



Impact Report 2018

Another Perspective



Everyone should have an equal opportunity to enter into a career and employers should find ways to help those who require a little extra support to do so. auticon is doing just that, helping autistic people by matching their unique skill sets with companies across the UK. As an investor in auticon, I'm delighted with their progress and their approach serves as a great example of scalable social enterprise.

Sir Richard Branson
Virgin Group Founder

Welcome



Ray Coyle
CEO

We are immensely proud of what we have achieved at auticon UK in 2018 and hope that you will be impressed with the impact set out in the following pages. auticon UK is just a small part of the auticon story, which is now transforming lives across seven countries and growing fast.

At auticon we firmly believe in the commercial benefits that autistic people can bring to the workplace. We know that by providing businesses with a commercially viable way to tap into these skills we can create high quality careers for increasing numbers of great people that are currently excluded from our workforce. Our growth over the coming years, both in the UK and internationally, will prove to the world the benefits of tapping into this resource and, we hope, shift people's perceptions forever.

Nothing we have achieved in the last twelve months would be possible without the input and support of so many people: our investors, advisory board, international colleagues and those that have provided their support by investing their time and effort to help us grow. The amazing work done by our consulting team, which has impressed so many of our clients, helps us to retain and win business. However, the most important factor for our past and future growth is the moment of decision by a CTO, CIO, Project Manager or team leader to cast aside their fears and doubts, to embrace neurodiversity and to bring a highly skilled auticon consultant into their team. The results set out in these pages spring directly from each and every one of those decisions. You should each be as proud of this report as I am.



Lars Backstrom
Consultant

It is a great honour to welcome you to this impact report. I hope you will find it both informative and uplifting how auticon is making an impact on both the lives of their employees and on society in general by giving those of us on the spectrum quality employment and helping to spread awareness of the strengths and benefits we bring to those who hire us.

Before auticon, and especially before my diagnosis, I was left to my own devices to develop survival strategies. Some worked, some were flawed. Life as a whole was difficult due to all the stress and constant setbacks. At auticon, however, the story is different: I have never felt so secure and supported. My working conditions enable me to thrive, and I even have a job coach who visits me at work and liaises with the client about concerns or questions regarding me and my position as a consultant.

auticon goes above and beyond in their efforts to ensure success and the mutual satisfaction of all parties. I am proud to be part of the growing team, and to be part of a ground-breaking project that provides employment to people on the spectrum whilst at the same time spreading awareness of our untapped potential.

It is very empowering and humbling at the same to be part of something bigger than myself. I feel I am becoming a more accepted member of society, something many of us strive for but way too often are denied because our condition is still so misunderstood.

I hope more people on the spectrum will take advantage of the opportunities and support that auticon provides. I also hope that auticon's success will inspire other businesses to employ people on the spectrum, even if their calling is not in IT.

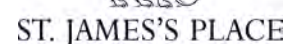
Executive summary

Key facts

- International IT consultancy business and B2B social enterprise
- auticon provides high quality careers in the IT sector for autistic adults. All consultants are formally diagnosed as autistic
- auticon consultants have unique cognitive strengths in pattern recognition, error detection, logical analysis, attention to detail and sustained concentration
- Services in analytics, software testing, development, compliance and security
- Clients range from major corporations to SME's, charities and Start-Ups
- More than 200 colleagues across the UK, US, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy and Canada

- **UK launch in 2016**
- **As of 31 December 2018 we had recruited 25 full-time consultants into permanent contracts**
- **Our consultants worked with 16 clients in 2018**, embedding themselves as part of our clients' teams
- **In 2018 our consultants delivered 35 client projects.** This is more than the number of assignments we completed in 2017 and 2016 combined, evidence of our continued growth
- **Our projects have taken place across 6 different locations in the UK**, and we have just launched a new office in Edinburgh
- **Our job coaches trained almost 100 employees of our clients' staff** on autism awareness and how to create a suitable work environment for a neurodiverse workforce
- **In 2018 we spoke at more than 30 events, including at the Social Enterprise World Forum**, and were featured in the Financial Times, the Times and many others – promoting neurodiversity to wider society
- **Our 2018 mean gender pay gap was 2.8% in favour of women**, and the ratio between our highest and lowest salary was less than four

We would like to thank our 2018 clients, who have provided fantastic workplaces for our consultants and helped promote neurodiversity. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the future!



