



Slide 3



The slide features a dark blue header with the Staffordshire County Council logo and the title "Autism Awareness: Aims". On the left is a photograph of a young boy with curly hair holding a magnifying glass to his eye. To the right of the image are three colored boxes containing text:

- To develop an awareness and understanding of Autism and the Three Key Areas of Difference**
- To know the importance of understanding the individual pupil**
- To identify key areas to help Autistic pupils develop positive relationships**

Below these boxes is a blue box with the text: **Key message: Focus on difference not deficit**

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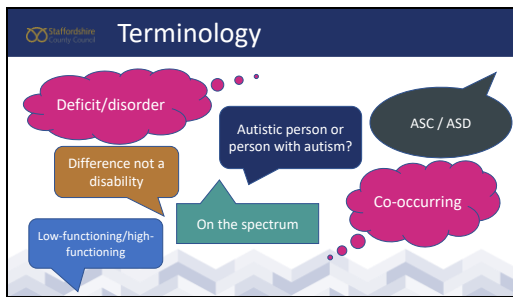
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Slide 6



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**Three Areas of Difference: Social Understanding**

- May be unaware group instructions apply to them.
- May not instinctively recognise unwritten social rules.
- Acting unexpectedly in the 'typical' social context.
- Difficulty with cooperative activities/interaction skills.
- May have lack of attention to or interest in people.
- Disconnection of emotions.
- Double empathy problem.
- Differences with imaginative play; instigating or joining play may be challenging.

Social understanding is "an understanding of the underlying, hidden messages that underpin social interaction - a 'hidden code'".  
Carol Gray (1998)

"People with Autism Spectrum have to learn social behaviour without the benefit of social understanding."  
Emeritus Professor Rita Jordan, 2013  
Birmingham University

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**Three Areas of Difference: Social Understanding**

How can we facilitate positive relationships?


- Direct teaching of social rules/skills in a variety of settings.
- Clear feedback about inappropriate social behaviour; specifically reward positive behaviour effort and tell children what to do rather than what not to do.
- Use of structured social activities.
- 'Put yourself in their shoes'.

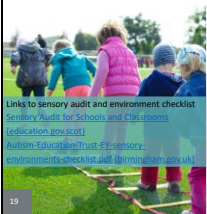






## Slide 19

 **Three Areas of Difference: Sensory**



How can we enable pupils to feel comfortable in the school environment?

- Work with parent/pupil to produce a sensory profile.
- Provide access to calming safe havens.
- Be flexible at times of increased sensory input.
- Reduce the amount of time spent in areas of high sensory input.
- Allow movement breaks.
- Consider wobble cushions, fidget toys, ear defenders, chew toys, sensory circuits.

Links to sensory audit and environment checklist  
[Sensory Audit for Schools and Clubs \(2016\)](#)  
[RedKaton.gov.scot](#)  
[Autism Education Trust's Sensory Environments Checklist.pdf \(penn.ac.uk\)](#)

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## Slide 20

 **Three Areas of Difference: Sensory**

What do the families we support want you to know?

I really wish that teachers/school could be more **flexible** with lessons an autistic child struggles with such as drama and PE. *Parent of autistic child.*

An autistic person can **"stim"**. This can be a **repetitive movement** or sound to help calm them. Unless they're hurting themselves or others, you should **NEVER** stop them from doing this. It's emotional regulation. It can range from flapping, jumping, squeezing their eyes together, blinking fast, swaying, running, spinning and many more. *Parent of autistic child.*

To me, autism is living in a world with **sensitive** hearing and smells. It really helps when people around me show **understanding** to my condition. Headphones subdue noise. *Tom (19)*

I would like to see more **quiet/safe** spaces children can **retreat** to that doesn't have the stigma often student support rooms have.

*"My son hates bananas. He won't play with children if they have eaten a banana and will actively move himself away from them. He won't tell them though so his **behaviour** can seem very strange! At home we have taught him to politely remind us to wash our hands if we touch a banana and this works well." Parent of 10 year old autistic boy.*

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## Slide 24

 **Autism Awareness**

There are many positives to autism including:

- Attention to detail.
- Good factual memory.
- Accepting of difference in others.
- Ability to concentrate for long periods on one topic.
- Can become experts in an area of interest.
- Are often honest and open.
- Can have fewer social inhibitions.
- Can have a strong and clear sense of justice.
- Can have a different and refreshing way of seeing the world.





