

Dear Friends

Happy New Year – welcome to our first newsletter of 2017. We hope you have had a good Christmas and New Year break. It was good to see so many of you at our first Support Group meeting of the year.

As always, we have details of our activities over the next month or so plus other information that may be of interest.

We have also been asked to consider an informal support group for partners of adults with autism – read on for more details.

Family Youth Club

Our next Youth Club takes place on **Saturday 4 February** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Children accompanied by their families are welcome.

Our usual facilities will be available and our volunteer play facilitators will be present to help the children and young people enjoy the activities we have on offer. We will also be featuring some Christmas craft activities for our young people.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents must be responsible for their children during the duration of the youth club and must remain in the same room as their child at all times – thank you.

£1.50 per child. Entry is via the children's garden at the rear of the church, next to the car park.

Full details, including a map, can be found at

www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/Family%20Youth%20Club

LEGO club



Our next club is also on **Saturday 4 February** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church.

This is for children with autism from ages 8 to 13. We have been pleased to welcome some new members to the club from our waiting list. The club is again currently full but for more information and to express interest in your child joining the waiting list, complete the form at www.shantsnas.org.uk/home/lego

PLEASE NOTE: We have been advised that, unfortunately, this type of therapy is not successful with children who have an ADHD or PDA diagnosis.

Support Group Meeting

Our next support group meeting is on **Monday 20 February** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm. We are hoping to have a speaker at this evening.

There will be plenty of time at our meeting to have a chat and to browse our Resource Library, comprising over 350 books, videos and DVDs on many aspects of autism and Asperger syndrome.

If you have any books due back or overdue, please don't forget to bring them along.

Our Southampton social groups

Both our Children's social group and Adults' social group are underway again following the Christmas break at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD. All dates for the next few months can be found on our website. For more details, email aspsg.shants@gmail.com or contact Sue (023 8043 2612) or Tracey (07532 282301).

Tony Attwood conference



Bookings for our Tony Attwood conference, on **Friday 19 May** at Winchester Guildhall, have continued to come in over Christmas and the New Year with **over 350 tickets** now sold – and still 4 months to go! Therefore, if you hope to attend, please do not delay in booking your places before we sell out! We are particularly keen to promote the event to professionals who we feel would greatly benefit from attending, therefore, please also pass on information to any professionals you think may be interested.

Prices have been kept as low as possible and include refreshments and buffet lunch. We have special prices for parents/carers, people with autism, Teaching Assistants, accredited Hampshire Autism Ambassadors and other professionals. For full details of this exciting event and to book, please visit our website at www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/TonyA. We do hope you are able to make it to this event.

Tony last visited us in 2011 (which was a sell-out) and we are delighted to be able to welcome him to the UK again in 2017. His programme will cover many aspects of autism across all age groups..



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Just 16% of autistic adults are in full-time paid employment. And, in almost a decade, this appalling situation hasn't improved.

The National Autistic Society is determined to change this, but need your help. Please sign their petition calling on the Government to double the number of autistic people in work by 2020.

Max is the star of a powerful new *Too Much Information* film. He is autistic and has a good job. But his first experiences of job interviews were distressing. "I didn't know what to expect, what to wear, or what questions would be asked. The information overload was too much – I couldn't even speak."

But in one interview, when again he couldn't get the words out, he passed his book of notes to the interviewers. They were so impressed with the knowledge these displayed that they offered him an apprenticeship. It hasn't all been easy but with the right understanding from his workplace and some small adjustments, Max has been a real success story – even winning apprentice of the year.

Employment won't be right for all autistic people. But 77% of unemployed autistic adults, or people responding on their behalf, told us they want to work.

The Government has committed to halving the 'disability employment gap'. But the autism employment gap is even wider. The fear is that without a better understanding of autism from both employers and the Government, autistic adults will continue to be left behind, their abilities overlooked.

Please sign The National Autistic Society's petition today to pile the pressure on the Government to take action, so that more autistic people get the jobs they deserve. Over 26,000 people have signed by visiting <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi.aspx> – be sure you do too.

Consultation on mental health and autism

Many thanks to those of you who contributed to our consultation about mental health services for children, young people and adults with autism. The consultation, working in partnership with Hampshire Autism Voice, has been funded and supported by Healthwatch Hampshire. The consultation is now closed and we are busy assessing all the data collected, which also includes feedback from a focus group with mental health professionals held in December.

The results of this survey will be made available on our website in due course and will be fed back to Healthwatch Hampshire, the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board and local Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Support for partners

We have a number of members whose partners are on the autistic spectrum (both diagnosed and undiagnosed). Would any of you be interested to get together on an informal basis to discuss issues around living with a partner with autism? If so, please drop us an email and we'll see if we can arrange something. Please let us know if a daytime or evening meeting (or either) is best and whether you would be happy for your email address to be passed to others interested in forming an informal group.

Help request

Following our recent requests for help in our Family Youth Club and Monthly support group, we were delighted to receive some offers from members. We look forward to working with them and thank them for their support. If anyone else is interested to help out in any way, please get in touch.

