

# Team Ambitious Guide to fundraising



**Ambitious  
about Autism**



## Thank you

At Ambitious about Autism, we make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

One in 100 people in the UK alone have autism; that's a lot of people who need our support. That's why we need people like you. Our vision is a world where the ordinary is the every day experience of children and young people with autism and the funds that you raise help to make this a reality. Thank you for joining Team Ambitious; your support is so important to us.



# Why Ambitious about Autism?

We are the national charity for children and young people with autism. We provide services, raise awareness and understanding and campaign for change.

We support children and young people with autism and their families through the journey from diagnosis to adulthood. We do this using four key programmes:

### Ready for school

Early diagnosis and support is critical to ensure children and young people with autism receive the best start in life. We are working to raise awareness of the importance of early intervention with decision makers and running an assessment and training service for parents and carers of young children with autism.

### Achieving at school

Education has the power to transform the lives of children and young people with autism, but as it stands, children with autism are being failed by our education system and the impact on them is enormous. We support children and young people with autism to learn, thrive and achieve through developing and running innovative and high quality educational services, like TreeHouse School and The Rise School through the Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust and by influencing policy and practice in autism education.

### Preparing for adulthood

We have developed a preparing for adulthood programme, which supports all young people with autism, whatever their needs, to prepare for a fulfilling adulthood. This includes Ambitious College, London's first day college for young people with complex autism, supporting young people with autism to access further education beyond school through our training programme, and growing and developing young people's employability skills through our Autism Exchange Programme.

### Building a community of support

Families face enormous challenges to ensure their children's needs are met from diagnosis and education to employment. We are committed to building a community of support for families and children and young people with autism, for those who access our services and beyond. This includes building an online community for parents on our website with access to information and support through Talk about Autism and delivering training to families and professionals to improve educational practice and outcomes. We run an innovative youth participation programme to ensure the views and experiences of young people with autism are taken into account in policy and in their everyday experiences.

Find out more about our work here:  
[ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/about-us](https://ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/about-us)

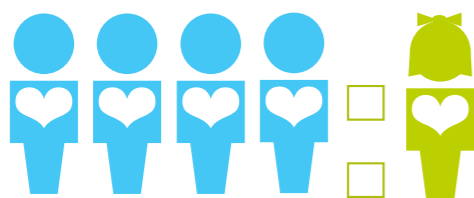


# The need

## Why your help is vital

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability; it affects the way a person communicates and how they experience the world around them.

Autism affects **four times** as many boys as girls



**42%** of classroom teachers say their training doesn't prepare them to meet the needs of children with autism.

**45%** of children with autism have been sent home illegally or denied a full education.



**66%** of children with autism have been bullied at school.



Caring for a child with autism puts a huge strain on families and parents are **60%** more likely to divorce.



Over **1,000** parents are forced to take legal action every year to get the right educational support for their child.



The lack of support for children and young people and their families costs society **£32 billion** a year



Many families with autism live in poverty as it costs on average three times more to raise a child with a severe impairment than a non-disabled child.



Only **11%** of parents who have children with autism work full time, and **70%** say the lack of appropriate care facilities stops them from working.



Fewer than **1 in 4** young people with autism access education or training beyond school.



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Only **16%** of adults with autism are currently in full-time, paid employment.



Find out more: [ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/stats-and-facts](http://ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/stats-and-facts)

# Living with autism

## Dawn: My family's experiences

“When I was told that my husband and I were expecting twins, we couldn't have been happier and we were delighted when Aimee and Thomas arrived and were both healthy. Thomas was always such a calm baby and he was never happier than when I was giving him lots of cuddles. I did notice that Thomas wasn't developing at the same rate as Aimee; He didn't have any speech at all and wasn't walking. I was obviously concerned and did a lot of reading on child development and of course, the A word kept coming up.

I took Thomas to the GPs when he was three and half and thankfully they took my concerns seriously; he was very quickly referred to an educational psychologist. After lots of questions, the psychologist told me very gently ‘that your suspicions are correct, Thomas does indeed have autism.’ I was upset for Thomas and grieving the life that he was never going to have. Eventually, I absorbed the shock. I knew that I had to toughen up as I had to look out for Thomas even more now. Diagnosis or not, we still had a beautiful son!

