Selfridges adds 'quiet hour' to shopping experience

By Sandra Halliday - March 24, 2022

Selfridges has become the latest retailer to commit to making the shopping experience for autistic consumers more enjoyable with the launch of a ‘quiet’ shopping hour in all of its branches that will run once a week from 10 am until 11 am on Wednesdays.

The initiative was announced during Neurodiversity week and will also be implemented in the retailer’s office. On LinkedIn, it said: “We understand that shopping experiences for people with autism spectrum conditions, sensory sensitivities, and mental health conditions like anxiety, can be stressful. That's why today, we are introducing Quiet Hour.

“[This] gives customers the opportunity to shop in an environment that is catered to their needs which means lowering or turning off music and, where possible, switching off screens to create a calmer, less overwhelming experience.

“We are encouraging team members to take part in our offices and back-of-house areas by being respectful of volume during this time. We are also creating quiet spaces for reflection across our locations where team members are encouraged to relax and take a moment for themselves.”

Modern stores can be noisy environments with loud music and strong lighting, as well as large crowds of shoppers. This can be an extremely uncomfortable experience for anyone with autism and the introduction of quiet periods has become much more common in recent years in British shops and offices.

Superdrug and Tesco are two of the big names who previously introduced quiet hours.