



What is Autism?

Autism is the word used to describe a lifelong difference in a person's neurology. It's very difficult to say exactly what 'it' is because it can't be separated from the person.

Edinburgh university describe it as: "A way of being in the world; it's a way of processing the things that come into your body (sights and sounds and so on). It affects how you perceive and interact with people. There will also be differences in how you plan and manage activities, and organising that information can translate into different behaviour."

In essence, an autistic person will see, process and understand the world in a different way from someone who isn't autistic, for all of their life.

Historically the focus on autism has been through the language of 'impairments' and deficits, instead of differences or even skills and abilities.

We at the North East Autism Society have had to change the way we think and as a result, the work that we do, with most of this stemming from listening to and working with autistic people, who have been the voices consistently missing from the autism narrative.

Without denying challenge, our aim has been to help the wider world shift to understand and accept those of us who are autistic.

*Research published by Newcastle University in 2021 suggests that around **one in 57 (1.76%)** children in the UK will be autistic.*



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