

# EMPLOY AUTISM

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## Session content

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- Autistic skills and talents
- Challenges while transitioning into work
- Challenges in the workplace
- AaA's employability programmes and paid opportunities of work
- AaA's resources for autistic jobseekers

# Skills and talents

# Current Autism approaches

## Four areas of difference



## The disability paradigm

### Paradigm Shift: Definition of Disability

#### OLD APPROACH

- A diagnosis
- A person is limited by the impairment or condition
- A medical "problem"

#### NEW PARADIGM

- Individuals with temporary or permanent impairments require accommodations to carry out life activities
- A socio-environmental issue involving accessibility, accommodations, and equity

## Language

We defer to identify first language  
**'autistic person'**

Some autistic young people identify as  
**'Neurodiverse/ND'**  
Or  
**'Neurodifferent'**

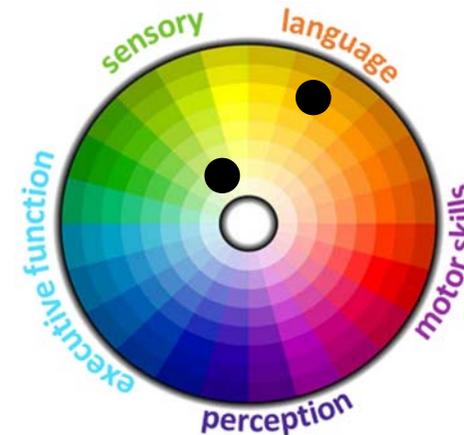
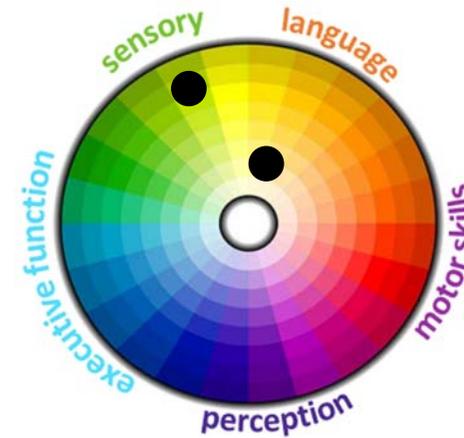
**Allistic** – anyone who isn't autistic

# The Autism Spectrum

❖ Everyone will have different abilities and skills in different areas – **these skills may change depending on the situation**

❖ For example, one person may be **very good at making conversation** (language) but may experience **sensory overload in loud and crowded spaces**.

❖ Another person might be **happy in loud crowds** but find **verbal conversations difficult**, which would look like this.



## Talents and skill sets

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She can walk around the power station in her mind

No-one can touch him when it comes to putting a file together for the CPS

He knows coding that we've never taught him, he just speaks it

She is queen of organising us, spreadsheets are so her thing

The clients love him because he doesn't tow the party line, he just does what they want

You've just got to trust her, she can see the finished thing, I can't but she can



**Attention to detail**

- Thoroughness
- Accuracy



**Methodical approach**

- Analytical
- Spotting patterns, repetition



**Deep focus**

- Concentration
- Freedom from distraction



**Novel approaches**

- Unique thought processes
- Innovative solutions



**Observational skills**

- Listen, look, learn approach
- Fact finding



**Creativity**

- Distinctive imagination
- Expression of ideas



**Absorb and retain facts**

- Excellent long term memory
- Superior recall



**Tenacity and resilience**

- Determination
- Challenge opinions



**Visual skills**

- Visual learning and recall
- Detail-focussed



**Accepting of difference**

- Less likely to judge others
- May question norms



**Expertise**

- In-depth knowledge
- High level of skills



**Integrity**

- Honesty, loyalty
- Commitment

# Challenges transitioning to work

# The impact of previous experiences



**Fewer than 1 in 4** autistic young people access training or further education after school.

**Four times as many** boys as girls are diagnosed with autism



Formal school exclusions of autistic children in England have risen by almost **60% in five years.**



**Only 15%** of autistic people believe that employers will offer them a job

# The experiences of AaA Youth Patrons

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My version of success is not necessarily the same as everyone else. I work 2 days a week and that is my version of success. And being told to do the 'regular' things isn't appropriate for everyone

Because of your autism you won't get a job in the arts and you're not academic enough

Gave me a leaflet on DLA rather than information on work and employability

Well, why are you here? If you can't even have a meeting with her then there is no hope, and you can't get a job if you can't even present yourself properly to me

Careers quiz: busy library lesson and sat on PC to do 15 minute quiz online and it told to me be a wigmaker; had a phobia of hair at the time!

