

## What is neurodiversity.

The word neurodiversity is used to explain how people's interactions and experiences of the world vary. Our viewpoints of the world are subjective experiences, meaning one variation is not more right or wrong than another.

Neurodiversity is often used to refer to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as well as other conditions such as ADHD and many different learning disabilities.

The term was coined by Judy Singer an Australian sociologist, who came up with the term to promote equality and inclusion regardless of a person's neurological state.

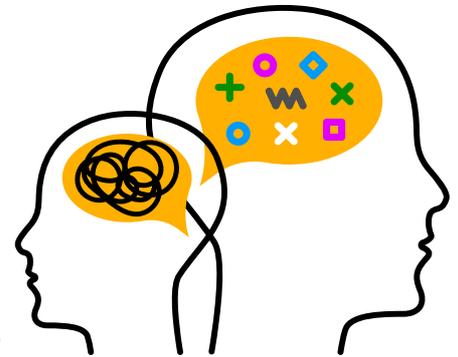
There is debate as to whether a person first term such as 'A person with ADHD' should be used or if an identity first approach such as 'An autistic boy' should be used instead. It is seen as best to ask the person you referring to if that is appropriate to do so.

It is estimated around 1 in 7 people have some kind of neuro difference. Many have more than one neurodiverse condition. Some are widely well known like Dyslexia but others like Dyscalculia are much less well known and understood. The support available depends on what condition a person has.

Support for Autism requires a diagnosis first. To access this as an adult or as a child, ask your GP to refer you for an assessment and diagnosis period, though these can often take a long time.

Once a diagnosis has been given, lots of support may exist. For a child this may be educational, financial and also general support to help parents cope with a child who is autistic.

For an adult getting diagnosed there may be support at work. And in some cases, universities and colleges can give financial help.



## ADHD

Unlike many neurodiverse conditions, ADHD can be treated with medication in some circumstances. Most cases are diagnosed as children but you can also be diagnosed as an adult.

Help can be accessed through your GP, such as Talking therapy services. Support from schools, work and also financial help may also be available. Support can be with things like planning the day.



It is important that the DVLA must be made aware of a ADHD diagnosis.

Dyslexia support is available mostly through schools, colleges, universities and work places, though a formal diagnosis is normally required. This is also care for Dyscalcula, but your GP can give you further guidance.

Neurodiversity in Kent is being supported in several ways:

**'Do- It'**, a group working with the NHS to trial a profiling tool that helps those offering support to access a formal diagnosis.

**'This is Me'** will work with early year providers to provide pre-diagnosis support and guidance.

**MOT** - A Multi disciplinary team working in Kent and Medway that aims to reduce the amount of appointments needed by having every part of the neurodiverse assessment chain connected. They also offer Peer to Peer support for parents, caregivers , children, young people and health care professionals. Work training is also available.



## Resources to explore: What is neurodiversity

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/what-is-neurodiversity-202111232645>

<https://www.cuh.nhs.uk/our-people/neurodiversity-at-cuh/what-is-neurodiversity/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/getting-diagnosed/how-to-get-diagnosed/>

<https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/health/mental-health/neurodiversity/>

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/articles/supporting-neurodivergent-colleagues-nhs>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-day-to-day-life/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/school/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/autism-and-everyday-life/help-for-families/>

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis>

<https://camhs.rdash.nhs.uk/north-lincolnshire/neurodevelopment-asd-adhd/celebrating-neurodiversity/>

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/Get-Help/Member-support-services/Peer-support-services/Neurodiversity-Guidance/What-is-Neurodiversity>

[https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/beds-luton-community-paediatrics/neurodiversity-support-pack-\(nsp\)](https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/beds-luton-community-paediatrics/neurodiversity-support-pack-(nsp))

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/living-with/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia/diagnosis/>

<https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/engagement-projects/current-engagement-projects/making-it-work-kent-and-medways-transformation-neurodiversity-support>

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/care-and-support/disability/autism#tab-5>

Kent County Council has an **Autism Support Team**. It is known as the **Sensory and Autism team**. They are designed to help people with neurodiverse issues live a full and Independent life. They offer assessments with occupational therapists and sensory needs specialists, lessons on learning new skills, getting equipment, information on community support services and individual and voluntary organisations. They also support families and carers with additional information and provide people with access to short term mental health help.

