

Dear Friends

A very Happy New Year to you all and we hope you had a good Christmas break. Please find details below of our activities over the next month or so plus other information that may be of interest. You will see we are hoping to run another social skills course in the spring and we have some other ideas being formulated which we hope to be able to announce soon – watch this space!

Support Group Meeting

Our next support group meeting is on **Monday next, 18 January** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm.

There will be plenty of time at our meeting to have a chat and to browse our Resource Library, comprising over 350 books, videos and DVDs on many aspects of autism and Asperger syndrome. This month we will be bringing along around **40 new books** for our library which we have recently purchased and catalogued.

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

Family Youth Club

Our Youth Club restarts on **Saturday 6 February** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Children accompanied by their families are welcome.

Our usual facilities will be available and our volunteer play facilitators will be present to help the children and young people enjoy the activities we have on offer.

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

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

Full details, including a map, can be found at www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/Family%20Youth%20Club

LEGO club

This also restarts on **Saturday 6 February** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church.



We have now extended the age-range from 8 to 13. For more information and to express an interest in your child joining the waiting list for the club, please complete the form 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.

Our Southampton social groups

Both our Children's social group and Adults' social group continue to meet at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD. All dates through to the end of March can now be found on our website.

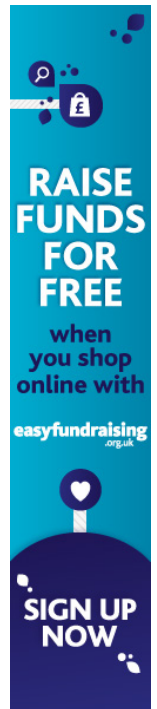
For more details of both of these social groups, email aspsg.shants@gmail.com or contact Sue on 023 8043 2612 or Tracey on 07532 282301. New members are always welcome to attend.

Social Skills group

We are hoping to run a social skills course in the spring for children with autism aged 7 to 11.

If you have a child within this age range that you think may benefit from this, you can register their interest by completing the registration of interest form (at www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/Newsarchive#140116_01) and return it to us by **Friday 29 January** at the latest. Registrations of interest will be considered on a first come, first served basis.

The branch will heavily subsidise these courses so the total cost to parents will be in the region of £65 (which includes food on the last session). Please do not send any money with the form – payment will be required, in advance, once a place has been confirmed.



Accept difference. Not indifference.

The courses will be run, as in the past, by Chris Parsons, from *Friends of In Touch*. Chris and her team have a great deal of experience in working with children with autism and our previous courses have been excellent. We have offered these courses since 2006 (whenever funding has been available) and, to date, over 80 young people have benefitted.

The 6-session course will run over 5 weeks (the last is a double session). We are awaiting confirmation of dates and times but it is most likely to be Saturdays 23 April to 21 May (each session would be 1 hour 15 minutes but we are not yet sure if this will be am or pm). The course will be preceded by an advance meeting (possibly Saturday 16 April) which will enable the children to become familiar with the surroundings, for Chris and her team to meet them and for the necessary assessment forms to be completed. The courses will most likely be held in Fair Oak.

The course can accommodate around 6-8 children. The main focus of the course will be on social and communication skills. Each session will build on the previous one, so it is essential that each child attends the full course.

Friends of in touch

Friends of in touch is a registered charity, in Eastleigh, that supports emotionally and socially vulnerable children and young people with autistic spectrum conditions, and behaviours associated with them. The aim is to enable anxious or socially vulnerable children and young people to feel more engaged with mainstream education and social activity by helping them develop their self-confidence, self-esteem and their coping skills.

There are currently vacancies in their Junior (9 to 13) and Senior (13 to 21) Youth Groups. They 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). For more details visit www.friendsofintouch.org.uk. Anyone interested should contact Chris@friendsofintouch.org.uk or call 07474 539539. Please do not just turn up at the youth centre without having contacted Chris.

