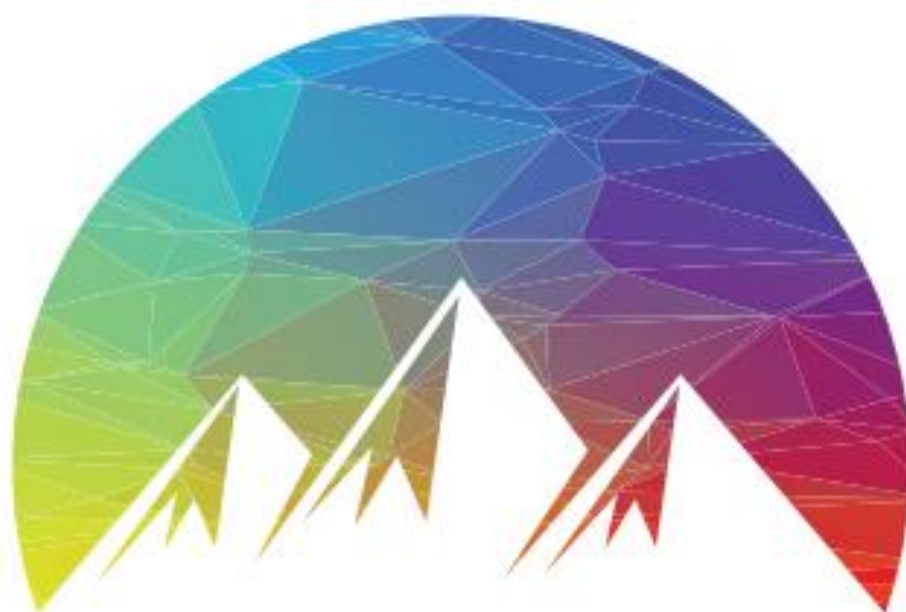


Toolkit



KILLARNEY **AUTISM FRIENDLY TOWN**

Supporting organisations to
become autism friendly



Introduction

Thank you for your support in helping Killarney become an Autism Friendly Town.

We have developed a Toolkit to help guide you and your business or organisation on this journey.

We wish to engage with local businesses and organisations to develop and sustain inclusive practices that ensure autistic individuals have full access to goods and services in Killarney, and that their lived experience is one of support and inclusion across all aspects of daily life.

In agreeing to become a champion, this toolkit along with planned training for your staff and teams will help everyone to recognise and understand autism. It will also help you look at practical strategies which will help to include the autism community.

This is a new undertaking for everybody in Killarney. We are all learning, and this is how we will grow TOGETHER as a community.

What is Autism?

“Autism is a lifelong, developmental difference which relates to how a person communicates and interacts with others and how they experience the world around them.”

Autism is part of the broader neurodiversity family which encompasses people with differences or disabilities such as ADHD, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia, Epilepsy, Tourettes Syndrome and Dyscalculia.

Autism Friendly Killarney-Toolkit



What is an Autism-Friendly Community?

- A community which makes a commitment to implement measures to improve accessibility for and promote acceptance of autistic people.
- Pathway to making Killarney an Autism friendly Community.
- A project led by a committee with representatives from the local community and autistic advocates.
- Partnering with AsIAm, an autistic led charity which advocates for the autistic community and passionately believes in making goods and services accessible to autistic people.
- 3-year plan to measurably improve the experience of living in or visiting Killarney for autistic people.
- A required number of Autism-Friendly Champions (*that is you!*)
- Campaigns to educate the wider public about autism acceptance and accessibility.

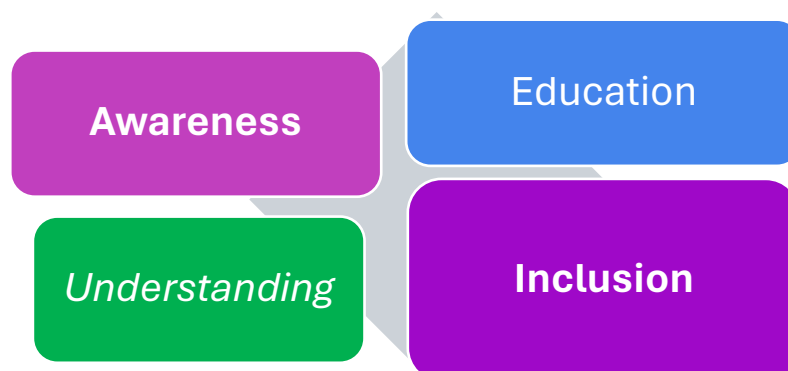


Question & Answers

What is the Killarney Autism Friendly Committee?

