



2018
**AUTISM
PROFESSIONALS
AWARDS**
Celebrating creativity and innovation

Entry Guidelines

The Autism Professionals Awards have been created to recognise and reward services and professionals who are leading the way in innovative autism practice and making a real difference to the lives of autistic people in the UK.

The Awards seek to acknowledge the outstanding contributions and achievements of individuals, teams and organisations who have demonstrated excellence, dedication and commitment to improving the lives of autistic people.

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Online entry open: **11 July 2017** | Deadline for entries: **Friday 27 October 2017**
Contact: **Chiara Martinelli** on **020 7903 3763** or email chiara.martinelli@nas.org.uk

Why enter?

Winning an award will bring unparalleled recognition for the teams and individuals behind the outstanding achievements. You or your nominee will benefit from national publicity, recognition for being the best in your field, and the chance to share best practice.

If you know a professional / team of professionals that you think are deserving of an award, why not nominate them? Perhaps you have been doing some exciting and innovative work with people you support? If so, why not nominate your own team for an award?

How to enter?

The online submissions form is live on the Autism Professionals Awards website from **Tuesday 11 July** ; below is some information you will need to provide when you submit your nomination.

Prepare your submission in a Word Document before entering it on our online system. This will prevent the system from timing out before you have finished and will allow you to write it in a more timely manner.

Steps for entering

1. Browse the categories and decide which award(s) you would like to nominate for.
2. Start early: try to answer the two prime questions listed below well in advance of the deadline (**Friday 27 October 2017**) so you get plenty of time to collect all the relevant details for a perfect application.
3. Read our list of tips.
4. Submit your entry online via www.autismprofessionalsawards.org.uk.

Prime question one

Provide a summary (not exceeding 250 words) of why you believe the nominee(s) should win the award.

The summary should include the following, where possible

- > the length of time the service has been running (team awards) / the nominee has worked in their role (individual awards)
- > how many people work for the service (team awards only)
- > how many people the service or individual supports or has impacted
- > how autism-specific the service is (n.b. at least 50% of service users or people supported must have autism to qualify for an award)
- > your relationship to the nominee (if you are nominating someone else)
- > sources of funding, if any (e.g. statutory, charity, NGO, fundraising).

Prime question two

Provide an explanation (not exceeding 250 words) of how they meet each of the below criteria.

- > **Innovation:** use of innovative approaches, working practices or technologies to improve the service they provide for autistic people. In this section, the judges are looking for something over and above general good practice – make sure you explain exactly what is pioneering or innovative about the work the nominee has been doing. Weighting given to this criteria: 30%.
- > **Creativity:** high levels of creativity in use of funds, space, staff or other resources to enhance the services they deliver. Weighting given to this criteria: 20%.
- > **Impact:** delivery of quantifiable benefits to the people they support through the implementation of creative or innovative practices within their organisation. Make sure you include the number of people impacted by the nominee in this part. Weighting given to this criteria: 30%.
- > **Sustainability:** evidence that the practice has been / will be sustainable to provide long-term benefits for autistic people. Weighting given to this criteria: 20%.

In completing the form, it is essential to provide concrete examples to illustrate your statements. Please include any relevant facts/figures to support what you have said.



Award categories



There are **15 awards**, 13 of which are open to nomination. Awards are divided into 3 categories:

- **individual professional**
- **team of professionals**
- **Autism Accreditation.**

Awards for an individual professional

The Axcis Award for Achievement by an Individual Education Professional

This award recognises an exceptional professional contribution made by an individual working in the field of education for autistic people. The award recipient will have a demonstrable record of professional excellence in their chosen discipline, making a difference to the lives of the people they teach.

Nominations are open across the education sector.

Lifetime Achievement Award (not open for nomination)

This very special category highlights the work undertaken over a lifetime in the field of autism by an individual professional who has demonstrated a commitment, passion and selflessness to delivering quality care for people with autism.

