

South Hampshire Branch

Dear Friends

Please find below all the latest information from our branch, along with other information that we hope you will find useful. This month there is an opportunity to visit the Circus for FREE! Also, great news that all your efforts campaigning against cuts to the Short Breaks services have succeeded (at least for the next year).

Monthly Support Group

Our next support group is on **Monday next, 16 February** held, as usual, at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm (a location map can be found at www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/SupportGroup).

There will be plenty of time at our meeting to have a chat and to browse our Resource Library, comprising over 300 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.

Family Youth Club

After a very busy and popular youth club last week, we meet again on **Saturday 7 March** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Children accompanied by their families are welcome. As always, a number of rooms and activities will be available and we look forward to an enjoyable afternoon.

For those who have not attended before, the club is for children with autism and Asperger Syndrome (most attending are around 4/5 to 13/14). The whole family, including siblings are welcome. We have activities such as table tennis, air hockey, a craft table, books, board games, LEGO and other toys plus an opportunity to play in the large hall with a ball, bowling and, sometimes, parachute games.

Karen (our play worker) will be present with a structured activity. Additionally, we are very pleased to welcome Emma, a new student volunteer play facilitator from University of Winchester who joined us last week. She will be able to help the children and young people enjoy the activities we have on offer. We may also have an additional volunteer play facilitator from next month.

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.

Richard Jones, a Gestalt Psychotherapist who works with people with autism, often attends to offer advice to parents and children. There is also an opportunity to book further sessions with him.

The club costs just £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 of the venue, can be found at www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/Family%20Youth%20Club.

LEGO club



Our new monthly LEGO club got off to a great start last Saturday with a small 'pilot' group for children aged between 9 and 13 (so that we can evaluate this activity).

Speech and language therapists, Jo (club leader) and Carolyn are ably assisted by Leanne and Ian, from The University of Winchester. We are very grateful to them all for volunteering their services. The club is applying the LEGO Therapy framework. LEGO Therapy involves building LEGO models in small groups or pairs where the children take on different roles and work together. The children are encouraged to practice turn taking, sharing, joint problem solving and general social communication skills.

To express an interest in your child joining the waiting list for this club, please complete the form (which can be found on our website 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.**

Accept difference. Not indifference.

Our Southampton social groups

Children's social group

Meeting on **Tuesdays** from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The group meet fortnightly (all the dates are on our website). An exciting programme of events is planned for the next few months.

Adult's social group

Meeting on **Tuesdays** from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. The group meet fortnightly (all the dates are on our website). Again, there are lots of plans this year for this popular group.

For more details of both of these social groups, email aspsg.shants@gmail.com or contact Sue on 023 8043 2612 or Tracey on 07532 282301. New members are always welcome to attend. Both groups meet at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD.

Circus Starr

Circus Starr is a charitable organisation that supports disabled, underprivileged and vulnerable children through its world class show. Full details can be found on their website at <http://www.circus-starr.org.uk/>. Some of you attended a performance last year and the feedback from this was excellent.

This year, we have again been offered 50 free tickets for the performance on **Wednesday 27 May 2015** (Spring Bank Holiday half term week) at Riverside Park, Manor Farm Road, Southampton, SO18 1DE at 4.45pm.

If you would like tickets for this performance, please let me know straight away as tickets are being offered on a 'first come – first served' basis. A maximum of four tickets are available per family.

The only other 'condition' is that, after the event, you let me have your comments about the show, or send in any pictures your children make about the show – this is so we can send these to the organisers who, in turn, can pass these to the local businesses who have donated your tickets. This will help them secure the support of local businesses for future funding.

Details for collecting the tickets will be sent to you on confirmation of your order.

So, get in quick in order not to miss out!

Calling all coffee drinkers!

Do you or your friends, colleagues use Tassimo coffee machines? If so, you can help us raise funds.

Tassimo wants to save TDISCs and outer flow wrap packaging from going to landfill. For the total weight of the TDISCs and outer foil packaging we collect, we are awarded TerraCycle points which are converted into cash for our charity. To date we have raised around £400.

