

Newsletter

Dear Friends

As usual we have details of our activities over the coming months, plus other information that may be of interest.

This year has already been a bumper year for great speakers, with Sarah Hendrickx in March, Sarah-Jane Critchley last month and we are looking forward to welcoming **Alex Kelly** to our May Autism Support Group meeting next week. For those who missed out on the Sarah Hendrickx seminar, full-length videos of each talk are now available (see below) – our thanks to Alex and Nate for making these films for us. We also look forward to seeing you at Southampton's SEN Information Day on Saturday 1 June which features a keynote speaker, **Carly Jones MBE**, an autistic advocate for autism. As always, if you have any ideas for activities or events you would like us to consider, please let us know.

Family Youth Club

Our next club is **next Saturday, 18 May** 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 also 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.

Autism Support Group Meeting

Our next meeting on **Monday 20 May** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm is one not to be missed.



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.

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.

Remember, our Autism Support Group meetings are open to parents, carers and family members of autistic children and adults, autistic individuals and professionals who work with them.

Future speakers at our Autism Support Group

Monday 17 June – Lottie Harland – Travelling the World

Lottie, who is autistic and an Autism Ambassador, has recently travelled around the world on her own. She will talk about how she coped and the strategies she had in place for such a daunting challenge.

Lottie, a keen sailor, is founder and a trustee of Ausome, a charity promoting the personal and social growth of autistic individuals of all ages through an exciting programme of sailing. She will also tell us about plans to enter an autistic crew of nine sailors in the challenging 608 nautical mile 2019 Rolex Fastnet Race later this year.

Monday 15 July – Ellie Jones – Sensory Integration

Ellie is an Occupational Therapist working for Speaking Space Ltd who has been working with autistic adults and children, learning disability and mental health needs for 12 years. Throughout this time Ellie has used sensory integration-based techniques to meet the sensory needs of her varied client groups. Her talk will cover what we mean by sensory integration, the impact for those with autism and what we can do to help.

Partners' Group

The next meeting is on **Thursday 23 May** at Chandler's Ford Methodist Church, Winchester Road, SO53 2GJ, from 7.30 to 9.30pm. 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.

Sarah-Jane Critchley at our AGM

We were pleased to welcome around 80 members to our AGM on Monday 29 April. Those of you who would like to download a copy of Sarah-Jane Critchley's talk can access this by visiting <https://differentjoy.kartra.com/page/ExclusionsandMHSouthHantsNAS>. A copy of our Branch Annual Report 2018/19 can be downloaded from our news page at www.shantsnas.org.uk/News.

Autism Seminar with Sarah Hendrickx

We are delighted to report that the **full-length videos** of both 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*) are now available to watch from www.shantsnas.org.uk/seminar. The presentation slides can be also be downloaded from this page.

World Autism Awareness week: 1–7 April

Our branch was out and about during the week, taking part in Autism Awareness events at Hampshire County Council's head office, Ordnance Survey and at Eastleigh Swan Centre. We presented 'Introduction to Autism' sessions at Hampshire Fire and Police HQ and at the University of Southampton.

Congratulations to branch members, Clive, Sarah and Sophie Green who took part in the **15k Spectrum Night Walk** in London and daughter, Sophie, **shaved her head!** to raise over £1500 for the NAS and autism awareness. Many thanks to Paul Light from Paul Light Hair in Bradbeers, Romsey, who made shaving Sophie's hair off such a fun experience!



Can you spare a small amount of time to help?

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.

Send Information Day and Transition Fair for special educational needs and disabilities

We will be at this very popular **free** annual Southampton event on **Saturday 1 June** from 10.00am to 3.00pm at Oasis Academy, Romsey Road, Lordshill, Southampton, SO16 8FA. **NO BOOKING REQUIRED.**

Over 40 local organisations will have stands at this event which you can browse and a series of **free talks** will take place during the day. The Keynote speaker is **Carly Jones MBE**, a British autism advocate. Carly has been advocating for awareness and equality of diagnosis, education and safeguarding of autistic women, girls and their families since 2008. As an autistic woman herself and the proud mum of two wonderful, autistic daughters, Carly is an inspirational keynote speaker and will be sharing her journey.

