

Newsletter

Dear Friends

This is our last newsletter of 2018.

We have details of our activities to look forward to in 2019, which includes some special events.

Our newsletter includes advice for the Christmas period that can, so often, be a difficult time from those on the spectrum. We also have great news about the National Autism Strategy being extended to include children.

Many thanks to those of you who supported our recent Quiz Night, which raised over £230 and was a fun evening for everyone taking part – we hope to make this an annual event. As always, if you have any ideas for activities or events you would like us to consider, please let us know.

Finally we wish you all a very happy Christmas and thank you for your support during 2018. We now look forward to welcoming you to our activities in the New Year.

Dates for January 2019

All our activities are taking a break over the Christmas holidays. We meet back in January as follows:

Children's Social Group

Tuesday 8 January at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD from 6.00–8.00pm, then fortnightly.

Totton Support Group

Our friends in Totton meet back on **Monday 14 January** at Testwood Baptist Church, 283A Salisbury Rd, Totton, Southampton, SO40 3LZ at 7.30pm.

Adults' Social Group

Tuesday 15 January at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD from 7.00–9.00pm, then fortnightly.

LEGO Club

Saturday 19 January at Chandler's Ford Methodist Church at 2.00pm. We hope to have some limited vacancies for this club early in the new year, so 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).

Family Youth Club

Saturday 19 January at Chandler's Ford Methodist Church from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Children accompanied by their families are welcome.

Support Group Meeting

Monday 21 January at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm.

Partners' Group

Thursday 24 January at Chandler's Ford Methodist Church, Winchester Road, SO53 2GJ, 7.30 to 9.30pm.

All details and timings of our activities can be found on our website at www.shantsnas.org.uk/Diary%20dates or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nassouthhampshirebranch

Top speakers booked for 2019

As previously announced, we have booked some top speakers for next year.

On **Saturday 2 March**, at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church from 10.00am to 3.00pm, we have booked one of this country's best autistic speakers, **Sarah Hendrickx**, to give two talks at an **Autism Seminar**:

Sarah has been a keynote autism speaker at national autism conferences in the UK and overseas and specialises in speaking on all aspects of autism and Asperger syndrome. She has an unusually blunt and humorous speaking style which is more informal and 'says it like it is' more than many professionals. She has written six books on the subject of autism. Sarah was diagnosed autistic with Asperger syndrome at the age of 43 – after she had written several books on the subject. Autism in women is so invisible that Sarah did not recognise it in herself!

Sarah will deliver sessions:

- **Women and Girls and Autism: What's the Difference**
- **Social and Personal Relationships on the Autism Spectrum.**

Delegates will have the choice of attending just one or both talks. Full details and booking details will be available early in the new year – meanwhile reserve the date now!

Monday 29 April will be our Annual General Meeting and, again, have a top speaker booked to attend:

Sarah-Jane Critchley is a keynote speaker, author and parent who spent 10 years building the Autism Education Trust to share good practice with schools across England. Sarah-Jane will be covering two topics:

- **School exclusions**
- **Mental health (both children and adults)**

She is Author of *A Different Joy: The Parents' Guide to Living Better with Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD and More...* and *The Different Joy Planner*. She has spoken at events for TES (formerly the Times Educational Supplement), National Association of Head Teachers on National and International stages, for Local Authorities and for parent's groups.

The event takes place at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church from 7.00 to 9.30pm. Full details and booking details will be available soon – meanwhile reserve the date now!

On **Monday 20 May**, we are delighted to announce a return visit of **Alex Kelly** as our guest at that month's support group meeting at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm:

Alex was a very popular speaker when she last visited us in 2017 and many members asked us to invite her again. She will be giving a talk about **Developing Social Skills and Making Friends**. This talk applies to both autistic children and adults.

Alex is Managing Director of Alex Kelly Ltd and has nearly 30 years of experience as a speech therapist. In 2011 she recognised the need for a day service for adults that had a communication and social skills focus, so along with her husband, Brian Sains, she opened Speaking Space – a day service for adults with autism and/or learning disabilities. Alex is a renowned international speaker and offers training in communication and social skills. She spent much of her time working in Wales with Afasic Cymru and also running communication courses for Hampshire County Council.

We are also in discussion with other guest speakers, so watch this space!

