

Newsletter

Dear Friends

We have details of our activities in the coming months, which include some very special events, plus other information that may be of interest, including important information about **World Autism Awareness Week**, during which we will be very active. With Easter fast approaching, please note that some of our regular activities will not take place in April.

We were delighted to welcome so many of you to our Autism Seminar with Sarah Hendrickx earlier in the month. Our next big event is when we welcome **Sarah-Jane Critchley**, speaking on two very topical issues, at our AGM on 29 April – booking for this is now open – see below. We are also looking forward to welcoming **Alex Kelly** to our May Autism Support Group meeting.

As you will know, our branch is run entirely by volunteers and it is only because of the great team we have that we are able to achieve anything. We are still looking for some help at our Family Youth Club and LEGO Club. This is just a small commitment – details below.

As always, if you have any ideas for activities or events you would like us to consider, please let us know.

Sarah-Jane Critchley at our AGM

Tickets are going fast for this special event on **Monday 29 April 2019** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church, Winchester Road, SO53 2GJ, 7.00pm to 9.30pm

We are delighted to welcome Sarah-Jane who will speak on two topics:

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

Sarah-Jane is a keynote speaker, author and parent who spent 10 years building the Autism Education Trust to share good practice with schools across England. She is author of *A Different Joy: The Parents' Guide to Living Better with Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD and More...* and *The Different Joy Planner*. She has spoken at events for TES (formerly the Times Educational Supplement), National Association of Head Teachers on National and International stages, for Local Authorities and for parents' groups.

Tickets: £3.50*

*suggested minimum donation

For further details and to book online visit: www.shantsnas.org.uk/agm

Places are limited – please book early to avoid disappointment



World Autism Awareness week: 1–7 April



World Autism Awareness Week is nearly here – from 1 to 7 April 2019 – and it's going to be the biggest yet! [Sign up for your free pack today](#). It's got a quiz from The Chase's Anne Hegerty, a Spectrum Cake recipe from Jane Asher and a fun wildlife sweepstake poster from the NAS' ambassador Chris Packham CBE.



Our branch will be out and about during the week, taking part in Autism Awareness events at Hampshire County Council's head office on **Tuesday 2 April** and Ordnance Survey on **Wednesday 3 April**. We are presenting 'Introduction to Autism' sessions at Hampshire Fire and Police HQ on **Wednesday 3 April** and at the University of Southampton on **Thursday 4 April**. Finally, we will be in Eastleigh's Swan Centre all day on **Saturday 6 April** with our stand promoting autism awareness – if you are in Eastleigh, come and say hello!

Other branch members will be getting involved; in particular, Clive, Sarah and Sophie Green who are taking part in the **15k Spectrum Night Walk** in London on **Saturday 6 April** and daughter, Sophie, is **shaving her head!** All to help raise funds for the NAS and autism awareness. Please do support them – their fund-raising page is at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/clive-green8



Autism Hampshire also has a series of events planned throughout the week including a LEGO walk, Autism Heroes campaign, free climbing sessions for anyone on the autism spectrum at Rock Up Whiteley, abseiling down the Spinnaker Tower, autism awareness sessions and more. Information about their activities can be found at www.facebook.com/AutismHampshire

Lots more information can be found on the National Autistic Society's website at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/world-autism-awareness-week.aspx

Autism Seminar with Sarah Hendrickx

We were delighted to welcome over 115 people to both of talks given by Sarah Hendrickx earlier this month (*Women and Girls and Autism: What's the Difference* and *Social and Personal Relationships on the Autism Spectrum*). Both presentations can be downloaded from the front page of our website. A film was made of the event and we hope to have an edited version of this on our website soon – watch this space.

Family Youth Club

Our next club is on **Saturday 18 May** (there is no club in April due to a clash with Easter) at Chandler's Ford Methodist Church from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Children accompanied by their families are welcome.

