

Making the most of a visit to your GP: a guide for those on the autistic spectrum

If you or someone you are caring for has autism there are some simple steps you can take to make it easier to access your GP:

- You should make sure the diagnosis is coded as a significant active problem on the records
- You should make sure you are on the carers register if appropriate
- You should highlight any reasonable adjustments that are needed to allow you to access the services
- You should make sure these adjustments are clearly “flagged” on the records.
- If you are registering at a new practice and you/your relative are anxious about visits, arrange some time to visit without an appointment and when no interventions are needed – “training”
- Use a patient passport and take it to appointments in case you see a doctor/nurse who does not know you: www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/out-and-about/my-hospital-passport.aspx
- If you do not understand something – say so
- If you are being referred to hospital for tests or investigations ask them to write on the referral letter the reasonable adjustments you will need at the hospital

Reasonable adjustments might include:

- Early or late appointments
- Longer appointments
- Somewhere quiet to wait
- Or waiting outside and being called in from there
- Seeing the same clinician if at all possible (recognising that in an emergency this may not be possible)
- A key named contact person who will navigate the system for you – this may be a receptionist, administrator or nurse and not necessarily your doctor
- Alternative ways of booking appointments – such as on-line that do not involve the telephone
- Accessible information in a format you understand about how and when appointments are available and how to get prescriptions or access services like cancer-screening tests.