# Mental Health and the Impact of The Covid Pandemic

**71% of autistic children and young people**



have mental health problems, compared with 1 in 4 of the general population

**Over three quarters said they think they will need ongoing support for mental health** once the pandemic is over

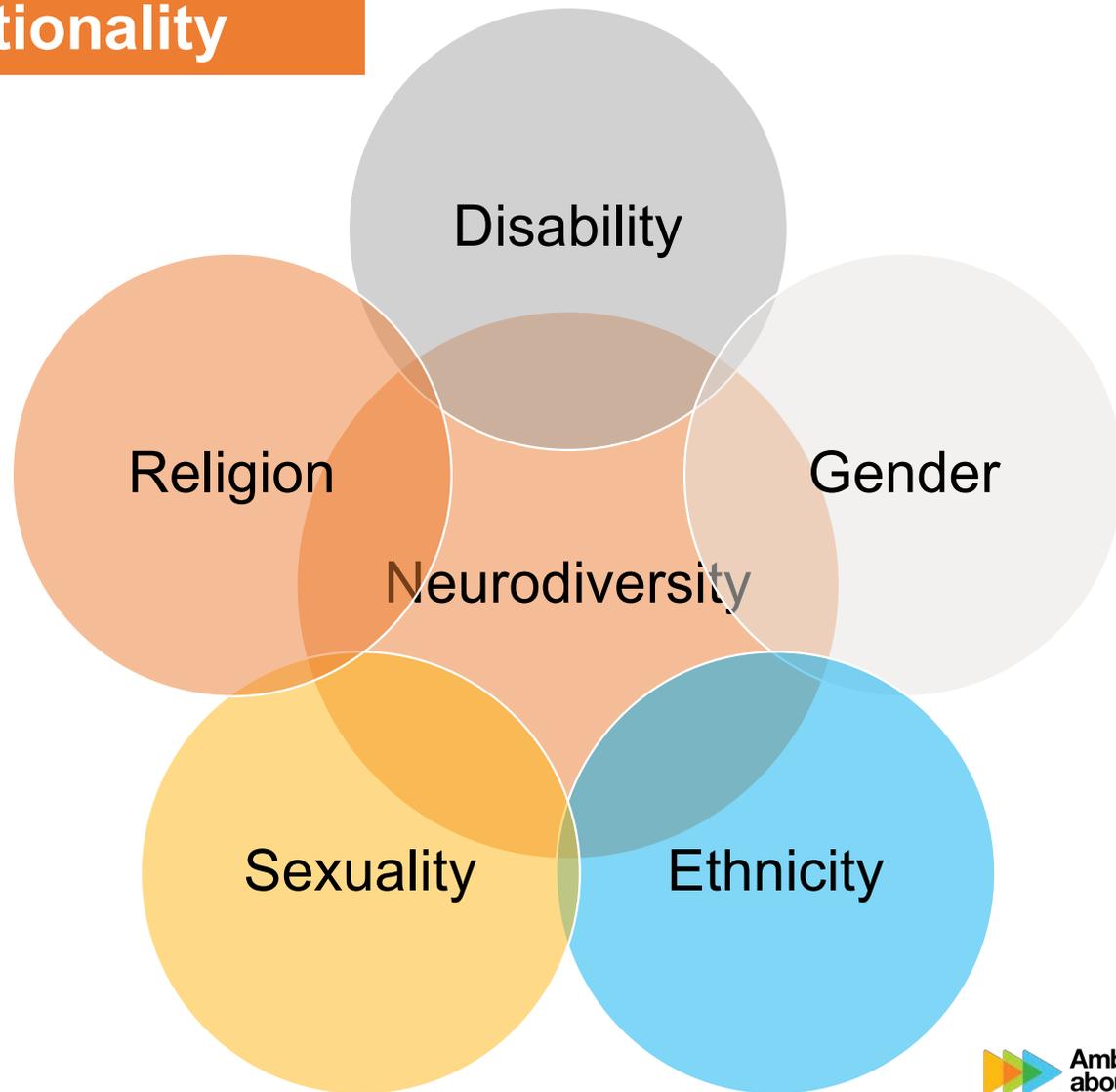
**75% of autistic children and young people**

