

Autism Post Diagnostic Support

Welcome to our autism post diagnostic support page.

Following your diagnostic assessment, you may have many questions about being autistic and understanding more about yourself.

If you received your diagnosis at The Retreat Clinics, you will have been offered post diagnostic options at your feedback appointment. The clinician would have explained the options available and discussed what may be most suitable for you. You would be then added to your chosen waiting list for PD support. These sessions are not mandatory but maybe recommended.

Waiting times vary depending on the list but it can be several months before you reach the top of the list. At this point our admin team will contact you and ask you again if you would still like to access the post diagnostic support and you will be reminded of your options. You can then change your original option if you choose to or, alternatively, decide that you no longer wish to access our post diagnostic sessions.

For post diagnostic support you can choose from one of the following options:

- *Individual sessions x2 in person (face to face) at The Tuke Centre, York*
- *Individual sessions x2 online using Microsoft Teams*
- *Group sessions x5 in person (face to face) at 30 Clarence Street, York (up to 8 participants)*
- *Group sessions x5 online using Microsoft Teams (up to 6 participants)*

Individual sessions consist of two one-hour sessions with Ronnie Pinder, our Coach and Peer Mentor who is autistic, or occasionally with another member of our team. You can opt for face-to-face sessions or online and the sessions will be very similar, whichever option you choose. The sessions are informal and relaxed and give you the opportunity to ask questions that may not have been covered during your assessment. Some people find it helps to bring a list of questions with them, but the sessions are conducted in whatever way makes you most comfortable. Some examples of commonly asked questions would be about communication, sensory, anxiety and strategies. Many people find the sessions validating and appreciate that they are held with somebody who is also autistic.

Post diagnostic group sessions consist of five weekly one-hour sessions. You can choose from in person/face to face (held at 30 Clarence Street, York) or online using Microsoft Teams. Whichever option you choose, the sessions follow the same format and cover the same topics. Our in-person groups consist of up to 8 participants and two facilitators. One of the facilitators will be Ronnie Pinder, our Coach and Peer Mentor, and he will be joined by another member of our team. Many people are understandably anxious about joining a group session, particularly in person. However, in our experience, people very quickly settle into the group and look forward to the sessions each week. If you've not experienced it before, there is something very different about being in a small group of other autistic adults with often very similar experiences and where you can be yourself. There is no pressure to speak, and you can talk as much or as little as you feel comfortable with.

Our group sessions cover the following topics, and each session includes the opportunity to share experiences (for those comfortable doing so) and to ask questions:

- **Session 1: What is autism?** *The first session begins with an introduction and overview of the 5 sessions. We will then discuss what autism is and isn't. We will describe sensory differences, communication, and routines before discussing the less criteria based (but more commonly asked about) topics such as fatigue, interoception and stomach issues.*
- **Session 2: How Do I Make Sense of My Diagnosis?** *In this session we will discuss our reactions to receiving a diagnosis and also the peaks and troughs that some may experience in the months following. We also discuss how these experiences may look different for some people.*
- **Session 3: How Can I Maintain My Wellbeing?** *We split this session into two main topics – sensory and anxiety. We give an overview of the senses and share experiences and strategies. We then discuss anxiety and talk about how this can often feel different for autistic people. We include fatigue and burnout and discuss experiences and coping strategies.*
- **Session 4: How Do I Share My Diagnosis with Others?** *In this session we discuss employment rights, reasonable adjustments, and support in educational settings. We also discuss sharing our diagnosis with friends and family, share experiences and answers to common questions that we may be asked.*
- **Session 5: What Next?** *We split this session into two main topics. We begin with the opportunity for you to ask any questions about topics that we have not covered in the previous sessions. We then provide signposting and resources, discussing local support and organisations and then recommendations for resources online and books, social media etc. After completing the sessions, you will then receive an email containing our resources pack, which includes additional resources that you may find useful.*

Venues

If you have chosen face to face 1:1 sessions, these are held at The Retreat Clinics in **The Tuke Centre**, 28 Green Dykes Lane, York YO10 3HH. There is a small car park directly outside the entrance if you are travelling by car.

You will see the main entry with an accessible ramp on the left of the front of the building and after entering, the reception window will be immediately on your right.

You will then be invited to wait in our waiting room. At the time of your appointment, you will then be met in the waiting room and taken to your session.



If you have chosen to attend our face-to-face group, these will be held on a weekday afternoon at **30 Clarence Street**, York YO31 7DE. This building is sometimes referred to locally as The Haven and, although not part of The Retreat Clinics, was chosen as our group venue as its central location makes it particularly easy to access for those travelling by public transport.

If you are travelling by car to Union Terrace a pay and display car park is opposite the venue. 30 Clarence Street is next to York St. John University and is a short walk from the city centre, just after Gillygate. After entering the main entrance, you will see a reception desk and a café directly in front of you. Looking to your right, you will see the room at the end that will be the venue for your group sessions. Between the main entrance and our room on your right are the toilets.



If you have chosen online 1:1 session or our online group, links and joining instructions will be emailed to you.

Ronnie Pinder



Ronnie is the Coach and Peer Mentor at The Retreat Clinics York. Ronnie also received a late autism diagnosis in early 2015 and two of his children are also autistic. Ronnie provides 1:1 post diagnostic support and also facilitates our post diagnostic groups. He has many years of experience as a coach, trainer, consultant, and public speaker before also training as an autistic peer mentor. He has been mentoring autistic adults for several years and he brings his knowledge and lived experience to his role at The Retreat Clinics.

Feedback from Post Diagnostic Support

“To see that I'm not as isolated in my experience and that there is help available to me has been life changing”.

“I would urge anyone who is struggling with their diagnosis or with understanding autism to attend a session”.

“I have gained SO much happiness from attending this group”.

“I left the group feeling uplifted each time”.

- In a recent group, of all the scores given for all sessions, 66.67% of ratings were scored as 5/5, whilst the remaining 33.33% of scores were rated as 4/5.
- In a recent group, 100% of group members gave the highest score possible, a rating of very valuable.

- In a recent group, 100% of group members reported feeling comfortable sharing their experiences in the group sessions.