Surviving Christmas

It's that time of year again! Christmas can be an exciting, fun time for many of us. But the hustle and bustle of Christmas can be overwhelming for some autistic people. Read autistic people's and their families' stories about how they celebrate Christmas at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/donate/christmas/real-stories.aspx.

And, with your help, the National Autistic Society has compiled a list of tips for the festive period at www.autism.org.uk/about/family-life/holidays-trips/christmas.aspx.

Also a list of autism resources can be found at <https://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/preparing-christmas-autism-resources>.

Relaxed performances over Christmas

Puppet Panto at **The Berry Theatre, Hedge End, SO30 4EJ**. Join the fun and playful adventures of this bunch of puppets as they try to put on a performance of their own! Performances are on: **Monday 17, Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19 December** – all at 10.30am and 2.00pm. For tickets, visit www.theberrytheatre.co.uk/whats-on/autumn-18/puppet-panto.

Footprints in the Snow at **Winchester Discovery Centre** on **Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 December**, both at 11am. To book and for more information visit www.hants.gov.uk/shop/product.php?productid=51955.

Peter Pan at the **New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth** on **Monday 31 December** at 11.00am. For more information, or to book, call 02392 649000 or visit www.newtheatreroyal.com/performances/peter-pan.

Beauty and the Beast Family Panto at the **Theatre Royal, Winchester**. A relaxed and signed performance is on **Tuesday 1 January** at 2.30pm. For details visit www.theatreroyalwinchester.co.uk/beauty-and-the-beast.

A Christmas Carol from **Friday 11 to Sunday 13 January**, 7.30pm at **Theatre Royal, Winchester**. For more information and tickets visit www.theatreroyalwinchester.co.uk/a-christmas-carol. Blue Apple is a theatrical company that supports performers with learning disabilities.

Puss In Boots at **Plaza Theatre, Romsey** on **Thursday 17 January** at 7.30pm, For more details visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/romsey/plaza-theatre/puss-in-boots-relaxed-performance/2019-01-17/19:30.

Dick Whittington, Southampton **Mayflower Theatre's** pantomime on **Friday 4 January** is very nearly sold out. We know a number of our members will be attending and look forward to seeing them (we will be stewarding at the performance).

There is also a relaxed performance of Birmingham Royal Ballet's *Beauty and the Beast* on **Friday 1 February** at 6.00pm (details at www.mayflower.org.uk/whats-on/brb-beauty-and-the-beast-2019). Looking further ahead to the summer, there is a relaxed performance of *Doctor Dolittle* on **Tuesday 27 August** at 1.00pm (details at www.mayflower.org.uk/whats-on/doctor-dolittle-2019).

Chichester Festival Theatre has a number of relaxed performances coming up in the next couple of months. For details of all their shows visit <https://www.cft.org.uk/your-visit/access/relaxed-performances>.

National autism strategy to be extended to children

Great news! Last week the Government announced plans to introduce an updated national autism strategy, which will cover people of all ages in England for the first time. After 10 years of calling for the strategy to cover both children and adults, the Government is making this commitment to improve the lives of future generations. We know both children and adults face huge challenges and need more support.

This commitment is part of the Government's review of the Adult Autism Strategy, which launched almost ten years ago. While we know that support for autistic adults is still nowhere near as good as it needs to be, there is evidence that the areas that the previous autism strategies have focused on have been improved. Ministers have acknowledged that far too many children on the autism spectrum are currently held back from achieving their potential. They have accepted that we need a national approach to improve the support that is offered to children and their families.

In Hampshire, we already have a Children's and Young Persons Autism Strategy sitting alongside the Adult Autism Strategy. The Hampshire Autism Partnership Board (HAPB), on which our branch is represented, is about to start revising and combining these two strategies into a new all-age strategy. The HAPB also have representatives on the national autism strategy's committees, so we will be following the progress of the new revised national strategy very closely.

Life on the Autism Spectrum

On **Thursday 7 February** Pioneer Teaching School presents Dean Beadle's talk, *Life on the autism spectrum from a personal perspective* at Ferneham Hall, Osborn Road, Fareham, PO16 7DB from 4:15 to 6.00pm (doors open 3.30pm). £12 per person. To book, email: pioneer.alliance@harrison.hants.sch.uk. Please note: tickets are **not** available from Ferneham Hall. This talk is open to educational professionals and the public.