### To Contact the Sensory and Autism Team:



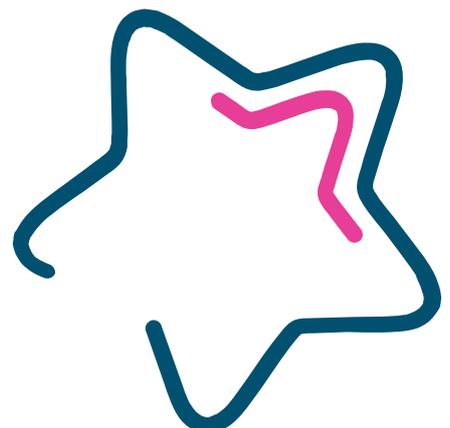
call: 03000 41 81 00



email: sensoryandautism@kent.gov.uk



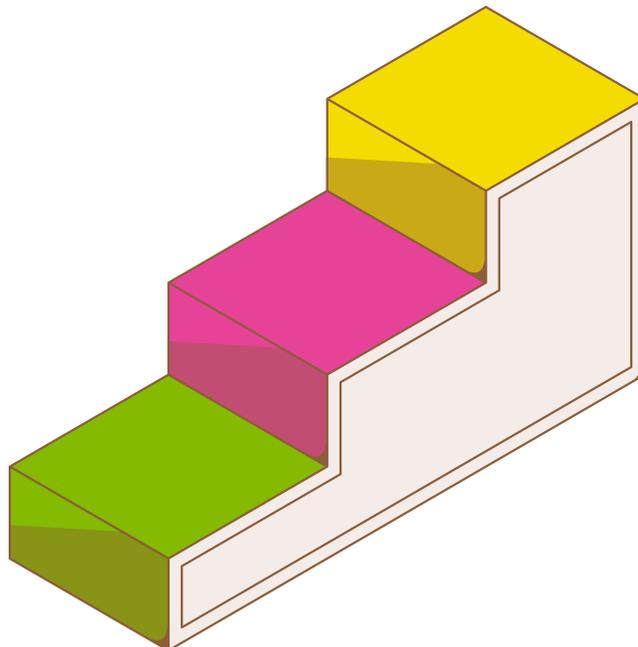
text relay: 18001 0300 333 5540.



In Medway a new programme for children with suspected or diagnosed autism or ADHD was launched in 2021 called **Small Steps**.

Small steps provides early support for families where a child or young person is suspected or has been diagnosed with ASC or ADHD. It works closely with health professionals, education settings and the local authority to enhance what is available to families. The service offers information workshops and specialised parenting groups, and has been providing parents with a Project Worker or a Volunteer Befriender who offer home visits and 1:1 support from within the family home. The Volunteer Befrienders have been supporting families to access social activities, attend medical appointments and have been offering a listening ear.

The service has also been offering drop-in parent support groups, education transition groups, support to access local services and the opportunity to meet other families in similar situations.



## Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Service.

<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/asd-adhd/> Kent – Adult

The service provides comprehensive expert assessment and treatment for adults with suspected or diagnosed attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and/or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) – the medical name for autism. (Autism spectrum condition (ASC) – is used instead of ASD by some people.)

They also provide a range of treatment options specified by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). These include management of medication, often in shared care arrangements with local services.

Their team is made up of clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, link workers and administrators.

