

# What is autism?

Autism is a lifelong disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. There are approximately **140,000** autistic school children in the UK.<sup>1</sup>

## Communication challenges

Needing time to process information

## Difficulty with unexpected change

Even small changes can cause huge anxiety

**This can lead to meltdowns or shutdowns**

## Sensory differences

Noise, smells and lights can be very overwhelming

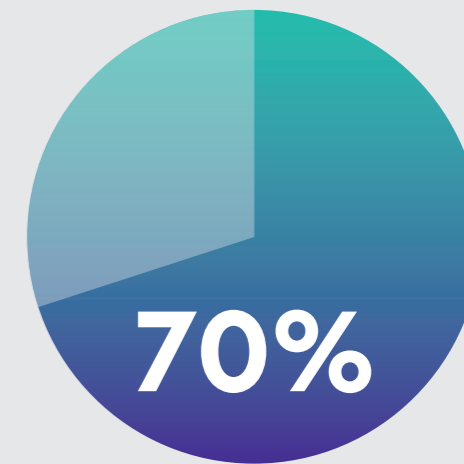
## Repeating things and routines

Taking the exact same route to school or liking the same food



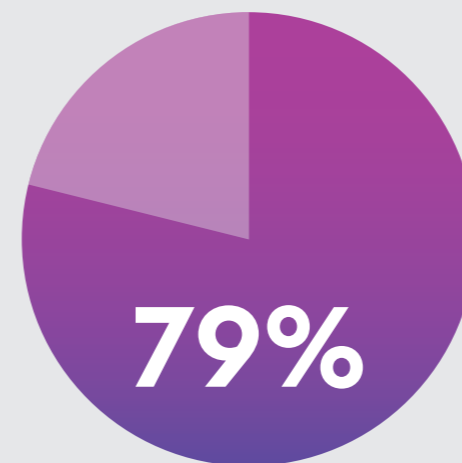
**1 in 100**

children are estimated to be autistic.<sup>2</sup>



**70%**

of autistic children are in schools like yours.<sup>3</sup>



**79%**

of autistic people report feeling isolated.<sup>4</sup>

Autistic children are **3 times** more likely to be excluded from schools like yours.<sup>5</sup>



## Well-known autistic people



Chris Packham



Anne Hegerty



Talia Grant

"If you see anyone having a meltdown, be calm and understanding and give them the space to calm down."

**Talia Grant**

**Help create a society that works for autistic people.**

**World Autism Awareness Week 2021**  
29 March - 4 April

# Sources

1. 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
2. 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
3. DfE Special educational needs in England: January 2014  
70% of autistic children are in mainstream school
4. The National Autistic Society Survey (2015)
5. Department for Education (July 2018), Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2016 to 2017  
70% of autistic children are in mainstream school, and are 3 times more likely to be excluded from them

**World  
Autism  
Awareness  
Week  
2021**  
29 March  
- 4 April