CAMHS P.A.C.E. Event

This free event for parents and carers is being held on **Friday 20 January**, 11.00am to 7.15pm, at Winchester Guildhall, The Broadway, Winchester, SO23 9GH. The aim of the event is to offer help, support and advice on subjects such as: crisis and self-harm • managing challenging behaviour • autism awareness • helping a child with anxiety. There will be stalls and information from local and national organisations so go along and meet the experts! For timetable of the workshops and to book, visit <http://www.fitfesthampshire.com/pace> or call 01962 831044.

Minecraft and Meltdowns Fun Fridays

Relax with your friends and family over coffee and meet members of Aspergers Adventures–Minecraft and Meltdowns. Plus, from Dobble to Warhammer, the expert Games Masters from Board in the City will help you rediscover how fun board games can be.

Only £1 each to access the huge games library. Barista style coffee; WIFI; Meepcraft demos; Homemade food and drinks; Gluten-free and vegan options; Quiet room; Be yourself!

The next meeting is on **Friday 20 January**. 6.00 to 8.00pm at Board in the City, 38–40 Onslow Road, Southampton, SO14 0JG.

Relaxed theatre performances

It was good to meet a number of you at the relaxed performance of the Mayflower theatre's pantomime on 3 January where we and Autism Hampshire were supporting the afternoon – we hope you had a good time.

The Mayflower's House Manager told us that the next relaxed performance will be 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' on **Friday 7 April** at 1.30pm. Next year's pantomime is 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' starring Craig Revel Horwood as the Wicked Queen – there will be a relaxed performance on **Tuesday 2 January 2018** at 1.00pm. Also, we have advance notice that there will be a relaxed performance of 'War Horse' at the Mayflower on **Thursday 24 May 2018** at 2.00pm – there's nothing like planning in advance!!

Contact: Box Office 023 8071 1811 or visit https://www.mayflower.org.uk/Whats_On

Autism-friendly Library sessions

Southampton Central Library is hosting a series of autism friendly sessions with low lighting, blinds drawn with large and portable sensory equipment available. Also, comfy bean bags and a range of books will help create a comfortable calm space for families either to stay in or dip in and out of as they use the full range of library resources and services elsewhere in the building. They welcome chewys, ear defenders, pushchairs and any other aids you want to bring, a social story and shoe park will be available for the events. The sessions are 10.30am-12.30pm on Saturdays: **4 February, 4 March and 1 April.**

GO! Club and GO! Mini's

Join in the fun club for children and young people with additional needs and their siblings! Aged 8-18 years and Mini's for 3-7 year olds. Held at Fleming Park Leisure Centre, Passfield Avenue, Eastleigh, SO50 9NL. They have a variety of different sports, arts and crafts at each session – something for everyone! GO! welcome children and young people with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities who live in Eastleigh. Fun for children and siblings! This is a short break so parents can leave their children with the trained and friendly staff and volunteers. Dates are **Wednesdays 25 January, 8 February, 8 and 22 March, 5 April**, 4.00 to 6.00pm. Cost is £5 per person and booking is essential. For more information and to book, contact Angela Fry on 01256 636288 or email bookings@greatopportunities.org.uk or visit <http://www.greatopportunities.org.uk/eastleigh-go-club/>

Flipout in Chandler's Ford

Flipout is a new trampoline park which now has a lift installed. It is situated at Southampton Unit 1a Chandlers Park, School Lane, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 4DG. They hold a popular session exclusively for people with a disability on Mondays at 4.00pm. The cost for the session is £7.50 and this price includes up to two carers. If you would like more information about this session or want bespoke sessions, please visit <http://www.flipout.co.uk/locations/southampton-2/> or call 0845 2411 340.

ActiveAbility Southampton also runs a weekly session at Flipout for young people and adults aged 14+. These are held every Tuesday 10.30 to 11.30am and cost £3 per person, carers go free. This session is open to all. For more information, email Max.Bradbury-Knight@activation.org.uk or call 07760 880917.

Free fundraising packs for World Autism Awareness Week from The National Autistic Society

Getting involved with World Autism Awareness Week next year will change lives. Help NAS to raise money and awareness so that as many people as possible learn about the reality of living with autism. Register online at <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/world-autism-awareness-week.aspx> to get a free fundraising pack to give you lots of ideas for how to get involved in your community, at work or at school. We will quiz, bake, walk, collect... Until everyone understands. Join us!

DWP – Work, Health & Disability: Improving Lives Consultation

The Government wants to help everyone to be able to enjoy independence, security and good health that being in work can bring. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is seeking views on what it will take to transform employment prospects for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. The consultation closes on **Friday 17 February**. For more information and to respond on the consultation, visit <https://consultations.dh.gov.uk/workandhealth/consult/>

Autism Music and Arts Festival, Southampton

An autism festival is being organised for **Sunday 19 March** at the 1865 venue in Southampton. This event will be an autism awareness music and arts festival and the aim is for at least the majority of the performers to be on the autistic spectrum. The organisers are Southampton Solent University students and one has autism and has been involved in organising something similar a couple of years ago in Stourbridge. ITV made a documentary about the previous event, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dRgs8-4hX4> to view. Jordan, the main point of contact, can be contacted on aoamusicfestival@gmail.com.

