

Autism Post-Diagnostic Pack
Renfrewshire Neurodevelopmental Team
Compiled by Elizabeth Hunter (CAMHS SLT)

NHS Supports

CAMHS:

The Renfrewshire CAMHS team is made of specialists in clinical psychology, psychiatry and nursing with input from speech and language and occupational therapy teams. They assess and treat moderate-severe mental health disorders in children and young people up to 18 years of age.

CAMHS might be the right service for you if you are struggling with:

- Anxiety and stress
- Body image
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Emotional distress
- Schizophrenia
- Self-harm

Contact details:

Renfrewshire CAMHS
Aranthruie Centre
104 Paisley Road
Renfrew
PA4 8LH



Tel: 0141 314 8981

Speech and Language Therapy:

Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) work with children and younger people (up to 18 years old) who have a range of speech, language, communication, and /or eating and drinking difficulties.

You can arrange to attend a Drop-In session if you would like to discuss access further support from Speech and Language Therapy. (Follow QR code for further info)

Contact details:

Specialist Children's Services
Aranthruie Centre
104 Paisley Road
Renfrew
PA4 8LH



Tel: 0141 314 4601

You can also phone the Helpline on Wednesdays 10am-12pm if you would like to speak to an SLT for further advice. Helpline phone number: 0141 314 4624

Occupational Therapy:

Occupational therapists support children and young people (aged up to 18 years old) with difficulties including handwriting difficulties, motor coordination difficulties, sensory processing difficulties, and difficulties with upper limb functioning and disability access.

Contact details:

Specialist Children's Services
Aranthruie Centre
104 Paisley Road
Renfrew
PA4 8LH



Tel: 0141 314 4601

You can call the Helpline on Thursdays 9.30am to 12pm to speak to an OT if you are concerned about any of the following:

- Self-care (dressing, washing, toileting, eating, drinking)
- Play (playing with toys, playing outside, joining in at clubs or sports)
- Work (nursery, school, writing, using scissors, being organised)

Helpline phone number: 0141 314 4624

Please note: Having a diagnosis of autism does not mean automatic access to these services. Should you wish to discuss a request for assistance for these services please contact your GP or NHS service directly.

NHS Kids Website: Joining in with Sensory Differences

This website contains resources to help parents understand sensory differences and how they can support their child/young person.

Supports include:

- Online parent workshops
- Sensory box ideas
- Strategies for managing specific sensory processing differences
- Links to further resources to get support



<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/joining-in-with-sensory-differences/>



Mental Health

(Credit: NHS Forth Valley)

Many people experience times of low mood, anxiety or stress at one time or another and these are just part of typical human experience. However, sometimes these feelings become severe and start to take over a person's thinking and behaviour, to the extent that they struggle to manage their day to day life. This can be a sign that someone is suffering from a mental illness. Mental illnesses are common and are known to affect around one in four people in the population as a whole.

Although many autistic people are mentally well, people on the autism spectrum are at greater risk of developing mental health problems than the general population. It is important to remember that treatments do exist for mental illnesses, so you should seek help from your GP if you think you need it.

Some mild mental health problems can be managed with changes to lifestyle and stress management techniques. You may need help to organise these.

If you are ...	You could try this....
Stressed and anxious	Try and establish a regular routine for everyday activities. Reduce unexpected changes to your routine as much as possible
Low in mood	Plan regular activities that you enjoy to help you feel better Exercise regularly which has been proven to benefit mood and anxiety levels
Feeling worse in the morning	Have a plan for each morning with specific activities to get up for
Frustrated that you are not sleeping well	Try and follow a regular bedtime routine Don't use Smartphones or tablets in bed Avoid exercising or eating a big meal before bed time Cut down on tea, coffee and caffeinated drinks, especially after 6pm

If these things do not work, or you are not able to manage them, then you may need specific treatment. Usually, the first step is to arrange an appointment with your GP who can give you some advice. They will refer you to specialist mental health services if they think that you need it.

Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health problems people experience. Some specific information about anxiety and depression is given below.

Anxiety disorders

Anxiety is a normal feeling and a common reaction to certain situations; indeed a moderate amount of anxiety can be helpful such as making a sports person feel more alert before a big event. In anxiety disorders this feeling becomes too severe to be helpful and can occur in the wrong context.

