

## Just Like You, a person with Autism is as individual as you are.....

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[by Shahnaz Ashraf](#)

At Total Communication Services CIC we were recently awarded a grant from Oldham Council's Autism Way Forward board. I worked closely with Gareth who has Autism and is an advisor to Total Communication to co-produce a leaflet.

Gareth wanted to create a leaflet to help raise awareness in the local community, he wanted a leaflet that anybody from the public could pick up and it would give them information about Autism.

Gareth also wanted to include what he felt was important for people to know about Autism from his point of view.

The leaflet was created using the words and vision described by Gareth including the title, images and layout. Symbols were used from the symbols package 'Boardmaker' to provide visual support and help understanding. The format was kept simple and clear.

We worked jointly to get all the information Gareth wanted to include into the leaflet in a way that could be printed and was easy to read and understand. We researched and gathered information on the points Gareth wanted to make, for example Gareth wanted

to include some figures about how many people have Autism and that Autism affects people in different ways, so we included these in the leaflet.

We consulted with professionals from various backgrounds in the early stages for their opinion of the initial drafts and every part of the leaflet is a direct result of what Gareth wanted people to know.

Gareth was then supported to speak to local community groups included the Autism Way Forward board meeting and POINT (Parents of Oldham in touch) charity about his Autism, to help raise awareness.

The leaflet is freely available to via our website for anyone to take an electronic copy as needed.

We believe that hearing from a person with Autism directly and with a supporting leaflet to take away, should help raise awareness of the issues.





We hope our work may help increase awareness and acceptance of Autism in the community and in a small way may also contribute to reducing discrimination.

We are happy to have achieved both our aims to co-produce a leaflet from the point of view of a person with Autism and to support and build his confidence to raise awareness and use his own voice to speak to groups of people. We are also grateful to Oldham Council for the initial grant which helped us achieve this and recognise the unique opportunity we had to contribute to raising awareness.

Thank you for reading this blog, I can be contacted on [shahnaz@totalcommunication.org](mailto:shahnaz@totalcommunication.org). If you would like a copy of the leaflet then this is available as a download under the 'downloads' tab on our website <https://www.totalcommunication.org>