What we do

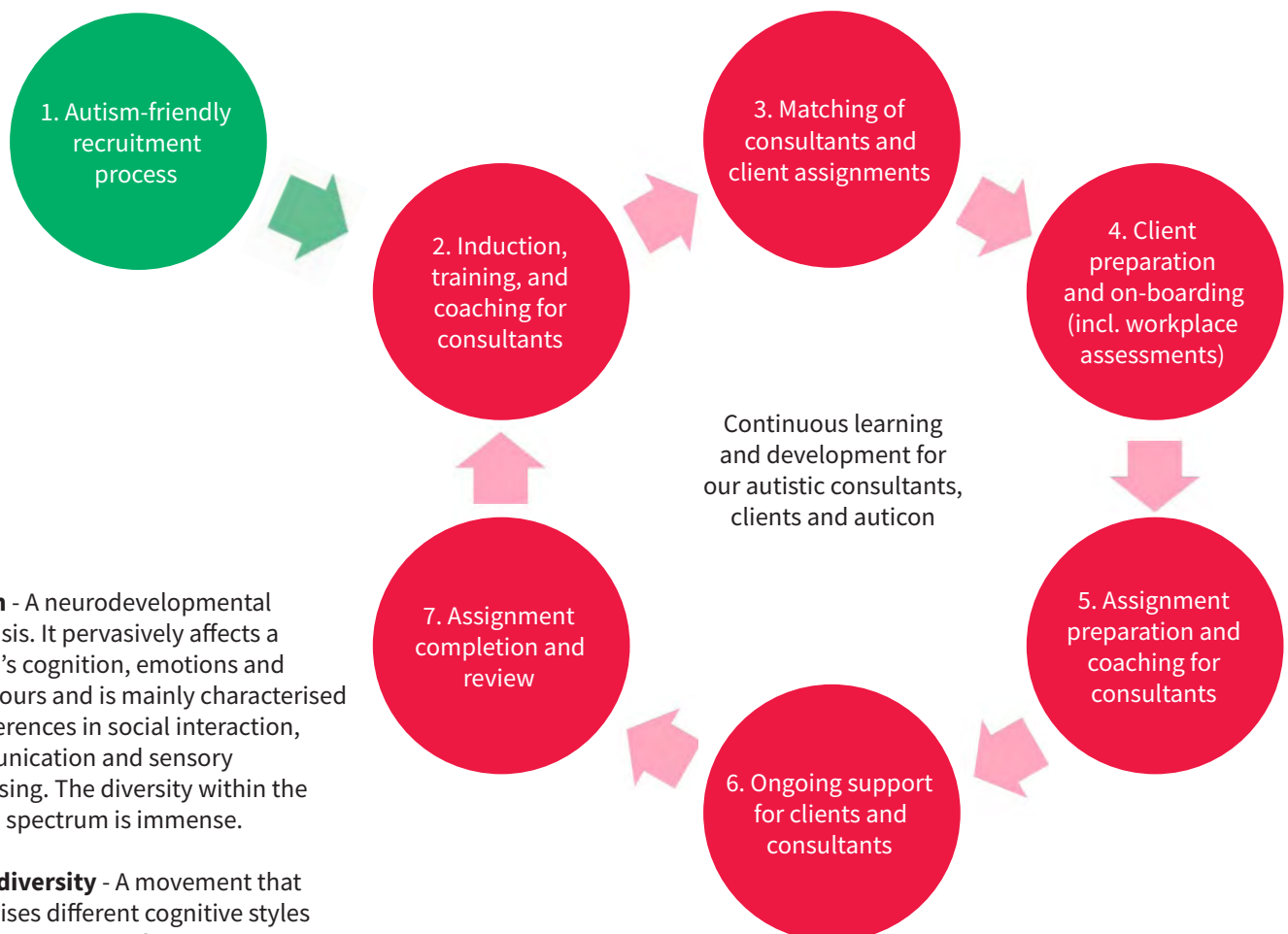
Autistic adults often have extraordinary cognitive and technical abilities, yet many find it difficult to secure or maintain mainstream employment. There is also an ongoing STEM skills shortage that poses a real challenge to UK businesses.

auticon recognises this situation and is the first international enterprise to exclusively employ autistic adults as consultants. The extraordinary talents of our consultants are what makes auticon unique - their cognitive diversity allows them to bring new perspectives to otherwise unsolvable problems. By creating autism-positive work environments and offering highly individualised sustained support mechanisms to autistic employees, auticon provides its corporate clients

with a means to tap into the amazing talents of autistic people while creating well-paid long-term careers for its team.

Our Business Model

Our business is based on the traditional IT consultancy model: highly talented experts are employed by auticon on a permanent basis. Each individual's skill set is then matched to a specific client assignment. Clients are charged a day rate for auticon's consultants at a level that matches the standard market rate. auticon's consultants and clients are offered the support of our in-house job coaches who ensure that the consultants' work environments enable them to deliver to their full potential.