Award for Most Inspirational Volunteer

This award recognises the exceptional contribution made by an individual who works as a volunteer with autistic people.

The award recipient will have demonstrated an incredible amount of commitment and passion, making a huge difference to the lives of the people they volunteer with.

Nominees must not receive payment for the work that they are being nominated for.

Award for Outstanding Healthcare Professional

This award recognises a healthcare professional who has made an exceptional contribution to the lives of autistic people. The award recipient will have a demonstrable record of professional excellence in their chosen discipline, making a real difference to the lives of the people they care for.

Nominations are open across the healthcare sector.

Award for Outstanding Achievement by an Individual on the Autism Spectrum

This special category celebrates the achievements of an individual professional who is on the autism spectrum and who has demonstrated commitment, passion and exceptional encouragement and support for other autistic people.

Judges will be looking for evidence of outstanding contribution to lives of autistic people and/or to the cause of autism in general.

Entries are welcomed for nominees from all types of professional background, whether delivering training or as a speaker, author, advocate or other type of professional.

Award for Most Inspirational Social Care Professional **new!**

This award recognises a social care professional who has made an exceptional contribution to the lives of autistic people. The award recipient will have a demonstrable record of professional excellence in their chosen discipline, making a real difference to the lives of the people they care for.

Nominations are open across the social care sector.



Award categories cont.



Awards for a team of professionals

Award for Inspirational Education Provision – Primary Schools

This award seeks to recognise and reward a team or organisation that has taken a fresh approach to learning and development in a primary educational setting.

Judges will be keen to see evidence of how the nominees have used their innovation and creativity to inspire the people they support.

Entries are invited from primary schools of all types, including mainstream, specialist or academies.

Award for Inspirational Education Provision – Secondary Schools and post-16 provision

This award seeks to recognise and reward a team or organisation that has taken a fresh approach to learning and development in a secondary or post-16 educational setting.

Judges will be keen to see evidence of how the nominees have used their innovation and creativity to inspire the people they support. Nominations should be supported by practical examples, where possible.

Entries are invited from secondary schools and post-16 educational establishments of all types, whether mainstream, specialist or academies.

Award for Inspirational Education Provision – other education providers

This award seeks to recognise and reward a team or organisation that has taken a fresh approach to learning and development within education.

Judges will be keen to see evidence of how the nominees have used their innovation and creativity to inspire the people they support.

Nominations should be supported by practical examples, where possible. Entries are invited from educational establishments who do not fall into the schools' awards categories (see above), such as adult learning providers and services that build capacity.

Award for Outstanding Adult Services

This award seeks to recognise and reward a team or organisation that has made a significant contribution to improving adult services and/or the quality of life for autistic adults.

Judges will be looking for evidence of how nominee(s) have used their innovation and creativity to improve the services they offer to adults with autism.

Nominations should be supported by practical examples, where possible. This category is open to entries from teams or organisations. For-profit companies and public or not-for-profit organisations are eligible.



Award categories cont.



Awards for a team of professionals

Award for Outstanding Health Services

This award seeks to recognise and reward outstanding examples of clinical/medical practice by a team or organisation.

Judges will be keen to see evidence of where best practice has positively impacted on patient treatment and care.

Nominations should be supported by practical examples, where possible. This category is open to entries from teams or organisations. For-profit companies and public or not-for-profit organisations are eligible.

Award for Innovative Family Support

This award seeks to recognise and reward a team or organisation that has made a significant contribution to improving the way they support the families of autistic people.

Judges will be looking for evidence of how nominee(s) have used their innovation and creativity to improve the services they offer to families.

Nominations should be supported by practical examples, where possible. This category is open to entries from teams or organisations. For-profit companies and public or not-for-profit organisations are eligible.

Award for Most Supportive Employer

This award seeks to recognise and reward a team or organisation that has made a significant contribution towards supporting autistic people in employment.

Judges will be looking for evidence of how nominee(s) have used their services to create respectful, equal and accessible work environments for autistic people.

