

Further help or support

Any person with autism who comes into contact with the Criminal Justice System is likely to experience higher than usual levels of anxiety. Not only is it likely to be a stressful experience because of the circumstances leading to their involvement, but for many, the anxiety of having their routine changed, their actions questioned or their circumstances scrutinised, can lead to unmanageable outbursts of frustration or equally inexplicable silences. The reactions that people with autism display are different in every individual. Professionals involved in their care and support whilst they are in contact with the Criminal Justice System should be prepared and able to assist them as much as possible.

For this reason it is advisable to use someone who knows them and understands their condition as an 'Appropriate Adult' and not the Duty Social Worker or other person on an 'Appropriate Adult Scheme' list.

Below are examples of the attention cards issued by Autism West Midlands and NAS – other variations are issued by other Autism Charities and groups such as in Wales, Cheshire, NI etc. be aware that not everyone who has autism carries one of these, some may have never had a formal diagnosis others are not aware of them and some refuse to do so because of the perceived stigma.

The AWM Attention card will have a unique issue number and a database of appropriate carers / parents is held by AWM relevant to the person carrying the card. Early contact with the person named on the rear of the card will undoubtedly make dealing with the person easier particularly if they can attend and speak with the individual as a familiar face is a calming influence and they will understand their particular mannerisms etc.



During office hours Monday to Friday telephone advice can be sought on the following numbers:

Nigel Archer - Criminal Justice Sector Development Coordinator, Autism West Midlands

Telephone: 0121 224 7843

Mobile: 07971 261312

If he is unavailable due to delivering training or other commitments and the matter is not urgent he can be e-mailed on: nigela@autismwestmidlands.org.uk .