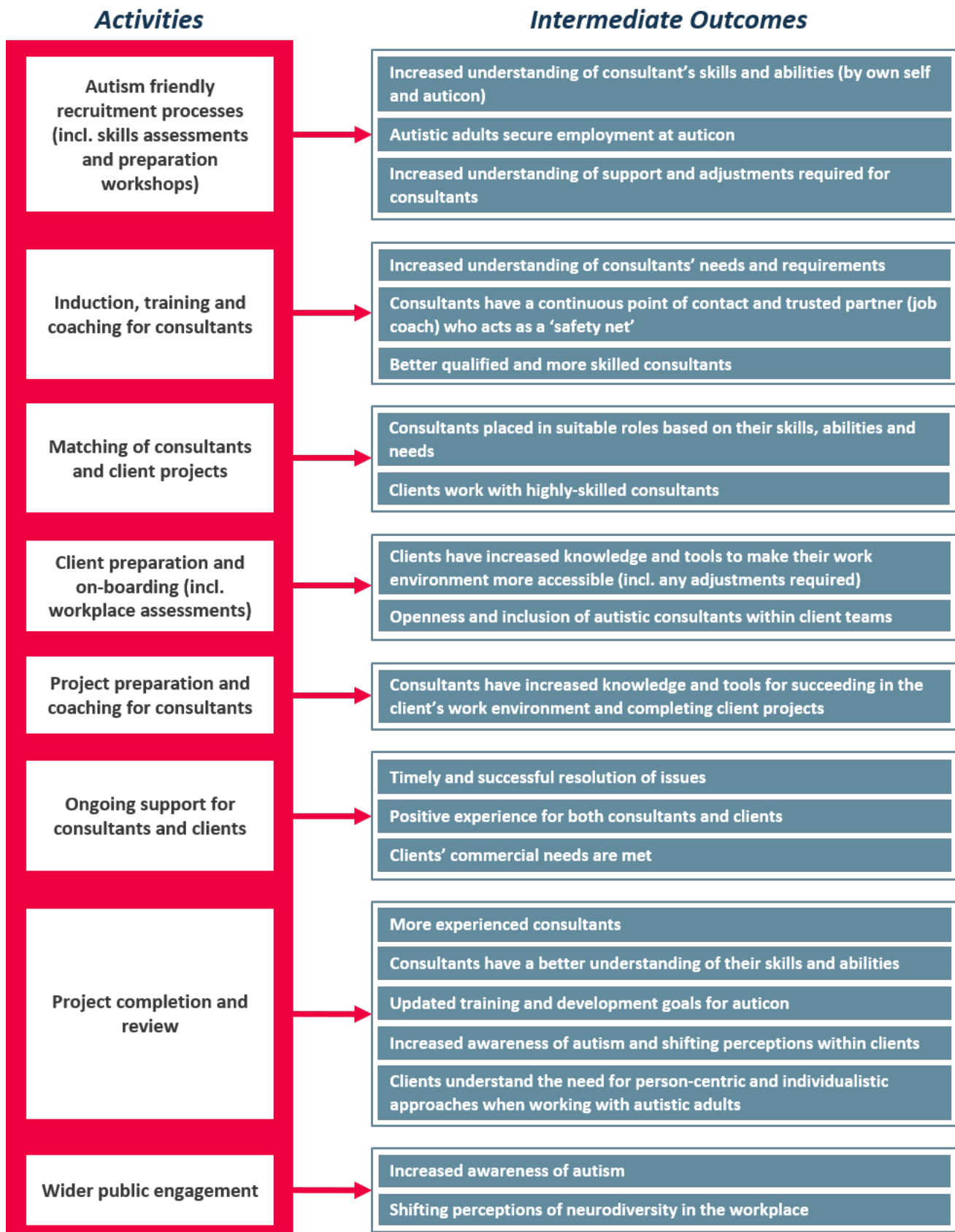


Autism - A neurodevelopmental diagnosis. It pervasively affects a person's cognition, emotions and behaviours and is mainly characterised by differences in social interaction, communication and sensory processing. The diversity within the autism spectrum is immense.

