

WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism, or an autism spectrum condition (ASC), is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition characterised by significant differences in how a person processes information and interacts with the world. Key characteristics associated with Autism are:

Differences in social communication: These include the use of non-verbal communication cues (eye contact, gestures, body language) and verbal communication (how they express themselves and comprehend information).

Differences in social interaction: This include differences in how a person approaches conversations, and picks up on emotional and social cues.

Differences in approach to relationships: These include how a person initiates or manages relationships and how they understand social dynamics and situations.

Differences in approach to everyday life: Preferences for sameness and routines, and intense interest.

Sensory differences: Many autistic individuals experience hyper- or hypo-sensitivity to light, sounds, taste, or touch. It is however important to note that this difference is not exclusive to the autistic population group.

Testimonials

"The service was exceptional (quick email replies, my feedback was taken on board, and I felt respected, understood and listened too)."

"My experience interacting with the CLAAS has been great Speaking over the phone/Teams made the process more accessible and less intimidating for me, as I did not have to factor in the logistics and stress involved in a commute, and I could still attend appointments on days when my pain and fatigue levels were high."

CENTRAL LONDON ADULT AUTISM SERVICE (CLAAS)



The **Central London Adult Autism Service** primarily offers autism diagnostic assessments. We also offer brief psychological support, social groups, and consultation to professionals.

We are a team of highly clinical and counselling psychologists alongside assistant and trainee psychologists.

WHO DO WE SUPPORT?

We work with adults over the age of 18 years, who are registered with GPs in the following boroughs: **Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea** and **Hammersmith and Fulham**.

In some instances, we accept referrals from clients with an existing diagnosis for brief consultation or signposting to local services.

We do not support service-users with a diagnosis of global learning disability.

HOW TO REFER TO OUR SERVICE?

We accept referrals from GPs, health and social care professionals and care providers.

Referrers must complete our referral forms and send them via email to: **clcht.spa.referral@nhs.net**



WHAT SERVICES DO WE OFFER?

Assessments: We adopt a neuroaffirmative and strength-based approach. This means that we understand Autism as significant **differences** in how a person communicates, interacts and processes information in the world. We focus on the strengths and lived experiences of our service-users.

Post-diagnostic support: After receiving a formal diagnosis from our service, we offer brief psychological support to discuss what autism means to our service-users and to explore coping strategies for their autism-related needs.

Social group: This is an opportunity for service-users to meet other autistic adults, share their experiences and socialise with like-minded individuals.

Talking Space: We offer monthly 20-minute drop-in sessions for service-users on our waiting list or who have been diagnosed in our service. These sessions provide the opportunity for informal chats, to explore autism-related queries or to seek advice.

Consultation: We offer specialist advice and consultation to professionals supporting autistic adults. For instance, exploring the impact of autistic needs on their well-being, making reasonable adjustments for communication needs, and identifying coping strategies for managing changes.

Signposting: We can signpost our clients and their GPs to services who may be able to provide more appropriate support to our clients.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND US?

Westminster: 215 Lisson Grove, NW8 8LW.

Kensington and Chelsea: 1-9 St Marks Rd, London W11 1RG

Hammersmith and Fulham: 56 Bloemfontein Road, W12 7FG

CONTACT DETAILS

Telephone: **020 8102 3889** (*This telephone line is shared with the CLCH Learning Disability Health Service*). Please mention you are looking for the Adult Autism Service when calling.

Dr Catherine Cheung (Highly Specialist Clinical Psychologist): catherinecheung@nhs.net

Dr Lizzie Kock (Highly Specialist Counselling Psychologist): elizabeth.kock@nhs.net