In 1988, Dean was diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum. Now twenty years on, through his humorous and insightful speech, Dean outlines his positive outlook on his diagnosis. Dean will give insight into various topics such as anxiety, social/emotional needs, sensory issues, relationships, sexuality and school life.

We have seen Dean speak before and can thoroughly recommend this talk.

New Impartial Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) Service in Hampshire

Support for children and young people with educational needs and/or disability living in Hampshire, and their parents, is changing in the New Year. In response to feedback from families, the service will provide a single point of contact for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability and their parents and carers.

Hampshire County Council (HCC), working with the five NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups in Hampshire, has awarded a three-year contract to Core Assets Children's Services, to provide an impartial Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) Service in Hampshire. From 1 January, this one service will encompass both Support4SEND (currently provided by HCC), and Parent Voice (operated by The Rose Road Association).

Core Assets Children's Services have over 24 years of experience in supporting children, young people and their families with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). The provider will be working with HCC, Support4SEND and The Rose Road Association to ensure that the transition from two services into a single service is as smooth as possible.

BBC Radio interview with Alis Rowe

Alis is founder of the Curly Hair Project. She was recently interviewed on Radio Oxford about autism and empathy.

The recording can be heard at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nY1U2QGPXHU&t.

Autism, teaching and me

Jennifer Pollock is a qualified teacher, mathematics tutor and volunteers at two local schools. Jennifer was diagnosed as autistic when she was a child, and in this article she explores why she chose a career in teaching and highlights some of the challenges she has encountered in qualifying as a teacher.

Read the article at <https://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/autism-teaching-and-me>.

Transition Support Service

The National Autistic Society's Transition Support Service is the only autism-specific advocacy service supporting young people and their families with the transition from education to adult life across the UK. They offer free telephone and email advice and support on transition planning, rights and entitlements, exploring options, finding suitable provision and ensuring that young people are engaged and meaningfully involved in their own future.

Young people and families in need of their help can telephone 0808 800 0027 (leave a message on the answering service and the NAS will call you back) or visit the transition section of the NAS website at www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/transition-support.aspx.

Human Library

Would you like to help promote diversity and challenge prejudice? Want to expand your own horizons by having a conversation with someone whose experiences are very different to your own?

The Human Library is a global equalities movement that promotes an inclusive way to challenge prejudice through social contact. Just like in a real library, a visitor to the Human Library can choose a Book from a range of titles. The difference is that Books are people, and reading is a conversation.

Social contact is known to be among the best ways to challenge prejudice, and the Human Library enables it to flourish. It provides a safe environment for people to engage in conversation within a framework of respect, and with the permission to respectfully ask questions and share experiences. The dialogue that the Human Library facilitates has the potential to challenge prejudice, stigma and discrimination.

In practice, the Human Library celebrates the diversity and positive difference of our communities, raises awareness of many different reasons people may experience exclusion, and takes positive action to address some of the issues that can lead to bullying, abuse and hate crime. Book titles deliberately acknowledge and provoke the assumptions or common prejudices that we, or society may have, and Readers are empowered to choose from a broad range of titles, and challenged to engage with the people behind the labels during short and respectful conversation.

Watch a short video explaining the concept of the Human Library at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSgXTMFppdKqAaeyd4amegw>. For further information contact Olena Waskiewicz (olena.waskiewicz@winchester.ac.uk) who organises these events at the University of Winchester.

Reminders:

Family Information and Services Hub

For local activities visit the Leisure and Play–Hampshire Gateway section on the Family Information and Services Hub – <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/results.page?familychannel=3&searchtype=event>

Scottish and Southern Electric

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks provide a free Priority Service Register (PSR) to register vulnerable people on their system. In turn, this allows them to highlight PSR customers when there is a fault, or if there are planned power outages. This alerts them so they are able to visit and check if any requirements are needed. There is also a free phone number that registered PSR customers can call for a quick response to any worries about their power. For further information and to register, visit <https://www.ssen.co.uk/PriorityServices>

Shine – a support group for Under 5s and their families

A parent and toddler group aimed at children with additional needs, and their siblings. It features sensory play, music, sensory stories, accessible arts and crafts, refreshments for all (including home-made cakes) and support for parents/carers. Friday mornings, 10.00 to 11.30am, at St Andrews Methodist Church, Blenheim Road, Eastleigh, SO50 5SD. Details from shinefamilies@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/shineeastleigh.