How do I know if I am becoming anxious?

Sometimes autistic people can find it hard to recognise when they are becoming anxious, instead just noticing that they 'don't feel quite right'. The symptoms of anxiety can be both mental and physical. The early mental symptoms of anxiety include feelings of tension, fear, negative thoughts or worry and feeling constantly tired. People can sometimes develop a strange feeling that either they or the world around them looks and feels 'unreal'.

Some physical signs of anxiety:

You could try this:

Dry mouth, churning stomach	Sit down and sip a glass of water
Eyesight becomes disturbed	Try to concentrate on your breathing and count each breath slowly in and out
Feeling faint, feeling panicky	Try to remember that this feeling will fade away shortly
Getting hot and sweaty, trembling	Concentrate on a helpful word or phrase and say it slowly to yourself e.g. 'harmony' or 'wide blue ocean'
Heart beat feels fast and strong	
Breathing feels fast and shallow	
Feel like you need the toilet	

Other strategies that may help	You could try ...
Relaxation techniques	Breathing exercises http://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/diaphragmatic-breathing Progressive muscle relaxation Practicing regularly and when you are not anxious can help a lot when you need to use the technique
See your GP if your anxiety is severe or persistent	They can discuss referring you to a specialist service

Depression

Everyone feels down or unhappy sometimes and this is a normal experience. The illness depression is when a person feels unhappy almost all the time for more than two weeks.

How do I know if I am depressed?

As well as persistent low mood or feeling unhappy for more than 2 weeks, people with depression often feel that they have no energy and don't enjoy things that they used to find fun. Sometimes people feel very negative about the future and think about hurting themselves or even ending their life. Physical symptoms of depression can include trouble sleeping and a loss of appetite.

You might be feeling...	You could try ...
Not enjoying things anymore Low energy levels	Try to have a regular structured daily routine Take regular exercise Get a good night's sleep Make sure you are eating regularly and have a healthy diet
Feel like hurting myself or ending my life	Visit your GP who can refer you to a specialist service

You may require support from another person to put these things in place.

Online Mental Health Resources (For children)

Chill Panda App

This free app is for children and adults who want to learn how to manage stress and worry, and feel better.

<http://chillpanda.co.uk/>



Clear Free App

This free app aims to help children and teenagers manage anxiety. This app helps to reduce physical responses to threat and change thoughts and behaviours through distraction and helpful activities.

<https://clearfear.stem4.org.uk/>



Coping Skills for Kids

A website that provides free resources for teaching children about healthy ways to cope with stress, anxiety and anger.

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/>



Kooth

Free mental health support from online counsellors. A free sign up service with discussion boards, helpful tips, articles written by young people, and the option to write mood journals and set positive goals.



Online Mental Health Resources (For Young People)

Shout

A free, confidential 24/7 text messaging service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

Text 85258 to speak to someone

<https://giveusashout.org/>



Calm

A mindfulness app that includes various relaxing sounds to listen to, visualisations to help relaxation, 'sleep stories' and guided meditations

<https://www.calm.com/>



Calm Harm

An app to help teenagers resist the urge to self-harm by providing a wide range of distraction techniques.

<https://calmharm.stem4.org.uk/>



Aye Mind

Website aimed at improving the mental wellbeing of young people. Includes resources and links to lots of useful digital tools.

<https://ayemind.com/>



Papyrus

Mental health charity dedicated to preventing young suicide by supporting young people and families. Young people can phone their 'Hopeline' if they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or for anyone who is concerned about a young person.

Tel: 0800 068 4141

Text: 07860 039967

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>



Local Supports

Renfrewshire Carers Centre

The Renfrewshire Carers Centre provides advice, support and information to unpaid carers of all ages in Renfrewshire.



They can offer the following supports:

- Information and advice
- Carer Support Plans
- Carer Breaks
- Emotional Support
- Support Groups
- Advocacy
- Training
- Care at Home
- Emergency Planning Support

Of particular interest may be the *Autism Parent Carers Support Group*. This group has both an evening and daytime option and offers opportunities for parents to share experiences, and access emotional and practical support. (Follow the QR code for more info)



Contact details:

Tel: 0141 887 3643

Email: enquiries@renfrewshirecarers.org.uk

Empower Up Programme

This is a programme for Autistic young people aged between 12 and 19 who are living in Glasgow (and surrounding areas).