### Additional Kent and Medway based support:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/types-of-send/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd-support>

<https://psychiatry-uk.com/kent-and-medway-adult-autism-and-adhd-service/>

<https://www.adhdcentre.co.uk/the-adhd-centre-kent/>

<https://www.medwaycommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/a-z-services/child-health-service/adhd>



<https://www.medway.nhs.uk/services/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder.htm>

The service above provides assessment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) for primary school aged children (5 to 11 years) who reside in Swale (Sittingbourne and Sheppey). Referrals need to be made by a professional and should include a completed School Information Form (SIF).

The team is based at Medway Maritime Hospital although clinics are carried out at the Orchards Centre in Sittingbourne and at Sheppey Community Hospital.

Initial assessments and medication decisions are made by a doctor within the Community Paediatric team with support from an ADHD Specialist Nurse.

They also offer objective computerised testing (Qb tests) if required as part of the comprehensive assessment and aim to support children with ADHD and their families with treatment and advice, including medication and offer regular clinic reviews. One of the Community Paediatricians and the Specialist ADHD Nurse offer bi-monthly information sessions for parents to help them to understand their children better.

The service also provides help and advice to agencies working with families where someone has ADHD, including arranging teaching sessions to school staff or other agencies. Information on referral to the service is available through your GP or School.



<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/contact/find-a-local-dyslexia-association>



<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia/diagnosis/>

<https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/engagement-projects/current-engagement-projects/making-it-work-kent-and-medways-transformation-neurodiversity-support>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia/symptoms/>

[https://lindamoodbell.com/our-approach?utm\\_source=Google&utm\\_campaign=2019-03\\_StandardSearch&utm\\_medium=PPC&utm\\_term=LC-UK&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0tKiBhC6ARIsAAOXutm7spV0dymH2wUEGbLR-Y9QRefA\\_2LwyeffwEse2VZKb8xEDwicDngaAkROEALw\\_wcB](https://lindamoodbell.com/our-approach?utm_source=Google&utm_campaign=2019-03_StandardSearch&utm_medium=PPC&utm_term=LC-UK&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0tKiBhC6ARIsAAOXutm7spV0dymH2wUEGbLR-Y9QRefA_2LwyeffwEse2VZKb8xEDwicDngaAkROEALw_wcB)



## Dyslexia assessments for adults and children

Over the years, there has been much debate on the importance of the early identification of dyslexia. It is felt that this helps to ensure that an individual's self-esteem is not negatively affected. It also enables support and interventions to take place whilst a child is still at school.

Many parents have reported that although they initially didn't want a 'label' for their child, they have seen that when the child comes to understand why they think differently, it helps them to develop a growth mindset.

There has been a lot of recent press surrounding neurodiversity and the benefits of dyslexic thinking in the workplace. It is widely understood that individuals with dyslexia have a creative mindset and are great problem solvers. Individuals also learn how to overcome their difficulties and develop resilience at an earlier age.

Although early identification has been shown as beneficial, this is not always possible for everyone. If you are over 18 and would like a full diagnostic assessment, please contact us to find out more.'

<https://www.theashforddyslexiacentre.org>

<https://canterburydyslexiacentre.co.uk>

<https://www.dyslexiauk.co.uk/dyslexia-assessment-in-kent/>

We provide remote dyslexia assessments and dyscalculia screeners to children, students and adults around the city of Kent. Popular locations include Canterbury, Strood, Rochester, Chatham and Rainham.

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/specific-learning-difficulties-support/dyslexia>



Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) affecting many people. If you have been diagnosed with dyslexia, assessed as dyslexic or think you may be dyslexic, please register with Student Support and Wellbeing so that we can discuss how to help you.



## Characteristics

A person with dyslexia may experience some of the following difficulties:

- Expressing their ideas clearly in writing
- Finding the right word in speech and when writing
- Spelling – the same word may be spelt in several ways in the same essay
- Punctuation – may be erratic or missing completely
- Reading – they may be slow readers and may need to re-read to establish meaning
- Remembering what they have read
- Remembering spoken instructions
- Processing information
- Taking notes from lectures and from books/journals
- Concentration
- Organisation
- Syntax and grammar
- Writing – may be slow and/or difficult to read
- Confusion with left and right

<https://dyslexia-east-kent.org.uk/>

## Who are DEKS?

Dyslexia East Kent Support is a local group set up to provide information and support to people with dyslexia of all ages.

