



Re: Join us in making (insert town here) an AsIAM Autism-Friendly Town

Dear (insert individual or organisation name here),

I am writing to you today as Chairperson (or whoever is writing from the committee) of (insert town name here) Autism-Friendly Town Committee.

As you may be aware, at least 3% of the population of our town are Autistic. Autism is lifelong, developmental difference which means that the way a person communicates and interacts with others and experiences the environment is different to people who are now Autistic. Autistic people have huge strengths and abilities but face accessibility barriers on a daily basis because of how the world works. Day-to-day tasks such as going shopping, using public transport or joining a sports club can be overwhelming for Autistic people and as a result many people in our community, including the families of Autistic people, are now able to enjoy the activities which most take for granted. This means our town is losing out on unique perspectives, members, customers to everyone's disadvantage.

Autistic people adapt every day to try to participate in the community but small changes in how our town works could be the difference between a person struggling and a person thriving. AsIAM, Ireland's National Autism Charity, has developed a Autism-Friendly Towns Award which recognises communities who go on the journey to becoming Autism-Friendly. The project began in Clonakilty in 2018 and now some 20 communities. We are working to achieve this status for (insert town name here) but we need your help!

A key requirement for our committee is to recruit a cross-section of Autism-Friendly Champions who are organisations who commit to learning how to meet the needs of customers/members/service users who are Autistic and put in place one or two small accommodations which will make life better for the town's Autism community. To-date, across the country, there has been excellent engagement from organisations and businesses including leading brands, sporting organisations and community groups

In Year 1, Champions who sign up will receive access to a training opportunity for managers and personnel, based on the size of the organisation. In Year 2 and 3, we will work with Champions to put in place sensory accommodations (e.g. a quiet space or quiet time) and visual guides (pictures which tell a person what to expect when using a service). We will also promote the participating Champions through our social media and other communications.

Becoming an AsIAM Autism-Friendly Town will not only improve life for Autistic people and their families living in our community but can also put our community on the map as an inclusive, understanding place to visit or even holiday.

We would really appreciate it if you would consider signing up to be a part of this much needed initiative. All we need from you to begin with is a confirmation that you are interested and we can then provide you with further information on next steps.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information and we greatly appreciate you taking the time to consider our request.

Yours Sincerely,

(Insert name here)