

When autistic patients attend the appointment

1. Be aware of the patient's special requirements

Relevant staff: All

- Make sure you have seen the special requirements information that the patient provided when booking the appointment.
- Think about how the patient's special requirements may impact the different stages of the eye examination.

2. Minimise the number of staff involved in an autistic patient's visit

Relevant staff: All

- Try and manage most of the tests and procedures between the optometrist and dispensing optician/an optical assistant.
- The optometrist could conduct the eye examination, visual field assessment, fundus photography and intraocular pressure measurements.
- The dispensing optician/optical assistant can manage the full dispensing procedure.

3. Minimise the number of rooms that need visiting during the appointment

Relevant staff: Optometrists

- Complete as many of the tests (as is practically possible) in the eye examination room.

4. Prepare the autistic patient when they arrive

Relevant staff: Practice manager or reception staff



- When the autistic patient arrives for their appointment, sit with them in a quiet space and describe what will happen during the appointment. Include details on visiting different rooms and meeting different members of staff.

5. Establish a good rapport

Relevant staff: All

- Introduce yourself and what you will be doing. For example: “My name is Ketan Parmar and I will be looking after your eyes today.”
- Be kind and friendly in the way you speak and behave.
- Be aware of the autistic patient being anxious, stressed or overwhelmed.
- Be reassuring.
- Speak with a calm tone.
- Be patient and avoid rushing procedures.

The contents of this resource were developed as part of a PhD project titled 'Investigating optometric and orthoptic conditions in autistic adults' at The University of Manchester. For more information, contact Ketan Parmar: ketan.parmar@manchester.ac.uk

Visit the Autism and Vision website: <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/autism-and-vision/>