Please bring along your TDISCs and outer flow wrap packaging (they do not have to be cleaned) to any of our meetings/activities. Even better, get all your friends involved too.

Also, if you have a link with a local supermarket or place where a collection bin could be sited, please let us know.



Short Breaks consultation – the final decision

As you may already be aware, on 21 January, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, Hampshire County Council, taking into account the feedback throughout the recent consultations, announced the council will not make any changes to the current form and level of funding for Short Breaks services during the 2015/16 budget year. This is fantastic news for Gateway card holders across Hampshire.

This means that the on-going delivery of these services will be supported while the wider service transformation proposals are considered as part of the County Council's Transformation to 2017 programme, in response to further anticipated reductions in the grant from central Government.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the consultation, proving that we all do have a voice and that, if we exercise it, common sense can often prevail!

Help with research

We have been contacted by University of Winchester student, Charlotte Spruce, who is studying for a degree in Psychology. She is undertaking a research project called 'An exploration of differing attitudes towards different family behaviours.'

This study requires you to fill out an online questionnaire which should take around 30minutes to complete. As part of this study you will be asked to write a detailed paragraph or two on a personal experience where your child was considered by others to have misbehaved in public followed by a number of statements about individuals with disabilities which you are asked to rate in terms of whether you agree or disagree.

If you would like to find out more and contribute to her research, please visit <http://ww2.unipark.de/uc/Charlotte/0c49/>. Charlotte would be most appreciative of your help.

Activities for February Half-Term

A wide variety of activities for February half-term are on the Hampshire Gateway website. Please follow the links below for more information on each event.

- Aerobility Aviation Open Day – [click here](#)
- Rose Road Holiday Play Schemes - Ringwood, Baycroft, Oaklodge, Bradbury – [click here](#)
- Calshot, No Limits – [click here](#)
- Emsworth Cookery School – [click here](#)
- Just Jump Chamberlayne Southampton - [click here](#)
- Mimika Theatre – [click here](#)
- Scarf Trips – [click here](#)
- Sensory4all Gateway Session – [click here](#)
- SONUS Underwater Diving - [click here](#)
- Swans Activity Morning - [click here](#)
- Sopley Touching Base - [click here](#)
- RCS Andover Autism Family Activity Mornings - [click here](#)

Grandparents Information Day

Community First New Forest's Grandparents Information Day is on **Monday 23 February**, refreshments 10.30am, start 10.45am, end 1.30pm at Lyndhurst Community Centre. It is open to grandparents from across the New Forest. They have speakers from CAB, Family Lives and Princess Royal Trust, amongst others. You can meet others in similar situations, find mutual support and encouragement. To book contact Carol Malky at Community First New Forest on 01425 482773 or email cyps@cfnf.org.uk. Alternatively, if you are unable to attend but would like to receive a copy of their Guide for Grandparent Carers then Community First New Forest would also like to hear from you.

Challengers Play and Youth Schemes

Challengers are running Playschemes and Youthschemes in the area. It's nearly time to book Challengers events for Easter Holiday and the Summer Term – all events running between **30 March and 28 July 2015**. For information visit: www.disability-challengers.org/playschemes and www.disability-challengers.org/Youthschemes or for any help or advice email playandleisureteam@disability-challengers.org or call 01483 230 939.

SEN Magazine

A month's free trial to this online magazine is available at <https://www.senmagazine.co.uk/freetrial?view=Contributions>.

Autism Centre for Employment (ACE)

ACE is a new local service which helps people with autism to find and keep employment. Their services include:

- Recruiting autism friendly employers in your local area.
- Training employers to create a supportive and productive environment.
- Providing comprehensive individual assessments designed to identify your specific strengths and skills with the aim to create workplace strategies that leverage these abilities.
- Helping you undertake useful work experience with the support of our trained mentors.
- Providing you with a comprehensive Employment Profile report.

To find out more about their services, which are FREE, contact: 023 9284 6344; Email: ACE@port.ac.uk; Web: www.port.ac.uk/department-of-psychology/community-collaboration/autism-centre-for-employment.