We provide information and resources to people with dyslexia, enabling them to reach their full potential. Our team of specialist advisors guides people to find the information they need and supports them to access further resources.'



<https://www.midkentdyslexia.com/our-services>

## Dyslexia Assessments

Mid Kent Dyslexia offers a full Dyslexia Diagnostic Assessment for primary and secondary school-aged children and is based in Maidstone, Kent.'

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/types-of-send/specific-learning-difficulties>



## Specific learning difficulties

A learning difficulty is not the same thing as a learning disability.

A specific learning difficulty (SpLD) means that someone has a difference or difficulty with one or more certain parts of learning.

Having a SpLD does not mean that children and young people cannot achieve and succeed in learning. However, they may struggle at school and may need to learn in different ways, through additional help.

Learning disabilities can range from mild to severe, and they don't always have to do with intelligence. Many people with learning disabilities can live independently and have jobs and families, while others may need care and support throughout their lives.'

<https://kentwestdyslexia.org.uk>



## Kent West Dyslexia Association

Kent West Dyslexia Association offer support and information to parents of dyslexic children, dyslexic adults, teaching staff, employers and anyone else interested in learning more about dyslexia. We cover Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Malling, Tunbridge Wells and surrounding areas.'

<https://kentdyslexia.co.uk>

Many people don't realise that their difficulties at work or school are due to dyslexia. A Kent Dyslexia Assessment investigates a person's strengths and areas of challenge. We make personalised recommendations that enable and empower people to overcome their difficulties and change their lives.

Kent Dyslexia provides in-person assessments across the South East of England. Our sister company, Dyslexia UK, provides online, remote assessments across the United Kingdom.

We believe that specific learning difficulties should not be a barrier to learning. We have a passion for supporting both young people and adults with overcoming their difficulties and leading successful, happy lives.

We have several highly qualified, experienced dyslexia assessors who provide dyslexia assessments and dyscalculia screening both online and face to face, within your home or at our centre.



## Local Dyslexia Associations

Your Local Dyslexia Association can be a great source of dyslexia-related information and support, and are run by dedicated volunteers. To find the one closest to where you live, please enter your postcode or county.

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/contact/find-a-local-dyslexia-association>

## NHS Dyslexia Diagnosis Information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia/diagnosis/>

## Making it work: Kent and Medway's transformation of neurodiversity support

<https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/engagement-projects/current-engagement-projects/making-it-work-kent-and-medways-transformation-neurodiversity-support>

[https://lindamoodbell.com/our-approach?utm\\_source=Google&utm\\_campaign=2019-03\\_StandardSearch&utm\\_medium=PPC&utm\\_term=LC-UK&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0tKiBhC6ARIsAAOXutm7spV0dymH2wUEGblR-Y9QRefA\\_2LwyeffwEse2VZKb8xEDwicDngaAkROEALw\\_wcB](https://lindamoodbell.com/our-approach?utm_source=Google&utm_campaign=2019-03_StandardSearch&utm_medium=PPC&utm_term=LC-UK&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0tKiBhC6ARIsAAOXutm7spV0dymH2wUEGblR-Y9QRefA_2LwyeffwEse2VZKb8xEDwicDngaAkROEALw_wcB)

We believe, passionately, that all children and adults can be taught to read, comprehend, spell, and do math to their potential.

We identify strengths and weaknesses that may be affecting school performance. Our instruction is based on an individual's learning needs.

Some students come to us with previous diagnoses such as dyslexia, autism spectrum disorders, or general learning challenges—and we make a difference for each of them.



