



Our New Ambitions

“I’m ambitious about autism because we still have a long way to go before all children with autism get the support they need.”

Nick Hornby
Author





Many of you will be familiar with the charity TreeHouse. TreeHouse was founded in 1997 by a group of parents who set up a school for their children and sought to transform education provision for all children with autism in the UK. The charity is now changing its name to Ambitious about Autism.

I am delighted to support the launch of Ambitious about Autism, the national charity for children and young people with autism. The new name reflects our renewed mission to enable children with autism to learn, thrive and achieve.

Ambitious about Autism is built on the very strong foundations of TreeHouse.

Being ambitious for children with autism has characterised the TreeHouse spirit for the past 13 years and we would like to thank everyone who has helped us. The same spirit will be carried forward into Ambitious about Autism, with a vision to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

TreeHouse School, based at The Pears National Centre for Autism Education, is at the heart of Ambitious about Autism.

Over the coming years, we want to have greater reach and impact. We want to develop more services, increase society's understanding and awareness of autism and influence policy.

This booklet explains what needs to be done, how we plan to do it and how you can help. We are ambitious about autism. I hope you will pledge to be ambitious about autism too.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Clement-Jones'.

Lord Tim Clement-Jones CBE
President, Ambitious about Autism



“I’m ambitious about autism because I live with the condition. My difficulties are invisible but very real. I would like everyone with autism to be treated with the compassion that our condition deserves.”

Luke Dicker

Youth Patron, Ambitious about Autism

The facts

The need is huge

- ▶ 1 in 100 children have autism
- ▶ Autism is a complex lifelong neurological condition that has a profound affect on children and their families
- ▶ Its cause is unknown and it has no cure

Children with autism are amongst the most excluded from society and face many barriers

- ▶ 27% of children and young people with autism have been excluded from school¹ and 40% are bullied²
- ▶ Only 15% of adults with autism are in paid work³



- ▶ Many families struggle to support their child and live in poverty and exclusion⁴

This must be addressed with urgency if we are to stop the wasted opportunities for these children, their families and our society.

The average age of diagnosis is six years and seven months⁵, and we know that with early intervention children can make huge amounts of progress⁶.

“I’m ambitious about autism because we must make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism. Society needs to accept autism as a part of everyday life.”

Jolanta Lasota

Chief Executive, Ambitious about Autism

Who we a

We are Ambitious about Autism, the national charity for children and young people with autism. We were formerly known as TreeHouse.

Our vision

To make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

Our mission

To help children and young people with autism to learn, thrive and achieve.

We are ambitious for all children and young people with autism and their families.



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We are highly collaborative, working with children and young people with autism, their families and other organisations.

We aim to be transparent, open and accountable at all times.

Our spirit is inclusive.

We are evidence-based, shaping our work on experience of what has proved the most effective.

We aim to be effective, striving for the highest quality and value in all our activities.

What we believe in

1. Equality

2. Education

3. Achievement



We are Ambitious about equality

We will not accept children and young people with autism being sidelined. Autism affects one in a hundred people in the UK – well over half a million, which would make it one of the top ten of Britain's cities. There are more people with autism in the UK than living in Bristol or Belfast. We are ambitious that, with the right information and awareness, people and society will accept autism as a part of everyday life.

We are Ambitious about education

The true meaning of education is enabling potential to become a reality. Every young person with autism has enormous potential. Most adults have the capacity to help them realise this. We believe that education is vital in ensuring children and young people with autism reach their potential.

We are Ambitious about achievement

Our central ambition is to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism. By ordinary we mean the types of everyday actions we take for granted like shopping, going on holiday or to the cinema as well as going to college and becoming independent. This might look like a dream. Our plans for the next three years will start to turn the dream into reality.

Our future plans

1. More and better services

2. Awareness and understanding

3. Influencing policy



More and better services

We will continue to grow and develop TreeHouse School as an exemplar of autism education using the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis. We will develop a presence in early-years settings offering early assessment and intervention for children in the vital pre-school period. We will provide support and training to parents and professionals to empower them to support children and young people with autism wherever they are. We will collaborate with other service providers to help create better pathways including new services for young people aged 19 to 25 years.

Awareness and understanding

We will increase awareness and understanding of autism amongst key professionals, policy and decision makers, opinion-formers and the wider public. We will build evidence about the needs of children and young people with autism and how best to support them to achieve good outcomes. We will continue to develop the pioneering Talk about Autism online community to engage people affected by autism and empower them to influence policies and services affecting them.

