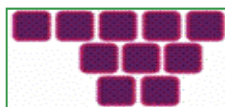


# AUTISM GM

## NEWSLETTER



Greater Manchester  
Autism Consortium

[www.autismgm.org.uk](http://www.autismgm.org.uk)

### AUTUMN/WINTER EDITION 2011



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**H**ello and welcome to the Winter edition of Autism GM.

We hope there is something of interest to everyone in this quarter's newsletter. More than ever before, it is vital that families and people with autism are informed about their rights and how to ensure these are not overlooked as a consequence of service changes and cuts. Similarly – more than ever – it is crucial that services become autism competent and friendly, so that more people with autism can be supported within and by their local communities.

Currently there is increasing demand for local authorities to consult with people with autism and their carers, and to meaningfully include their views in service delivery and design. Anyone who is interested in contributing, or who has ideas how this could be done in a more 'user' friendly way, please contact us. Similarly, let us know if there is anything you would like to see in, or add to this newsletter. Finally, please don't hesitate to ring the Project with any ASD related queries on 0161 998 4667 and we can put a tailor-made information pack together for you.

Wishing you all the best for the festive season,

Debbie Waters and Mari Saeki  
Project Officers

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# PARENTS OF DISABLED CHILDREN TO TAKE ACTION ON THEIR RIGHT TO AN ASSESSMENT

**E**very Disabled Child Matters, in association with Irwin Mitchell Solicitors has launched a template letter to help families with disabled children to gain an assessment for social care services.

This letter is intended to help parents who have been told that their council will not assess their disabled child in relation to short breaks or any other specialist social care service.

The law says that councils must assess every



child who is or may be a child 'in need'. Children are 'in need' if they are 'disabled'. Therefore, it is unlawful for a local authority to refuse an assessment for a disabled child.

The first step for a parent of a disabled child who needs short breaks, or other social care services, is to ask for an assessment. Parents should ask their social worker (if they have one) or the duty worker for the Disabled Children's Team (or equivalent) if they will carry out the assessment. If the answer to a request for an assessment is 'no' then a version of the letter can be sent to explain the legal situation.

The letter, and an accompanying guide, has been written by Steve Broach, a barrister at Doughty Street Chambers and Alex Rook, Associate Solicitor at Irwin Mitchell, two lawyers who specialise in cases involving

disabled children. This is intended as a general guide and does not replace legal advice on their specific case.

**Christine Lenehan, EDCM Board Member said:**

*"Disabled children have the right to an assessment for social care services. However, parents often tell us that their local authority has refused to provide an assessment. Sometimes local authorities decide they will not assess children with particular conditions e.g. ADHS or Aspergers. This letter helps to explain the legal requirements local areas,*

*to ensure that they are able to respond appropriate to requests from parents of disabled children for assessment".*

The letter and an accompanying guide can be found at:

**[www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/assessment\\_letter](http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/assessment_letter)**

The National Autistic Society produce an Information Sheet entitled '**Social services: getting help for your child (England and Wales)**'. This is available to download from the NAS website [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

Or by contacting the Family Services Development Project Tel: 0161 998 4667.



# What is Good Practice in Autism Education?



**A** new report, commissioned by the Autism Education Trust (AET) and written by Professor Tony Charman and a team at the Institute of Education (IOE), London, has identified the features that represent 'good practice' in autism education across a range of settings and approaches. The report—from the IOE's Centre for Research in Autism and Education—outlines key themes and recommended practices which all schools can adopt to improve their education practice for pupils on the autism spectrum.

Entitled *What is Good Practice in Autism Education?* The report provides the context for the AET to develop National Autism Education Standards and deliver autism education training that meets those standards to teachers and other education professionals. It also gives schools an immediate blueprint for 'good practice' in autism education which professionals in the field of autism education agree is 'good practice' for all pupils.

Speaking about the findings of the report, Professor Charman, who holds the Chair in Autism Education at the IOE, says,

*"Many of the themes that emerged from this research are reflected strongly in the proposals outlined in the government's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Green Paper. These include the importance of joint working between education, health, social care and voluntary organisations; the need for staff to have high expectations of all their pupils, to be well-trained, and crucially to understand autism at a detailed level."*

Steve Huggett, Director of the AET, says,

*"One of the most interesting findings of the report in the context of the new remit of the AET is teachers' need for networks of schools to work together to disseminate knowledge with specialist schools and services working as 'centres of excellence' in autism education practice. The AET*

*is currently developing a 'hub' training model which is designed to capture the expertise in specialist schools, units and services and to ensure that all teachers have access to it via autism education training."*

## Key findings regarding best practice:-

- ◆ Schools had high ambitions and aspirations for pupils with autism; for them to reach their full potential and to be included in school and society.
- ◆ Schools were interested in hearing the pupil's own voice about their learning and other school activities.
- ◆ Schools went further than individualising and adapting the curriculum for each pupil. They saw the need for a unique 'autism curriculum', which captured not only children's learning needs but also sought to address the social, emotional and communication needs of children and young people with autism, and to nurture their independence and well-being.
- ◆ Schools used multiple assessments beyond those statutorily required in order to monitor progress in terms of attainments and also with respect to social and behavioural outcomes, again acknowledging that the education of children with autism must be broader than for children without autism.
- ◆ Staff in schools were both highly trained and highly motivated and the expectations placed on staff by school leaders were high.
- ◆ There was a considerable amount of joint working with specialist health practitioners, in particular speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

mental-health professionals, and with social care professionals and the voluntary sector.

