

Autism Professionals Awards 2020

**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.

Deadline 25 October

Why enter?

- Recognition for excellent work and achievement from independent specialists in the field and the National Autistic Society
- Celebrate indispensable professionals or teams who go above and beyond in their work
- Motivate and inspire teams or individual to continue and develop their working practices
- Share best practice and practical strategies with other professionals in the field
- Publicity for individuals and organisations for supporting autistic people in the sector

You can:

- Nominate a professional/team of professionals that you think deserve an award
- Nominate your team for an award

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.

How to enter?

1. Browse the categories and decide which award(s) you would like to nominate for.
2. Read our list of tips.
3. Start early: try to answer the two prime questions listed below well in advance of the deadline (**Friday 25 October 2019**) so you get plenty of time to collect all the relevant details for a perfect application.
4. Submit your entry online via www.autismprofessionalsawards.org.uk

Nomination form

Part one

This section is divided into 3 criteria. Provide an explanation (a total of 1,000 words) of how your nominee meets each of the below criteria.

- **Innovation and Creativity:** 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. Give examples of high levels of creativity in use of funds, space, staff or other resources to enhance the services they deliver.

Weighting given to this criteria: 40%.

- **Evidence:** organisations must be established for at least a year. A link to the latest regulatory report - CQC/Ofsted – must be provided where relevant. Notes can be included to explain changes that have been made since the last report, and why this isn't available.

Weighting given to this criteria: 40%.

- **Sustainability:** evidence that the practice has been/will be sustainable to provide long-term benefits for autistic people.

Weighting given to this criteria: 20%.

Part two

Provide a summary (up to 250 words) of why you believe your 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
- your relationship to the nominee (if you are nominating someone else)
- sources of funding, if any (e.g. statutory, charity, NGO, fundraising).

Autism Professionals Awards 2020

There are 13 awards, 12 of which are open for nomination.

Awards are divided into two categories -

- **Individual professional**

We welcome entries from individuals wishing to recognise their colleagues' efforts, from managers nominating a member of their team, and from autistic people who use the service or their parents or carers. Individuals cannot nominate themselves for an award.

- **Team of professionals**

Any individual, community organisation, professional organisation or similar group, colleague or service provider can nominate another team or organisation for an award. Teams or organisations are also welcome to nominate themselves. Autistic people, their families, carers and friends are particularly encouraged to make nominations.

Awards for an individual professional

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 autistic people.

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.

Autism Professionals Awards 2020

Individual professional

Awards for an individual professional

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.

Someone who 'changed my life'

This award recognises an exceptional professional or volunteer who 'changed the life' of an autistic person. We are looking for an individual who transformed the person's life and helped them achieve the very best they can. Nominations should be supported by examples of things that have changed as a result of the support received. Only autistic individuals or families are eligible to nominate for this award.

Most Inspirational Volunteer

This award recognises a Healthcare and / or 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 healthcare and social care sector.

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.

Autism Professionals Awards 2020

Team of professionals

Awards for a team of professionals

Inspirational Education Provision - primary and younger

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

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 foundation and primary schools of all types, including mainstream, specialist or academies.

Inspirational Education Provision - secondary and further

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 and 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 secondary schools and post-16 educational establishments of all types, whether mainstream, specialist or academies and other educational establishments, such as adult learning providers and services that build capacity.

Outstanding Adult or Children's Services - health or social care

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

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

Most Impactful Researcher

This award seeks to recognise and reward outstanding research by an individual researcher or research team. Judges will be keen to see evidence of quality methodology, meaningful autistic participation, and relevance to the autistic community. The research should demonstrate potential to improve lives and/or influence practice. Nominations should be supported by examples of the researcher/team making positive change. Nominees are welcome across the research sector.

Autism Professionals Awards 2020

Team of professionals

Awards for a team of professionals

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.

Outstanding Employer

This award seeks to recognise and reward a team or organisation that has made a significant contribution towards supporting autistic people in gaining employment through training and/ or apprenticeships or towards supporting autistic people whilst 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.

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 and make it more interesting.
- **Tell a story:** write your submission as though you are telling a really good story and talk 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.
- **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 **0115 911 3367**.

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 must relate to accomplishments occurring during the calendar years 2018/19.
- 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 **midnight on Friday 25 October 2019**.
- 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 2020**. The winners will be announced at the Professionals Awards Dinner on **Thursday 27 February 2020**
- 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.
- 14 If you or your organisation is involved in anything that could bring our charity into disrepute, we hold the right to consider disqualification.

Good luck!