

Dear Friends

Welcome to our latest newsletter. As always, we have details of our activities over the next month or so, plus other information that may be of interest. We particularly look forward to seeing some of you at our support group meeting next Monday, when we welcome an excellent speaker.

We hope some of you took advantage of shops that opened for Autism Hour last week – we would be very pleased to receive feedback. This month we feature a number of articles concerning employment for people with autism, including the excellent current project being run by Autism Hampshire to support people into work and to raise the profile of autism amongst employers.

Support Group Meeting

Our next meeting is on **Monday 16 October** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm.

We are delighted to welcome, as our special guest, **Liz Flaherty, County Service Manager, SEN, and STAS, Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council**. Liz will be talking about the role of the SEN Service which includes Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs).

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.

Family Youth Club

We were delighted to see a good number of families attend our last Family Youth Club and hope we can now maintained these numbers over the coming months. We are always pleased to hear your views on what this club should offer.

Our next Family Youth Club takes place on **Saturday 4 November** at Chandlers 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 is also on **Saturday 4 November** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church.

This is for children with autism from ages 8 to 13. The club is currently full but for more information and 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.

Our Southampton social groups

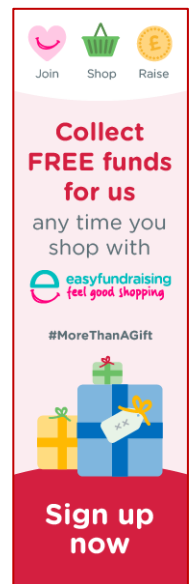
Both our Children's and Adults' social groups meet during term time on alternate Tuesday evenings at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD. Dates for this term can be found on our website.

A visit has been arranged to look at the stars at Toothill Observatory, near North Baddesley (Solent Astronomy) on **Monday 6 November** at 7.00pm (£2.00 adult and 50p children). The visit will only take place if the sky is clear. If unsure, telephone Sue (023 8043 2612) shortly after 6 pm, when information on weather conditions will have been received. There is a reserve date of Monday 20 November should the 6th be too cloudy.

The Adult group will be bowling at Hollywood Bowl, Eastleigh on **Tuesday 24 October** from 7.00pm (half term). Members will pay £2.00 each (subsidised by the Group) for one game. They also have a Karaoke night on **Tuesday 31 October** (8.00–11.00pm) at The Robin Hood, Middle Road, Sholing – as this is Halloween night, do dress up, if you wish!

The annual meeting of the Southampton groups' sub-committee will be on **Tuesday 7 November** at 7:15pm, to which child members' parents are especially welcome. Please come along to hear our plans and put forward your ideas.

For more details, email nassouthampton@gmail.com or contact Sue (023 8043 2612) or Tracey (07532 282301).





The employment campaign

Just 16% of autistic adults are in full-time paid employment. And, in almost a decade, this appalling situation hasn't improved. The National Autistic Society is determined to change this.

Watch their film at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/employment.aspx and see what job interviews can be like for an autistic person.

Employment won't be right for all autistic people. But 77% of unemployed autistic adults, or people responding on their behalf, told the NAS they want to work.

The Government has committed to halving the 'disability employment gap'. The fear is that without a better understanding of autism from both employers and the Government, autistic adults will continue to be left behind, their abilities overlooked.

In an NAS report, they set out what the Government needs to do and how employers can play their role in finally tackling the autism employment gap. Read the report at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/employment.aspx



The National Autistic Society's Autism Hour took place last week: one week for shops and services to take simple steps for 60 minutes to be more autism-friendly.

For so many people, in a world of too much information and too little understanding, it was so much more than that:

1. We trended on Twitter
Everyone was talking about The National Autistic Society's Autism Hour. Both #AutismHour and #AutismTMI trended. So Autism Hour was one of the top five things discussed on Twitter around the world!
2. Over 8,000 hours
Lights were dimmed, background music reduced, and staff gained understanding of autism for a grand total of 8,080 National Autistic Society Autism Hours – hosted by 4,977 shops and services around the UK. That's the equivalent of 336 days, everywhere from Orkney to Guernsey, and everywhere in between.
3. All over the news
BBC News focused on The National Autistic Society's Autism Hour for a segment, and The Guardian put it on the front page! There have been over 300 news stories about Autism Hour – helping everyone to understand autism, the person, and the change they can make. Catch up at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41482019 if you missed the BBC segment on air.
4. Many shops and businesses are looking to keep holding regular quiet hours in the future.
5. Autism Hour 2018 is on the way!
Dozens of businesses have already signed up for the next one! If your local businesses missed out this year they can pre-register at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/autism-hour/sign-up.aspx. Next time you visit them, ask them to sign up.