- ◆ Training for all staff, including for support staff, was a priority for schools, and many schools were active in disseminating their expertise to other schools and practitioners.
- ◆ Senior school staff provided strong leadership and vision that encompassed not only their own school but also the broader community where they took on the role of 'ambassadors' for autism to raise community awareness.
- ◆ Schools worked in partnership with families, aware that there is reciprocity in such relationships and that parents and carers have expertise and knowledge to share with schools, just as the schools do

with parents and carers. (In addition, they recognised that families of children and young people with autism can often be vulnerable and require additional support, which they did their best to provide within the resources available—although they wished they could do more.)

**To download the report in full and to find out more about the Autism Education Trust visit their website at:**

**[www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk)**  
**OR**  
**email**  
**[info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk)**

**What is Good Practice  
in Autism Education?**



## **FAMILY STUDY OF AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**



**W**e have recently been contacted by The Autism Research Centre at the University of Cambridge and the Open University in Milton Keynes who are looking for volunteers to participate in a research study the purpose of which is to examine to what extent children with autism resemble their parents on a series of tasks. The study may provide important insights about which characteristics are shared between parents and children and which features are not.

The team is currently seeking the participation of very special families, who have **two or more children with an autism spectrum diagnosis**. The participation of such families is of extreme value to the research study and will greatly help the team with their

investigation into the personality characteristics and cognitive abilities of children on the autism spectrum and their parents.

If you and one of your children are interested in participating, then please contact Edward Sucksmith directly on 01223 746030 or by email [es504@medschl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:es504@medschl.cam.ac.uk)

### **NB**

**Home visits are a requirement of the study and the team are willing to visit Greater Manchester providing the families fit criteria (e.g. having 2 or more children diagnosed in the family). However, the data collection phase of the study will be finishing in January so the team would need to see families before then.**

# RIGHT TO CONTROL TRAILBLAZING IN GREATER MANCHESTER



**R**ight to Control is designed to give disabled adults more control and choice over the support they receive by giving them control about how the money is spent, and what they require support for. People who are eligible for adult social care, employment support, or supporting people type funding, may now be able to exercise real choice about who supports them, when, and according to the individual's priorities and preferences.

From April 2011, 5 of the local authorities of Greater Manchester received extra funding as a Trailblazer for 'Right to Control'. The Trailblazer areas include **Manchester, Oldham, Bury, Stockport and Trafford**. These authorities have formed a Manchester Area Partnership (MAP). MAP is made up of the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, Breakthrough UK, Jobcentre Plus, Independent Living Fund (ILF) and the five local councils.

If you live in one of the five local authority areas and you start to receive one or more of the types of financial support listed below you will be able to choose and control how money is spent to support you to achieve what you want in life via the Right to Control initiative.

- Access to Work
- Adult Social Care
- Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)
- Independent Living fund (ILF)
- Supporting People
- Work Choice

Breakthrough UK has been asked by the Manchester Area Partnership to be a Centre for Independent Living (CIL). As the CIL, Breakthrough will work closely with other disabled people's organisations and the MAP to support disabled people who are or may be eligible for the Right to Control.

If you would like to find out more about Right to Control in your area, please contact Breakthrough UK or look at the relevant web

pages for your local council.

**Breakthrough UK Ltd**  
Business Employment Venture Centre  
Aked Close  
Ardwick  
Manchester  
M12 4AN  
Tel: 0161 273 5412  
Textphone: 0161 273 5727  
Website: [www.breakthrough-uk.co.uk/OurWork/righttocontrol](http://www.breakthrough-uk.co.uk/OurWork/righttocontrol)

**Bury**  
[www.yourcareyourchoice.bury.gov.uk/i-need-help-with/disabilities-and-sensory-loss/right-to-control.aspx](http://www.yourcareyourchoice.bury.gov.uk/i-need-help-with/disabilities-and-sensory-loss/right-to-control.aspx)

**Manchester**  
[www.manchester.gov.uk/righttocontrol](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/righttocontrol)

**Oldham**  
[www.oldham.gov.uk/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/right\\_to\\_control.htm](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/health_and_social_care/right_to_control.htm)

**Stockport**  
[www.mycaremychoice.org.uk/what-is-the-right-to-control.aspx](http://www.mycaremychoice.org.uk/what-is-the-right-to-control.aspx)

**Trafford**



**Debbie Waters**  
Project Officer





# NAS RECOMMENDED LINKS



## How it is

How it is, is a free downloadable image bank for children about feelings, rights and safety, personal care and sexuality from Triangle.

[www.triangle.org.uk](http://www.triangle.org.uk)



## Disability Law Service

The Disability Law Service is a charity run by and for disabled people which aims to provide high quality information and advice to disabled people, their families, and advocates. The areas of law covered are

disability discrimination, goods and services, Community care, employment, and welfare benefits. A wide range of factsheets are available to download on the website.

[www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk)



## AuKids

AuKids is a quarterly magazine aimed at parents of young children on the autism spectrum. They have recently launched a website where you can download a sample copy of the magazine, and access information on a range of topics including top tips for days out.