Parent Forum – Alex Kelly Ltd

Speech therapist Alex Kelly continues to run seminars at Speaking Space, Fleming House, Alma Road, Romsey, SO51 9EP, from 7.00 to 9.00pm. Entry is a £5.00 contribution at the door towards the costs and cake! Visit www.speakingpace.co.uk/communication-2/, email office@speakingpace.co.uk or phone 023 8098 7134.

Friends of In Touch

Friends of In Touch, a small registered charity funded by the *BIG Lottery* based in Fair Oak, supports autistic children and young people. It runs two weekly youth clubs during term time and in school holidays. Activities include cooking, arts and crafts, bushcraft, games, construction toys for the Junior group (9 to 13) and cookery, pamper evenings, film nights, quizzes, bowling, book club, sports, meals out and BBQs for the Senior group (13 to 21). Places in both groups may be available soon. To join the waiting list, contact info@friendsofintouch.org.uk. Groups meet at Y-Zone Youth Centre, Fair Oak on Tuesdays during term time (Juniors 4.30 to 6.00pm and Seniors 6.30 to 8.30pm). Holiday groups are also planned. For full details visit www.friendsofintouch.org.uk

ActiveAbility Solent

Visit <https://www.activecommunity.org.uk/activeability> to see their timetable which includes updates and new sessions. A range of accessible and fun activities run seven days a week, including martial arts, athletics, boccia, ten-pin bowling and many others. Mainly in Southampton but also include Totton, Eastleigh, Chandler's Ford and Warsash. On average, sessions are £3 each so just turn up, and their experienced and qualified coaches will take it from there. Also make bespoke bookings where they can supply equipment, coaches and facilities. Contact Tom Grave, Activities Coordinator on 02380 784131 or email tom.graves@activenation.org.uk

Clarks Quiet Hour Appointments

Available in the Southampton Above Bar store on **Sundays**, 9:30am – 10:30am to offer consumers a quiet and relaxed environment for fitting appointments. You are encouraged to bring toys, sensory aids, tablets and other appropriate items to ease the experience. To ensure that your appointment goes as smoothly as possible, it is best to make an appointment in advance by calling the Southampton store on 023 8022 4515.

Sensory Sundays at the Swan Centre, Eastleigh and The Marlands, Southampton

Both shopping centres now run a *Sensory Sunday* on the **last Sunday of each month**. Shops lower their lighting levels and reduce the volume of music and announcements. The Swan Centre has visual guides which aim to support you with planning a visit, arriving at the Centre, information about amenities and what to do in an emergency. They also have alert cards that can be used at your discretion. Guides and card can be found in the first floor Library or downloaded from www.swanshopping.com/Content.aspx?ContentName=Accessibility. On the same dates, alongside the activity in the retail part of the Swan Centre, Partyman World of Play hold SEN sessions (see below) and Vue Cinema (www.dimensions-uk.org/get-involved/campaigns/autism-friendly-cinema-screenings/autism-friendly-screenings-vue) hold special SEN sessions and autism friendly screenings.

Partyman World of Play SEN sessions

Partyman World of Play, Unit L10, Swan Leisure Centre, Eastleigh, SO50 5SF, is a children's soft play centre. It has a café, slides, ball cannon areas, climbers, rockers, and a designated toddler and baby area. They offer complimentary morning and evening sessions dedicated to children and young adults with special needs where they close the entire venue just for you. Morning sessions are held from 9.00 to 10.00am on the **3rd Sunday of every month**. Evening sessions are from 6.00 to 8.00pm on the **1st Wednesday of every month**. For more information or to book, call Jessica on 02380 018336 or email jessica.campbell@partyman.co.uk

SEN sessions at Monkey Bizness, Southampton

Monkey Bizness, a soft play centre with huge play frames, games, machines, slides and more, special areas for toddlers, free WiFi, comfy seating and a bright airy cafe serving freshly prepared food, at 234 Empress Road, Southampton, SO14 0JY, is running SEN sessions on the **last Thursday of every month** from 5.30 to 7.00pm at just £3 per child. For further details call 023 8055 0580.