said they feel more anxious now

**63% of autistic children and young people**

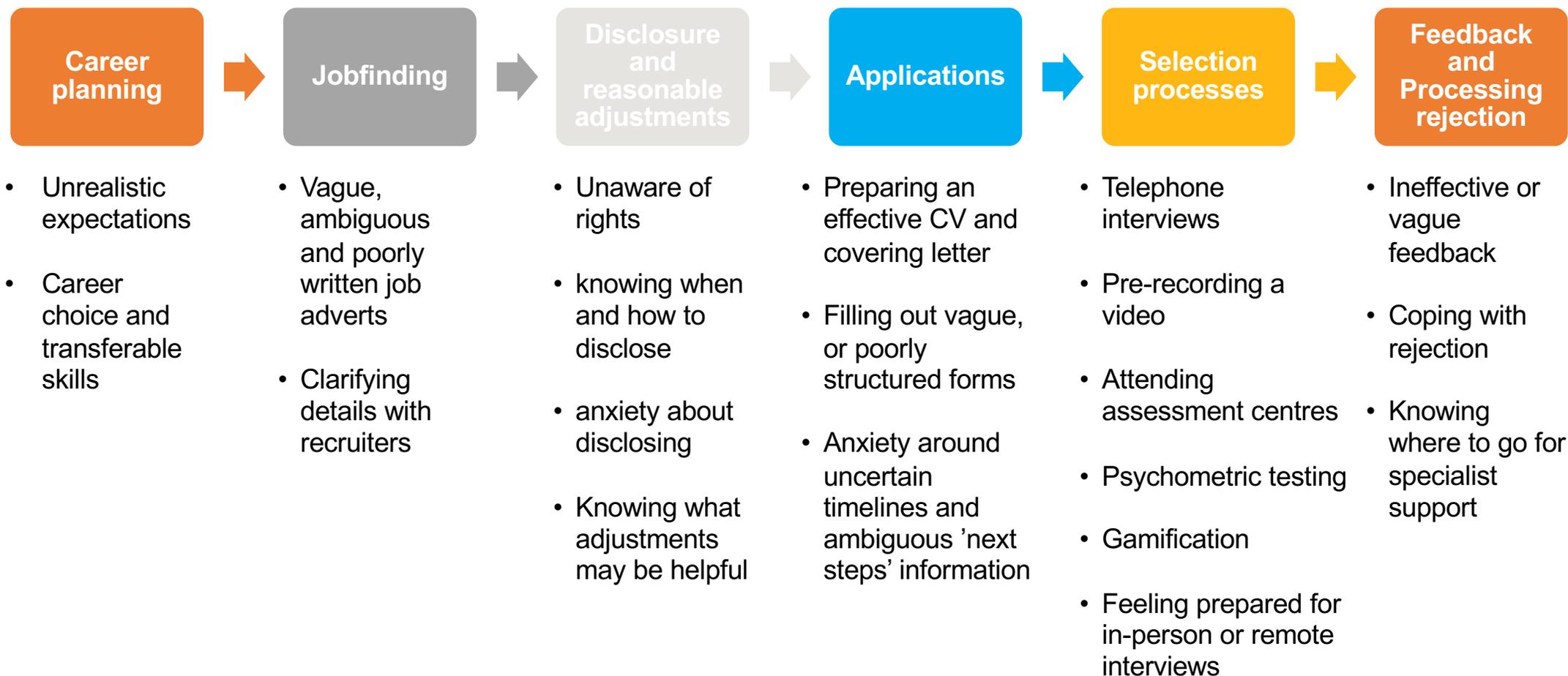
reported their mental health was worse than before the pandemic