[www.aukids.co.uk](http://www.aukids.co.uk)



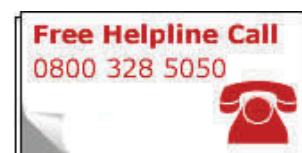
## Autism Podcast series

The Autism podcast series aims to showcase the latest research published in Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice in a way that is accessible, easy to understand and has real world relevance. The podcasts are aimed at a broad audience, including academics, researchers, students, clinicians, journalists, policy makers, individuals with autism and their families, and anyone interested in autism spectrum disorders. **You can follow the podcasts on Facebook (search 'Autism Journal') or Twitter (@journalautism).**



**D**isability Alliance (DA) is providing support and information for disabled students, through DA's agreement with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills following the closure of Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities. We can offer:

- online information for disabled students, families and professionals
- factsheets for disabled students and advisors
- a helpline/email advice service





## BOOK REVIEW

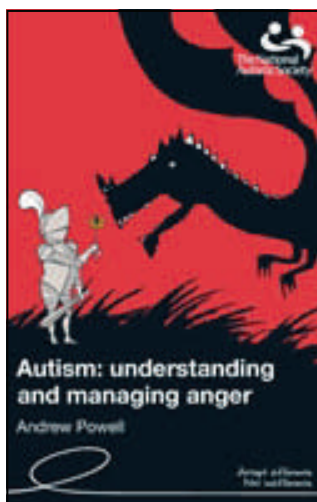
By Debbie Waters

**Autism: understanding and managing anger**

**Author: Andrew Powell**

**NAS Product No NAS948 £13.99**

**A**ndrew Powell has always worked with people with autism and their families. In recent years he was the main author and driving force behind the much valued help! information programme for parents and carers. As part of the help! Portfolio, he put together the popular 'Managing Anger' seminar for carers of children with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism. The book takes this subject and extends it to incorporate the following themes: what is anger?; the low arousal approach to anger management; recognising anger; preventing and reducing anger; coping with meltdowns; helping your child manage their feelings, and getting support for the family.



As is apparent from the chapter headings, this is a very family-focused and parent-friendly book. Unusually, but brilliantly and compassionately, Powell never forgets that children with autism exist primarily within families. He never talks down to the parent reader, but instead encourages them to take small but very practical steps to reduce everyone's stress. For example, in the introduction to the 'low arousal' section he writes:

*'The low arousal approach takes some effort and you'll probably find it isn't always the natural way to react when faced with anger. You'll need to take a step back and think about how you respond to confrontational situations. You'll also need to look after yourself and get some support – not always parents' first priority.'* (p32)

This book is relentlessly practical with regular 'top tip' sections. The suggestions are very precise, well illustrated, and doable within a home setting. A wide range of common problems are used to illustrate the difficulties, the potential underlying causes, and then lists of possible strategies to apply to ease the situation. There is no hint of parent blaming, and no promise of cures or overnight success. What reading this book can promise is a greater understanding of what a child finds difficult, and why that might be. It will give parents confidence to try some of the practical suggestions included. Most importantly, any parent or carer reading this excellent book, will no longer feel alone and misunderstood in their ongoing attempts to understand and deal with their child's problems with anger.

**Debbie Waters  
Project Officer**



To order your copy online visit the NAS website at:

**[www.autism.org.uk/  
publications](http://www.autism.org.uk/publications)**

To order by telephone please contact Central Books, by calling 0845 458 9911

Lines are open 10:00 to 17:30, Monday to Friday.

# NICE GUIDELINES ON DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM IN CHILDREN



National Institute for  
Health and Clinical Excellence

**O**n Wednesday 28 September, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published the first of three guidelines on autism.

This guideline focuses on improving recognition, referral and diagnosis of children and young people with autism in England and Wales, and will bring about a far more consistent approach to referral and diagnosis, and mean more children get quicker access to necessary support services.



## Key recommendations include:

- ◆ Local autism multi-agency strategy groups should be set up with managerial, commissioner and clinical representation from child health and mental health services, education, social care, parent and carer service users, and the voluntary sector.
- ◆ In each area a multi-disciplinary 'autism team' should be formed. This group should include a paediatrician and/or a child and adolescent psychiatrist, a speech and language therapist, and a clinical and/or educational psychologist.
- ◆ For each child who has an autism diagnostic assessment, a case coordinator from the autism team should be identified.

- ◆ Every autism diagnostic assessment should include an assessment of social and communication skills and behaviours through interaction with and observation of the child or young person and consideration of any co-existing conditions.
- ◆ A profile of the child or young person's strengths, skills, impairments and needs should be developed during their assessment. With consent, this profile can be shared with those involved in the child's

education to help ensure the assessment contributes to the child or young person's individual education plan and needs-based management plan.

We now expect local areas to review their own diagnostic services against these guidelines to make sure that they are following best practice and that families do not have to struggle to get a diagnosis and early support.

NICE guidelines are considered as best practice and will be looked at by health and social care commissioners across the UK.

NICE has published 4 documents:

- The full NICE guideline (296 pages)
- The NICE guideline (55 pages)
- The quick Reference Guide (24 pages)
- The NICE guidance written for parents and carers (12 pages)

All guidelines can be downloaded from their website



[www.nice.org.uk/CG128](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG128)

# CALLING FOR AN AUTISM QUALITY STANDARD



**A**mbitious about Autism has signed a letter to Health Minister, Andrew Lansley, in support of the National Autistic Society's call for an Autism Quality Standard. The letter has also been signed by 12 MPs, charity chief executives and several autism experts. The Bill was introduced by Robert Buckland MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism, and calls on the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to develop a Quality Standard on autism.