Relaxed performances at the Mayflower

There are a two relaxed performances coming up at the Mayflower Theatre, Southampton:

- *The Snowman* on **Saturday 16 January** 2016 at 11.00am. Tel: 02380 711811, Web: https://www.mayflower.org.uk/Whats_on/TheSnowman2016.
- *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* on **Sunday 14 February** at 5.00pm. Tel: 02380 711811, Web: https://www.mayflower.org.uk/Whats_on/ChittyChittyBangBang2016

Eastleigh SOS group

Eastleigh SOS Group is a friendly, informal group for families affected by Autism and they meet up once a month to provide support in the Eastleigh area. They have recently changed from meeting on a Monday to now meeting on a Friday (usually the third Friday each month). If you are attending for the first time or require any further information about the group, please email soseastleigh@gmail.com or call Debbie Bourne on 07813 299118.

GO! Great Opportunities

GO! Club Mini's for 3–7 years and a GO! Club for 8–18 years run every two weeks until **16 March** at Fleming Park Leisure Centre with something new every week. These clubs are for children and young people with additional needs in Eastleigh and their siblings. This is a short break so parents can leave their children with a friendly and trained team. Children can take part, make friends and have fun in a safe and friendly environment. Details can be found at <http://www.greatopportunities.org.uk/eastleigh-go-club/> and <http://www.greatopportunities.org.uk/eastleigh-go-club-minis/>.

Social group for young people who have autism in Southampton

An opportunity for young people in Southampton to attend a very low cost social/support group being run jointly by Autism Hampshire and Friends of St James Park (Shirley). The group offers young people who have autism and attend mainstream secondary school the chance to meet other young people with autism, learn more about their autism and to enjoy social activities in a supportive environment. Please book ASAP (places are very limited) For more information or to book contact Autism Hampshire: Tel: 02380 633951, Email: communityaccess@autismhampshire.org.uk.

New Forest National Park Authority PedALL

The National Park Authority has its own fleet of specially adapted cycles which it uses to provide inclusive cycling opportunities to audiences that struggle using a traditional bicycle. They aim to provide opportunities to those who often require additional equipment and special care when cycling. They host regular fun and active sessions that cater to everyone's unique requirements. They are currently taking bookings for their regular drop-in sessions and also their private group sessions for the New Year. There is a short video that helps show what they do at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfYOi4IGm-U>. For information visit www.pedall.org.uk. For all enquiries or bookings contact inclusivecycling@newforestnpa.gov.uk.

Autism and Nature website and publications

Autism and Nature is a non-profit organisation dedicated to enriching the lives of people on the autistic spectrum, especially children, by engaging them with the countryside and nature. They believe that contact with the natural world can benefit a child's learning, health and well-being. They are raising awareness of these benefits, and developing educational resources in partnership with schools, local authorities, conservation organisations and autism charities. They are currently producing a series of local guide books, to help families and teachers to introduce children with autism to nature and the countryside. So far the series covers Kent, West Sussex, Surrey and Suffolk and the latest one covers East Sussex. Whilst Hampshire has not been covered yet, the above will be of help to those of you living close to the borders or who are prepared to travel and as a lot of the information is generic, it can be applied to any part of the countryside. For more information, visit <http://autismandnature.org.uk/>.

Brain in Hand for autistic people in university, employment or training

The NAS are pleased to announce their partnership with Brain in Hand, software for autistic people in university, employment or training. Simple yet comprehensive, Brain in Hand is designed to help people access detailed, personalised support at a time when they need it, giving them increased confidence to achieve independently. This is accompanied by professional facilitator support from our specialist staff. For more information visit www.autism.org.uk/services/community/brain-in-hand.aspx.

Free online anti-bullying information

New free Online Anti-Bullying Information The Anti-Bullying Alliance has launched their new free Online Anti-Bullying Information Tool for parents and carers. The tool is interactive and designed to give parents and carers information about bullying. The tool will help parents if they are concerned that their child may be vulnerable to bullying at school, are worried that their child might be being bullied, are aware that their child is being bullied and think or know that their child is bullying others. Visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/parent-tool/story_html5.html.

