

# Effective support to maintain meaningful employment

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# Employment Quiz

*Discuss the questions below in groups:*

- 1. What percentage of the population has autism, including Asperger syndrome?**  
0.2%, 1.1% or 9.2%
- 2. What is the ratio of males to females with autism?**  
1:1, 4:1 or 8:1?
- 3. What percentage of people with autism are in full time employment?**  
15%, 32% or 58%
- 4. What jobs do people with autism succeed in?**
- 5. Name 3 difficulties someone with autism may have in the workplace.**

# Autism and Employment

- Autism (including Asperger syndrome) affects over 700,000 people in the UK
- 15% of people with autism are in full-time employment
- 79% of people with autism on out-of-work benefits want to work
- 43% have left or lost a job because of their condition

# At this moment in time.....

- Most support services are under increasing pressure on time and resources
- High unemployment rates = less jobs and more competition
- New government job finding programmes (Work Choice and Work Programme) – how suitable for ASD?

.....but

- Personalisation agenda
- Autism Strategy
- Innovative employment strategies
- Improving technology

# The Autism Strategy



- Following lobbying from the autism community the Autism Act was signed in October 2009

- Strategy 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' was published in March 2010

*'We know that adults with autism are significantly under-represented in the labour market.....indicates that UK employers are not benefitting from the skills and talents adults with autism can offer in the workplace (Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, March 2010)'*

- Covered four key areas:

- Training
- Identification and diagnosis
- Access to relevant services
- Transition planning

Accept difference. Not indifference.

# The Autism Strategy

## Access to relevant services

- Each local authority should ensure there is a joint commissioner/senior manager with a clear responsibility for adults with autism.
- Should be able to access direct payments and personal budgets

## Transition planning

- Tailored to needs of individual
- Parent and young person informed of right to community care assessment

# Difficulties and Strategies



- The Equality Act requires employers to make 'reasonable adjustments'
- Think about 2 difficulties and reasonable adjustments that you could suggest for someone with autism in the workplace.

# Common difficulties...

- Job description/roles and responsibilities
- Unrealistic workplace expectations
- Unwritten rules of the workplace
- Environmental and sensory sensitivities
- Team working
- Social aspect of workplace



# Reasonable adjustments in the workplace

- Job coach or support worker
- 'Buddy' or mentor
- Training for colleagues/raising awareness
- Job carving (building the role based on persons strengths)
- Providing one to one training
- Modifying instructions (e.g. providing written as well as verbal instructions)
- Regular feedback meetings with line manager
- Environmental adaptations to meet sensory needs

# Best Practice for workplace mentoring



- Consistent support at workplace tailored to individual needs (e.g. weekly, monthly or quarterly visits)
- Meet with manager at regular intervals (ideally every other visit)
- Ongoing email and phone support to employers and employees
- Sessions in a calm non-stressful environment
- Summarise session and action points in email/text/writing
- Be supportive, direct, motivational and positive
- Advise on awareness training for colleagues and manager

# Access to Work

- Government scheme aimed at helping individuals with disabilities overcome barriers in work
- [www.direct.gov.uk/accesstowork](http://www.direct.gov.uk/accesstowork)
- Fund reasonable adjustments
  - Support at interviews
  - Workplace mentoring
  - Workplace assessment
  - Awareness training
  - Equipment

# Best Practice Employment Support



- **Preparing for the workplace**
  - Clarifying expectations
  - Planning for work
  - Build awareness of individual strategies
- **Workplace assessments**
  - Assess all aspects of working day
  - Written report describing specific difficulties, strategies and adjustments
- **Workplace mentoring**
  - Ongoing support at regular intervals
  - Facilitate employee and manager discussions

*Accept difference. Not indifference.*

# Some ways forward?

- Sharing knowledge  
eg. Autism Awareness Network, BASE, Autism Partnership Boards
- Working together  
eg. NAS/Remploy partnership
- Utilising available funding  
eg. Access to Work, Right to Control, Personal budgets
- Creative employment practices  
eg. EFD, social firms, placement programmes
- Evolving services  
eg. School transitions, employment support in day services

# NAS Employment Service

- Supported Employment
  - Training to support job seekers with autism into work (including FE/HE transition)
  - Toolkit to facilitate job finding sessions and programmes
  - Become NAS Employment Training Partner to link with established network of employers
- Employer and Employee
  - Training for HR, colleagues and managers to ensure effective recruitment and retention of employees with autism
  - Workplace assessments
  - ‘Work skills’ courses and Workplace mentoring for employees

# Case Study - Remploy

- Employment Training Partnership established in 2010
- Delivered tailored training package for all Remploy UK branch staff
- Trained over 450 staff
- Provide ongoing specialist consultancy
- Increased job outcomes for Remploy customers with autism by 92%
- Successful bids for joint Employment Programmes

# Case Study - Remploy

*“Working in partnership with the NAS allows us to deliver a solid and innovative service to our customers. The in-depth training, alongside some great resources, has ensured that we are more confident and able to deliver employment services to customers on the autism spectrum.”*

**Partnerships Manager, Remploy**



# Case study - Kingston University



- Specialist training for colleagues and manager
- Comprehensive workplace assessment report to guide the organisations' working practice
- Ongoing workplace mentoring

*“At Kingston University the help and support that the NAS have provided for the employee, work colleagues and management staff have been invaluable in resolving a difficult situation – The NAS initiated and ran a Workplace Assessment and report, meetings with staff, training and support for managers and one to one support for the employee. These have all been expertly run programmes that have raised awareness, identified issues and developed strategies to support everyone to find appropriate and successful solutions to the complex issues that can arise with Autism in the workplace. I cannot recommend their services highly enough.”*

# Further Information

## **Autism and Asperger Syndrome**

NAS website: [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

NAS helpline: 0808-800-4101

[autismhelpline@nas.org.uk](mailto:autismhelpline@nas.org.uk)

## **Employment Training Team**

<http://www.autism.org.uk/our-services/employment-support.aspx>

## **Network Autism**

<http://network.autism.org.uk/welcome>

## **Supported Employment**

[www.autism.org.uk/supportedemployment](http://www.autism.org.uk/supportedemployment)

- Employers Forum on Disability: [www.efd.org.uk](http://www.efd.org.uk)