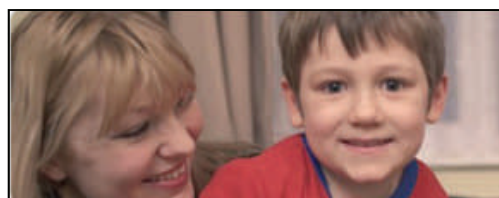
It is hoped that the production of a Quality Standard would help guarantee an excellent service through recognition and referral, diagnosis and post diagnostic support for adults and children with autism.

The Quality Standard would provide local commissioners and health practitioners with guidance on how to improve the quality and value for money of services in their area. It will also help people with autism have a greater influence over the services they receive and help make the NHS and local authorities more accountable. It is hoped that Parliament can build on the success of the 2009 Autism Act with the guidelines.

Following this letter, Paul Burstow MP, Minister for Care Services, has asked to meet with the signatories to discuss the proposal for an Autism Quality Standard.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has also launched a consultation proposing not one, but two new Quality Standards on autism – one for adults and one for children and young people.

This is fantastic news for people with autism and their families, and shows that the government is serious about the need to improve the quality of autism services. We will continue to campaign with young people, their families, and colleagues across the sector, to push for the Quality Standards to be delivered.



Sarah Lambert, Head of Policy at the NAS, said: *"The production of the quality standard will bring together a lot of the good, yet patchy, work that currently exists across health and social care. We believe that if the government wants to live up to its ambition to deliver the best possible outcomes for people with autism, this is the best way to achieve it."*



If you know of any autism-friendly services in your locality then we'd love to hear from you. Just ring, email or drop us a line at:-

The National Autistic Society  
The Family Services Development Project  
Anglo House, Chapel Road, Northenden  
Manchester M22 4JN

Tel: 0161 998 4667 or email [mari.saeki@nas.org.uk](mailto:mari.saeki@nas.org.uk)



# LAUNCH OF NEW BUDDYING SCHEME IN TRAFFORD



**T**he NAS has secured £29,300 funding from Trafford Borough Council to re-establish a Buddying Scheme in Trafford for a year. A similar scheme was forced to close in March this year when the Aiming High funding came to an end. The money will pay for the employment of a Project Co-ordinator for the year who will work in partnership with another charity, Stockport CP to deliver the scheme to 32 families across the borough.

Buddying enables people with autism to access youth clubs and social activities in the community that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to do. There are also plans to develop a mentoring aspect to the scheme which will support young people in voluntary roles so that they can further develop social and employment skills.

If you are interested in having a Buddy for your son or daughter (11-19yrs) or would like to become a Volunteer Buddy (16-21yrs) then please contact:

**Meredith Walsh**  
Befriending & Mentoring  
Co-ordinator  
Tel: **07920 727444**  
Email: **Meredith.walsh@nas.org.uk**



The NAS also has a **Rochdale Befriending Scheme** so if you have a son or daughter aged between 5-18yrs of age who would like to have a Befriender then please contact:-

**Emma Storrie**  
Rochdale Befriending  
Co-ordinator  
Tel: **07796184454**  
Email: **emma.storrie@nas.org.uk**

## Would you like a Befriending Scheme in your area?

If your son or daughter would be interested in having a Befriender but currently there isn't a scheme in your local area then please contact Dave Scowcroft, Befriending & Mentoring Manager as he would be pleased to hear from you. Dave is interested in gaining evidence from parents to support funding applications to set up other local schemes.

Dave's contact details are:

**Dave Scowcroft**  
Befriending & Mentoring Manager  
Tel: **07920 727444**  
Email: **david.scowcroft@nas.org.uk**

# COMMUNITY CARE LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE



**C**ommunity Care Legal Advice Service is part of the Citizens Advice Bureau organisation. It offers legal advice regarding access to services for those with physical and mental health problems and carers of people with disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The service covers all of Greater Manchester with offices in Salford, Oldham, Bury and Trafford. Team headquarters is at Salford Royal Hospital.

It offers advice on a range of Community Care issues including;

- Help with equipment or adaptations in your home
- Help with obtaining a care package
- Help with your care packages if your needs
- Advice about safe discharge from hospital
- Advice on how to pay for your care
- Help with re-housing if your home is no longer suitable
- Respite including Holidays/ Short Breaks

- Advice on the help available to carers for return to work/ education
- Help around the house
- Advice on support available for disabled children

The service employs a large number of case workers, most of whom work under a contract funded by the Legal Services Commission. This service is available to those who qualify for Legal Aid via a passported benefit or low income. Passported benefits include Income Support, Guaranteed Pension Credit, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance and Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.

It also has 3 Community Care Advocates who are funded by the Big Lottery. They are able to help people regardless of their income and can offer appointments over the telephone.

**Contact the Community Care Legal Services Helpline on  
Tel: 0161 206 0283 (Mon to Fri 9-5).**

**John Davies  
Information Officer**



## CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

**O**nce again the NAS is offering some wonderful and unusual cards for you to choose from. By buying and sending these cards you are supporting the invaluable work of the National Autistic Society and helping to raise awareness.

