

I've Just Been Diagnosed - What Now?

A guide for autistic adults, young people and families in Lewisham

Receiving an autism diagnosis can bring a mixture of emotions. Some people feel relief and understanding, while others may feel overwhelmed, confused or unsure about what happens next.

You are not expected to figure everything out immediately.

This guide has been created by the Lewisham Autism Hub to help autistic people, parents and carers understand what support and services may be available locally following a diagnosis.

First Things First

An autism diagnosis does not change who you are.
It can however:

- Help explain differences in communication, sensory needs, emotions or social interaction
- Help you access support and reasonable adjustments
- Help you better understand your needs and strengths
- Help schools, workplaces and services make appropriate adjustments

Everyone's experience of autism is different.

Common Feelings After Diagnosis

You may feel:

- Relieved
- Validated
- Emotional
- Confused
- Angry
- Anxious
- Unsure what support is available

Parents and carers may also experience mixed emotions while trying to navigate next steps. This is very common.

What Support Is Available in Lewisham?

Lewisham Autism Hub

The Lewisham Autism Hub offers autism-specific support for:

- Children and young people
- Parents and carers
- Autistic adults

Support includes:

- Information, advice and guidance
- 1:1 support sessions
- Parent/carers workshops
- Social groups
- Employment support
- Community activities
- Signposting to local services



The Hub supports individuals both before and after diagnosis.

If You Are Waiting for Support

Many autistic people experience long waiting periods for assessments or ongoing support.

While waiting, it can help to:

- Learn more about autism from trusted sources
- Explore sensory needs and routines
- Ask schools/workplaces for adjustments early
- Access peer support and social groups
- Speak to your GP about emotional wellbeing support if needed

You do not always need to wait for a formal diagnosis to ask for support.

Support for Children and Young People

You may be able to access:

- SEN support in school
- EHCP assessments where appropriate
- CAMHS support
- Autism-specific workshops
- Social groups
- Parent/carer guidance

If your child is struggling in school, it can help to:

- Request a meeting with the SENCO
- Discuss reasonable adjustments
- Keep written records of concerns and support requests

Support for Autistic Adults

Adults may benefit from support around:

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Employment and confidence building
- Benefits and advocacy
- Isolation and social connection
- Independent living skills
- Navigating services

The Lewisham Autism Hub can help signpost and connect adults to appropriate local services.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Autistic people can experience:

- Anxiety
- Burnout
- Emotional dysregulation
- Low mood
- Social exhaustion
- Sensory overwhelm

If you are struggling emotionally:

- Speak to your GP
- Reach out to trusted support networks
- Access autism-informed support where possible
- Contact crisis services if you feel unsafe

Understanding Reasonable Adjustments

Autistic people may be entitled to reasonable adjustments in:

- School
- College
- University
- Workplaces
- Healthcare settings
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Examples include:

- Written instructions
- Flexible communication methods
- Sensory adjustments
- Extra processing time
- Quiet waiting areas
- Clear routines and expectations

Helpful Local Services

Lewisham Local Offer

Information about SEND support and services for children and young people.

Lewisham Works

Employment and skills support for local residents.

Adult Social Care

Support for adults who may need additional help with daily living.

GP Support

Your GP can support with:

- Mental health referrals
- Medication discussions
- Referrals to additional services

Things You Do Not Need To Do Immediately

You do not need to:

- Tell everyone about your diagnosis
- Have everything figured out straight away
- Change who you are
- Access every service immediately

It is okay to take things one step at a time.

Autism is not something that needs to be “fixed.”

The goal of support is to help autistic people feel understood, supported, safe and able to access the world in ways that work for them.