Thank you to all the businesses who took part in The National Autistic Society's Autism Hour and to everybody who visited an Autism Hour. This was a huge step towards a more autism-friendly world, and we can't wait for what's coming next!

Managing Anger Parent Seminar

As previously announced our Managing Anger Parent Seminar on 23 November was so popular that it filled within an hour and a half (and now the waiting list is also full)! We are unlikely to be able to get another free seminar (as this was due to the funding NAS received nationally for this seminar) but it is possible we, as a branch, can buy in seminars and partly sponsor them from branch funds - although, of course, they would not be free and so we would have to make a modest charge. We are looking at this possibility and will let you know what we manage to arrange.

Active Nation

Following the very interesting and inspiring talk from Peter Hull at our last support group meeting, I promised to circulate their website address which gives details of their activity programme:

<http://activation.org.uk/active-ability/#subPageTimetable>

Talkabout Social Skills Groups

As you may know, we have not been able to run any Social Skills groups this year (but hope to next year). However, you will be interested to hear that Alex Kelly Ltd, are running a series of Social Skills groups for primary age children, secondary age young people and adults at their base in Romsey. Leaflets about these groups can be downloaded from our website at www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/Newsarchive#031017_01

Chris Packham: Asperger's and Me

For most of his life, broadcaster and naturalist Chris Packham has struggled in social situations, found it hard to forge relationships and is, he admits, 'a bit weird'. But it wasn't until he was in his 40s that he was finally diagnosed with Asperger syndrome. In this film, to be shown on BBC2 on **Tuesday 17 October** at 9.00pm, Chris lets the cameras into his autistic world.

Employability Training – Self-Employment – Is it for me?

A new autism friendly workshop for autistic adults. This workshop is aimed at those deciding whether or not self-employment* is right for them. It is aimed at those who are contemplating turning a hobby into a part time role and supplementing their income without the stresses of taking it to full employment which could impact on health and wellbeing, etc. or for those, who for confidence reasons, need incremental steps on their road into work.

Wednesday 15 November, at Autism Hampshire, Training Department, 1634 Parkway, Solent Business Park, Whiteley, Fareham, PO15 7AH. 10.00am – 12.30pm (registration & refreshments at 9.45).

- What is self-employment?
- What transferable skills are required for self-employment?
- What job roles are most typically completed in self-employment?
- The next steps—organisations that can provide further support

**This workshop does not cover the process of becoming self-employed (i.e. business plans, financial information, implications and so forth but will sign post you to these services if required)*

Prior booking is required. For further details and to book, contact kaye.adamson@autismhampshire.org.uk

Autism an Untapped Resource – Free Workshops for Business Owners, HR Directors, etc

Autism Hampshire's Employment Pathway project is running Hampshire-wide workshops to empower Business Owners, HR Directors and those with Recruitment and Selection responsibilities to better understand autism and how they can support people on the autism spectrum through the recruitment process and into work. Common traits of people on the autism spectrum include loyalty, attention to detail, high level of technical ability – assets that many employers seek, and yet many struggle to get through the recruitment and interview process because of a lack of awareness as to the simple adjustments that can be made to support candidates on the autism spectrum. Only 16% of people on the autism spectrum are in full time work and 32% in part time work – Autism Hampshire is trying to change this locally. The workshops are on the following dates – please spread the word to any businesses you know:

- **Tuesday 5 December** – Eastleigh/Southampton
- **Monday 18 December** – Whiteley
- **Tuesday 16 January** – Portsmouth north

Prior booking is required. One Candidate FREE per organisation. Subsequent candidates £25 each. For further details and to book, contact kaye.adamson@autismhampshire.org.uk. For further information visit <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/how-we-can-help/learn-new-skills.html>

PALS Computing Confidence

PALS Society is a registered charity (www.pals-society.com) operating in the Solent area that aims to help young people with autism or learning difficulties get employment in the IT sector.

It is launching its PALS Computing Confidence programme which aims to connect their young people who love computers with older people who struggle with IT. They think of it as having a favourite niece or nephew to help out. There are three strands to their programme:

1. They are asking for donations of broken or unwanted computers that their young people can strip down, test, and rebuild into working computers. They will sell these 'at cost' locally to people who would benefit from having a computer but cannot afford one.
2. They run Computing Confidence sessions where they help people become more confident using computers.
3. They run IT surgeries where their young people can help with specific questions, can speed up a computer that is running slow, remove viruses or irritating adverts, or even repair a broken computer.