Your cards should arrive within 14 days of receipt of your order. The quicker you can get your order to us, the quicker we can send you your cards.

If you have any queries regarding your Christmas card order, please contact our distributor:

The Right Sort Mailing Company  
Unit 29, Penley Industrial Estate  
Penley  
Wrexham  
LL13 0LQ  
Tel: 01948 831 068  
Fax: 01948 830 505

Or contact the NAS directly by emailing  
[xmascards@nas.org.uk](mailto:xmascards@nas.org.uk)



## NETWORK A: A new NAS online community for professionals

**T**he National Autistic Society is launching a new online community for professionals next Spring. **Network A** is aimed at enabling anyone who works with people with autism to come together, network and share good practice, so we are very keen for you to become involved.

Many professionals working with people with autism, do so without a close network of support - **Network A** is a place where they can come together, share good practice and achieve better outcomes during a time of unprecedented change in the sector.

Join **Network A** and you'll be able to:

- connect with professionals in similar situations
- collaborate in finding new solutions
- develop and contribute professional skills
- share expertise and knowledge

You can register your interest in joining **Network A** by visiting the NAS website and completing the online registration form at:

[www.autism.org.uk/networka](http://www.autism.org.uk/networka)



## NEW AND UPDATED INFORMATION SHEETS

**T**he following Information Sheets have been updated:-

- ◆ Autism: information for HE students studying the condition
- ◆ Challenging behaviours and ASD
- ◆ Courses for professionals in autism and other related topics
- ◆ Environment and surroundings
- ◆ Holidays@ autism-friendly venues

- ◆ Overseas enquiries
- ◆ picture symbols: for professionals and students

The Information Sheets can be downloaded from the NAS website at :

[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

Or by telephoning

The Family Services Development Project on  
Tel: 0161 998 4667

# NEW GUIDE FOR NURSING STAFF ON THE AUTISM ACT 2009



**The Autism Act 2009: developing specialist skills in autism practice has been published as a supplement to Learning Disability Practice and Mental Health Practice, journals produced by the Royal College of Nursing.**



This guide was issued with Mental Health Practice and Learning Disability Practice in October 2011 and can be downloaded from their website.

**T**his guide will explore how services might anticipate the needs of people with autism. Its aims are to:

- ◆ Explore an understanding of autism in adulthood (or transition to adulthood) that helps practitioners to provide a positive experience for people with autism seeking to access services in health and social care.
- ◆ Review how this knowledge might help to identify and plan to meet the needs of adults with autism, while making 'reasonable adjustments' to the services to enable this to occur.
- ◆ Provide a clear pathway for the development of leaders in the field of autism in health and social care who will 'champion' the implementation of the Autism Act 2009.

On the same website there is a poster which is available as a free download for all healthcare professionals that may come into contact with people who have autism, highlighting key issues to consider.

## How to support people with autism poster



[www.mentalhealthpractice.rcnpublishing.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthpractice.rcnpublishing.co.uk)



**T**he National Autistic Society publishes the following Information Sheets specifically for health professionals and Social Care professionals available from the NAS website at [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk) or The Family Services Development Project can post or email you a copy direct. Tel 0161 998 4667

- Patients with autistic spectrum disorders: information for health professionals
- Guidelines for Staff working with people with autism
- Social care: Assessment of need for adults with an autism spectrum disorder

# AUTISM AND AGEING: ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE



**Recognising the needs of autistic adults is now an expectation enshrined in law with the Autism Act 2009, but little attention has been paid to the issues affecting older people with the condition.**

***What is certain is that a significant challenge remains to ensure that adults with autism enjoy fulfilling and productive lives as they age.***

**Here is the summary of a document the National Autistic Society has published discussing the issues that older people with autism spectrum disorders may face.**

**In 2009 the National Autistic Society surveyed 1400 adults with autism, either directly or through their families, to support their campaign to draw attention to the needs of adults with autism.**

## **Survey Findings**

The findings of this survey showed

- Those over 40 are struggling to have their needs recognised and met.
- A significantly higher percentage of 40–64 year olds had not received an assessment (a statutory assessment of their needs under the Community Care Act 1990) compared with 18–29 year olds
- A considerable number of adults with autism aged 40 and over remained reliant on family for their support.

**The evidence points to people with autism becoming more and more isolated as they grow older.**

As parents age, they may no longer be able to support their autistic children, but there is evidence that they are not supported by professionals or friends either. This puts a great responsibility onto other family members. When asked about their son or daughter's future, 85% of parents said they

had serious worries about what would happen when they were no longer able to support them.

We still know little about outcomes for older adults with autism and whether there are changes in autism symptoms and behaviours related to the ageing process. Studies have revealed a desperate picture of social isolation, high unemployment and mental ill health among the more able autism population.

More research is needed now into the specific issues related to autism and ageing.

## **Screening Tools and Training**

The National Autistic Society has introduced

- A health screening tool to assess personal health and family health history. This will capture essential information that will allow for the assessment of the risk of particular medical conditions that have a familial component such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.
- Training information is being prepared to help staff working with older people with autism gain a better understanding of how to support people as they grow older. Many care staff who work with people with autism are used to managing younger groups and, therefore, may have had little experience in being with older people. Without good training, they may struggle to understand the issues they face.
- Training information based on the Department of Health framework for older people, which looks at how people with autism can be helped to remain independent and healthy into older age. There is some evidence that dementia in the learning disabled

*(Continued on page 15)*

(Continued from page 14)

population is much higher than in the general population.