A committee of volunteers set up to support autistic people in Killarney. It is our goal to ensure autistic individuals have full access to goods and services in Killarney, and that their lived experience is one of support and inclusion across all aspects of daily life.

What are we trying to achieve?



How can AsI Am help?

AsI Am produces a wide variety of online and in-person autism training modules, including bespoke modules for several businesses and organisations and public bodies nationwide which can be tailored to suit an organisation's size, needs and the industry they do business in.

For more information visit <https://asiam.ie/>

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What is a Champion?

A champion is a business or organisation committed to becoming autism friendly by upholding standards and implementing practical measures.

What are the benefits of becoming a Champion?

3.3% of the population live with autism. Becoming an autism friendly business or organisation shows autistic people and their families that you value their custom. Your business or organisation will be listed as autism friendly on the Killarney.ie website; clearly visible for those living in or visiting Killarney town.

What community sectors can get involved?



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So, how can you begin?

The Killarney Autism Friendly Committee, working in partnership with AsI Am is here to support you on your journey.

There are **four essential steps** required for your organisation to become a champion (You may already have completed some of these steps).

1. Autism
Friendly
Training

2. Sensory
friendly
Accomodations

3. Visuals for
your
organisation

4. Being
Assistance Dog
Friendly

Once you have completed these four steps.

You can email the committee- autismfriendlykillarney@gmail.com to be listed as an Autism Friendly Champion.

Step One-Training

All training will be completed through AsI Am as part of their community certification process.

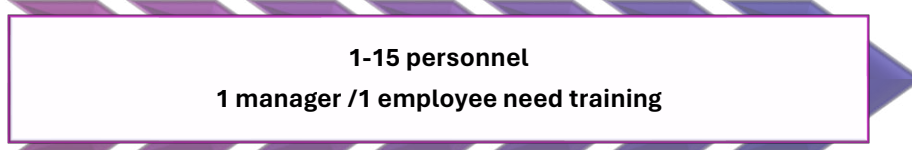
Many of you have already completed Autism friendly training.

Those who wish to avail of training can:

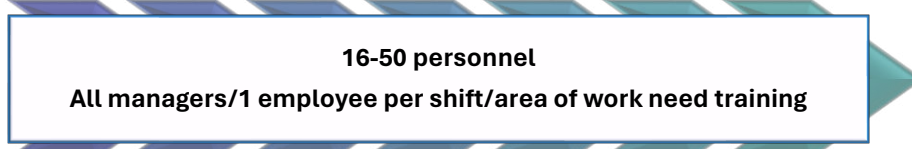
- Contact [AsI Am](#) directly to book in house or online training for your organisation-email training@asiam.ie
- Contact Killarney Autism friendly Committee to express your interest in the next in house training session (planned for later this year) - email autismfriendlykillarney@gmail.com
- You may have already attended Autism training through your organisation, e.g. schools, health care setting. Please let us know as this training may be accredited by AsI Am.
- AsI Am will also keep you updated on eLearning tools that will be made available in the coming months.

Training Guide for Size of Organisation

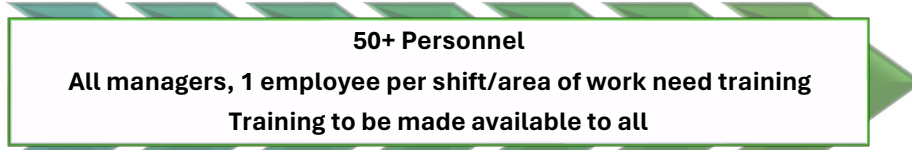
Small organisation



Medium organisation



Large organisation



Step Two-Sensory Friendly Accommodations

This is about **INCLUSIVITY**.

There are many ways to create a comfortable environment to support autistic people.

This will look different for everyone.

It might mean you move loud machinery to another location in your premises to reduce noise. It could mean you have created a quiet area or provided a box with sensory toys and tools.

Listed below are a few inexpensive ways your organisation can make a positive impact on the experience of autistic people.

- Autism friendly shopping hours.
- Reducing lighting or noise levels.
Being mindful of the amount/type of lighting and the volume of music being played within your organisation.
- Avoid unnecessary strong smells (e.g. burning incense sticks) or consider using lighter smells where possible.
- Priority queuing to avoid waiting.
- Awareness and recognition of autism I.D cards/lanyards.

