

# WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS WEEK



**At work**

**MONDAY 27 MARCH TO  
SUNDAY 2 APRIL 2017**



# EMILY'S STORY

For World Autism Awareness Week 2016, we took part in Onesie Wednesday in our offices. We also helped The National Autistic Society with bucket collections at train and tube stations. This is our 3rd or 4th year taking part in World Autism Awareness Week and every year more staff get involved, making each year bigger and more successful than the last!

**Being involved has really helped to spread understanding of autism at work, as well as raising money for a charity which we so passionately believe in. Win, win!** Plus it's fun to dress up and take part, as it really helps to break the monotony of the working week, which can never be a bad thing!

If any workplace was thinking about taking part next year, **we would say do it!** Be a progressive workplace which encourages diversity and acceptance, while having a bit of fun in the process!

Emily, Axcis Education





## World Autism Awareness Week 2017 will be taking place from Monday 27 March to Sunday 2 April.

We need your help to improve understanding of autism and raise funds, which will make a huge difference to the lives of over 700,000 people living with autism and their families across the UK.

Getting involved with World Autism Awareness Week will change lives. We are asking you to raise money and improve understanding so that as many people as possible learn about the challenges, features/characteristics and reality of autism. Your support enables us to gather that knowledge and understanding from vital services, and to spread it as far as we can, through ground-breaking campaigns like *Too Much Information*. So we will quiz, bake, walk, collect...

### Until everyone understands.

Only 16% of autistic adults are in full-time paid employment. And in almost a decade the situation hasn't improved. All too often, employers don't see ability. They see autism. They see a problem. With your help, starting with World Autism Awareness Week, we can change that. **Starting with your workplace.**

Sometimes the workplace is full of too much information. Too many sounds, lights, stares and glares – and too little understanding. That can make it difficult for autistic people to cope, and makes employers worry about getting it wrong.

All of the events in this pack have been designed to help you spread real autism understanding at work – as well as have fun and raise money! By hosting your own World Autism Awareness Week event at work, you can help improve your colleagues' and employer's understanding of autism. More understanding can make huge strides towards helping autistic people get the jobs they deserve.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Read about what one of our 2016 fundraisers has to say – page 2
- What this guide is all about – page 3
- Fundraising ideas – pages 4-5
- Creating an autism-friendly workplace – pages 6-7
- Our *Too Much Information* campaign – pages 8-9
- Merchandise – page 10
- Competition time! – page 11



# FUNDRAISING IDEAS

## Jargon jar

“Thinking outside the box”, “going forward” and “let’s touch base” were identified as the top three most overused pieces of jargon in a recent survey by Institute of Leadership & Management.

Can you last a week without using jargon? For every time that you use ‘corporate speak’, you put £1 in the jar. For example, you may say:

- run it up the flagpole
- get all your ducks in a row
- blue sky thinking
- don’t let the grass grow too long on this one.

Many autistic people struggle with knowing what people mean when they speak in slang or use idioms. This activity is a great way to raise some money while also thinking about how to communicate with autistic employees and colleagues.



## Quiz

Holding a pub quiz in your workplace is a great way to raise some money. Not only is this a brilliant way to raise funds, but it can also help improve understanding. A round about autism in the quiz could help your colleagues better understand how to work with autistic colleagues.

You can charge a participation fee or even ask for a donation. Perhaps your workplace will be generous enough to donate a prize to the winner!

If you’d like a template quiz pack with questions and answers supplied, contact [caroline.rees@nas.org.uk](mailto:caroline.rees@nas.org.uk).



## Sweepstake

Hold a sweepstake in your office!



Running a sweepstake to raise money for The National Autistic Society has been a brilliant experience! It's given me the opportunity to talk to so many of my colleagues who I might not otherwise chat with, and it adds a whole other element to something like watching Strictly – it just makes it more fun and it can bring out the competitiveness in people, which is always entertaining.

**Bonnie**, Strictly Come Dancing sweepstake fundraiser

Why not use our 'special interests' sweepstake poster? You could even create your own sweepstake poster by asking your colleagues about their interests. That way you can make the poster as large as you like!

Some autistic people can have exceptional knowledge in one particular area, due to their special interest. This can be incredibly useful in the working world.

Celebrate this wonderful aspect of autism by holding a special interests sweepstake!

## Bake off

Don't just leave it to the Bake Off tent to create wonderful and tasty treats! Why not have a bake off challenge between you and your colleagues? You could then sell the cakes or ask for a donation!

Contact Caroline at [caroline.rees@nas.org.uk](mailto:caroline.rees@nas.org.uk) to learn how to make your bake off autism-friendly.

Who will be the champion baker of 2017? Three, two, one... **BAKE!**



**SOCIAL MEDIA BLACKOUT,  
PARTY, COFFEE MORNING,  
DYE YOUR HAIR, WEAR  
A ONESIE, RUN, CYCLE,  
TREK, DANCEATHON,  
BINGO, KARAOKE SING OFF,  
SPREAD THE WORD**



# CREATING AN AUTISM-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

Every autistic person is different, so creating an autism-friendly workplace can seem like a daunting task. If you work with an autistic person (or might someday), it's natural to worry about doing the wrong thing.

But by understanding a little bit more about autism, you can help change an autistic colleague's world. Lynsey told us about how small changes at work from colleagues who understood autism made a big difference to her.



