

# Calderdale: Autism Prevalence Data



**THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY &  
CALDERDALE COUNCIL**

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# Background

This document has been produced to highlight prevalence data and statistics of people living with Autism both nationally and locally. Much of the information that has been provided has been sourced from epidemiological research which has been completed in recent years, which provides estimations of how many people are anticipated to be living with Autism nationally.

Some of the statistics which are outlined throughout the document have been obtained from professionals and services located in Calderdale, however, where information could not be given, statistics have been generated from national prevalence data, using population statistics outlined in the 2011 UK census to provide local prevalence data.

## What is Autism?

The National Autistic Society (NAS) have defined Autism as 'a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them'.

# What is Asperger Syndrome?

The NAS have defined Asperger Syndrome as 'a form of autism... often of average or above average intelligence. They have fewer problems with speech but may still have difficulties with understanding and processing language'.

# National Autism Statistics and Prevalence Rates

## 1. How many people in the UK have Autism?

Recent Statistics provided by the NAS report that around 700,000 people are diagnosed with Autism currently in the UK. With the addition of their natural support networks and family members, it is anticipated that Autism impacts approximately 2.8 million people on a daily basis.

It is difficult to attribute truly accurate and reflective statistics of Autism as there are no official resources which are accountable for recording these statistics. However, by implementing the use of epidemiological surveys, we can identify trends and patterns from distinct and identifiable populations which inform prevalence rates both globally, nationally and locally.

The latest prevalence and incidence studies of Autism indicate that approximately 1.1% of the UK population are diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Condition. This equates to more than 1 in 100 people who are affected by Autism in the UK.

## 2. How many people in the UK have Autism and a Learning Disability?

Furthermore, it is anticipated that between 44%-52% of people diagnosed with Autism have an associated learning disability. Based on current statistics/estimates of people diagnosed with Autism in the UK those with a learning disability would be anticipated to be 308,000-364,000.

On the other hand, it is estimated that 48%-56% of people diagnosed with Autism do not have an associated learning disability. Therefore, it is estimated that around 336,000-392,000 people with Autism do not have an associated learning disability.

Mencap define a learning disability as 'a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities- for example household tasks, socialising or managing money- which affects someone for their whole life'. These statistics have been estimated based on national criteria associated with a person's IQ.

### 3. What are the differences in male and female Autism Statistics in the UK?

In addition, there remains variation in diagnostic rates across genders. It is evident that five times more males are diagnosed with Autism nationally than females. This statistic has been disputed by various professionals through numerous studies over the years with a 3:1 ratio reported by Baird et al (2006) and 1.8% prevalence rate in Males and 0.2% prevalence rate in females by the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey when comparing statistics in private households.

It has been stated that Autism is significantly under-diagnosed in females and therefore the proposed 5:1 ratio may not be a true reflection of gender differences in Autism. This has been suggested for a number of reasons including the idea that behavioural characteristics are more noticeable in boys e.g. 'different' and disruptive, females have noticeably better verbal skills whereas males excel at visio-spatial tasks and that females are better at masking their difficulties in order to fit in with their peers.

Furthermore, more contemporary research around Autism and gender suggests that there may be a strong genetic link than anticipated, which makes males more susceptible to Autism than females. In conclusion, it is estimated, based on current statistics that around 556,000 males are diagnosed with Autism in the UK compared to 139,000 females.

#### 4. What are the differences in Autism Statistics between White British communities and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in the UK?

‘The majority of epidemiological studies on Autism do not report or analyse data regarding ethnic background, and those that do produce an inconsistent picture of prevalence amongst different ethnic groups’ (Corbett and Perepa, 2007). Most research conducted around Autism and Ethnicity refer to ethnic groups as ‘black and minority ethnic’ (BME) communities as a means of representing anyone who does not come from and/or identify as coming from a White British background.

Statistics have been disputed as inconsistent for a number of reasons including varying perceptions of Autism in different communities’ e.g. limited understanding of Autism in western cultural definitions. Furthermore, many children from BME communities miss out on diagnosis or receive a late diagnosis as some of the developmental milestones used to define ASC are culturally bound and are therefore ‘missed’. Other explanations which have been provided include the stigma attached to Autism in some BME cultures and language barriers preventing learning opportunities around detecting Autism and accessing a ‘timely diagnosis’.

# Calderdale Autism Statistics and Prevalence Data

## 1. How many people in Calderdale have Autism?

It is difficult to establish an accurate statistic of how many people have a diagnosis of Autism in Calderdale, as these are dependent on universal services maintaining and updating recording and monitoring systems which highlight this information. In addition it is likely that there are significant numbers of people who are not known to services, particularly health services with an ASC diagnosis. Furthermore, it is likely that there are prominent cases of under-diagnosis, which can be explained in terms of low referral rates into diagnostic and treatment services. It is anticipated that with the introduction of more coherent local autistic provision, diagnostic rates will increase and more accurate statistics will emerge.