Thomas went to a mainstream nursery and they were very good with him. Thomas has always enjoyed being outside regardless of the weather – I have one memory of him playing in the snow – it was far too cold for the other children to be outside and there was one poor teacher who just stood there hugging a cup of coffee watching him to ensure he was safe.

After nursery, we got Thomas a place at a special needs school in Hertfordshire and for the first few years everything was going well. However, when he was around 13, some difficulties developed and Thomas would bite his arms when he was stressed. The hospital recommended medication to calm him which thankfully worked.

As Thomas grew older, he became increasingly unhappy at the school and this did present itself as challenging behaviour. The school asked for me to come into the school to observe him. That experience confirmed my fears that he wasn't happy there and shortly after that, Thomas was excluded from school. At that time, I thought it was the worst thing in the world. He was out of school for five months as we couldn't find another that could meet his needs. I then remembered of another boy who had also been excluded from the same school and I got in touch with his mother. She told me that he now attended TreeHouse School and he couldn't be happier. I immediately made enquires and Thomas was accepted a short time afterwards and I have never looked back.

The change in Thomas since he has been at TreeHouse School has been immeasurable. All my friends and family have noticed it too – he is happy and always has a smile on his face. Thomas has lots of opportunities to do things that I wouldn't have thought possible a few years ago. Just recently, he went for a three day adventure holiday with the school. The care and dedication the staff take over the young learners there is just incredible to see. When Thomas goes off to school, I know he will have a great day.”

# How your money makes a difference

These figures can inspire your supporters to sponsor you.

**£10** could support 30 minutes of our online community forum **Talk about Autism**. This service provides a vital support network for parents, carers and young people with autism.

**£500** could pay for two sensory pressure ‘Squeeze’ vests for pupils at TreeHouse School or Ambitious College, providing great comfort and reassurance.

**£50** could be used to give a young person with autism the opportunity to access leisure services within their local community.

**£1000** could fund one of the annual meetings of our Youth Council; a group of young people with autism who act to ensure that the interests of young people are put first in our work.

**£100** could fund the recruitment of one Youth Patron. This is a young person with autism who sits on our Youth Council, who makes sure that our work is vital and relevant.


**£2,500** could fund two week's autism training for teachers, enabling them to better support 70% of children with autism in mainstream education. Currently over half of teachers have not had the specific autism training they need.

**£300** could fund two pupils for a six-week course of horse riding at stables in Enfield; an activity which calms our learners, giving them increased confidence and better behaviour management.

**£5,000** could fund ‘a hub’ in our Life Skills Kitchen at the new west London campus of Ambitious College. Each of six integrated ‘kitchen hubs’ are laid out like traditional kitchens to increase students' independence, easing the transition into adult life.



**A** **Adopt a tin**  
Place a **collection tin** in your gym, local pub, hairdressers etc...



**B** **Bake sale**  
**Everyone loves a sweet treat!**



**M** **Media**  
Use our [press release template](#) to **share your story** with the local newspaper.



**N** **No more**  
**Ask people to sponsor you** to give up smoking, chocolate or swearing.




**C** **Contacts**  
**Contact friends** and colleagues, and **ask for their support.**



**D** **Duck race**  
Ask people to give a donation as a **bet on the winning duck.**



**O** **Online fundraising**  
Set up your **online fundraising page** and **share your progress.** Read our ['How-to' guide](#) for helpful tips.



**P** **Plan your event**  
Check out our [top tips](#) here.



# A-Z of fundraising ideas



**Q** **Quiz night**  
You can **find questions** really easily **online**, or **ask your local pub** to support you on their next quiz night.




**R** **Raffle**  
Easy to organise, **Don't forget to follow the rules!**




**E** **Eat**  
**Come dine with me**, a barbecue, curry night or dine in the dark. Exchange **donations** for the meal.




**F** **Fancy dress**  
Choose a theme and **dress up or down** at work for a donation.



**S** **Smarties tubes**  
Hand out smartie tubes and ask people to **fill them** with as many 20p pieces as possible. **A full tube can hold £12**



**T** **Team**  
**Ask friends to help you raise funds** – teamwork will make it more fun and you'll hit your target even faster.



**G** **Gift Aid**  
Remember to ask people to **Gift Aid** their **donations**, more info [here](#).




**H** **Hashtag**  
**Promote** what you're doing **on social media** #TeamAmbitious @AmbitiousAutism.



**U** **Upcycle**  
**Repurpose your waste** into pieces of art **and sell** them, e.g. turn old lightbulbs into plant pots or decorations.




