



SIKH HUMAN
RIGHTS GROUP



SIKH
NEURODIVERSITY
NETWORK



Autism Spectrum Disorder and the Criminal Justice System

Website: shrg.ngo

Instagram: [shrg_ngo](https://www.instagram.com/shrg_ngo)

Twitter: [@shrg_ngo](https://twitter.com/shrg_ngo)

Autistic people are 7 times more likely to intersect with the criminal justice system than individuals without ASD, despite research showing that Autistic people are more likely to be victims than perpetrators.



In a recent study, only half of Autistic people (52%) were considered by the police to be vulnerable adults even though the law recognises all autistic people as vulnerable.

Individuals with neurodiverse needs may display behaviours that police officers view as suspicious or that draw attention, making them more at risk of being approached by the police.

However, in most cases, autism is a hidden disability which may not be immediately obvious.

Following a recent study, over half of legal professionals were satisfied with their professional encounters with individuals with autism, while less than a fifth of the autism community was satisfied with their encounters with the CJS (including the courts).



In cases where a client was found to have committed a crime, only 60% of judges saw the defendant's autism as a mitigating factor, resulting in a suspended or reduced sentence.

It is therefore crucial that an individual's diverse needs are identified and reasonable adjustments are offered to ensure they are not placed at a disadvantage.

Adjustments such as using visual aids to assist with communication, allowing extra time to process information, and the involvement of forensic mental health specialists can be made by the police to assist the detainee.

Autism Alert Cards are an excellent resource for individuals with an ASD diagnosis. They are designed to be easy to carry and act as a visual aid to assist both the person carrying it and the person to whom it is presented.

These can be used in all types of day-to-day interactions, not just interactions with the emergency services.



Additional Resources

The National Police Autism Association has published a comprehensive 'Police Autism Guide' and further information regarding Autism Alert Cards.

(www.npaa.org.uk)

Autism Rights Group Highland

Autism Alert Card

(www.arghighland.co.uk/arghcard.html)

CPS Toolkit

Toolkit for professionals within the criminal justice system working with or interacting with individuals with an ASD diagnosis.

(cps.gov.uk)