# The impact of Intersectionality



# Barriers along the jobfinding and recruitment process

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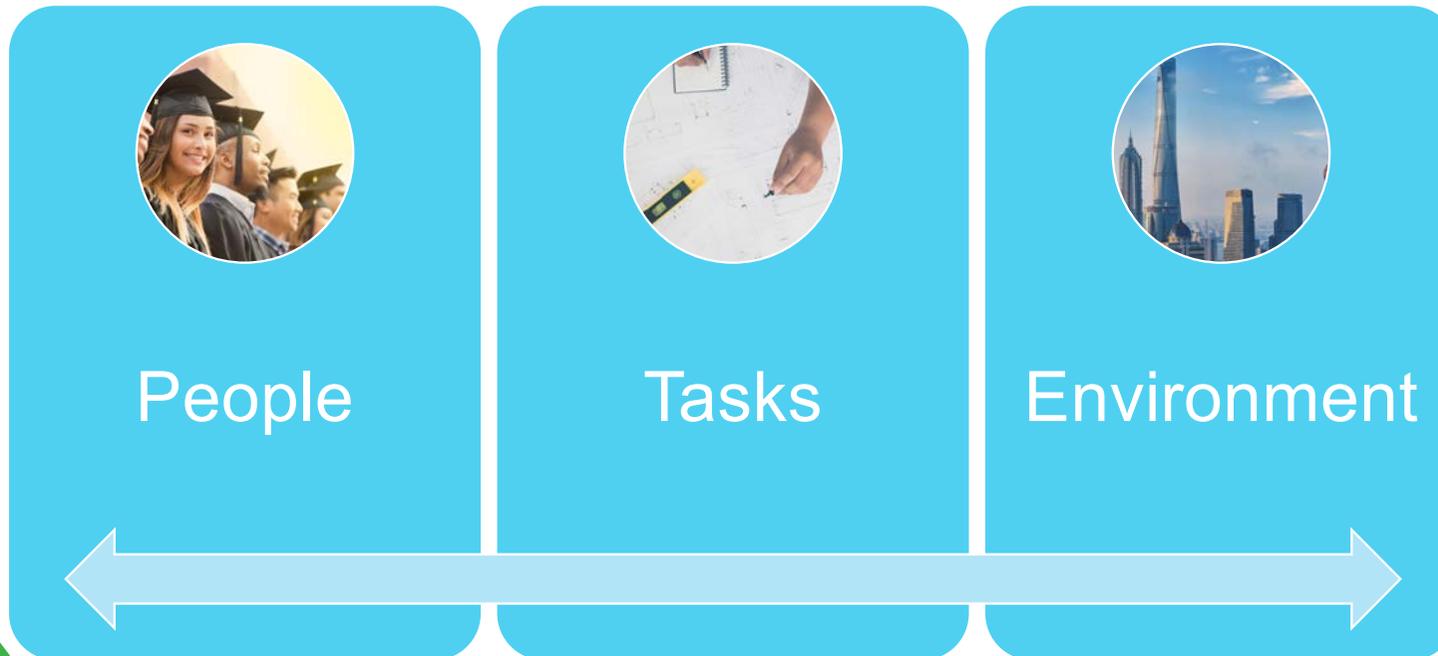
## **JOB TRAILS OR APTITUDE TESTING.....**

- **Dedicated person** and flexible contact details to discuss helpful adjustments before application or interview
- **Longer processing time** between questions
- **Allow support** to accompany
- **Alternatives** to telephone screening, psychometric testing, gamification, pre-recorded video's and in-person assessment centres
- **Questions in advance**
- **Clear visual information and structure** about the interview, timings, location, and interviewers
- **Quiet and private place** to wait in or calm down in
- **Meeting platform test** for remote interviews
- **Sensory neutral environments** (in-person and remote)

# Challenges in the workplace

# Challenges in the workplace

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- Workspace social rules & small talk
- Reliance on quick, verbal instructions
- Social demands
- Intuitively understanding non-autistic behaviours, intentions and motivations

# Tasks

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- Ambiguous or vague expectations
- Distractions /shifting focus
- Processing time
- Planning, prioritising and managing time
- Coping with changes

# Environment

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**Other sensory considerations:**