Health issues apart, the social and economic and legal implications of ageing should also be considered. The majority of adults with autism spectrum conditions live with carers in the community, some of whom may themselves be ageing or vulnerable.

Local authorities are frequently unaware of their number or circumstances, especially the more able who are not receiving funded services and the boundaries of responsibility for health and social care are blurred. Their social isolation may be compounded by the sudden loss of a carer, retirement or loss of employment and related network of support. This is likely to result in negative effects on health and longevity of a lifetime of high levels of anxiety, stress or medication.

The issues related to autism and ageing are a growing challenge for society. We need to develop ways for people to continue to enjoy fulfilled and productive lives as they grow older. By its very nature, autism provides strong predisposition to a host of social and

medical problems and these may be made worse with age.

Just as children with autism become adults with autism — adults with autism grow older. As with our response to the transition from childhood to adulthood, we need to deal with the new transition from adulthood into older age. The question from parents “what happens after I’m gone?” is as relevant today as ever.

The full NAS report is available at:



[www.gerimed.co.uk/\\_documents/resources/1104.230.pdf](http://www.gerimed.co.uk/_documents/resources/1104.230.pdf)

**John Davies**  
Information Officer



## THEATRE INSPIRATION DAY RAISES AWARENESS



**T**he Ambassador Theatre Group organised a conference in partnership with the NAS to raise awareness of autism, following an incident in one of their venues. 12-year-old Gregor Morris, who has autism, was asked to leave a performance of ‘Wicked’ for making too much noise.

The Inspiration Day provided an opportunity to openly discuss the subject of autism in forum and break out sessions, and identify the challenges facing families, theatres and performers.

Guest speakers included Mark Lever, ATG’s Joint Chief Executive, Rosemary Squire OBE,

and children’s playwright, producer and Chair of Action for Children’s Arts, David Wood OBE.

Jane Asher, who was a keynote speaker on the day, said: *“Making adjustments and training staff can make a huge difference and it was great to see my industry come together. I hope it will lead to more theatres across the UK engaging with local people affected by autism and make the magic of live performance available to as wide a range of children and adults as possible.”*

*See article on page 16*

# AUTISM-FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE AT THE LIVERPOOL PLAYHOUSE



On 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012 the Liverpool Playhouse will be hosting its first Autism Friendly performance of the Rock 'n' Roll panto Cinderella.



The idea behind this special performance is that we create a relaxed and accepting atmosphere for autistic children, adults and their families to enjoy the show with minimum fuss.

We'll be sending out an information pack in advance of the performance which will include a pictorial social story about the theatre building and a summary of the play including photos of the stage, cast and set and information about loud noises, special effects and when to join in! We can also arrange people to look around the building in advance of their visit by arrangement where possible.

On the night itself we'll be dimming the audience lights rather than having a complete blackout, audience members will be free to roam about the auditorium whenever and wherever they like and we will also have a comfy chill out area for anyone who needs to have a break from the performance. Any extreme visual or sound effects such as strobe or gunshots will be removed from the performance but for the most part the production will remain unchanged so everyone gets as full an experience as possible.

Most importantly our staff will be specially trained to take an easy going approach with all audience members so that everyone feels thoroughly welcome.

We're very excited about hosting the event and we hope that as many people as possible take advantage of the opportunity.

To obtain further information or to arrange a look round the theatre then please contact: Allan by email on [access@everymanplayhouse.com](mailto:access@everymanplayhouse.com) or by calling Tel: 0151 7083717.

If Allan is unavailable then please leave a message and he will get back to you as soon as possible.

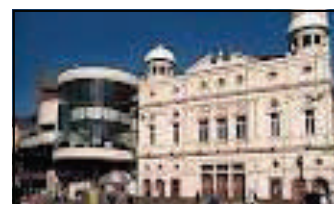
More information about the show itself can be found on our website at:



[www.everymanplayhouse.com](http://www.everymanplayhouse.com)

Tickets will be available to book from **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November** and you will be able to book them by calling the main box office number **Tel: 0151 7094776**.

Tickets are priced at £9.50- £13.50 with free carer places and additional group discounts available on request.



Liverpool Playhouse Theatre

# AUTISM FRIENDLY FILM SCREENINGS—EVERY MONTH



**ODEON**  
FANATICAL ABOUT FILM

**D**imensions is a leading specialist provider of support for people with autism and people with learning disabilities. Their partnership with cinema group ODEON will mean that thousands of people will now have better access and improved choice to watch films in an environment more conducive with their needs.

After this summer's pilot of Autism-Friendly Film Screenings, Dimensions and ODEON are pleased to announce their continued partnership. Sensory friendly screenings will be taking place monthly in 55 ODEON cinemas across the UK. More than 3000 support workers, carers, people with learning disabilities, people with autism and their families came out in support of the first special screening, which took place in 40 cinemas nationwide in August.

## What makes the screenings autism friendly?

- The lights will be on low
- The volume will be turned down

- There will be no trailers at the beginning of the film
- You'll be able to take your own food and drinks
- You'll be able to move around the cinema if you like.

## Book your tickets now!

The participating cinema in our area is **THE ODEON at The Trafford Centre**.