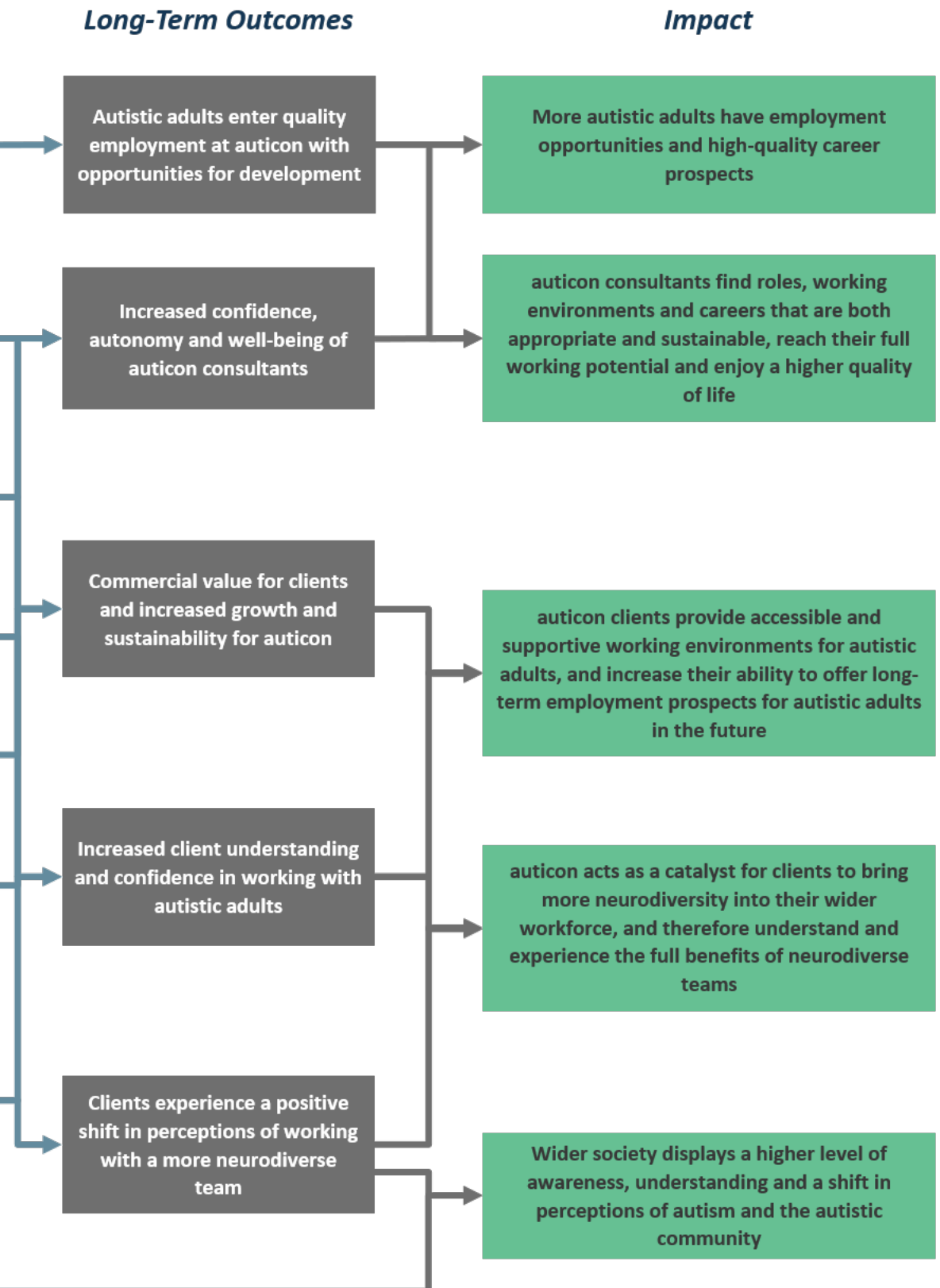
Neurodiversity - A movement that recognises different cognitive styles as an integral part of natural human diversity.

Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change sets out the social impact we will deliver for our core beneficiaries, and how our services and activities will collectively contribute to long-term sustainable change.



Our Theory of Change was developed in partnership with **Aleron**



Our impact 2018

Consultants

There is a significant employment gap between autistic and non-autistic adults in the UK. In 2016, the National Autistic Society found that only 16% of 450,000 autistic adults were in full-time paid work, a rate that has not substantially changed over the last decade. In the same report, 51% of autistic people in employment said their skills were higher than those that their job required.

auticon's mission is to improve the employment prospects for autistic adults by providing high-quality careers for skilled autistic adults. We have an inclusive recruitment process and once the consultants are with us we offer a range of support. This includes 1:1 job coaching, development opportunities and autism-positive work environments, helping to ensure that our consultants have long-term fulfilling careers at auticon.

So how are we doing?

As a social enterprise, we are committed to creating impact for the consultants we work with in accordance with our Theory of Change and the long-term outcomes that we want to achieve.