Parent Voice provide Independent Support to Parent/Carers and Young People

The new Children and Families Act 2014 is changing the statutory process for children and young people aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disability. The Independent Support Programme has been commissioned to provide additional support to help families at this time of change. An Independent Supporter will give impartial support and guidance to families with children or young people who are being assessed for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or those 'transferring' from a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) to an EHCP under the new system.

If you have received a letter about transferring your child or young person's statement or learning difficulties assessment or confirming that an EHC assessment will be done, you can contact them to discuss the support you might need through the process. They can also support Young People directly, putting them at the heart of decisions that are made.

An Independent Supporter will help you to better understand the assessment process, understand the law relating to the assessment, and help you to agree outcomes to be achieved for your child. They will also help you to understand other areas of the reforms such as The Local Offer and Personal Budgets. They will provide information and support that enables you to make decisions that are right for your child or young person. They will not tell you what to do or do it for you.

You can contact the Independent Support services on 0300 303 8604 or by email independentsupport@roseroad.org.uk.

New FREE Advice Line – Sexually Harmful Behaviour in Young People and Adults with Autism

Do you need to talk to someone regarding inappropriate sexualised behaviour? Unsure how to challenge or approach this complex subject? With over 12 years' experience in reducing sexual harm in communities, Circles South East has a new helpline to support you. The advice line covers Hampshire and Thames Valley and is for professionals, parents and carers of young people and adults with autism. The advice line number is 0300 303 0443 and is open every Friday between 10.00am and 1.00pm.

Serendipity Social Groups

The Autism Partnership Boards and leading local autism groups in Hampshire are working together to develop an exciting and innovative project which will establish a network of social groups for local adults who have Asperger syndrome or High Functioning Autism. Many people with autism are severely disadvantaged by the difficulties they have with social interaction, communication and sensory issues and can easily become isolated from their community.

The team is working to set up a network of small, distinctive, user-led social groups, with adults who have Asperger syndrome or High Functioning Autism, across Southampton, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth (SHIP). The groups will be facilitated by volunteers and based in community venues such as a community café, college or pub. Autism Hampshire has run a very successful pilot to develop this model.

For further information please contact: Kathryn Cornish - Community Access Project Officer, Community Access - Autism Hampshire, Suite 1c, Fairways House, Mount Pleasant Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO14 0QB; Telephone: 023 8063 3951; Email: kathryn.cornish@autismhampshire.org.uk; Website: www.autismhampshire.org.uk.

Toad on the Road

Head2Head Multi-Sensory Theatre for All present Mischief in the Wild Woods Easter 2015 production 'Toad On The Road' (based on The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame) at Treloar's, Nr. Alton on **Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 April** at 10.45am or 1.30pm.

Approx. 60-minute walkabout performance: led by a team of Head2Head's actors, participants will move around the venue, discovering scenes & meeting characters from the story. Full of sensory experiences, loads of makaton & sign-a-long. £3 per person aged 2+ (Booking via 01372 278021 or h2hoffice@gmail.com). For more information visit <http://www.head2headtheatre.co.uk/family-holiday-activities>.

Harbour Lights Picturehouse Autism Clubs and Groups, Southampton

Harbour Lights Picturehouse in Ocean Village, Southampton has set up clubs and groups for children and people who are on the Autism spectrum. The groups are as follows:

- Autism Friendly – these screenings, arranged in partnership with The National Autistic Society (NAS) are designed for people on the autistic spectrum, their families, friends and carers. During the film, low lights are left on inside the auditorium and the volume of the soundtrack is reduced. Cinemagoers are free to move around, make a noise or take a break during the film if they need to – these are activities not usually encouraged at regular screening.
- Toddler Time – for preschool children, their parents and guardians. Membership is free. Tickets for members are £3, free for accompanying adults. The usual ticket prices apply to non-members and their parents. No adult unaccompanied by a toddler will be admitted.
- Big Screen – for parents and guardians with babies under one year old. Membership is £5 and valid until the baby's first birthday. Tickets are at Picturehouse Member's rates (see above), babies come free. Only customers with babies will be admitted.