A guide for parents on social care in England

Social Care in England: A Guide for Parents. Cerebra have prepared a guide for parents of disabled children in England who want to know how to get help for their child's social care needs. It principally deals with responsibilities of local authorities to provide social care for disabled children, as well as support for the parents/carers of those children. Visit <http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/guides-for-parents/social-care-in-england-a-guide-for-parents/>.

Transferring from a statement to an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP)?

Have you received a letter about transferring your child or young person's statement or learning difficulties assessment, or are you applying for a new EHCP? Parent Voice and Support4SEND have a team of Independent Supporters working across Hampshire available to give impartial advice and guidance for transfers and also new applications. So if you have a question about the new system, would like help to complete the paperwork, need some advice about responding to your draft plan, or anything else connected with the process in this time of change, please contact the team on 0300 303 8604 or email independentsupport@roseroad.org.uk.

Community First New Forest groups

Community First New Forest's ASD meetings for the next few months are on Wednesdays **20 January, 24 February** and **16 March** from 10.30 to 12.30, all at Ringwood Fire Station. For further information contact Carol Malky at CYPServices@cfnf.org.uk.

World Autism Awareness Week

Saturday 2 April to Friday 8 April. Last year, almost 5,000 people took part in the National Autistic Society's first ever World Autism Awareness Week. It was their biggest ever fundraising campaign, and it raised over £200,000 to help autistic people and their families across the UK. They are to do even more this year, watch out for updates about what they've got planned and how you can take part. Visit <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/world-autism-awareness-week.aspx> to download your pack!

AutismCon returns in 2016!

The National Autistic Society's unique, annual convention on **Saturday 5 March** is run by autistic people, for autistic people and friends. Join them in London for a day of talks, workshops and relaxation. There's something for everyone. Full details can be found at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/raise-money/special-events/autismcon.aspx.

Reminders:

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/>

The Eastleigh Social Group

Part of the Serendipity Social Groups Project run by Autism Hampshire, the Eastleigh social group is for people 18 or older who have High Functioning Autism or Asperger's. They meet at the Eastleigh Wellbeing Centre fortnightly on Friday afternoons from 1.30-3.30pm. For more information contact: Eastleigh Wellbeing Centre, 111 Leigh Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9DS, Tel: 023 8063 3951, Email: Jamie.pratt@autismhampshire.org.uk

Schools' Autism Awareness Week

The first ever Schools' Autism Awareness Week will take place from **14-18 March 2016**. Hosted by the NAS, this week has been conceived as part of the run up to World Autism Awareness Week (2-8 April 2016). They are calling to all schools to join them and help spread autism awareness. Schools who sign up will receive a bumper pack including lesson plans to help children learn more about autism in a fun and interactive way. Contact your local schools to let them know – [full details are available here](#).

My World, National Autistic Society

The NAS is offering 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/Working-with/Education/teacher-form.aspx.

Autism Alert App

The Autism Alert App, from Autism Hampshire, enables people with autism to share information about their autism and support their autism. It can be used by young people and adults who live in Hampshire (including Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight). It functions on a smartphone and you can also have an Alert Card. It can be used to explain your condition to the emergency services, any professional, family member or friends who you choose to share it with. Contact Community Access team on 02380 633951 or email communityaccess@autismhampshire.org.uk for an application form. For further details visit <http://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/assets/files/Outreach/Project/Insert%20-%20Community%20Access%20Helpful%20Apps%20&%20Smart%20Phone%20Loans.pdf>.

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 now have around 350 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.

Calling all coffee drinkers!

Do you, your friends or 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 get TerraCycle points which are converted into cash for us. **To date we have raised over £1200.**

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 situated, please let us know.



Help us boost our fundraising

A great way to raise money for us for free – shopping online through *easyfundraising*.

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 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.



As always, for full details of all our meetings, other dates, news items and information, please visit our [website](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk).

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.*