Dimensions autism-friendly cinema screenings

Dimensions work with ODEON, Cineworld, Vue and Showcase to host Autism Friendly Screenings at over 250 cinemas nationwide. For a limited time at nine selected cinemas, including Southampton, ODEON are showing autism friendly screenings for older audiences. See what screenings are coming to a cinema near you at www.dimensions-uk.org/get-involved/campaigns/autism-friendly-cinema-screenings.

Flipout sessions

Flipout, the biggest trampoline arena in Hampshire, at Unit 1a Chandlers Park, School Lane, Eastleigh, SO53 4DG, is running Rebound Therapy sessions on **Wednesdays** and **Fridays** between 9.00 and 11.00am or 3.00 and 5.00pm for these hourly group sessions. Prices: Ages 1 to 5: £4.50, Age 6+: £7.50 dependant on disability. Between 12.00 and 3.00pm they run half an hour one to one sessions at £18 per 30 mins. They also run SEN sessions **every Monday** at 16:00pm – £7.50 for a jumper and up to two carers. For further information, phone 023 8214 7811, email southampton@flipout.co.uk or visit <https://www.flipout.co.uk/locations/southampton/>

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

Rose Road Association Stay & Play Family Coffee Morning

Every **Saturday**, 9.30–11.30am, at The Bradbury Centre, 300 Alder Moor Road, Southampton, SO16 5NA. Music, arts & crafts, sensory, soft play and lots more activities for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs aged 3-16 years. Siblings also welcome. This is a free session for all families! Donations for refreshments. Details on 02380 721234 or 07823 353887 or email claireheadington@roseroad.org.uk.

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 <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-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 <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/first-steps-guides>

Our Resource Library

Our library is available to members at our support group meetings and a small selection is available at our Family Youth Club and Partner Group.

Members can join the library for a one-off donation of £5. We now have around 400 books, videos, DVDs and games. Up to 3 items may be borrowed for a maximum loan of 2 months. We do ask that items are returned promptly to enable others to borrow them.



Help us boost our fundraising

A great way to raise money for us for free – shop online through *easyfundraising*. **This year alone has seen over £300 raised for our funds.**

Whenever you buy anything online (presents, groceries, clothes, books, train tickets, hotel rooms, etc.) you can raise a free donation for our Branch. Over 2,700 retailers have registered with the site, including Amazon, John Lewis, eBay and Tesco who donate a percentage of what you spend to us.

1. Sign up at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas.
2. Shop – from the *easyfundraising* website, search for the retailer you'd like to shop with and click through to the retailer to make your purchase. This tells the retailer you came from *easyfundraising*. The price is exactly the same as if you'd visited the retailer directly.
3. Get a donation – after you've made your purchase, the retailer will give you a cash reward that *easyfundraising* turn into a donation for our Branch.

Please be assured that using the *easyfundraising* website will not cost you a penny. There are no catches or hidden charges and we benefit from any donations you make once registered.

Thank you for your support.



The advertisement features a light blue background with a central white rounded rectangle containing various product categories in green text: STATIONERY, BOOKS, DVDs & GAMES, HOLIDAYS, CLOTHES, HOME APPLIANCES, INSURANCE, GIFTS, BROADBAND & UTILITIES, SCHOOL STUFF, MOBILES, TRAVEL, ELECTRONICS, BUSINESS SUPPLIES, and GROCERIES. Below this, a cartoon woman with brown hair and a pink top asks 'What do you buy online?'. To her right is a green circular badge that says 'Start raising free donations now!'. Below the woman, text reads: 'Whatever you buy online, you can raise free donations for us by simply buying through **easyfundraising** .org.uk'. At the bottom, the website www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas is listed. A footer bar contains the text 'WITH OVER 2,700 RETAILERS TO CHOOSE FROM' and logos for Amazon.co.uk, John Lewis, Viking, Tesco, eBay.co.uk, ASDA, M&S, Aldi, and Sainsbury's.

As always, for full details of all our meetings, other dates, news items and information, visit our [website](#) and/or [Facebook page](#).

Regards

David & Rachel Carter

The National Autistic Society, South Hampshire Branch

Email: shants@nas.org.uk | Facebook: www.facebook.com/nassouthhampshirebranch | Website: www.shantsnas.org.uk
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