and works to provide life-changing services for over 35,000 autistic people currently living in Northern Ireland.

Our work wouldn't be possible without the generosity of our supporters. Your donation can help us continue to provide invaluable autism services, and build an inclusive society where autistic people can reach their full potential.

To make a donation, please visit [www.autismni.org](http://www.autismni.org) or call us on **028 9040 1729**.

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# What is autism?



# Autism is lifelong and affects the way an individual relates to people, situations and the immediate environment. Autistic individuals have difficulty processing everyday sensory information such as sight, smell, touch, taste and sounds.

Autistic individuals may face barriers to accessing services such as health and education. Autism NI provides support and information to autistic individuals and their families, with the aim to create an equal society where access to services and opportunities are available to all.

- ◆ There are 1 in 20 pupils attending school with a diagnosis of autism.\*
- ◆ Statistics show that males were 3 times more likely to have a diagnosis of autism than females.\*
- ◆ The rate in girls diagnosed has been increasing at a higher rate each year.
- ◆ More than 4,500 children in Northern Ireland are waiting for an autism assessment.\*\*
- ◆ Children in urban areas were more likely to be diagnosed than those in rural areas.
- ◆ 82% of autistic children have special educational needs.
- ◆ More than 14,000 school aged children in Northern Ireland have been diagnosed with autism (4-15year olds).\*

\* The Prevalence of Autism [including Aspergers Syndrome] in School Age Children in Northern Ireland. (Department of Health, 2023).

\*\* Figures released via a NI Assembly question, (tabled September 2021).



## About us

Formed in 1990, Autism NI is a partnership led organisation formed to promote positive collaboration between parents, professionals and autistic individuals and address the need for appropriate services throughout Northern Ireland.

### Autism NI's core activities include:



**Family support:** This is the main activity of the Charity which includes a Helpline, Autism Resource Officer services, Autism Support Officer services and a regional Support Group Network.



**Early intervention:** Aims to build and strengthen relationships for families of children aged 17 years and under. The project will support families across Northern Ireland.



**GAP:** (Girls & Autism Project) works with girls aged 11-18 years and their families within the Northern Trust. GAP supports achievement, enjoyment and full participation.



**MAP:** (Mental Health & Autism Project) works with autistic young people aged 11-18 years residing within the Belfast Trust. MAP supports young people address barriers presenting across home, school and the community, enhancing emotional well-being and enjoyment.



**Adult autistic peer networks:** Online peer support for autistic adults, providing an opportunity to socialise in a relaxed setting.



**Research:** Autism NI has a 20-year partnership with Ulster University in commissioned action research which underpins the Charity's training, autism spectrum interventions and service models.



**Training:** Autism NI are the only autism specific accredited agency in NI, providing nationally recognised AQA accreditations. We pride ourselves on providing training that is evidence based, accurate and practical to ensure it is effective in supporting autistic individuals and their families.



**Lobbying:** Autism NI's ongoing lobbying efforts are based upon a general campaign of autism awareness working alongside the All Party Group on Autism. We celebrated the passage of the equality based Autism Act (NI) in 2011 after a 6 year long political lobby. Furthermore, the Autism (Amendment) Act (NI) 2022, received Royal assent on 26th April 2022 and will be enacted within three months of publication. Autism NI focus on ensuring the full implementation of the Autism Strategy and better autism services to families throughout Northern Ireland.



**Fundraising:** Autism NI receives limited funding from the Statutory Sector and therefore relies heavily on public donations and fundraising activities.

If you would like further information on autism or our services, please visit [www.autismni.org](http://www.autismni.org)