Other speakers during the day include Mike Pink from Saints Foundation, Katherine Vowles from Southampton SENDIASS, and Bridget Denney and Fiona Owens from Southampton City College.

There will be free lunch and refreshments. Mr Giant (Children's Entertainer) and Glitter Fairies (Facepainting and glitter tattoos) will also be present.

For full details, visit www.facebook.com/events/924178264406911. We look forward to seeing you there.

Growfest

A **free-entry** festival to promote inclusion within the community, aimed at adults with learning, mental and physical disabilities. At the Royal Victoria Country Park, Netley, SO31 5GA on **Saturday 22 June** from 11.00am to 4.00pm. For more details visit www.facebook.com/events/2102048206682466.

New app from Autism Hampshire

Autism Hampshire's Autism Alert App has been upgraded and by following a few steps, you can enjoy the benefits of the new improved version, which is now called the **Spectra5 Autism Assistant App**.

The app is designed to help you when you need support from the police or emergency services. It can help you feel safer in situations that you find challenging and enable you to communicate more effectively. Spectra5 can also be helpful in your daily life including work, education and leisure.

Autism Hampshire and their technical partners, Mpro5, provide the Spectra5 Autism Assistant App free of charge for adults who are on the autism spectrum and who live in Hampshire.

[Click here to find out more about this exciting development.](#)



Employment resources

Are you preparing or looking for work? Already at work and need some help? Are you an employer responsible for supporting employees on the Autism Spectrum?

Over the last 5 years, the **Autism Centre for Research on Employment** team at the University of Portsmouth, led by Dr Beatriz López, has been conducting research on employment issues in autism. This work has resulted in the creation of a suite of online resources to support people on the Autism Spectrum and their employers. The resources include:

- **The online Employment Toolkit:**
In this toolkit they have selected and summarised, from the vast information available, the most relevant information to get you started and to help you take control.
- **The employment online Profiling Assessment[®] service:**
This innovative interactive online platform enables the assessment of employability and cognitive profiles. Their assessment reports provide tailored recommendations reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- **The online University Toolkit:**
Although designed for students attending the University of Portsmouth, the toolkit can also be used by university students attending any UK university. This toolkit aims to give university students self-advocacy skills to prepare them for the transition in employment.

The University of Portsmouth is committed to having a positive impact on the community. As a result, all their online resources, including the Profiling Assessment[®] services, are provided **free of charge**.

Mental Health and Emotion in autism

Charlotte Huggins, a researcher from the University of Aberdeen, is currently looking for parents of autistic children to take part in a research study about mental health and emotion in autism.

Do you have a child with autism? Do they ever seem to have difficulties understanding their own feelings? Or do they have an amazing grasp of emotion? Or do they fall somewhere in between? Whatever your answer, She would like to hear about it!

She is seeking autistic children 8 to 17 to take part in a study about how well we understand our own emotions, and whether that relates to mental health and empathy. Children must be age 8 or above to take part. The study is conducted online, and you will receive a £10 Amazon voucher for taking part. It will take around an hour and a half to complete. Your child will only need to take part for 40 minutes. Both parent and child need to be present. Your child will answer some questions about themselves, view images and make decisions about them, and take part in a brief vocabulary task. You will answer questions about yourself and your child. Please find more information at <http://viis.abdn.ac.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=155195616813>.

What has the Autism Act achieved – 10 years on?

In 2009, most areas in England didn't have an adult diagnosis service. Now almost all (93%) do. Nearly every council has a designated member to lead the development of adult autism services. And, during a time when council services have faced cuts, the National Autistic Society has managed to use the Autism Act's duties to save services.

They also been talking to individuals about how the impact has impacted them – you can read some of their stories here:

- [Trevor Wright](#)
- [Robyn Steward](#)
- [Andrew Hensman](#)

But, the Act isn't implemented properly in too many places. People are still waiting far too long for an autism diagnosis. Despite clear legal obligations, too many are denied an assessment of their social care needs.

