



ARGH (Autism Rights Group Highland)

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Press Release

Scottish Government to fly the flag for Autistic Pride on Monday 18th June 2018

The Scottish Government will fly the Autistic Pride Day flag on 18th June at their headquarters St Andrew's House in Edinburgh. This will be the first time that a Government building in the UK, or indeed worldwide, has marked this important Autistic Cultural event so publicly.

The flag is being raised at the request of a world-leading Autistic-led activism and support organisation, *Autism Rights Group Highland* (ARGH). The Scottish Government have led the way globally by recognising Autistic Pride Day for some years but this is a further step. In a show of support for the autistic community, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon signed artwork created by an ARGH member specifically for Autistic Pride Day in 2015:

<http://www.autismstrategyscotland.org.uk/news/autistic-pride-day.html>

Autistic Pride Day was founded by the UK based online group 'Aspies for Freedom' in 2005, the day has been marked by Autistic people every June 18th since then. Autistic people across the world celebrate in all kinds of ways; it is still celebrated widely online including blog sites, Twitter and Facebook. The day is also traditionally linked to outdoors events, all types of arts and crafts, music and fun. Events should be an inclusive celebration of neurodiversity – a term used to describe differences between people in how their brains think about and perceive the world. Some people will celebrate quietly at home, go for a walk or have their own family event, maybe a picnic in the park.

More recently, larger organised Autistic Pride Day events have become popular. ARGH ran their first public Autistic Pride Day celebration in 2013 but members have been celebrating privately since the day was founded in 2005.

Pictures from some of ARGH's previous Autistic Pride Day events can be found here <http://www.arghighland.co.uk/pride.html>

This year there will be more events than ever before around the UK, including Inverness, London and Edinburgh's first Autistic Pride community event.

Sonny Hallett, co-founder of [AMASE \(Autistic Mutual Aid Society Edinburgh\)](#) said "AMASE are very proud of the Scottish government for leading the way in celebrating the autistic community with the flying of the Autistic Pride flag. We are grateful to ARGH and other autistic people's organisations for their work helping to build our community. We are looking forward to contributing in our own way, celebrating Edinburgh's first Autistic Pride Picnic on the 17th."

Autistic Pride is about coming together to reject negativity. The day promotes the idea that autistic people of all kinds are all valuable and should be celebrated for who they are.

Kabie Brook, co-founder of [ARGH \(Autism Rights Group Highland\)](#) says, "the most important thing to note about the day is that it is an autistic community event: it originated from and is still led by autistic people ourselves. It is a day of celebration and positivity, and is marked by autistic people and families all over the world. There is no central organisation in control unlike some awareness days; the day is owned by Autistic Community."

Sue Fletcher-Watson, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh and an autism expert, says: "Scotland is leading the world by marking this important day in the Autistic community calendar. The country punches above its weight in terms of autism research, now we can add pioneering support for Autistic rights to that list. I'm proud that Scotland, which has always welcomed and valued diversity, is an ally to Autistic people in our community, and to their friends and families."

This year ARGH, will be marking the day with an [open community outdoors event](#) on 16th June with arts and crafts, dancing, information sharing and Autistic speakers: a gathering of Autistic people to celebrate with our families and others. The event is free and open to all.

Everyone has the right to be proud of who they are but often Autistic people are denied this right from an early age, Autistic Pride is an antidote to this: a reminder to everyone that all Autistic people are valuable and have the right to live a life that gives them joy. This is not about rejecting support, this is about wanting to be our true selves and to be supported to be successful Autistic people rather than to be viewed as broken non-autistic people, recognising that all Autistic people have potential, that we are all part of a neurodiverse

world and that is a good thing.

The symbol for the day is an infinity symbol in spectrum colours: to represent diversity with infinite variations and infinite possibilities.

ARGH's message for the day is: On June 18th please take the time to remember the meaning and ethos behind Autistic Pride Day and think about how you can work with us to make sure that every Autistic child and adult never has to feel ashamed of their own natural state - how you can be a good ally and how we can all work together to celebrate neurodiversity all year round.

Notes to editors

On Autistic Pride Day we celebrate our right to be our authentic selves and in addition we celebrate neurodiversity as a whole.

The word Neurodiversity describes the natural neurological differences within humanity accepting and respecting that these variations make our societies richer. Neurodiversity includes all humans as equal and worthwhile, it is not a rejection of supports or accommodations but rather a fact which can be thought of as similar to biodiversity: difference being enriching and valued rather than eradicated.

What is ARGH

Autism Rights Group Highland is a group of Autistic adults based in the Highlands of Scotland working for the rights of Autistic people in Scotland and beyond. We were founded in 2005, since then we have been involved in lobbying, campaigning and collective advocacy as well as producing our own Autism Alert card. We are involved in many local, national and international projects.