To check when the next autism-friendly screening is scheduled and to buy Cinema tickets call the ODEON's **Accessibility Helpline on 0800 138 3315** (Network charges may apply) between 11am and 8pm or by visiting your closest cinema. Online booking will be available soon.

**John Davies**  
Information Officer



## FREE CINEMA.....

**contact a family**  
for families with disabled children

**C**ontact a Family North West are holding a free cinema event at the Odeon Cinema, the Trafford Centre, for families with disabled children. We have booked out Screen 12 for families to enjoy the new film, Arthur Christmas.



Come and join us to find out just how Santa delivers all his presents in just one night! The story of 'Arthur Christmas' takes you behind the scenes to let you in on the secret. Set on Christmas night, you will see Santa's ultra-high-tech operation hidden beneath the North Pole and follow Arthur (Santa's son), as he embarks on a mission to deliver a missing present before the Christmas morning. Produced by Aardman Animation Productions, (makers of Wallace and Gromit and Flushed Away) the film has been given a U certificate.

**PLEASE NOTE: BOOKINGS CAN ONLY BE TAKEN FROM 8<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER ONLY.**

For more information and to book your places please ring Corriena,  
Regional Development Officer on Tel: 01772 812 294

**Date:** Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November  
**Time:** Arrive at 10.00 for film to start at 10.30 (no trailers)  
**Venue:** Odeon Cinema,



**C**ome along to the Manchester Carers Forum Information Day on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November where we will be launching the **Manchester Parent Carer Network Library**.

Due to the recent downsizing in office space at The NAS Manchester Office, Anglo House, Northenden, we asked the Manchester Carers Forum if they would consider accepting the stock of autism books which the NAS had been built up over many years. The Manchester Carers Forum kindly agreed to host the library books and make them available to anyone living or working within the Greater Manchester region.

To become a Manchester Carers Forum Library User all you need to do is either come along to the Information Day on the 19<sup>th</sup> November and join up there and then or contact:

Kerrie Wilson, Parent Participation Worker  
Tel: 0161 819 2226  
Email: [kerrie@manchestercarersforum.org.uk](mailto:kerrie@manchestercarersforum.org.uk)

Mari Saeki, Project Officer, NAS Family Services Development Project will be attending the Information Day on the 19<sup>th</sup> so why not combine a trip to Manchester for some early Christmas shopping and then pop along to meet Mari and the staff from the Manchester Carers Forum.

# ART EXHIBITION FOR ARTISTS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITIONS MARCH 2012



**A**re you an aspiring artist? Do you struggle to get your work displayed? Would you be interested in taking part in an Art Exhibition to showcase your art?

The Family Services Development Project has been approached by the father of a young person with high-functioning autism. Brin Morris feels there is next to nothing for young adults with HFA/Asperger Syndrome once they leave Children's Services and move into Adult Service provision. Brin wants to do something positive to change this situation.

Brin is an avid amateur sculptor. His daughter also enjoys painting so he has arranged for an



Photograph kindly provided by The NAS

art exhibition to be held in March 2012 at the **Museum and Art Gallery at Vernon Park, Stockport** which would showcase the talents of individuals with High Functioning Autism/Asperger syndrome. Brin is keen to hear from anyone who is interested in submitting their work or would like to become involved in setting up the exhibition. The exhibition would also be a good opportunity for individuals to sell their artwork.

The vision Brin has for the future is for an inclusive artist studio for professional and amateur artists, including people on the autistic spectrum. The studio would be a place where individuals with ASD could mix with like-minded individuals and Brin believes that this could help to reduce the sense of social isolation many individuals with ASD experience and also provide an opportunity for them to improve their social skills.

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity please contact Brin Morris direct on:-

Email: [brinmorris@hotmail.com](mailto:brinmorris@hotmail.com)  
Mobile: 07976 903375

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE - MENCAP EVENT



**I**f someone in your family, or someone you care for, has a learning disability, you can take steps now to ensure their finances are well looked after when you are no longer around. Mencap have organised some FREE information sessions where you can find out more about setting up Wills and trusts for the benefit of someone with a learning disability. There will be a local legal professional speaking who has experience of drafting Wills for the benefit of people with a learning disability.

These seminars are always very popular, so please book your place(s) as soon as possible.

**Friday 25th November  
12.30pm—2.30pm  
Trinity Methodist church, Tonge Old Road  
Bolton BL2 6BH**

**To book your place contact:  
Gina Collins, Wills & Trusts Team  
Tel: 020 7696 6925**

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN THE REGION



## **NAS Pathological Demand Avoidance**

**Wednesday 23rd November 2011  
Renaissance City Centre Hotel,  
Manchester**

This conference has been developed to provide delegates with a greater understanding of PDA and an opportunity to discuss strategies and techniques that will help in their support of people with the disorder, both at school and at home. Delegates will hear the latest research on changing diagnostic understandings, as well as an in-depth discussion of educational strategies for teachers. There will also be presentations on approaches to managing behaviour and issues with communication. Places are limited.

## **NAS Professional Conference**

**28th –29th February 2012  
Manchester Central Convention  
Complex**

This annual two-day conference will be a unique opportunity for senior professionals to discuss best practice and share learning.