We have three rooms available and 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. One of the rooms is a quiet room where the children can play board games, LEGO or just read. We also offer a structured craft activity which children can join in with if they wish.

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

£1.50 per child. Entry is via the children's garden at the rear of the church, next to the car park. Full details, including a map, can be found at www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/Family%20Youth%20Club

LEGO Club



Our next club takes place on **Saturday 18 May** at Chandler's Ford Methodist Church.

This is for children with autism from ages 8 to 13. To express interest in your child joining the waiting list, complete the form at www.shantsnas.org.uk/home/lego

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

Support Group Meeting

It was great to see a good number of members attend this month's support group. Our next meeting is on **Monday 20 May** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm.



We are delighted to welcome **Alex Kelly** as our guest. Alex was a very popular speaker when she last visited us in 2017 and many members asked us to invite her again.

She will be giving a talk about **Developing Social Skills and Making Friends**. This talk applies to both autistic children and adults.

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

We are delighted to report that Alex's company has just been awarded *Autism Accreditation Advanced* status by the National Autistic Society. Autism Accreditation is the UK's only autism specific quality assurance programme of support and development for organisations providing services to autistic people. It proves that an organisation is committed to understanding autism and setting the standard for autism practice. It is only awarded after many hours of observation and an intensive inspection process (usually done over 3 years). There are around 450 organisations around the UK that are either autism accredited or aspiring to be accredited, but only a handful that are awarded Advanced status. Receiving this status means that they are:

- The first speech and language and OT service ever to be accredited
- The first service of any kind to be accredited in Hampshire
- The first day service in England to receive advanced status.

There will be plenty of time at our meeting to have a chat and to browse our Resource Library, comprising around 400 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.

Partners' Group

The next meeting is on **Thursday 28 March** and then **Thursday 25 April** at Chandler's Ford Methodist Church, Winchester Road, SO53 2GJ, from 7.30 to 9.30pm. The group has been growing in numbers since it started last year and we welcome anyone who has a partner with autism. It runs monthly on the fourth Thursday evening of each month. Full details at www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/Partners

Our Southampton Social Groups

Both groups continue to meet as usual on alternate Tuesday evenings (term time) at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD. Dates for all meetings until July can be found on our website. For more details, email nassouthampton@gmail.com or contact Sue (023 8043 2612) or Tracey (07532 282301) or visit www.shantsnas.org.uk/soton.

Support for Women and Girls

At our recent Sarah Hendrickx morning talk, we circulated a questionnaire to help us gauge the interest starting a women's and/or girls' group. We have been approached in the past by members enquiring if we had considered running a locally-based support/social group specifically for women and/or girls on the autistic spectrum (whether diagnosed or not).

Currently, all our volunteer committee and helpers are fully committed running our regular activities and special events. If, however, we were able to find another volunteer who, with full support from our branch committee, would be interested in facilitating such a group, we may then be able to consider this.

We had a good response from this questionnaire and are currently evaluating the responses. For those who did not get a chance to respond and would be interested in attending a women's and/or girls' support/social group or may be interested in facilitating a group, please get in touch. If you have any views on how regularly (weekly, fortnightly, monthly) and when (daytime, evening, weekend) such a group would meet or any thoughts/comments about what type of programme a group could follow, please let us know.

Can you spare a small amount of time to help?

For **LEGO Club**, we are still looking for help, for about an hour, on the 3rd Saturday afternoon of most months, to assist our two volunteer Speech and Language Therapists who run this activity for us.

For our **Family Youth Club**, we operate a rota of volunteers who assist with this monthly club. We are looking for a couple of volunteers who could spare the 3rd Saturday afternoon every couple of months from 3.00 until 5.30pm to help with manning the door, serving refreshments, organising craft activities, keeping an eye on proceedings and/or setting up/packing away equipment.

Your help would be much appreciated and enable us to continue these popular activities. If you are interested, please do get in touch. Thank you.

