

New guidance on supporting autistic customers for the insurance industry

24 April 2024

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has released a new good practice guide for the insurance industry to improve support for autistic customers.

The Supporting Autistic Customers guide was launched to coincide with World Autism Awareness Day. It explains the unique experiences of autistic people. It sets out the challenges they might face when interacting with the insurance industry, such as understanding complex policy documents and financial jargon.

The guide offers practical actions that firms can take, including:

- Communicating using clear and plain English. Avoiding jargon and technical terms and clearly explaining and defining these terms when they must be used.
- Limiting use of acronyms or abbreviations.
- Using short sentences. Not putting more than one piece of important information in one sentence.
- Emphasising important information. This is so that attention is drawn to critical details and individuals can quickly identify and focus on essential points.
- Dividing complex documentation into manageable sections.
- Signposting to reasonable adjustments or additional support.
- Providing detailed context for why information is needed and how it will be used when asking certain questions or requesting specific information.
- Investing in training for employees so that they can recognise diverse communication styles and implement inclusive practices.

Autism support group GAIN's General Manager Vic Mazonas says:

Vic Mazonas, General Manager

GAIN

"This good practice guide aligns with priorities set out by the FCA's guidance on fair treatment of vulnerable customers - which may apply to autistic people."

Whilst the guidance above will be of assistance to customers with autism, the guidance holds good for all customers, particularly given the requirement to comply with the Customer Understanding objective within the FCA Consumer Duty.

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