Harbour Lights have even set up a children's area so that they have a place to play, colour and draw. They are also looking into providing toys and activities and hopefully getting some local libraries involved with holding a reading session after certain screenings. For more information call Harbour Lights on 02380 635335.

Free Training Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the Law, Eastleigh

Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN) are delighted to offer a day's free training from IPSEA, a registered charity who provide legal advice and support to parents of children with a disability and/or special needs, on the subject of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the Law. It is being held on **Thursday 19 March** from 10am-2pm (drinks will be served from 9.30am to start promptly at 10am) at Wells Place Centre, Wells Place, Eastleigh, SO50 5LJ. It will cover: What to expect from your school and local authority • SEN Support in school/college • What are Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and what makes a "good" EHCP? • Statutory Assessments. Spaces are limited so email participation@hpcn.org.uk or call Michala on 01962 832580 to book as soon as possible. Please take your own lunch or use the onsite café. Unfortunately, they cannot accommodate children on this workshop and are not running a crèche. If you have any special requirements do let them know. The venue is fully accessible.

Promoting better information sharing

The 'National Network of Parent Carer Forums' are seeking views from parents on 'promoting better information sharing' what are your views on the following suggestion:

'Do you think it is a good idea for professionals to share information about individual children and young people? What safeguards do you think should be in place before a professional shares information about your child with another professional?'

If health, social care and education used a common identifier (the NHS Number) it would enable data to be linked (without anyone knowing the names of those involved). This could, for example, enable comparisons to be made on the effect of various treatments on young people with long term medical conditions (such as epilepsy, diabetes, asthma) – how many days off school did they take and the impact of different treatments and improve the treatment provided in the future. Do you think that data linkage is a good thing and what concerns, if any, do you have about it?'

Hampshire Parent/Carer Network (HPCN) would value your comments, which they can feedback to the steering group who are looking at this. If you would like more information or background on this piece of work then please email Michala on participation@hpcn.org.uk.

Disability Matters

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) have launched Disability Matters – a free e-learning resource for the UK workforce to help professionals improve how they support disabled children, young people and their families. It is worthwhile looking at it and suggesting professionals you work with also look at <https://www.disabilitymatters.org.uk>.

Equipment for Children with Special Needs

Safespaces (Cornholme) Ltd supply equipment for children with autism, physical and learning disabilities and challenging behaviour. They supply custom-made safe rooms and sleep areas for use at home, in schools, and for respite care or holidays. Safespaces equipment is designed for adults and children who may be unsafe in an ordinary room or bed. Typically they supply products for people with special, sometimes very complex needs including autism, epilepsy and challenging behaviours. Safespaces work closely with parents, carers, occupational therapists and other health professionals, as well as architects and design engineers to develop their products to ensure they are right for the person using them. Their dedicated team will support you through every stage of the process, from initial enquiry to supply, installation and aftercare of your equipment. For more information visit www.safespaces.co.uk or call 01706 816274.

Reminders:

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. Members can join the library for a one-off donation of £5. We have just purchased over 40 new books which will be added to the library in the next few weeks, bringing the total number of books, videos, DVDs and games to around 350 items.

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. *Currently we have a number of items that, despite constant reminders, are very overdue, so ask that these be returned immediately please. Thank you.*

An Introduction to autism

We are considering running a family seminar 'An Introduction to Autism' to be held over two sessions (possibly a week or two apart) in the Spring. These seminars would be held in Eastleigh, during the day (probably from around 10.00am to 2.30pm) with a light lunch provided. There will be charge for attendance. We would be very pleased to hear from parents who may like to attend so that we can gauge the level of interest. Please email us at shants@nas.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 <http://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/directory/>

Help us boost our fundraising

This is a great way to raise money for us for free, simply by shopping online through a website called easyfundraising.

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

1. Sign up – go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas and click on the button to sign up.
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.

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

Regards

David & Rachel Carter

The National Autistic Society, South Hampshire Branch
Email: shants@nas.org.uk | Website: www.shantsnas.org.uk
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You will have received this news update because we have your contact details on our list. Should you no longer wish to receive information, please let us know and we will remove you from the list. Thank you