Quiz Night

Following last year's enjoyable Quiz Night, we have just confirmed the date for another one later in the year on **Friday 18 October** – put the date in your diaries now. If you can't wait that long, why not support our friends at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church's Quiz Night on **Saturday 6 April** at 7.30pm. For more details or to enter a team of up to 6 people (@ £3 per person), email: quiz@bishopstoke-evangelical-church.org.uk.

Gateway Card

All Hampshire-based families with a disabled child accessing Short Breaks activities must apply for a new card by the 1 April 2019. The Gateway Card is free and gives you access to activities, play schemes and buddy schemes through the short breaks programme. For full details visit www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/specialneeds/shortbreaks/gatewaycard

Plans for all health and care staff to get autism training

The Government has published its proposals to introduce mandatory autism and learning disability training to all health and care staff in England. This is a very welcome move that could mean that all NHS staff have the training they need to support autistic people, finally living up to duties in the Autism Act.

The Government has launched an eight-week consultation on their plans and is seeking the views of autistic people, their families, charities and professionals, including health and care staff. The consultation can be accessed at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/learning-disability-and-autism-training-for-health-and-care-staff. This consultation closes at 11:59pm on **12 April 2019**.

The Autism Act – 10 years on

This year is the 10th anniversary of the Autism Act. This was a landmark in the battle to improve the lives of autistic adults and their families in England. In her blog, Robyn Steward, an autism consultant, author and ambassador for the NAS, looks back on the campaign for the Autism Act and considers what still needs to change. View the blog at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2019-01-25-blog-robyn-steward-autism-act.aspx.

This year, the NAS is working with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA) to identify the gaps and what we need to do to strengthen the Autism Act.

Please take part in the survey, which is now open, and give your views. We want as many autistic people and families to engage in this survey to help us tell Government what needs to change. The survey closes at 10.00pm on **Sunday 7 April 2019**.

An interview with the Autistic Gardener

Many of you will have loved watching the Channel 4 series *The Autistic Gardener* which features the NAS' very own pink-haired cultural ambassador, Alan Gardner. Alan turns 60 this month and is voicing a new NAS *What is Autism?* animation, coming soon. Read about Alan and what the future holds for The Autistic Gardener at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2017-07-07-alan-gardner.aspx. Catch up with his series at <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-autistic-gardener%20>.

Could you be the designer of the NAS 2019 range of Christmas cards?

The NAS are now accepting entries for their annual Christmas card competition!

It is so important to them that their annual range of Christmas cards feature the talents of autistic people, and so once again they are inviting adults and children on the autism spectrum to submit their entries. Whether you want to feature penguins, robins, a festive scene or something else entirely, be as creative as you like and show them what Christmas means to you! The two winners (one adult over 18 and one child) will receive five packs of cards featuring their design. Not to mention the joy of knowing your designs will be proudly standing in the homes of many across the country during the festive season!

For full details and an entry form visit www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2019-02-18-christmas-card-competition.aspx

Special iApps

Special iApps is a non-profit social enterprise founded in 2011. They have developed a range of educational apps that have won a number of awards and are being used around the world in over 26 languages to support children with their education and development both at home, in school, and by speech therapists. For more information visit www.facebook.com/specialiapps.

Interesting articles from Network Autism

Understanding autistic communication: Dr Brett Heasman from the Centre for Research in Autism and Education (CRAE) at UCL and Dr Alex Gillespie, Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science at the London School of Economics, discuss their research into how autistic people interact with each other and create shared understanding. Visit <https://network.autism.org.uk/good-practice/evidence-base/understanding-autistic-communication>

More support needed for autistic women with anorexia: Autistica are asking for National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines for eating disorders to include autism, reports the BBC. Autistica highlight research which suggests that one in five women with an eating disorder may be autistic. The article discusses why autistic girls and women may develop an eating disorder and why treatment should be more tailored to their needs. Visit www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-47359416