**Alexithymia**  
feelings and emotions

**Interoception**  
internal body sensations, pain, hunger, need to urinate

# Workplace adjustments passport

## Workplace Adjustments Passport

**Review date:** .....  
**Next Review date:** .....

**Dissemination permission: (insert or delete as appropriate)**

Brief to team colleagues as needed  
 Meet with employee and discuss before disseminating or briefing to any new people  
 Disseminate only to HR and line manager

**Condition(s)/Disability(ies)/Difference(s) (insert or delete as appropriate):**

Asperger Syndrome/Autistic Spectrum Condition/Autism

**Preferred language: (insert or delete as appropriate)**

autistic person/person with autism  
 person with autistic spectrum condition

**Name:**

**Manager:**

**HR:**

It helps me when people	I have difficulty when people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Redirect me when I'm off topic</li> <li>✓ Follow up important points via email</li> <li>✓ Communicate in a clear, <u>literal</u> and direct way to avoid misunderstandings</li> <li>✓ Give clear timelines for things to happen, and updates as soon as possible if things are going off track</li> <li>✓ Give me extra personal space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Display 'high-arousal' communication, speaking very quickly and with quickly changing tone, volume and pitch of voice, fidgeting, lots of subtle micro-expressions</li> <li>× Have noisy backgrounds whilst meeting remotely</li> <li>× Mis-read me based on non-autistic communication and interaction</li> </ul>

**Strengths:**

- Technology/Spreadsheets/Organisation/follow-up/admin
- Problem-solving/consultancy/reasonable adjustments for service users
- Detailed work
- Remembering written information
- Research (with strict time limits and purpose)

**Challenges:**

- Anxiety – specifically time anxiety, tendency to overthink past social interactions
- Travelling on public transport or with other people
- Personal boundary/touch –I find it especially uncomfortable if people touch me to comfort me when I am anxious or upset
- Noise sensitivity, especially 'human' noise
- Photo-sensitivity – prolonged strip/fluorescent lighting is painful
- Very sensitive to temperatures and am usually too hot



WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS	
<b>Collaboration and tasking</b>	Advance, written notice of meetings wherever possible, with a written agenda/structure supplied to allow for preparation – specifically catch-up meetings, and feedback meetings or work planning and tasking
<b>Sensory (tactile)</b>	Extended personal space and no touching when in-person
<b>Team meetings</b>	For in-person meetings, a seat near the door so I can step out or stand up and move when feeling overwhelmed, seating set back from crowded meeting tables
<b>Travelling</b>	Additional time to plan and prepare, able to choose own accommodation for overnight stays, travelling alone, and by car wherever possible

**It may be useful to know:**

- I need a greater level of detail and information to cope with the unfamiliar
- I'm very open and don't always filter topics that may not be expected
- I prefer written/visual communication wherever possible
- I often need to document to process important verbal information at a later date
- I'm chatty and can digress easily
- I try to join in with banter but don't always get it right

# Ambitious About Autism Programmes and opportunities

# Autism Exchange

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<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/employment/paid-work-experience>



## Work experience opportunities

On this page you will find all our current work opportunities open to applications.

[Read more](#)



## Support for candidates

Information for autistic young people about what to expect from the Autism Exchange programme.

[Read more](#)

## 18 -25 years

We have been building on the successes we've had in London since we started in 2015; now we want to see employers from all over the UK offer work experience to autistic people

# Employ Autism

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<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/employment/paid-work-experience>



## Employers

Find out how your organisation can benefit from the rewards a neurodivergent workforce can bring.

[Read more](#)



## Careers and employability professionals

Receiving effective careers advice and guidance is critical when preparing for the future.

[Read more](#)



## Paid work experience

Discover more about the placement opportunities we have available.

[Read more](#)



## Supported internships

Our internships are a great opportunity for young autistic people to combine work and education.

[Read more](#)



## Higher Education Network

Delivered with Santander Universities, this programme supports students and graduates across the UK.

[Read more](#)



## Join the Employ Autism Network

Join the Employ Autism Network and be part of our pioneering national programme.