Based on current national prevalence rates, it is assumed that 1.1% of the UK population have Autism. The 2011 UK census stated that there are currently 204,200 people living in Calderdale, with an estimated increase to 208,500 people living in Calderdale at the beginning of 2014. The current prevalence rate would suggest that there are 2293 people with Autism in Calderdale.

## 2. How many adults (15yrs-75+) in Calderdale have Autism?

There are currently 166,600 people over the age of 15 living in Calderdale, it is anticipated that 1.1% of this population have Autism, equating to an estimated figure of 1832 people who have Autism (based on population figures from the 2011 UK Census)

Approximately, 387 adults with Autism are known to universal services in Calderdale (18 in employment services, 50 in the community mental health team, 86 to Autism specific support groups, and 233 to the community learning disability team (estimated)).

Figures provided by the local Autism treatment pathway indicates that there are approximately 64 cases of Autism known to the service. These numbers are dispersed throughout the upper and lower valleys, but with generally more cases of Autism being prominent in the lower valleys. In addition, approximately 5.8% adults known to mental health services have a diagnosis of Autism in Calderdale.

Based on national Autism prevalence rates this would suggest that there are approximately 1,381 adults with Autism not known to universal services.

### 3. How many children and young people (0yrs-14yrs) in Calderdale have Autism?

In addition, there are 37,000 children and young people between the ages of 0-14yrs currently living in Calderdale. Similarly, it is anticipated that 1.1% of this population have Autism equating to an estimated figure of 410 children and young people who have Autism in Calderdale.

Information provided by the ASD team stated that there are currently 338 pupils with an ASD in Calderdale that they know about. 78 of these pupils attend specialist schools, 254 attend mainstream schools and 6 or in out of authority schools or Education Other than at Schools (EOTA). This would suggest that there are at least 72 children and young people not known to universal services who have Autism, based on national prevalence data.

#### 4. How many people with Autism in Calderdale have a Learning Disability?

It is anticipated that 44%-52% of people diagnosed with Autism in the UK also have a learning disability. Based on population figures and national prevalence rates of Autism it is anticipated that there are between 1,008 (180 children and young people and 806 adults) and 1,192 (213 children and young people and 952 adults) who also have a learning disability in Calderdale.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that 48%-56% of people diagnosed with Autism in the UK do not have a learning disability. Based on population figures and national prevalence rates of Autism it is estimated that there are between 1,100 (196 children and young people and 879 adults) and 1,284 (229 children and young people and 1,025 adults) people with Autism who do not have a learning disability in Calderdale.

## 5. What are the differences between male and female Autism statistics in Calderdale?

Based on national gender statistics which state that males are five times more likely to have Autism than females, it would be estimated that approximately 1,834 males in Calderdale have Autism in comparison to 458 females have Autism in Calderdale.

However, information provided by the local Autism treatment pathway indicates that there is more or less an equal number of males and females with Autism known to universal health services (Males= 36 (56.25%) Females= 28 (43.75) However, gender statistics differ in the lower and upper valleys, with 75% of known cases of Autism in the upper valleys being Male.

However, despite this information, it would appear that Calderdale does not represent the national gender trend of Autism diagnosis.

## 6. What are the differences in Autism Statistics between White British communities and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in Calderdale?

Due to the lack of research that has been undertaken to establish figures and statistics about the differences in Autism prevalence rates between White British communities and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, it would be difficult to provide an accurate estimation.

However, based on general Autism prevalence rates of 1.1% of the UK population and the population of Calderdale (provided by the 2011 UK census) an obscure estimation can be made.

90.1% of the population in Calderdale identify as 'White', based on the figure that 2,293 of the population have Autism, 2,065 of those would be 'White'. 9.9% of the population identify as BME e.g. Asian, Black, Pakistani, Mixed etc which would suggest approximately 227 of those would have Autism.

Based on information provided by the ASD team, 17.15% (58/338) of pupils known to the team with Autism are from BME communities. This suggests that the number prevalence rate of Autism in BME communities is higher than anticipated in Calderdale. This is further supported with statistics showing that 33% of students attending specialist schools are from BME communities.

Information provided by the local Autism treatment pathway team indicates that there are no reported cases of Autism in the South East Asian community and in the Eastern European community which could suggest that cultural differences play a role in identifying and diagnosing Autism.

# Summary of National and Local Data

	National statistics (UK)	Local Statistics (Calderdale)
How many people have Autism?	700,000	2,293
How many people with Autism have a Learning Disability?	308,000-364,000	1,008-1,192
How many people with Autism do not have a Learning Disability?	336,000-392,000	1,100-1,284
How many males have Autism?	556,000	1,384
How many females have Autism?	139,000	358
How many people who identify as White British have Autism?	Unknown	2,065
How many people from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities have Autism?	Unknown	227

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## Contact Us

If you would like further information on national or local Autism prevalence data and statistics, please visit the National Autistic Society Website

Web: [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk) (The National Autistic Society)



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