Stress and coping for caregivers: This latest research bulletin from Middletown Centre for Autism provides accessible research summaries on the topic of stress and coping for caregivers. It also includes an interview with Dr Lenny Thornton, consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Cheshire Autism Diagnostic Service in which he discusses stress and its impact for caregivers. Visit <https://network.autism.org.uk/good-practice/evidence-base/stress-and-coping-caregivers-research-bulletin>

Spectrum Live: You may have missed the NAS' very first live streaming covering the different routes available to getting a diagnosis, what an autism assessment should look like and how you can help the NAS to campaign to reduce the length of time people have to wait for an autism diagnosis? Watch it on demand at www.autism.org.uk/about/spectrum-live.aspx

Reminders:

Autism Learning Day and workshops

The Curly Hair Project (CHP) is an award-winning social enterprise founded by autistic author and entrepreneur Alis Rowe. The project is running an Autism Learning Day in Eastleigh on **Wednesday 17 April** from 9.30am to 4.00pm. They also have a series of autism workshops in Lyndhurst through to June, covering Education, Communication, Sensory Processing and Executive Functioning. For full details visit <https://thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk/training/events/>

Family Information and Services Hub

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

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

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

Parent Forum – Alex Kelly Ltd

Speech therapist Alex Kelly continues to run Parent Forums at Speaking Space, Fleming House, Alma Road, Romsey, SO51 9EP, from 7.00 to 9.00pm. Entry is a £5.00 contribution at the door towards costs and cake! Visit www.speakingspace.co.uk/parent-forums-2019, email office@speakingsspace.co.uk or phone 023 8098 7134.

Hampshire Local Autism Directory

The Local Autism Directory (LAD) is funded by Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth (SHIP), 8 CCGs and Adult Services, Hampshire County Council. Information within it covers children and adults. Visit the LAD at <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/>

First Steps to Autism Information – local guides

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

ActiveAbility Solent

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

My World, National Autistic Society

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

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

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

Partyman World of Play SEN sessions

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

SEN sessions at Monkey Bizness, Southampton

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

Dimensions autism-friendly cinema screenings

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

Friends of In Touch

Friends of In Touch, a small registered charity funded by the *BIG Lottery* based in Fair Oak, supports autistic children and young people. It runs two weekly youth clubs during term time and in school holidays. Activities include cooking, arts and crafts, bushcraft, games, construction toys for the Junior group (9 to 13) and cookery, pamper evenings, film nights, quizzes, bowling, book club, sports, meals out and BBQs for the Senior group (13 to 18). For further details contact info@friendsofintouch.org.uk. Groups meet at Y-Zone Youth Centre, Fair Oak on Tuesdays during term time (Juniors 4.30 to 6.00pm and Seniors 6.30 to 8.30pm). Holiday groups are also planned. For full details visit www.friendsofintouch.org.uk

Flipout sessions

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

Rose Road Association Stay & Play Family Coffee Morning

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

Scottish and Southern Electric

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

Our Resource Library

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

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



Help us boost our fundraising

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

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

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

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

STATIONERY BOOKS, DVDS & GAMES HOLIDAYS
CLOTHES HOME APPLIANCES INSURANCE GIFTS
BROADBAND & UTILITIES SCHOOL STUFF MOBILES
TRAVEL ELECTRONICS BUSINESS SUPPLIES GROCERIES

What do you buy online?

Whatever you buy online, you can raise free donations for us by simply buying through **easyfundraising** org.uk

Start raising free donations now!

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas

WITH OVER 2,700 RETAILERS TO CHOOSE FROM

amazon.co.uk John Lewis Viking TESCO eBay.co.uk ASDA M&S Argos Sainsbury's

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

Regards

David & Rachel Carter

The National Autistic Society, South Hampshire Branch

Email: shants@nas.org.uk | Facebook: www.facebook.com/nassouthhampshirebranch | Website: www.shantsnas.org.uk
Registered as a Charity. No. 269425

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.