[Read more](#)



## Toolkits

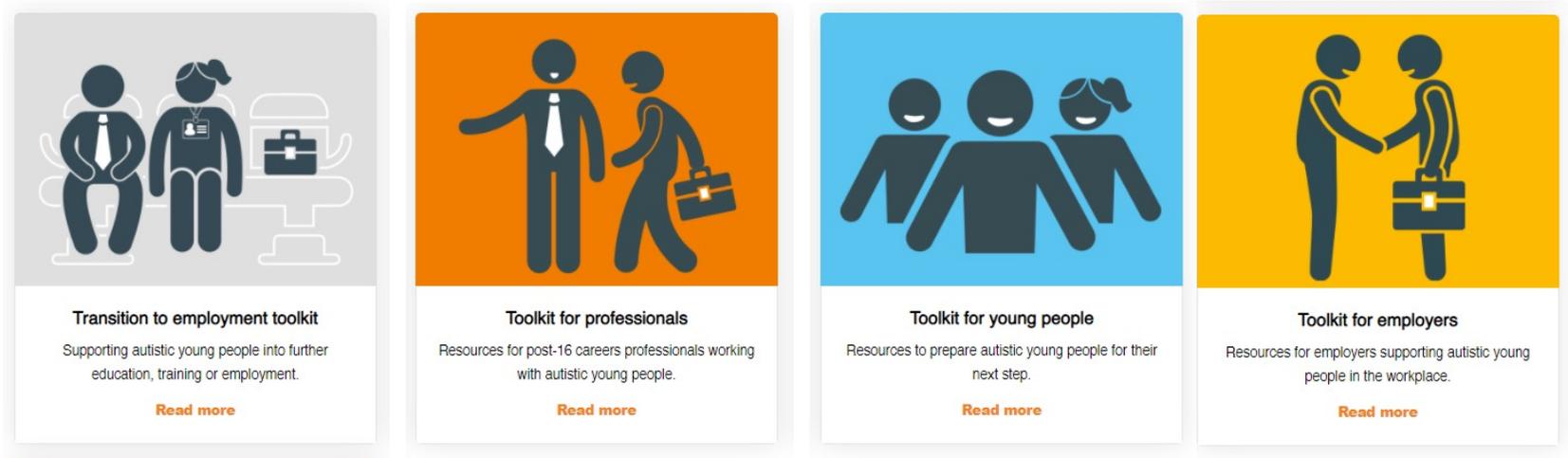
Download our toolkits to support autistic young people in the workplace.

[Read more](#)

**16-25 years** Supported internships are courses aimed at young people, who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and want to move into work but need extra support to do so

# Ambitious About Autism Employability Resources

Ambitious about Autism provide a range of free resources for anybody to access when supporting autistic children and young people.



The image displays four resource cards arranged horizontally. Each card features an icon at the top, a title, a brief description, and a 'Read more' link. The cards are: 1. 'Transition to employment toolkit' with a grey background and icons of a person sitting, a person standing, and a briefcase. 2. 'Toolkit for professionals' with an orange background and icons of two people, one pointing and one with a briefcase. 3. 'Toolkit for young people' with a blue background and icons of three people. 4. 'Toolkit for employers' with a yellow background and icons of two people shaking hands, one holding a briefcase.

Resource Title	Description	Action
Transition to employment toolkit	Supporting autistic young people into further education, training or employment.	<a href="#">Read more</a>
Toolkit for professionals	Resources for post-16 careers professionals working with autistic young people.	<a href="#">Read more</a>
Toolkit for young people	Resources to prepare autistic young people for their next step.	<a href="#">Read more</a>
Toolkit for employers	Resources for employers supporting autistic young people in the workplace.	<a href="#">Read more</a>

<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/employment/toolkits>

# Mental Health and Wellbeing

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<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/coronavirus-and-autism/health-and-wellbeing/how-support-positive-mental-wellbeing>

What's  
**YOUR**  
**'NORMAL'?**

## **Know your normal**

Our [Know Your Normal toolkit](#), helps young people identify their version of 'normal'.

## **Further resources**

[techniques to support self-regulation during challenging situations](#).

[support for autistic young people during the Coronavirus pandemic](#).

[top tips for young people on managing anxiety](#).

[top tips for family members on managing anxiety](#).

Contact us for further information on our training courses and programmes

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<https://forms.office.com/r/rMNQPLtBgd>