Autistic adults enter quality employment at auticon with opportunities for development



58% of respondents to our recruitment questionnaire **enjoyed the skills based assessment in our recruitment process**



54 IT-based skills courses completed by our consultants including courses on R, SQL and Python



80% of consultants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their **skills and abilities have increased**

Our year at a glance:

25 full-time consultants recruited

72% of consultants unemployed before auticon

3 years average length of unemployment prior to auticon

96% with a STEM degree or equivalent qualification

44% educated at one of the top 10 UK universities

Increased confidence, autonomy and wellbeing of auticon's consultants



80% of consultants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their **self-confidence has improved**



75% of consultants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their **personal wellbeing has improved**



65% of consultants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their **autonomy has improved**

Consultant case study

Lars

“I feel like I am doing something worthwhile,
I’m being part of something important”

As an undiagnosed person on the spectrum, my working life has been varied. Places where I did find a mentor, usually a sympathetic, more experienced colleague, I thrived. In places where I didn’t have a mentor I did fine for a while, but it was very stressful because I was lonely and felt confused by all the social rules I was meant to be following but were never explained to me. Now I understand I was meant to have an innate understanding of them. Either way, I would eventually be bullied and would have to leave. This happened in many of my jobs. Attracting bullies can be part of life for a person on the spectrum, starting in school and for those who do find employment, continuing there - it’s all too common.

I have only worked on one assignment at auticon so far, because I have only been here for eight months. I’m working at an auditing company and I am doing data analytics for them. I’m kind of a backup team for the auditors. When I first started work at auticon I was incredibly stressed, but the atmosphere was so supportive I began to settle in sooner than I had expected. In previous jobs I used to have back problems but now that has gone; I used to have headaches but now they have gone; I have lost quite a significant amount of weight as I don’t have to comfort eat. I am in better physical shape. I’m less anxious, less afraid, more motivated; I have really benefited in lots of different ways.

The support from my job coach has been key in bringing this about. One moment that stands out is when one of my colleagues and I started on the same day and we were given a presentation of our upcoming assignment. It left me and my

fellow consultant in a bit of a state as it sounded very difficult and challenging, and a lot hinged on us performing well. It was nerve-racking. My job coach picked up on that, and after the meeting was over he said let’s have a chat and helped calm us down. That is what stands out - the support really started from day one.

There is this myth that confidence is independent of your environment, yet here I am with like-minded people in an environment that is easier and more supportive, so it has improved my self-confidence a lot. I can focus on what I am good at and don’t have to worry about what I am not good at, like the social interaction thing. Focussing on what I do well obviously improves my confidence. I am not like a hexagonal shape that is being placed into a square hole. I am a hexagonal shape that is being placed in a hexagonal hole, which is really nice.

I feel like I am doing something worthwhile, I’m being part of something important. This is a high tech social enterprise that works with corporate clients on cutting edge projects. As a result of our assignment, the auditing company is now looking into hiring more autistic people, and is more open to recruiting people with other neurodiverse conditions or disabilities. I’m thrilled to be part of something so big.

auticon supports us in lots of ways but at the same time encourages us to find and make use of our own voices. I hope many autistic people out there will find this inspiring and that many more employers start to understand the potential that is out there.



Lars Backstrom
Consultant

Key IT Skills
Data analytics
and graphical
presentation

Our impact 2018

Clients

Research suggests that the employment gap for autistic adults in the UK is partly due to a lack of understanding of autism. In 2016, the National Autistic Society found 60% of employers would worry about getting support for an autistic employee wrong, and 60% did not know where they need to go for advice about employing an autistic person.