That's not good enough and the NAS want to change it.

What is the National Autistic Society doing this year?

2019 marks ten years since the passing of the Autism Act. The Government is reviewing the autism strategy again and they will work with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism to find out:

- what has worked well?
- what hasn't worked?
- what needs to change?

For more information about this project, please stay updated via the NAS website <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategy.aspx>.

The Autism Show 2019

Taking place in ExCeL, London on **14 and 15 June**. At the show, you can pick and choose from over 100 hours of talks, clinics and workshops, plus hundreds of specialist products and services. Visit the show website, to view the huge programme of talks, workshops, clinics, exhibitors and interactive features such as the Hexagol Interactive Games Station. Once inside the event, all content is free to access and CPD certified for professionals. Book your tickets today and save 20% off the door price by visiting www.autismshow.co.uk.

British Dyslexia Association's Parent Pop-Up Roadshow Event!

At this event, a variety of topics will be of interest to our members as they are not necessarily dyslexia-specific. Also many autistic people have a dual diagnosis of Dyslexia.

It takes place on **Saturday 6 July** from 12.30 (doors open) to 4.00pm at Otterbourne Village Hall, Cranbourne Drive, Otterbourne, Winchester, SO21 2ET. There is **free** parking, disabled access and refreshments available.

What will be covered?

- 1.00pm: What is dyslexia? Supporting your child's needs; BDA CEO, Helen Boden
- 1:40pm: Empowering Potential – using IT; Arran Smith
- 2:20pm: Navigating the SEN maze: entitlement, provision and appeals; Hayley Mason
- 3.00pm: How does my child's dyslexia affect me? John Hicks
- 3:40pm: Questions

For further information contact Hampshire Dyslexia Association at hampshiredyslexiaassociation@gmail.com

Free entry but to ensure your seats you can book at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-free-bda-parent-pop-up-roadshow-event-tickets-60745675952>

Interesting articles from Network Autism

Autism and healthcare: an interview with Dr Carole Buckley

Dr Carole Buckley is a retired GP and is the Royal College of General Practitioners' clinical representative for autism. Carole has an autistic son and was involved, along with our own Branch member, Dr Michael White, in creating the autism toolkit for healthcare professionals. In this interview filmed at the NAS Autism Professional Conference this year, Carole discusses NHS England's decision to make autism a clinical priority and how healthcare can be made more accessible to autistic people. Carole also discusses the Autism Act and how autism diagnosis pathways can be improved. Visit <https://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/autism-and-healthcare-interview-dr-carole-buckley>

Supporting autistic pupils with anxiety

West Sussex County Council and the Autism Research Group at City, University of London, have produced an evidence-based guide on supporting autistic pupils to manage their anxiety. The guide is available as a [free PDF download here](#).

Autism support: an interview with Gina Davies

Gina Davies has worked as a speech and language therapist for over 30 years in clinical, educational and family settings. In this interview Gina discusses the work she does with autistic children and her focus on meaningful engagement. Visit <https://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/autism-support-interview-gina-davies>.

Calls for mandatory autism training for police

Ann Clwyd, MP for Cynon Valley, has introduced an important new bill in Parliament to make autism understanding training mandatory for all police officers in England and Wales. The National Autistic Society, know that a lack of understanding can lead to autistic people being treated poorly and even unjustly, so they fully support this bill and have been working with Ann Clwyd to make sure it was heard in Parliament. Visit www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2019-05-01-ann-clwyd-police-training.aspx.

Reminders:

Quiz Night

Following last year's enjoyable Quiz Night, we are holding another one later in the year on **Friday 18 October** – put the date in your diaries now.

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 5EP, 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

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

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

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

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*. **The past year alone has seen around £350 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.

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As always, for full details of all our meetings, other dates, news items and information, visit our [website](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk) and/or [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/nassouthhampshirebranch).

Regards

David & Rachel Carter

The National Autistic Society, South Hampshire Branch

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