

Welcome to Autism Central

Terms of service for parents, carers and personal assistants

Your Autism Central Region hub is:

North West Hub

Website - <https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/hubs/north-west-delivered-great-minds-together>

Email – autismcentral@gmt.team

Phone – 0808 275 8944

About Autism Central

Autism Central is a peer education programme for parents and carers of autistic people that is delivered via 7 regional hubs across the NHS regions of England. We offer high-quality and easily accessible learning, information and guidance developed by autistic people, parents and carers, with the aid of a dedicated website and learning management system.

To find out more about Autism Central please visit:

<https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/about-us>

<https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/faqs>

<https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/resources>

Survey completion

It's essential for Autism Central to receive feedback from parents, carers and personal assistants as this informs the development and growth of the programme. Completing evaluation surveys is crucial as they allow us to demonstrate the impact of the programme to our funders. Survey QR codes will appear at the end of every group session and workshop and we encourage all participants to complete these as we want to hear what you think. All surveys are anonymous and unidentifiable. Some anonymised data may be shared with the programme funders – National Health Service (England), the Autism Central governance steering group and programme team.

Quality observations

To ensure the continued quality and development of Autism Central, we will at times allow observers to participate in sessions. Observations are necessary to see how the programme is being delivered, highlight good practice which can be shared and identify issues so solutions can be created. The observers will be from Autistica who quality assure the Autism Central programme. All visits will be conducted by fieldworkers with lived experience of autism. All information gathered will remain anonymous and unidentifiable. Anonymised feedback may be quoted and used externally for publicising the benefits of the programme. The programme funders – National Health Service (England), the Autism Central governance steering group and programme team will have sight of this information as it will be used to inform programme development.

Family Carers, Personal Assistants and PEs will be informed in advance that an observation will take place in their upcoming session. A reminder will also take place at the start of the session. **If a participant does not wish to be observed, please make themselves known to the peer educator that they do not consent to an observation. They will need to leave the**

session before it starts. All family carers, personal assistants and PEs consent to the observation by participating and remaining in the session.

Conduct and expectations

The role of the peer educator is to share knowledge, learning and experience and make access to information, advice and guidance more accessible to participants.

It's important FCPAs understand that the workshops, groups and 1:1 sessions are not the same as:

- Counselling
- Key working or case working
- Support from an advisor
- Support from a social worker
- Talking with a friend

Appropriate boundaries are used to help participants understand the purpose of the service offer, so it can use the service for its intended purpose and become educated and informed about autism and the support and services available.

Autism Central peer educators will:

- Be friendly, kind and courteous at all times
- Be professional and set clear, appropriate boundaries
- Stay within the law and abide by policies
- Maintain a non-judgemental attitude, whilst respecting the values, choices and beliefs of families
- Seek support and guidance when needed for ourselves and others
- Learn from experience
- Work in a sensitive way with families to challenge prejudice or ignorance about autism

Autism Central peer educators will not:

- Directly or indirectly abuse, neglect, harm or exploit others in any way
- Abuse the trust of individuals or access to personal information about them, or to their property, home or workplace
- Develop inappropriate personal relationships with individuals who are participating in the Autism Central programme. This includes not actively forming new friendships with participants, either face to face or on social media channels and also relates to romantic and/or sexual relationships
- Be dishonest or use deception in order to gain advantage
- Discriminate against individuals
- Condone or participate in any illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour
- Be judgemental and impose our own values and beliefs on families

Peer educators are accountable for the way they work. They have a duty to keep others and themselves safe. This is achieved by maintaining a respectful, caring and professional approach to work, by conducting themselves in a way that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement and upholding the values of Autism Central.

Parents, carers and personal assistants will be asked to adhere to certain behaviours when attending all sessions. These include:

- Respecting the confidentiality of other participants
- Understanding that everyone should have space to contribute and speak
- Use language that is respectful and supportive
- Use identity first language (autistic people not people with autism)
- Are respectful in their questions or comments
- Respecting different communication preferences. For example, in online sessions some people may prefer to speak with a video on, whilst others may prefer the chat feature with no video
- Understanding that interruptions may occur. This is more common when taking part in online sessions
- Being punctual

Safeguarding

All peer educators have a duty to report all safeguarding incidents and concerns, however minor to their hub designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding manager. Examples of these may include situations where a peer educator is concerned for the wellbeing or welfare of a participant, or has been made aware of a concern for the wellbeing or welfare of other adults or children who are not participating in Autism Central. All hubs follow an internal safeguarding process which is outlined in their safeguarding policy.

Each hub supplies Autism Central with anonymised monthly monitoring which records the number of concerns and incidents raised alongside the anonymised theme of the concern.

[North West Hub Safeguarding Policy](#)

Products and services

Hubs recruit, train, induct, support and manage a network of peer educators across their regions and coordinate the delivery of:

- Group sessions for parents, carers and personal assistants - These are structured or unstructured education workshops/sessions (dependent on the hub requirements) facilitated by Peer Educators. The groups may focus on:
 - various topics around understanding and learning more about autism and how to support autistic people
 - learning how to navigate support and services and understand rights and entitlements
 - accessing support and help locally
 - signposting to further learning and resources available on the website.
- One to one wrap-around sessions for parents/carers - Peer educators can run one-to-one sessions for parents or carers with a particular focus on:
 - those who need individual time or specific help
 - underrepresented groups – those who have additional barriers to accessing education and support.

- Group information and training sessions delivered to Personal Assistants working with Autistic people:
 - These are 2 hours group information/training sessions to upskill PAs in autism and how to support autistic people
- Autism Central Web Portal and Learning Management System (LMS)
All regional hubs have access to national co-produced peer educator training materials and resources. This ensures all peer educators across the country are trained with the same consistent approach.
 - The Autism Central website www.autismcentral.org.uk allows parents and carers to access information about autism and available support in a single place, so you can easily find what you need.
 - Here you can access content directly when there may be barriers to you being able to attend group sessions delivered by hubs. Peer Educators may signpost you to content for additional learning, or the content may back up and refresh what you have learned from attending a Peer Educator group or 121 session or be used as pre-learning before attending a session.

Confidentiality/privacy

[North West Hub Data Protection Policy](#)

In a situation where a concern has been raised where there is risk for material or reputational damage for the programme or the funder, Autism Central may ask for personal data to be shared so Autism Central can be satisfied appropriate actions and resolutions have been concluded.

Data protection

[North West Hub Data Protection Policy](#)

Feedback and suggestions

Your views are important to us. We welcome and value any feedback or suggestions that may help to improve the Autism Central programme. A simple idea can sometimes make all the difference. We also want to hear if you have any concerns. You can either contact the hub direct or the programme team by emailing autismcentral@gmt.team or using the link below <https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/contact-us>.

Whistleblowing

[North West Hub Whistleblowing Policy](#)