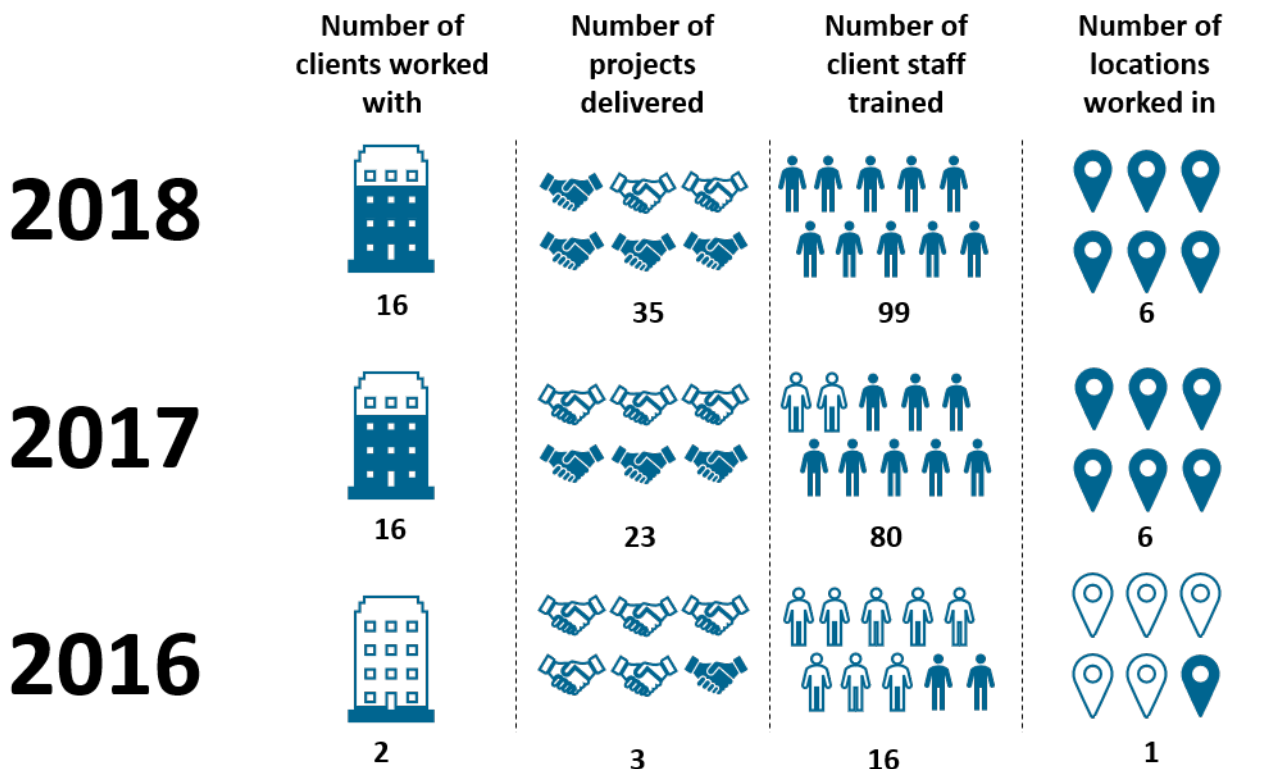
At auticon we want to increase our clients' understanding and confidence in working with autistic adults. Through our support, clients and their teams experience a positive shift in perceptions of working with autistic adults, acting as a catalyst for clients to bring more neurodiversity into their wider workforce.

We provide a range of support including:

- Workplace assessments
- Client preparation
- Staff training on autism (person specific and on a general level)
- Recommendations of adjustments to working environment
- Ongoing support

So how are we doing?

Although we're still a young organisation, our results demonstrate that we are continuously increasing the number of clients and client teams we work with, on more and more assignments and in more locations across the UK – and making progress against our long-term outcomes in our Theory of Change.



Client case study



“There is a massive amount of untapped talent and skills readily available within the autistic community”

In my previous jobs, I have always felt that we were losing out on talent by overlooking those who do not conform to our societal ‘norms’. I was looking for a way to increase diversity in my team and bring in more technical expertise, when I learnt about auticon through a colleague who was involved in the DLG Diversity Network Alliance.

We initially started with a three month contract as suggested by auticon, but this was extended once it became clear that the project was proving beneficial for all parties. The project was to change an undocumented data transformation process for one of our products from SAS to Alteryx. Essentially, a bunch of coding needed to be translated into an understandable process in new software we had purchased.

auticon asked for a very detailed job description pertaining to the project role so they could find the best consultant to match the project’s requirements. We then met the consultant to understand their motivations and expectations and close any gaps in the job description. The day before auticon’s consultant joined their job coach came to meet the team. She gave us an overview of autism and then went into the details of what to expect from their consultant behaviourally. She discussed in detail the likes and dislikes of the auticon consultant. This gave us confidence in the support framework auticon was providing for its clients. Indeed, the whole engagement process from auticon’s side was very comforting and made us feel secure that auticon had the professional capability to make such contracts mutually beneficial for the client and the consultant. The availability of a job coach also reassures the manager there is always expert support available in case there are any issues.

Projects like these tend to linger on because of lack of documentation and ambiguity of coding. The project delivery was much quicker than expected with the first useful deliveries being available within months. Similar projects in the past took us no less than six months using more than one fixed time resource. In addition, the approach of auticon’s consultant was quite refreshing and provided a different perspective to the problem. They were able to use their attention to detail to pre-empt a far wider degree of contingencies, and hence their code could be used for a much wider variety of purposes.

I would say our work with auticon has helped to normalise the presence of autistic individuals within our team. In the past, my direct reports and I have been sceptical about managing autistic individuals due to not having the right support framework in place and fearing what to do should things go wrong. auticon has completely alleviated such concerns. Overall the project was very enriching. It was at times challenging but a massive learning experience on how to manage diverse individuals. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work with auticon and see the value they can add. I would absolutely work with auticon again in the future.