The programme aims to support autistic young people to develop greater confidence, self-esteem and social skills so that they can play a more active role in realising their potential. The peer groups will also support autistic young people to become more connected to their peers and wider community, which may help to reduce isolation and improve wellbeing.



Contact: Socialprogrammescotland@nas.org.uk

Local Supports

Ren-10

A network of people who work and volunteer in the Renfrewshire Area – offering a variety of early help services to support mental health and wellbeing. They work with children aged 0-25 and parents. You can make a request for assistance on their website and a member of their team will get back to you to discuss what supports they can offer you.



The supports they can offer/link you in with include:

- Counselling
- Anxiety management support
- Family wellbeing supports
- Sleep supports
- Peer support groups
- Eating disorder supports
- Specific supports for care-experienced children and young people
- Non-Violent Resistance parent training groups



Parent Resources

Right Click Programme

A free online support programme for parents and carers of young children or teenagers. Made up of over 50 videos and supporting materials, Right Click offers advice and practical strategies for supporting your child.

<https://www.scottishautism.org/online-support-right-click>



DIFFERabled Scotland

Providing peer support and training to parents and carers of children with Additional Support Needs.
www.differabledscotland.co.uk

Scottish Autism Advice Line

A dedicated team of advisors who are trained and experienced in working with autistic people. They offer individualised advice and information to parents, professionals and individuals with Autism.

Tel: 01259 22202 (available Tuesday-Friday 10am-4pm)

Email: advice@scottishautism.org



Scottish
autism
WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE
ARE VALUED

ENQUIRE

Providing easy to understand advice and information about additional support for learning legislation and guidance for families and professionals.
www.enquire.org.uk

ENQUIRE

Young Minds Parent Helpline

A free and confidential service offering tailored information, advice and support to parents and carers who are concerned about their child's mental health. It is available for parents/carers of children/young people aged 25 and under. You can contact them via the phone or on an online chat.

Tel: 0808 802 5544 (available Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm)

OR use the QR link to chat to them online



YOUNGMINDS
fighting for young people's mental health

Autistic Girls

Scottish Women's Autism Network (SWAN)

SWAN was established in August 2012 in partnership with Autism Network Scotland. It is a resource for autistic women and girls to understand themselves better, connect with others and learn from and support one another, without the stress of masking to fit in.

They run a range of events and activities, both in person and online, including:

- Local meet-up groups
- Online peer support
- Pre- and post-diagnosis groups
- Wellbeing webinars

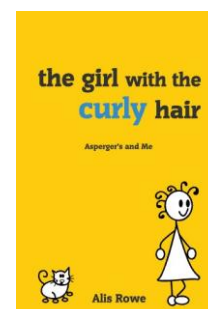
<https://swanscotland.org/>



The Girl with the Curly Hair Project

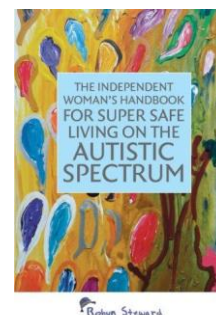
Training and advice for women and girls by young woman with ASD.

www.thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk



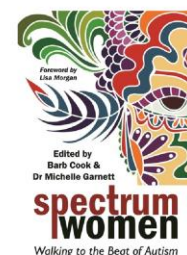
An Independent Woman's Handbook for Super Safe Living on the Autistic Spectrum

Book by Robyn Steward about recognizing potential risks to personal safety. Topics include sex, relationships, drugs, money and mobile devices



Walking to the Beat of Autism Book

Well-known writers provide advice, support and empowerment to fellow autistic women



Autistic Girls Network

A community for autistic young people to celebrate their uniqueness and find support and resources.

<https://autisticgirlsnetwork.org/>



Higher Education – College and University

Sharing information about a diagnosis of ASD

Many people worry that disclosing their disability when applying to university may lead to discrimination against them. Universities and colleges have a legal requirement to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that students with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage. An example of a 'reasonable adjustment' could be to provide copies of the lecture notes for a student who finds note-taking during lectures difficult.

What supports are available?

You will need to contact the learning inclusion/student support staff at the university or college to find out about support services they offer and for a chance to talk about the support that you feel you may need whilst studying. It is useful to make contact with the support services before starting university or college so that the support is in place from the beginning of the course.