**V** **Video**  
Keep your supporters updated with films of your progress, **explain why you've chosen AaA on film** and share online.



**I** **Important dates**  
Halloween, Easter, Christmas, Hanukkah - **time your fundraising** to coincide.



**J** **Jumble sale**  
Your old things could be worth something to someone – **have a clear out** and collect donations.




**W** **Walk**  
**Ask friends and family to take on a mile** for autism and get sponsored to do it.



**X** **X-treme**  
**Take on an extreme challenge** such as a sky dive, bungee jump or abseiling.




**K** **Kids**  
Does the **local school** have a fair or a fundraising event at which AaA could be the beneficiary?



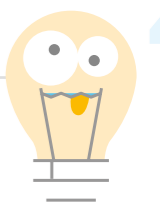
**L** **Local businesses**  
Could provide a venue, prizes for auction, home a collection tin or **promote your event.**



**Y** **You**  
**Document and share your achievements & struggles.** Your supporters want to know.



**Z** **Zany**  
**The more unusual the fundraising idea the better, get creative!**



# Spread the word



## Word of mouth

Tell your friends, neighbours, social club, gym, local shops or office what you are doing and why. Telling people face-to-face makes your efforts more genuine and will motivate others to help you reach your target.



## Email

Email your friends, family and colleagues to ask for their support. Remember to include the link to your online fundraising page so that they can easily sponsor you. It's important to include some information about Ambitious about Autism and to explain why you need their support and how it will make a difference.



## Social media

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat... Use all your channels regularly to reach out and share your updates with others.



## Blog it!

Create a blog to keep your donors or potential donors informed of your latest challenges and training stories with pictures and film clips. People are more generous when you keep them updated with your progress and with what the charity is up to.

## Local media

Contact your local media. Local newspapers, radio and TV stations are always interested in stories about local residents taking part in activities. It's a great way of spreading the word and attracting more sponsors. Here is a [template press release](#).

We would love to hear about your fundraising efforts too – **please follow us @AmbitiousAutism and use the #TeamAmbitious. Be sure to like our Facebook page, follow us on Instagram and please send us your Twitter handle.**

On average, **20%** of donations are received after the event date so let people know how you got on. Add extra content such as photos from the day and any interesting stories.

# Show us your money!



## Online

Pay the money on to your online fundraising page or donate via our website:  
ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/donations/donation-page

## By post

Send a cheque payable to "Ambitious about Autism" to:

**FAO Events Fundraising Team  
The Pears National Centre for Autism Education  
Woodside Avenue  
London  
N10 3JA**

Remember to include a note, so we know it's from you.

## Over the phone

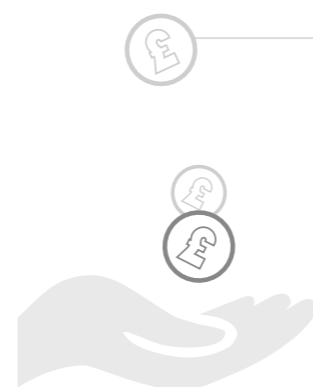
Call us on **0208 815 5431** and ask for the Events Fundraising Team to pay with your credit/debit card.

## By bank transfer

If you would like to transfer the money through your bank account, please contact the Events Fundraising Team who will provide you with more details.

## Some tips about paying in money:

- Remember to **keep accurate records** of your sponsors and donations
- Please **do not send cash in the post**. You can use the donation form included in this pack when paying in money.
- Remember to **reference any cheques or bank transfers** by stating your name and the event you have taken part in.
- Remember to send us your sponsorship form so we can **claim Gift Aid. This means we can claim an extra 25% on every donation** – at no extra cost to you or your sponsors!



# We are here to help

We hope this pack has given you a good starting point for your fundraising, though if you would like further information or advice, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We have included sponsorship and donation forms in this pack. If you'd like any other support materials please contact the Events Fundraising Team.

**We're here for you on: 020 8815 5431 or [events@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:events@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk).**



Pears National Centre  
for Autism Education,  
Woodside Avenue,  
London N10 3JA

**Tel** 020 8815 5444

**Email** [info@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](mailto:info@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)

**Web** [ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](http://ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)

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