Join us in Manchester to hear the latest information and gain practical tools to increase the effectiveness of services and improve outcomes for people with autism. Plenary sessions with expert speakers will present an overview of the changing environment and the latest developments in the field of autism. Our streamed seminars will give you useful strategies to implement in your work, while our breakfast briefings and debate will provide the chance to discuss and debate the current issues faced by autism professionals.

Delegate rate: £225+ VAT  
NAS members: £150 + VAT  
Parents/Carers/Individuals on low income:  
£95 + VAT

Lunch and refreshments plus full conference documentation included.  
To reserve your place please contact:-

Janet Matthews  
NAS Conference and Events Team  
6th Floor, Castle Heights  
72 Maid Marian Way  
Nottingham NG1 6BJ  
Email: [conference@nas.org.uk](mailto:conference@nas.org.uk)  
Tel: 0115 911 3367  
Fax: 0115 911 3362

## **NAS Help! Parent Seminars**

**Help! First Steps  
23rd November 2011  
Trafford**

For parents of children aged 5yrs—11yrs old who have recently received a diagnosis of autism.

**Help! Teen Life  
25th November 2011  
Preston**

For parents of 11-16 year olds with autism

Families can book 2 places on a help! seminar for £30 which includes a full resource pack of useful information, advice and support guidelines. Full details are available at [www.autism.org.uk/help!](http://www.autism.org.uk/help!)

To register your interest please contact the help! Team  
Tel: 070425 624 592  
(normal call charges apply) or  
Email: [help@nas.org.uk](mailto:help@nas.org.uk)

# ASD PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

## BOLTON

**Hyperactivity And Euro Developmental Family Unity Link (H.a.n.d.f.u.l.)**  
Tel: 01204 794979  
Contact: Michelle Daubney  
Email: [handfulhelp@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:handfulhelp@yahoo.co.uk)

## BURY

**Bury Autism Parent Society**  
Tel: 761 0132  
Contacts: Joanne and Tony Moran  
Email: [mail@baps-online.org](mailto:mail@baps-online.org)  
(Telephone support only)

**Bury Autism/Asperger syndrome Support Group**  
Contact: Chris Parkinson  
Tel: 0161 763 4867  
Email: [burycarers@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:burycarers@yahoo.co.uk)

## MANCHESTER

**The Autumn Group**  
Contact: Sue Broaderst  
Email: [autumngroup@live.co.uk](mailto:autumngroup@live.co.uk)

**P.O.S.Y. (Parents of Special Youngsters)**  
Contact: Leslye Vaughan  
Tel: 0161 436 4043  
Email: [leslye.posy@yahoo.com](mailto:leslye.posy@yahoo.com)

## OLDHAM

**OSCA**  
Tel: 07913672175  
Contact: Cathy Williams, or Maria Aspin  
Email: [osca@bigfoot.com](mailto:osca@bigfoot.com)  
Website: [www.fdk.org.uk/osca.html](http://www.fdk.org.uk/osca.html)

**A.S.C. (Autistic Spectrum Condition support group)**  
Contact: Natalie Hughes (Treasurer)  
Tel: 07825899658  
Email: [paash@live.co.uk](mailto:paash@live.co.uk)

## ROCHDALE

**RAGS (Rochdale Autism Group Support)**  
Tel: 01706 374525  
Contact: Margaret

**Littleborough Autism, Aspergers syndrome and ADHD Support Triangle (L.A.A.A.S.T.)**  
Tel: 07980 983872  
Contact: Liesl Beckles  
(Telephone support only)

**Rochdale Jigsaw**  
Tel: 07534828764  
Contact: Sharon

## SALFORD

**Salford Action for Autism (SAFA)**  
Tel: 0161 607 1695  
Carol Gray or Barbara Berry

## STOCKPORT

**Living with Autism**  
Tel: 0161 283 4750  
Contact: Sue Allison

**Stockport ASD Partnership Project Support Group**  
Offering monthly sessions with invited speakers.  
Tel: 249 4474  
Contact: Cheryl Salt  
[cheryl.salt@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:cheryl.salt@stockport.gov.uk)

## TAMESIDE

**TASCA (Tameside Action for social communication & Autism support group)**  
Tel: 07931 466417  
Contact: Valerie Bayley  
Email: [tasca4u@ntlworld.com](mailto:tasca4u@ntlworld.com)  
Website: [www.tasca.org.uk](http://www.tasca.org.uk)

**Tameside Asperger's syndrome Support Group**  
Tel: 604 3600  
Contact: Julie Scrymgeour

## TRAFFORD

**ADHD/ASD Family Support Group**  
Tel: 07969 459523 (Jess)

## WIGAN

**Landgate Parent Support Group**  
Tel: 01942 730134  
Contact: Caren  
Email: [landgatesupport@aol.com](mailto:landgatesupport@aol.com)

## OTHER SUPPORT GROUPS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

### **The Autistic Society Greater Manchester Area (ASGMA)**

A group for parents of children and adults with Asperger's syndrome.

For further information regarding dates and times please contact the ASGMA Information Officer

Tel: 0161 866 8583  
Email: [information@asgma.org.uk](mailto:information@asgma.org.uk)

### **Cygnets Springside ASD Support Group**

Organises events for parents, carers and individuals affected by ASC. Professionals are also welcome.

Contact: Peter Lawson  
Tel: 0161 443 4060  
Email: [peterlawson@cygnethealth.co.uk](mailto:peterlawson@cygnethealth.co.uk)