



# Autism and computers



**This factsheet tells you how computers and technology can help autistic people.**

# How to use this factsheet



We are **AbilityNet**.

We are a charity that helps disabled people use technology.



Like computers, tablets, and smartphones.



This is an **Easy Read** factsheet. You may still need help to read it. You can ask someone you know for help.



For more information you can phone or email us.



Phone  
**0800 048 7642**



Email  
[enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk)

# 1 What is autism

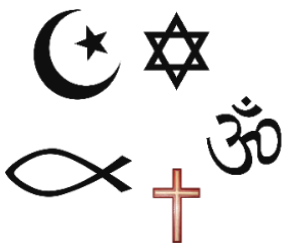


There are about 700,000 autistic people in the UK.

That means more than 1 person in every 100 people is autistic.



People from any country can be autistic.



People with any religion can be autistic.



Both men and women can be autistic.



There are more autistic men than women.



Someone who is autistic will be autistic for their whole life.



Someone with autism thinks and acts differently to people who do not have autism.



Autism is a spectrum.  
This means that autism will be different for different people.



But some things are the same for lots of autistic people.

## These are



Finding it hard to talk to people.

Feeling things more strongly.  
For example,



- light
- noise
- smells.



Having a special interest.  
Like, transport or animals.



Having a **routine**.  
This means doing things the  
same way every time you do it.



Employers now understand more about autism.



They understand there are lots of things autistic people might be good at.

For example, they



- can see details more clearly

- have good focus

- know a lot about special topics



- can be very open



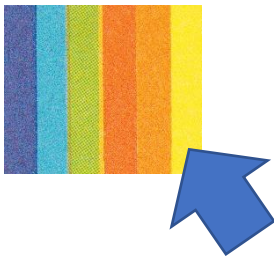
Better understanding of autism means more autistic people now have jobs.



Asperger Syndrome is a type of autism.



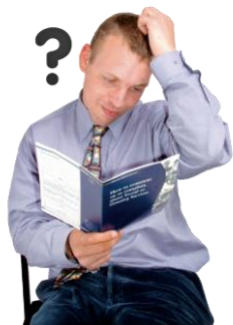
Doctors do not say Asperger Syndrome anymore.



Doctors now say they are autistic.



People who have this type of autism do not usually have problems with speaking.



But they might have a learning difficulty.

Like problems understanding language.

## 2 How technology can help



Technology like computers, tablets and smartphones can help autistic people be **independent**.



**Independent** means that people can do things for themselves.

### Help you to talk to people



You can send messages by email or chat instead of speaking to people in person.



You can shop online and get things sent to your home instead of going out.



happy



New technology can help you recognise facial expressions.

This can help you understand people better.

## Help with places which are noisy or have lots of lights



You can do things online instead.

Like work or study.

## Help you to find information on a special topic



You can use computers, tablets, and smartphones to find information online.



You can also go online to find other people who have the same interests as you.

## Help you to type and take notes

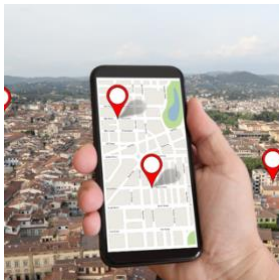


You can use a tablet or computer with a touchscreen or special electronic pen.

## Help to stop worrying



Computers, tablets, and smartphones have lots of apps that can help if you are worried.

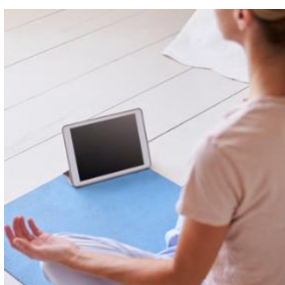


Like

- maps and getting directions



- travel apps with timetables



- apps to help with mental health.

# 3 What software can help

## Mind-mapping software



**Software** is what makes computers, tablets or smartphones do useful things.



Mind mapping software helps you to type your ideas.



You can add links between the ideas to put them in order later.

This can also help with remembering things.

## Speech to text software



Speech to text software will type what you say out loud.

This is quicker than typing by hand.



It can help with spelling.



Sometimes you can use your voice to control your device.

## Text to speech software



Text to speech software reads text aloud.



This can help you

- if you cannot read.



- if you get tired when you read.



- stay focused.



- check your work.

## 4 Where you can get more help



You can get more information from these organisations.

### The National Autistic Society



Phone 0207 833 2299

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

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

### Scottish Autism



Phone 01259 720044

Email [autism@scottishautism.org](mailto:autism@scottishautism.org)

Website [www.scottishautism.org](http://www.scottishautism.org)

### Child Autism UK



Phone 01344 882248

Email [info@childautism.org.uk](mailto:info@childautism.org.uk)

Website [www.childautism.org.uk](http://www.childautism.org.uk)

### NHS Health A-Z



Information about autism

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism)

# 5 How AbilityNet can help you

## My Computer My Way



The **My Computer My Way** website tells you how you can make your computer, tablet or smartphone accessible.

Website

[mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk](http://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk)

## Advice and information



If you have any questions, you can contact us at **AbilityNet**.

We are here to help you.



**Phone**

0800 048 7642



**Email**

[enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk)

## Support with technology at home



AbilityNet volunteers can help you with your computer, tablet or smartphone.



If you need support at home, you can book an AbilityNet volunteer to visit you.



You do **not** have to pay AbilityNet for support at home.

For more information, visit [www.abilitynet.org.uk/at-home](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/at-home)