Some sensory toys and tools you can provide



Ear defenders



Rubix Cube



Poppet

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As a thank you for your support, the committee will provide champions with a starter sensory box.

Additional sensory toys and tools can be sourced locally.

A Quiet Space

It is not feasible for all prospective champions to provide a quiet area due to space restrictions. For those who can make this accommodation, you may consider the following:

Movement: Providing an exercise ball, a small trampoline or a rocking chair or swing chair.

Lighting: Access to a source of natural light is preferable, but in its absence a dimmer switch would be beneficial. A retractable black out blind over any window is ideal for those who require less light input. Offering an option of alternative calming light sources where possible (lava lamp, fibre optic, fairy lights).

Tactile: Providing a beanbag or pillows/cushions, making sensory or stimulating toys available.

Autism Friendly Killarney-Toolkit



Sound: Availability of ear defenders or plugs, and/or an iPod with calming/soothing music which can be chosen and controlled by the user.

Step Three-Visuals for your Organisation.

This is about **PREDICTABILITY**. What can someone expect when they visit your premises?

This will look different for everyone.

It could mean you create a **Communication Board** for display & ensure it is relevant to your organisation.

A useful resource in creating a communication board for your organisation is available at [Finding Charlies Voice](#).

Best practice would have actual photos from the premises.

Picture Cards

I	Want	Cup	Keep Cup
Sit	Drink	Almond Milk	Sitting room
Sugar	Cold	Ice Coffee	Hot Drink
Milk	Hot Chocolate	Eat	Spoon
Something Sweet	Cookie	Mini Marshmallows	Hot Chocolate

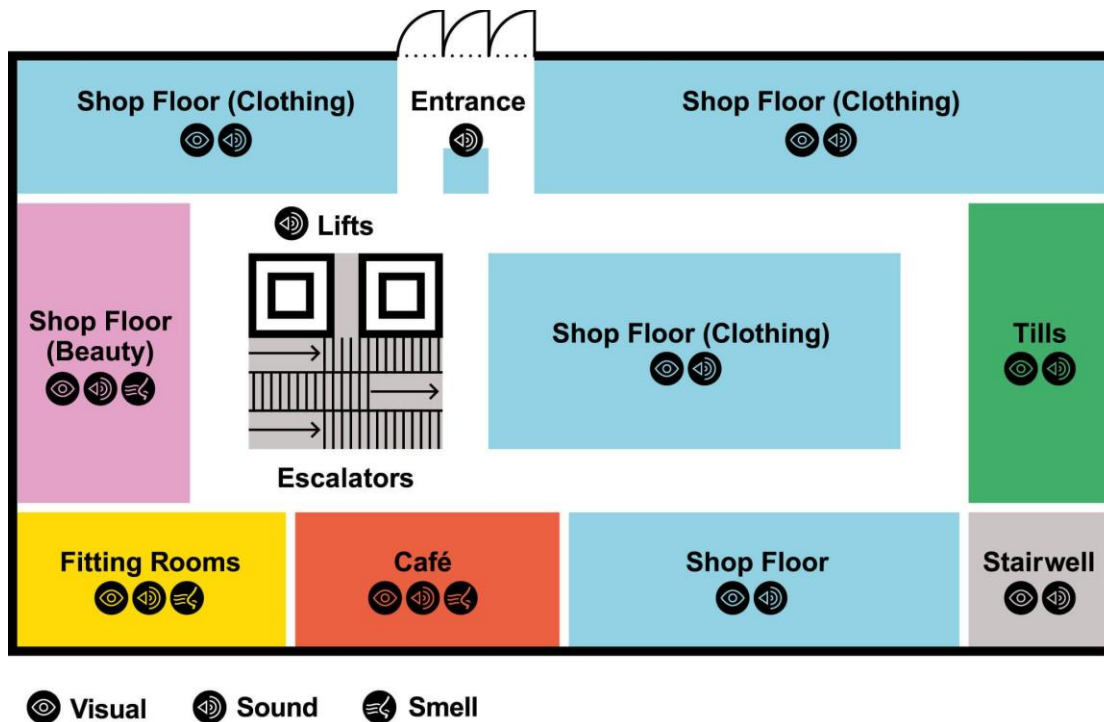
Core Board Shoe Shop

I	Want	Pay	Please Tie My Shoe
Wear Shoes	Shoes	Velcro Shoes	Yes
No	Shoe On	Shoe Off	Tie Shoelace

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You could also provide a Sensory Map of your premises, see example below:



- **Visual guides and videos** provide a vital support for autistic people, particularly when going somewhere new and unexpected. These resources take a person through what to expect, provide a heads up of any stressors and let the person know the supports available. It is important to update your website or social media with autism friendly information. This sets expectations, reduces anxiety, and communicates what to expect clearly, in advance.

