

What is Autism?

- Autism is a lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them
- Autism is a spectrum condition. All autistic people share certain difficulties, but being autistic will affect them in different ways
- Autism is not an illness or disease and cannot be 'cured'.
- All people on the autism spectrum learn and develop and, with the right sort of support, all can be helped to live a more fulfilling life of their own choosing.
- For further information see:
 - National Autistic Society website: www.autism.org.uk
 - NHS Choices website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/
 - Autism Research Trust: www.autismresearchtrust.org

How many people in Trafford have autism?

- It is estimated that around 1 in 100 (1.1%) of the UK population may be on the autism spectrum.
- Applied to the estimated resident population of Trafford (*ONS, mid-2017 estimates*) this would give:
 - **1,980** adults with autism
 - **550** children aged 2-17 years with autism

Gender

Estimated prevalence of autism is much higher in males compared to females



0.3%



1.8%

However, there are many factors that might explain this difference, including that women and girls are under diagnosed.

For more on this gender difference see:

www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/gender.aspx

Source: The NHS Information Centre, Community and Mental Health Team, Brugha, T. et al (2012). [Estimating the prevalence of autism spectrum conditions in adults: extending the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey](#). Leeds: NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care

How many people in Trafford have autism?

Children with autism known to schools

- As at Jan 2018, **448** children had autistic spectrum disorder as a primary special educational need.
- This gives a rate of 10.4 per 1,000 pupils, lower than England (13.7 per 1,000) and 2nd lowest among a group of 15 other statistically similar authorities
- Between 2015 and 2018, the number has increased from 316 to 448 (i.e. by 132 or 42%).

Adults with autism known to Adult Social Care

As at November 2018, the number of adult social care clients with autism as a reported health condition was:

- 110 among those aged 18-64 (out of a total 885 clients)
- 5 among those aged 65+ (out of a total 1,830 clients)
- That is, 115 clients in total which represents only 5.8% of the 1,980 adults in Trafford estimated to have autism

Health and Well-being of people with Autism

Mental Health

Mental illness can be more common for people on the autism spectrum than in the general population.

- **Anxiety:** around 40% of people on the autism spectrum have symptoms of at least one anxiety disorder at any time, compared to 15% in the general population
- **Depression:** it has been estimated that a quarter of adults with autism also suffer depression
- **Eating disorders:** 70% of autistic children have feeding and/or eating problems with half classified as severe
- Research in Stockport involving people who are recorded by their GP as having autism found that:
 - they were just over four times more likely than average to have **self harming** indicated on their medical records
 - **severe mental health problems** such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder were nearly four times more likely

Health and Well-being of people with Autism: Mental Health

Autistic people are often diagnosed with other, co-occurring, conditions. A correct diagnosis is key to getting the right support.

- **Learning disability:** Around half of autistic people have some degree of learning disability
- **ADHD** (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder): estimates are that 30%-60% of people with autism also have ADHD, ten times the rate for the general population
- **Epilepsy:** 15% to 30% of people with autism also have epilepsy
- **Sleep disorders:** are ten times more likely for people with autism; over half of autistic children have chronic sleep problems
- **Gastrointestinal disorders**, such as Inflammatory bowel disease, chronic constipation or diarrhoea, and gastroesophageal reflux disease: are two to eight times more likely in autistic children
- Research indicates that autistic children have higher rates of **central nervous system and / or cranial anomalies, diabetes mellitus type I and muscular dystrophy**
- Multiple studies have found that most autistic adults are at a **significantly increased risk of most medical conditions**, including 'big killers' like cardiovascular disease, stroke, circulatory and respiratory conditions.