There is a massive amount of untapped talent and skills readily available within the autistic community. With the right kind of support framework, both for the potential employees and companies, there is a serious opportunity for the financial sector to make use of previously overlooked talent. Quite simply, if we are prepared to accept more diversity in views, opinions and behaviours in our teams, then companies and society can benefit from overlooked brilliance.



Gourab Mukherjee
Head of Pricing Development,
Commercial Lines, Pricing and Underwriting

Our impact 2018

Job coaches

auticon's consultants and clients are supported by our job coaches who ensure that the consultants' work environments enable them to deliver to their full professional potential. Our talented job coaches promote inclusion and wellbeing, and are integral to making sure our consultants feel supported in their assignments. They also provide clients with support and information regarding autism in the workplace and can mediate feedback between the client and the consultant. Our consultants work with a dedicated job coach and the support provided is always aligned with individual requests or needs.

80% of consultants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the support offered by their job coach helps with their transition to a client's workplace.

Our job coaches support our consultants and clients in three key areas:

Workplace assessments

- Preparing consultants for workplaces and briefing them on specific corporate cultures
- Conducting workplace assessments and facilitating workplace adjustments with the client

Training

- Briefing clients on autism and the specific characteristics of their new consultant
- Providing dedicated training sessions for the client and future team members

Job coaching

- Offering weekly or fortnightly 1:1 coaching sessions and any other individual support that consultants require
- Offering initial support to the consultant travelling to and from a new workplace

I have worked in the autism and employment field for several years and during this time became all too familiar with the barriers autistic people face when securing or maintaining employment.

I was drawn to working at auticon as a company that actively removes those barriers. I loved the idea of an open culture where 'disclosure' is not seen as a secret to divulge but something to celebrate.

I am very lucky to manage a tight knit team of job coaches. Job coaching allows consultants to openly discuss issues around communication, relationships with colleagues, managing anxiety and

organisational skills with someone outside of their line management. Job coaches can then suggest strategies to consultants, clients, managers and colleagues that will lead to a smooth working relationship.

Autism affects everyone differently and job coaches take time to get to know each consultant. We support our colleagues to thrive in neurotypical environments and help clients to understand the individual's needs and what they can do to make their environments more neurodiversity friendly. Being able to empathise and foresee potential challenges as well as being able to think of creative ways to make the client assignments as autism friendly as possible is very important.

We support the transition to starting a new assignment by providing a workplace assessment. We try to understand the client's culture and unwritten rules to prepare consultants prior to assignment.

We have all developed some wonderful coaching relationships. I feel privileged to work with such interesting and intelligent people who show me a different perspective to the world. A perspective which I value tremendously.



Richmal Maybank
Lead Job Coach

Client case study



“By allowing auticon’s consultants to focus on their strengths they have produced great results and become key members of our team”

The key thing that attracted us to working with auticon was the opportunity to be provided with talent, and the way auticon approached the project. It was very measured, the strategy was right, the planning was good – this all helped to drive success.

It was clear from the outset how there was a sustainable purpose for all parties involved: for us, auticon, our staff and the consultants. From our perspective, we were able to bring talent into our team, helping us to fill a skills shortage while at the same time helping our staff by reducing their workload. Additionally, from auticon’s perspective, they were able to send their consultants to us and provide them with the opportunity to work in a major professional services firm. There was undoubtedly mutual benefit for all parties involved.

We decided to engage with auticon to work with two of their consultants who joined our data analytics team as analysts. This team centrally delivers data analytics services across our audits. Someone scopes the work and they help deliver the technical analysis. Before the project started, we mapped out all our processes with auticon and they pinpointed exactly what neuro-skillsets would be required for each part of the process. This allowed us to identify the role we wanted the consultants to fill and therefore which consultants would be best suited to that role.

We were very open about the fact that we may need to adapt our working environment to make the project work, and we needed auticon to guide us on how to do this. The onboarding process was really helpful in terms of helping us to be aware of those individual needs and how we can get the best out of auticon’s consultants. Many people in the team, by their own admission, either didn’t understand autism

or knew little about it. They are by no means experts now, but they know a lot more and it has opened their eyes a bit. Even simple things such as recognising when someone is trying to ask you for support without directly asking for it. This has been an important learning and is a kind of awareness that we can apply across the wider team.

Having people on the team who have a different way of doing things has gone down really well. A lot of what we do is very technical in nature, so having people who look at that in a slightly different way and spot better ways of doing things has been a real positive. There are some healthy conversations between the consultants and our team talking about how processes could be improved.

