



## ADVICE FOR MANAGERS

The most useful way to support an individual with autism in the work place is to increase your knowledge and understanding of autism. A basic introduction to autism can be found at [www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk/ASDaware](http://www.ASDinfoWales.co.uk/ASDaware).

### Orientation

Many individuals with autism find new people and places difficult. When starting a new job, it is important that they are supported to understand the workplace and become familiar with the people and patterns within it.

- Invite the individual to visit the work place and be introduced to other staff members before starting work.
- Provide written information outlining expectations including what to wear, start and finish times and conduct.
- Discuss any adaptations to the work stations that would be useful for the individual. A seat in a less busy area may be useful if applicable.
- Ensure the individual knows who to speak to about any concerns. Be specific about the type of concern and contact person.
- Provide information about breaks, lunch options and 'unwritten rules' about eating / drinking at work.
- Allocate a co worker to 'buddy' the individual during their induction period.
- Be specific about induction activities, don't use phrases such as 'go and find out about...'

### Allocating Tasks

Individuals with autism find it difficult to 'read between the lines' or to think creatively about what is expected of them. When setting work or tasks it is important that you:

- Are clear and precise about the work you want them to undertake.
- Say what you mean, do not use phrases such as 'would you mind...' or 'if you have a moment could you...' when you actually mean 'I want you to...'

- If the task is complex or involves a number of steps, write them down.
- Support the individual to prioritise, be clear if you want a task to be prioritised over others.
- Give clear end points, so that the individual can recognise when the task is complete
- Provide additional structure when needed. Break down tasks into smaller ones, specify what is needed at each stage.

## **Feedback**

An individual with autism may find it difficult to predict what is expected of them. This is particularly significant when asking open ended questions or asking general questions.

- If asking for feedback about an issue, ask specific questions rather than for general feedback.
- Provide a 'structure template' for feedback so that the individual has structure to follow.
- Where appropriate, offer a limited number of choices to help the individual verbalise feedback.
- When giving feedback to an individual with ASD be specific. Avoid terms such as 'quite', 'maybe' or 'normal', 'average'.
- Provide a structure for the feedback you are giving, offer a plan to address any issues and follow up in concise written form.
- If meeting with an individual to address an issue, ensure the individual understands what the meeting is about, what will be expected of them and any employment rights / policies that are related to the meeting.
- Allow the individual to have an advocate or co worker for support.

## **Predictability and Routines**

Most individuals find changes difficult and prefer the predictable structure and routines. Some things that may help:

- Be understanding of the individual's need for predictable routines, even if they seem odd to you.
- Do not move items or furniture without discussing it with the individual first.
- Be aware that changes to staff, management structure or systems can cause anxiety – be supportive.
- Use calendars, timetables and planners to support the individual.
- Keep the environment free of clutter and distractions where possible.
- Be aware that sudden loud noises such as fire alarms can be distressing.