Jordan is looking for musicians, artists, poets, bands, singers and any other people who are talented in any of the other arts to perform on the day in a really nice venue that can hold up to 800 people. You can also get involved by volunteering for the event in a number of different ways including giving out flyers, selling merchandise, helping with layout of event, greeting guests, helping at the box office and they are also looking for a graphic designer. This will be an event for all and more information will follow closer to the time. If you want to be added to the autism fest mailing list or would like to get involved in any way please contact Jordan by email on aoamusicfestival@gmail.com or Jamie by email on jamie.pratt@autismhampshire.org.uk.

New leaflets on mental health and epilepsy in autism

Earlier last year Autistica released a report highlighting new research showing people on the autism spectrum are more likely to have poor health and sadly are often at risk of early death. Two leaflets have been produced to help those affected by two very common issues in autism – mental health problems and epilepsy. These provide some background information, practical tips, and importantly direct you to places to go for help. Visit <https://www.autistica.org.uk/autism/useful-information/> to download these leaflets.

Five free Early Learning apps for children with autism

Some interesting information can be found at <http://www.autismpluggedin.com/2013/08/5-free-early-learning-apps.html>

Life, Animated (PG)

This film is being shown for one night only at No 6 Cinema, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. This film is the true story of a young American boy with autism who learns to communicate with his family via favourite Disney cartoons.

It is being shown on **Wednesday 1 February** at 7pm. For more details, email peter.gruner@btinternet.com. Watch a trailer via the link at <https://www.no6cinema.co.uk/films/life-animated>.

Reminders:

Gambado, Eastleigh – exclusive admission times for SEN guests

Gambado hold one-hour SEN indoor soft-play sessions for young children with all types of disabilities and special educational needs at Unit L10, Swan Leisure Centre, Eastleigh, SO50 5SF. Upcoming dates will be announced on their website shortly. For more information or to book, visit www.gambado.com/events/eastleigh/sen-sessions or call 023 8001 8336.

Visiting the Hampshire Countryside and Exploring the New Forest by Bus booklets

We still have a few of these booklets left which will be available to our next support group meeting. These are designed for families and teachers of children with autism and can also be downloaded free from <http://autismandnature.org.uk/>

Avon Tyrrell Inspiring You Events 2017

Avon Tyrrell UK Youth Outdoor Activity Centre, Bransgore, BH23 8EE. A wide variety of activities are available. The dates can be found at <https://www.avontyrrell.org.uk/IYou.html>. In addition to the Inspiring You weekends, they also offer additional support to enable young people to attend Funday sessions throughout the year, which are a great way to develop independence and confidence, while experiencing some of the activities Avon Tyrrell has to offer.

Save the Date! Special Needs Information Day 2017, Yateley

Support4SEND and Parent Voice's next Special Needs Information Day will be held on **Saturday 25 March 2017**, 10.00am to 3.00pm, at Yateley School, School Lane, Yateley, GU46 6NW. These popular free events give families and practitioners opportunities to gather information about local support and services. The event is free to visitors (refreshments and food are available to buy). There is ample free parking on site and disabled access. Several workshops and talks will be on offer, alongside the exhibition, and further details about these will be published in the coming months. They also hope to offer activities for children and young people. Our branch will be there with our stand. If you would like to know more about the event, email enquiries.support4send@hants.gov.uk.

Dimensions autism-friendly cinema screenings

Dimensions work with ODEON, Cineworld, Vue and Showcase to host Autism Friendly Screenings at over 250 cinemas nationwide. See what autism-friendly cinema screenings are coming to a cinema near you at <https://www.dimensions-uk.org/families/autism-friendly-environments/autism-friendly-screenings/>

Hampshire Local Autism Directory

The Local Autism Directory (LAD) is funded by Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth (SHIP), 8 CCGs and Adult Services, Hampshire County Council. Information within it covers children and adults.

Visit the LAD at <http://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/directory/>

First Steps to Autism Information – local guides

Autism Hampshire's set of useful local guides for Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth for people when they first want to know more about autism and the local support services available. Available from the Hampshire Local Autism Directory at <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/directory/#stepbystepguides>

Hampshire Specialist Parenting Support Services (HSPSS)

The Hampshire Specialist Parenting Support Service (HSPSS) has been commissioned by the Children and Maternity Collaborative of the five Hampshire CCGs. The service provides parenting programmes across Hampshire both in a group setting and individually in family homes for parents/carers who have children aged 5-17 that are:

- diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition (ASC)
- diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- displaying troubling or challenging behaviours associated with mild-moderate conduct disorder
- teenagers displaying anti-social behaviour including child-to-parent violence.

Please either email hampshire.parenting@barnardos.org.uk or call 01489 799178 to find out more.

My World, National Autistic Society

The NAS offers a FREE autism classroom resource pack and fortnightly resource emails for teachers who sign up to *My World*. Please pass this information on to all teachers you know. For a video with more information, please visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fv66Q-MUxqc and sign up at www.autism.org.uk/myworld