SAAS: Disabled Students' Allowance

You may be eligible for a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), awarded through SAAS (Student Awards Agency Scotland). These grants are available to help with costs that students may incur as a direct result of their disability. Unlike a loan, these do not have to be paid back.

SAAS gives information about what you can claim under DSA, how to apply and contact details.

<https://www.saas.gov.uk/>



Lead Scotland: National Disabled Students Helpline and Information Service

This service provides advice and information about

- Applying for educational courses and training programmes
- Information on community learning opportunities
- Sources of funding for disabled learners
- Support for disabled learners in a range of learning environments
- Support and funding for carers
- Information regarding disabled people's rights in post-school learning under the Equality Act
- Signposting to specialist sources of support



Tel: 0800 999 2568 (open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 2-4pm and Tuesday, Friday 10am-12pm)

The National Autistic Society

Information and support for students

www.autism.org.uk/services/scotland/further-education.aspx



Disability Rights UK

Disability Rights UK is a useful website with further information about applying to higher education and accessing work and apprenticeships

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/guidance-resources>



Daily and Social Activities

Quiet Hours

Many shopping centres and supermarkets have introduced Quiet Hours where they will often dim lights, turn music off, avoid using the tannoy and turn check-out beeps down. Check out their websites for further information about this.



Braehead Shopping Centre has an Autism-friendly quiet hour on the first Tuesday of each month 10-11am.

Autism Friendly Cinema Showings

The Odeon, The Vue and Cineworld have Autism-friendly screenings of films. Check out their websites for more details. These screenings feature adjustments to create a sensory-friendly environment, including reduced sound levels, dimmed lighting, no ads or trailers and the freedom to move around or make noise without judgement.



Glasgow Film Theatre (GFT) runs an Access Film Club in association with the National Autistic Society – these are Autism-friendly film screenings which take place on the first Tuesday of each month at 6pm.

<https://www.glasgowfilm.org/access-film-club/>

Autism Friendly Museums

Glasgow Life museums have created resources to support Autistic people access their museums. These include earlier opening times, quiet spaces, family workshops, visual storyboards and sensory kits. Check out their website for more information.



<https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/glasgow-life-museums-are-autism-friendly>

Glasgow Science Centre run Autism-friendly hours on Sundays 10am-1pm and have created a range of adjustments and resources to support Autistic people to access their events and activities.

<https://www.glasgowsciencecentre.org/visit/autism-friendly-hours>

The Autism Directory

An online directory of services for the autistic community, their families and carers. The website lists services and events that have been made accessible for Autistic people in your local area.

<https://www.theautismdirectory.com/>



Employment

What can your employers do to support you?

Your employer can make a number of **reasonable adjustments** to working practices to support you if you have a diagnosis of autism.

Some examples of supports and adjustments your employer can make include:

- Appointing a colleague to act as a mentor for you, to help with any issues that arise and if need be represent your views;
- Arranging general and specific autism awareness training for staff who work with the employee(s) with autism
- Bringing in help from external support organisations that offer job mentoring, coaching and general or specific job assistance to autistic people
- Using a job coach to help both employer and employee to establish a successful working partnership

National Autistic Society

Their website has information and advice for both employers and Autistic people who are seeking employment. They provide a variety of work programmes, training and resources to support Autistic jobseekers.

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



Employability Scotland: No One Left Behind

This service aims to support people of all ages to develop skills, confidence and access supports to help achieve employment goals. The support may include help to prepare for employment, training, education and volunteering to support career progressions.

<https://www.employabilityinscotland.com/local-employability-services/renfrewshire/>



Email: ann.davidson@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 300 1180

RAMH: Renfrewshire Employability Support

Offers supports to individuals over 16 to focus on supports which will enable access to employment opportunities.



Supports on offer include:

- Personal profiling / person centred planning
- Confidence building, anxiety management
- Signposting for appropriate additional supports, such as: benefits advice, financial management and advocacy services
- Job search skills
- CV drafting
- Completing application forms
- Interview preparation

- Support to access further education, training or volunteering
- Support to sustain employment

Email: enquiries@ramh.org

Employment Autism

A charity that advocates for the rights of Autistic people in the work place. They offer advice and information to help Autistic people find sustainable and fulfilling employment

<https://employmentautism.org.uk/>

