

HOT TOPICS – JUNE 2022

AUTISTIC PRIDE DAY

This month's Hot Topic looks at Autism & 'Autistic Pride Day', which is celebrated on Saturday 18 June

OVERVIEW: Autism is described as a "lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them" [Source: [Autistic Pride Day | Embrace Learning \(embrace-learning.com\)](#)].



Autistic Pride Day is a pride celebration for autistic people that is held on 18 June each year. It "recognises the



importance of pride for autistic people and its role in bringing about positive changes in the broader society. Although Autistic Pride Day is June 18, pride events are often held on the weekend of that year for logistical reasons, but can be held at any time

during the year" [Source: [Autistic Pride Day - Wikipedia](#)]

WHY IS AUTISTIC PRIDE DAY ON 18 JUNE?

The day was first celebrated in 2005 by 'Aspies For Freedom' (AFF) because June 18 was the birthday of the youngest group member at that time. AFF was established in 2004 and they aim to raise awareness of the autism rights movement.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AUTISTIC PRIDE DAY?

AFF campaign to raise awareness of the autism rights movement and to educate people that the autism spectrum is not always a disability because there are advantages as well as disadvantages.



THINK ABOUT THIS!!

"People with autism have unique characteristics that provide them with both rewards and challenges. Although many of the difficulties they face are because of

neurodiversity, another factor is issues in society. For example, society's attitude towards autism is often one of pity or a belief that it is a condition requiring treatment"

[Source: [Autistic Pride Day 2021 - Awareness Days Events Calendar 2022](#)]

You may know friends, family or colleagues that are autistic. There is a run group of UK police officers and staff



that support colleagues affected by autism as well as other neurodivergent conditions that include dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD. The group is called the National Police Autism Association (NPAA) and they offer free

membership to the policing community as well as selected third parties. According to their website, "the NPAA advocates for **valuing individuals for their strengths**, and creating a workplace environment and culture in which everyone can fulfil their potential. We aim to end the stigma, prejudice and ignorance surrounding neurodivergent conditions" [Source: [National Police Autism Association \(NPAA\)](#)]

Did you know that the **National Autistic Society** is the leading charity for people on the autism spectrum and their families? They provide advice, guidance, training and support. Be sure to watch the two short videos created by the society to help you better understand autism - press the 'ctrl' key and click each link:



[What is Autism? - YouTube](#)

[What is autism? - YouTube](#)

The National Health Service (NHS) has a website that provides information to support your understanding of autism. This includes training, resources and videos as well as details of their Long Term plan that was published in 2019. This provides a clearer focus on the needs of autistic people and their families. The plan tells us that "autism is a lifelong condition and a part of daily life for around 600,000 people in England" [Source: [NHS Long Term Plan v1.2 August 2019](#)].



So, now you have a better understanding of autism and the celebration of Autistic Pride Day, prepare for your meeting with your PDC by thinking about how this may affect you not just in your role as a police officer, but your relationship family, friends and colleagues.

Once you have prepared for your meeting, be ready to talk about the potential impact of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and your obligations as a police officer when dealing with people that are autistic. Consider the things that may affect your interactions, such as your use of language, peripheral noises such as your radio and eye contact. Remember that autism is often referred to as a 'hidden disability'.

'World Autism Week' was covered as a Hot Topic in April 2021, so you may want to refer to that as well to develop your understanding further