Influencing policy

We will continue to influence policy development and ensure the needs of children and young people with autism are fully considered at every stage. We will provide platforms for parents and young people to engage with policy and decision-makers and to share their experiences. We will also support young people and their families to campaign for change within their communities.

“I strongly believe in being ambitious about autism because I believe every child should have the opportunity to reach their potential and achieve their goals.”

Trevor Pears CMG
Executive Chair, Pears Foundation

Our appe

The Ambitious about Autism appeal is launching alongside our strategy and aims to raise £10 million over the next three years to fund the services and projects that will achieve our further ambitions for children and young people with autism.

Our appeal will draw on our track record of working together with partners and donors to have the greatest possible impact.

We can only achieve our ambitions through the generosity and commitment of our supporters working beside us to bring about the lasting change needed.



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We do hope that you will support us to make our ambitions a reality and we look forward to involving you in our plans.

Our champions

President

Lord Tim Clement-Jones CBE

Vice Presidents

Peter Carroll

Virginia Bovell OBE

Katharine Doré OBE

Karen Edwards

Alex Hatter

Richard Hatter

Nick Hornby

Youth Patrons

Akintade Adebayo

Cian Binchy

Luke Dicker

Hollie Ryan

Josie Ryan

Parent Patrons

Speaker John Bercow MP

Sally Bercow

Keith Duffy

Charlotte Moore

Claire Ryan

Ambassadors

Sarah Cawood

Michelle Collins

Hayley Ronson

Jon Snow

Expert Advisers

Dr. Gillian Baird

Judith Barnard

Prof. Simon Baron Cohen

Virginia Bovell OBE

Steve Broach

Prof. Tony Charman

Phillip Cullum

Fenella Gentleman

Prof. Richard Hastings

Julia Hobsbawm

Johnny Hornby

Prof. Pat Howlin

James Partridge OBE

Nick Peacey

Prof. Bob Remington

Mark Schmid

Su Thomas

Gaby Zein

Trustees

Nick Baldwin

Tristia Clarke

John Constantine

Clare Coombe-Tennant

Paul Fallon

Jonathan Meth

Kamran Nazeer

Lorraine Petersen OBE

Matthew Punshon

Dr. Rowie Shaw

Richard Townley

Sid Wells

TreeHouse School

Governors

Tony Balazs

Alyson Balloch

John Coombe-Tennant

Max Hogg

Becky Jones

Jolanta Lasota

Katy Lee

Dr. Julie O'Sullivan

Lorraine Petersen OBE

Dr. Rowie Shaw

Cllr. Ann Waters

“I fully support **Ambitious about Autism because I believe that all young people should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, be part of their communities and live the life they choose.”**

David Cameron MP
Prime Minister

“Why do I support **Ambitious about Autism? Because I believe every single child should have the absolute best start that we can give them. Children with autism and their families should feel confident that they will be able to live happy and fulfilled lives”**

Nick Clegg MP
Deputy Prime Minister

“It’s vital that every child has a fair start in life and the highest possible standard of education and choice so that each can reach their fullest potential and happiness. I am ambitious for all our young people, and that’s why I am **ambitious about autism.”**

Ed Milliband MP
Leader of the Opposition

¹ ONS, Mental Health of Children and YP in Britain 2005

² Beth Reid and Amanda Batten (2006), *B is for Bullied: the experiences of children with autism and their families*, NAS

³ Redman, S et al (2009). *Don't Write Me Off: Make the system fair for people with autism*. London: The National Autistic Society,

⁴ Every Disabled Child Matters (2007), *Disabled Children and Child Poverty*

⁵ Clements, K & Daly, S (2009), *A Snapshot of children's autism services in the UK* (TreeHouse)

⁶ Howlin, P. (2005). The effectiveness of interventions for children with autism. *Journal of Neural Transmission*. Supplementum, 69, 101–119.



“I’m ambitious about autism because for 40 years I’ve worked in a day centre with vulnerable and homeless teenagers – a disproportionate number being on the autistic spectrum. It has raised my awareness of the acute need for support, opportunity and greater understanding of autism.”

Jon Snow
Channel 4 Presenter

“We are ambitious about autism because we believe that increasing society’s awareness and understanding is vital if we are to change perceptions.”

Tristia Clarke
Executive Commercial Director, TalkTalk Group plc

“I am ambitious about autism as I am the father of a child with autism and I have seen how far a child with autism can progress with the appropriate support, time and love.”

Keith Duffy
Musician and actor



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