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Click below for an example of a video guide:

[Wanderwild Festival Autism Friendly Video Guide](#)

Below are two other visual examples that could be included in your website or social media. **Canva** is just one of many useful graphic design tools that can help you create a visual guide for your organisation.

Visual Guide Example 1

A red poster with white text and icons. The title 'Autism-friendly shopping hours' is at the top left. A clock shows 9:00 on Wednesday. A white circle on the right says 'Every Wednesday 9-11am'. Below the clock is a paragraph: 'To improve the shopping experience for our customers and their families, we have made our stores more autism-friendly by making some small changes.' At the bottom are six icons with labels: 'No music' (musical note with slash), 'No TV' (TV with slash), 'Assistance dogs welcome' (dog), 'Priority appointments' (clock with checkmark), 'Priority seating (store permitting)' (chair with 'PRIORITY' sign), and 'Relaxation box available*' (hand holding a box). The bottom left says 'Designed by AS I AM .IE' and the bottom right says 'Together we can' with a red heart icon. A small disclaimer at the bottom left reads: '*Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions, customers cannot use the relaxation box when visiting our stores.' Social media icons for download, share, and print are at the bottom right.

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Visual Guide Example 2

<p>A visit to Who's 4 Shoes</p>		<p>This is a visual guide of what to expect when you visit Who's 4 Shoes.</p> <p>Who's 4 Shoes is a shoe shop in Killarney.</p> <p>It has shoes for adults and for children.</p> <p>You visit their shop when you need a new pair of shoes.</p> <p>The front of the shop looks like this.</p>		<p>When you look in the front door, you will see this.</p>	
<p>The front of the shop has shoes for women.</p>	<p>Sometimes the shop is busy. You might have to wait. While you wait, you can look at the fish in the fish tank or ask the shopkeeper for a toy.</p>	<p>The back of the shop has shoes for younger people.</p>	<p>When it's your turn to try on shoes, you might have your feet measured. You take off your shoes and put your foot onto this. The shopkeeper will measure your 2 feet.</p>		
<p>The shopkeeper will go upstairs to get the right shoes in the right size.</p>	<p>When the shopkeeper comes back, you can try on shoes.</p>	<p>When you try on shoes, you walk a few steps to make sure that they fit correctly.</p>			
<p>Only the shopkeeper can go upstairs.</p>	<p>You will sit on a chair to put them on.</p>	<p>It's ok to take time to make sure you've picked the right shoes. They should feel comfortable.</p>			
<p>When you are sure you have found the right shoes, you can buy them. You can wear them home or the shopkeeper will put them in a bag.</p>					

Step Four- Assistance Dog Friendly

This will look.... *the same* for everyone.

Allowing assistance dogs is a **legal** requirement. It ensures equal access and inclusion for individuals who rely on these animals for support in their daily lives.

- Display signage informing the public that all assistance dogs are welcome on your premises.
- Ensure **ALL** members of your organisation are fully aware that you are assistance dog friendly.



For now, we ask that you start with the **4 essential commitments**. In time, with the right support, you can progress to more complex accommodation if feasible for your organisation.

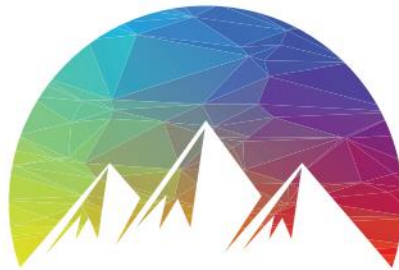
Once you have completed the 4 steps to becoming an Autism Friendly Champion- **Email** autismfriendlykillarney@gmail.com

Tell us how you completed the steps & attach an example of your organisations visuals so that we can display it on the Killarney.ie website.

Thank you!



**Thank you for your commitment to
becoming a champion for Killarney!**



KILLARNEY
AUTISM FRIENDLY TOWN

autismfriendlykillarney@gmail.com

[Instagram.com Autism Friendly Killarney](https://www.instagram.com/AutismFriendlyKillarney)