This category is open to entries from teams or organisations. For profit companies and public or not-for-profit organisations are eligible.

Award for Most Creative Community Project

This award seeks to recognise creative non-profit making enterprises or projects that have made a big impact for autistic people within their local communities.

Only projects which have received external funding of **less than £5,000** from grants, trusts or other governmental subsidies or payments are eligible for this award.

Monies that have been raised through the project's own community fundraising activities are not included within this funding cap. Only not-for-profit or charitable enterprises or projects are eligible for this award.



Tips for entering

Remember that by the time the judges get to your entry, they may have already sifted through hundreds of others, so make yours stand out.

Here are some tips

- › **Prepare your submission** in a word document before entering it online as this will prevent the system from timing out before you have finished writing it.
- › **Involve the nominee(s)**: if you are nominating someone else, make the entry a joint effort - this will often produce a better, more comprehensive summary, as well as making the story appear more interesting.
- › **Involve a service user**: often the most persuasive words are from the people you/ your nominee(s) support.
- › **Use supportive statements and/ or quotes**: this will give your application more depth as well as making it more interesting.
- › **Tell a story**: write your submission as though you are telling a really good story and don't be shy about talking about the nominee's achievements and successes.
- › **Use real evidence with lots of factual examples and illustrations**: this will give more depth to your application.
- › **Try to use a user accolade in your summary**: if you are nominating yourself for an award, they are very insightful and can add weight to your entry.
- › **Keep it simple**: less is often more. Avoid unnecessary jargon and flowery language. Check for typos, grammatical errors and spelling.
- › **Stick to the truth**: don't exaggerate or include false claims, as judges will see through them.
- › **Use real evidence**: this will give more depth to your application.
- › **Be ruthless when redrafting**: once you've written your rough draft submission, read it over several times and cut out unnecessary information. This will make it much clearer. It's also a good idea to get someone who hasn't been directly involved to look over it to double-check for clarity.

Don't forget to call us if you have a query on **020 7903 3763**.

Rules for entering

1. Nominations must be submitted through our online system. No hard copy entries are accepted.
2. Only fully completed entry forms will be accepted. Word limits are to be strictly observed. Judges will only receive the exact number of words requested.
3. All nominations (except for the Individual Lifetime Achievement Award) must relate to accomplishments occurring during the calendar years 2016/2017.
4. All nominee(s) must be UK based.
5. Members of the judging panel may not be put up for nomination.
6. The entry form represents the full and entire official entry. Attempts to further influence the judges by any means outside of, or in addition to, the official entry may result in disqualification.
7. If you nominate someone for more than one award, each nomination must be submitted as a separate entry.
8. Completed nominations must be submitted no later than **5.00pm on Friday 27 October 2017**.
9. On receipt of your entry, the awards administrators will confirm its arrival via email. If you do not obtain such a receipt within three days, it is your responsibility to contact us to confirm its arrival. Unless you have this written or verbal confirmation from us, we cannot guarantee the arrival of your entry.
10. It is essential that we can contact the nominee easily with questions regarding the submission, or for judging enquiries and requests for further information. Therefore, please provide us with full contact details for the nominee on the entry form.
11. Shortlisted organisations and individuals will be published in **January 2018**. The winners will be announced at the Professionals Awards Dinner on **Wednesday 7 March 2018**.
12. All shortlisted nominees must have at least one representative at the awards ceremony to potentially collect their award. Therefore, all shortlisted entrants are entitled to **one** free seat at the Awards Dinner. All entrants reaching the provisional shortlist will be contacted upon announcement of the provisional shortlist to discuss their attendance. Entrants unable to commit to attendance at the Awards Dinner will not be included in the final shortlist.
13. The National Autistic Society will publish details of the shortlisted entrants and category winners, including profiles of their projects/ services, using the information taken from the entry form. We will not reveal the names of those organisations/individuals who are not shortlisted.

Good luck!