“I once worked in an open plan office. I started out working in the middle of the office and was really uncomfortable because there was a lot of traffic. People were coming in and walking around me and even standing beside my desk to have a chat. It was really distracting. And then there was the guy sat next to me. He was really loud and would gesticulate wildly when he was talking on the telephone. It was very distracting. I did not like that.

So, I asked if I could sit at a desk on the edge or in the corner. They did this for me and also allowed me to listen to my music while I was working. These small changes made a real difference to me. Music really helps me concentrate. It helps me to work and I don't hear background noise. I did really well in the job after that. I was the fastest worker on the team.

Lynsey

**We've provided three top tips for a more autism-friendly workplace. So when you're working with an autistic colleague, just think TMI.**

### Take time

Some autistic people need a little more time. If you ask a question and don't get a response straightaway, count to ten and be patient. Still no answer? Try rephrasing it a bit.

If you write instructions down as well as talking them through, most autistic people will better understand what you're saying, too.

### Make plans

Sudden changes in plans or routines can feel like too much information and can cause people to have a meltdown.

If you need to cancel a meeting, give your colleague as much notice as you can and offer new dates. Put proper descriptions in for your meetings, and set agendas so there are no surprises.

### Inform yourself

Every autistic person is different, so learn more about autism by getting to know the person and how autism affects them. This will help you to avoid the overload of too much information for them. With a bit of understanding, everyone can be happier.

To learn more, you can sign up to Autistic Talent, an e-newsletter providing top tips for making a more autism-friendly workplace.

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









WITH YOUR SUPPORT, YEAR TWO OF **TOO MUCH INFORMATION** WILL BE EVEN BETTER.

Your support will help us reach even more people, and turn that understanding into improved attitudes and behaviours towards autistic people and their families. Only then will we be able to create a world where autistic people and their families get the understanding, support and appreciation they deserve – free from judgement and isolation, and more and more autistic people will be able to lead the lives they choose.

**99.5%** of people in the UK have heard of autism.



But only **16%** of autistic people and their families said the public understands how autism affects behaviour.



Make sure autistic people get the understanding they need.

#autismTMI

[autism.org.uk/TMI](https://autism.org.uk/TMI)



# MERCHANDISE

World Autism Awareness Week is all about helping to fundraise and raise awareness, until everyone understands.

Spread the message by sporting our newly-designed t-shirts for just £9.99!



## **Too Much Information virtual reality headset – £8.00**

Our **Too Much Information** film has helped 56 million people gain a deeper understanding of autism.

Experience the *Too Much Information* virtual reality experience at home! This innovative and portable headset allows you to experience what someone on the autism spectrum may experience every day.

Download the video app (Autism TMI) for free from your app store (including iTunes and Android) and insert your mobile device into the headset and watch.

The app requires iOS 6/Android 4.4 or better and an appropriate mobile phone.

Visit our online shop at [www.autism.org.uk/shop](http://www.autism.org.uk/shop) to browse our selection of merchandise.

We also have fundraising materials such as collection buckets, balloons, flags and information leaflets to help you with your fundraising activities. To order these, please call **0207 903 3570**.



# COMPETITION TIME!

Who will be 2017's World Autism Awareness Week fundraising champions?

This year, we are having competitions for the top fundraisers in school, the workplace and the community. The competition is simple – those who raise the most money will win!

The prize for the top community fundraiser is a feature in *Your Autism Magazine* and a year's free membership!

The prize for the top school fundraiser is some of our original artwork for World Autism Awareness Week 2016, a goody bag of merchandise and a big shout out on our social media!

The prize for our top workplace fundraiser is a lunch and learn and a big shout out on our social media!

When sending in the money for this competition, please make sure that you tell us who raised the money (your name, the school's or the workplace's) and your fundraising activities. The competition will stay open until 1 May. This gives you over a month to send in your money after World Autism Awareness Week.

Keep an eye on our website for some of our amazing fundraisers during World Autism Awareness Week!

**GOOD  
LUCK!**

## How to send in the money you've raised

Once you have collected all the money, there are several ways you can send in your donations.

- Fill in the paying in form and send it, along with any completed sponsorship forms to **The National Autistic Society, 393 City Road, London, EC1V 1NG**. Sponsorship and paying in forms are included in the postal packs and are available to download online.
- If you set up a JustGiving or other online donation page before your event, we will receive the money directly!
- Donate online at [www.autism.org.uk/waaw](http://www.autism.org.uk/waaw)
- Text WAAW17 plus your amount (£1/£5/£10) to 70070. For example, to donate £10 you would text "WAAW17£10" TO 70070
- Call our Supporter Care team on **0808 800 1050** to request a paying in slip, which you can use to pay in your funds at any Barclays bank
- Donate over the phone by calling **0808 800 1050**.

# UNTIL EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS.

We are the UK's leading autism charity. Since we began over 50 years ago, we have been pioneering new ways to support people and understand autism. We continue to learn every day from the children and adults we support in our schools and care services.

Based on our experience, and with support from our members, donors and volunteers, we provide life-changing information and advice to millions of autistic people, their families and friends. And we support professionals, politicians and the public to understand autism better so that more autistic people of all ages can be understood, supported and appreciated for who they are.