When you first hear that someone is on the autistic spectrum, you wouldn’t automatically think that they would be able to thrive in a typical professional services environment. There is a perception that this environment is very socially focused, with everyone looking to build their network and further their career. However, the work we did with auticon shows that there is not necessarily one single definition of what it means to be a successful analyst. By allowing auticon’s consultants to focus on their strengths they have produced great results and become key members of our team.

It has also helped to open our eyes at the leadership level as to how we might sometimes have unnecessary biases in where we get our talent from. This is a demonstrable example of how you can get talent from areas you might not have previously considered, if you are prepared to put the effort in. We can now access these opportunities and we can look further. This partnership has created many benefits at many levels, both operationally and strategically.



Nick Frost
Head of Audit
Technology and
Innovation, Partner



Matthew Campbell
Director

Consultant case study

Richard

“I don’t think I’ve been really stressed out since I started work at auticon at all - it’s gone completely”

My working history before starting at auticon was very varied. I had done temporary full-time work, temporary part-time work, permanent part-time work and self-employed contracting work. This is actually my first full-time permanent job as an employee - it took me long enough to get it!

My experiences in work have been varied too. Some places really didn’t understand me at all, assuming I would work in the same way as everyone else and didn’t understand that I was doing things in a different way. They expected me to do them in the same way as everyone else. This didn’t quite work out. Other offices were fine, let me get on with it as long as I got the work done. “Do the work, do it how you want to do it, just get it done!” – that was nicer.

Then a friend mentioned auticon to me and it seemed like a good idea. I thought I might have more luck with a company that actually understands me, and it is the type of work I want to do. It looked like a good role and better than what I had done previously.

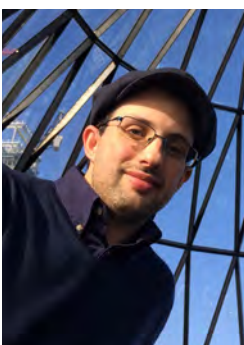
I’ve only had one client assignment so far, but the role I did do I was very happy with. It feels like my manager takes the time and makes an effort to pick a role that he thinks I could do well and that I would enjoy doing, rather than simply putting me in the first role that comes up and hoping I will do it. He aims to find the right role for the right consultant. I feel I’ve improved the skills I wanted to increase, got better at what I wanted to get better at, and made better use of the skills that I’ve already got.

I also got the workplace adjustments I needed for the project I was on. None of them were that big; they weren’t drastic changes and were mostly just ‘rearranging’, but they can make a real and substantial difference to me and the way I work. The adjustments help me work better, and in return the client gets better value for money.

I appreciate the support we have here at auticon, the key element of which is my job coach. We have a scheduled time slot to just talk about anything, work-related or otherwise. We talk about all sorts of things: problems, experiences and topics of interest. If I raise an issue with my job coach, it’s usually because I haven’t been able to do so with a colleague, or it is simply something I only want to discuss with my job coach. My job coach is very good with advice.

There are many things I enjoy about working at auticon. Different colleagues are in the office from time to time, which is nice. The different personalities in the office are really interesting. I also like the location and the building in which we work. The other people in the building are always friendly as well, which is not always the case in my experience. It’s nice to get on well with everyone you work with.

I feel much better since I started work at auticon. Actually, I don’t think I’ve been really stressed out since I started work at auticon at all - it’s gone completely. The relaxed atmosphere here has made me much more at ease than other workplaces I have experienced. That’s a real improvement!



Richard Sarsby
Consultant

Key IT skills
Programming,
Software testing,
IT support

Vision mission values

Our vision, mission and values inform our aims as a social enterprise and the way we do business.

Our vision
Equal employment
opportunities for
autistic people

Our mission

To improve the employment prospects of autistic people through:

1. Providing high quality careers for skilled autistic adults
2. Shifting perceptions in the workplace by placing consultants into client teams
3. Acting as a catalyst for clients to bring more neurodiversity into their wider workforce

Our values

- We put people first and cultivate our team spirit
- We prize individual difference
- We operate a commercially sustainable business
- We act transparently with all stakeholders
- We change perceptions by delivering excellence



It is inspiring to see the growth of auticon in the UK and worldwide. auticon has the potential to transform lives from a sense of societal exclusion that comes with underemployment to the sense of inclusion and being valued for talents through high quality employment. Employment also improves mental health and autonomy, through financial independence. And client companies benefit too, from the diversity and originality that autistic employees bring to the job. I'm proud to be an advisor to the auticon board.

Professor Simon Baron-Cohen
Director, Autism Research Centre,
Cambridge University



Thank you

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the production of this impact report. We would also like to thank our partners at [Aleron](#) with whom we worked to develop the report.

Contact us

If you would like to work with us or find out more about what we do, please get in touch.

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