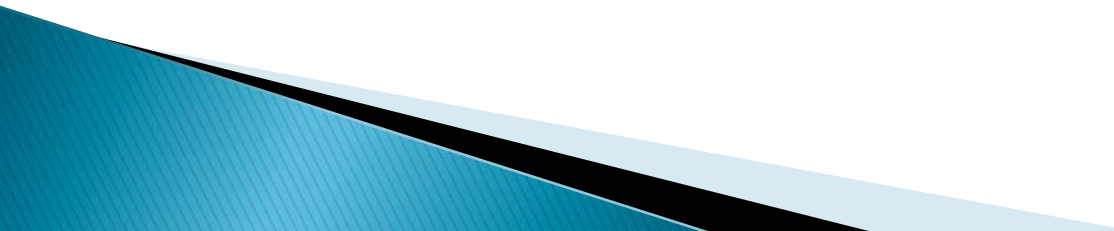


# Exploring the Transitions of Young People with Autism from Childhood to Young Adulthood

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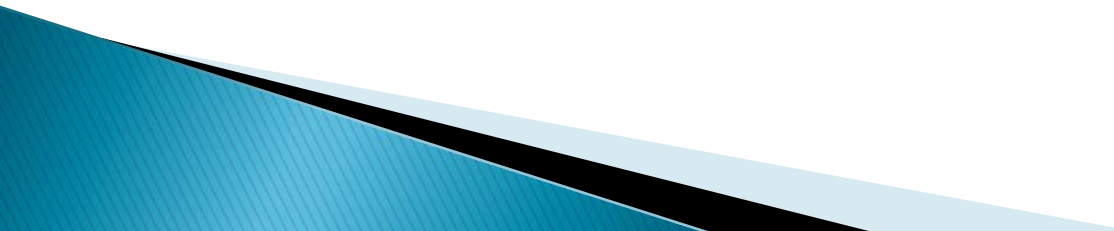
# Overview

- ▶ The National Autistic Society ‘Don’t write me off’ campaign
  - ▶ Our project
  - ▶ Embracing Neurodiversity
  - ▶ Positive examples: Specialisterne
  - ▶ Transition services of the future...
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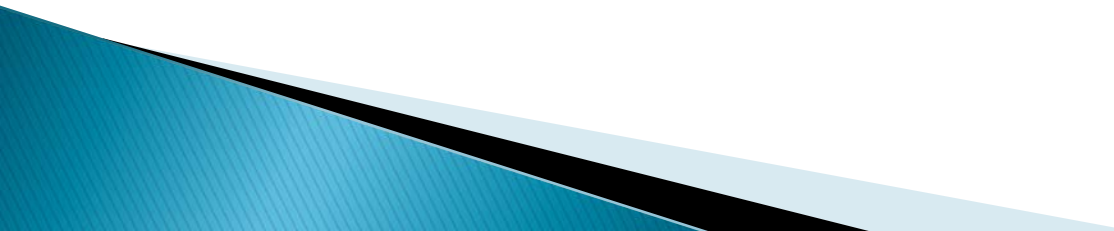
# 'Don't write me off' NAS Campaign

- ▶ Draws attention to real-life stories of people with autism
- ▶ Currently:
  - Only 15% of people with autism have a full time job
  - One third currently without a job or access to benefits
  - 79% of those on incapacity benefit want to work
- ▶ Government needs to:
  - Ensure that Employment and Support Allowance works for people with autism
  - Jobcentre plus staff to understand and meet their needs
  - A national strategy to transform access to employment

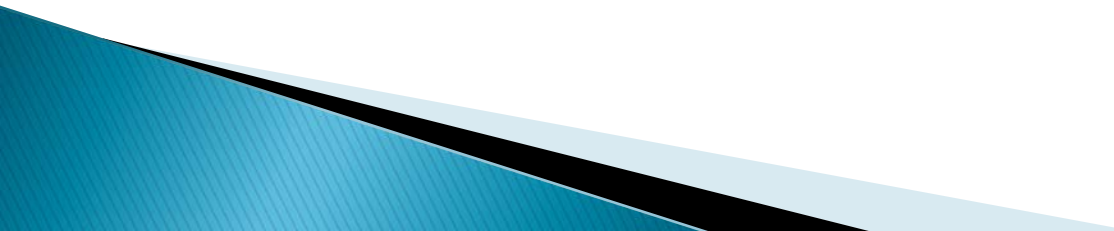
# Exploring Transitions

- ▶ Very little literature exploring transitions for young people with autism
  - ▶ Seek to examine how pathways during the transition to young adulthood are experienced by young people with autism
  - ▶ What role do families play in negotiating transitions for young people with autism?
  - ▶ How might reframing autism as ‘neurodiversity’ impact on young people’s transitions?
- 


# The Research Plan

- ▶ Stage one: online synchronous interviews
    - 3 groups of participants: young people with autism, parents/carers of young people with autism and professionals working with young people with autism
  - ▶ Stage two: Online discussion group and the development of a Wiki
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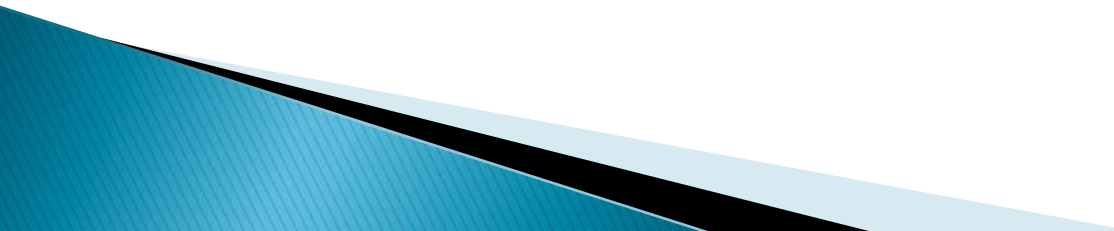
# The use of new technologies

- ▶ Can be more effective when researching with people with autism as it removes the need to read FTF cues
  - ▶ Increasing number of people with autism are using the internet as a forum for self-advocacy
  - ▶ Strong movement has developed online drawing on ideas of 'neurodiversity'
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# Embracing Neurodiversity

- ▶ Rejection of the presentation of people with autism as 'impaired' in particular traits
  - ▶ Celebration of autism as a type of neurodiversity
  - ▶ Questioning of 'normality', e.g. people without autism = neurologically typicals or NTs
  - ▶ Seek to draw on the skills of many individuals with autism
  - ▶ A change in the social nature of workplaces?
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# A way forward: The case of Specialisterne

- ▶ Translates as ‘The Specialists’ and is an IT company employing people with autism
  - ▶ Employs 60 people and has a turnover of almost £2million
  - ▶ Sonne: “This is not cheap labour and it’s not occupational therapy. We simply do a better job.” (The Independent May 31<sup>st</sup> 2009)
  - ▶ Importance of recognising some of the potential issues in working in a socially-dominated environment
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# Transition services of the future...

- ▶ Important to carry out research with young people with autism and their families
  - ▶ A focus on the understanding of difference rather than a focus on deficit and impairment
  - ▶ Facilitating the transition of young people with autism into a range of options that best tap into the abilities of the individual
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