At the moment, they are looking for computer donations (these can be dropped off at Tesco in Quay Street, Fareham), or perhaps you would like to organise a local collection point near you? Also needed are IT-savvy volunteers to help oversee the surgeries.

Finally, they would like to speak with the families or carers of any young person (16–25) with autism or a learning difficulty who is interested in a career with computers or who would simply like to have fun and help others learn computing skills.

For more information please contact Steve Bond, phone: 07549 535159; email: steve@pals-society.com

Autism and Neurodiversity Toolkit for staff and managers

Autism Alliance has developed a toolkit with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to help staff and managers work more effectively with people on the autism spectrum. This resource supports awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Conditions and provides practical guidance for supporting people who have neurodiverse conditions into employment. You can access this toolkit here: <https://www.autismandneurodiversitytoolkit.org/>

ASD New Forest meetings

This group meet on Wednesdays, 10.30 to 12.30 at The Place, Ringwood on **15 November** and **13 December**. For more information email asdnewforest@gmail.com.

Waterside Autistic Spectrum Support for Parents/Carers (WASSP)

This support group is based at Cornerstone URC Church in Hythe but is currently not running as they are seeking a leader to run the group. If you would be interested in taking this forward, please contact Julia Cross on 02380 207623 or email familiesmatter@cornerstonehytheurc.org.uk for more details.

Online ASD courses

The Curly Hair Project is a social enterprise based in the UK, which aims to help people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). All their work is based on personal, real life experiences. It offers helpful, inspiring workshops, training and information for individuals (with or without a diagnosis), families, schools, professionals and employers. Four webinars are being held as follows:

- **Thursday 2 November**– ASD and Sensory Processing
- **Tuesday 7 November**– Autistic Meltdowns and Shutdowns
- **Sunday 12 November**– ASD and Anxiety
- **Tuesday 28 November**– ASD and Socialising

For full details, <https://thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk/events/>

Alice's tea party

Fun for all the family! For children/young people with SEND (ages 0-25) & their siblings. Half-day session to include interactive, multi-sensory walkabout performance and lunchtime games, craft activities & sensory tent (plenty of parking, hoist & changing facilities, secure venues). £5 per person. At Exeter House School, Salisbury, **Monday 23 October** (12:45–3.15pm) and **Tuesday 24 October** (11:15am–1:45pm or 12:45–3:15pm). For more information visit www.head2headtheatre.co.uk/family-holiday-activities/october-2017

Understanding the school experiences of siblings of children with autism

Do you have a brother or sister with autism? And are you in secondary school aged 11 to 16 years old? Or do you know anyone that meets these criteria? Alexandra Gregory is a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying the Doctorate in Educational Psychology at the University of Southampton. She is also a sibling to someone with autism. As part of her course, she is carrying out a thesis/research study that aims to explore the school experiences of siblings of children with autism. If you are/know a secondary school aged sibling to someone with autism (the child with autism can be any age), she would be really grateful for your participation. Taking part involves completion of online questionnaires with a £5 voucher incentive and will really help to further our understanding in this area. If you would like to find out more about her study and/or would like to take part, please email her at ag2q15@soton.ac.uk and she will send you the information sheet and questionnaire link.

New Sensory Room Opens at St Mary's

Southampton Football Club, in partnership with Virgin Media, has opened a new Sensory Room at St Mary's Stadium. The Sensory Room is one of the first in the Premier League and provides a calming environment for fans of all ages with sensory differences, or who may find the atmosphere of a football stadium challenging. The club has worked with Autism Hampshire to create the space, which it is hoped will enhance the match day experience for existing fans, while also encouraging new supporters and families, who would not previously have considered attending a live game, to visit. For some time, Southampton's Supporter Relations Team has worked with families of children with autism spectrum disorder, anxiety and other sensory conditions to make their visits as successful and enjoyable as possible, and the new Sensory Room will provide a calming environment for those fans to experience the club's matches. Any fans who feel they can benefit from the Sensory Room should contact the Supporter Relations team on 02380 711980 or supporterrelations@saintsfc.co.uk. Places in the Sensory Room will be available for all first-team fixtures, and are subject to availability. Proof of eligibility, in the form of a letter from a doctor/consultant or similar, may be required.

Reminders:

Parent Forum – Alex Kelly Ltd

Speech therapist, Alex Kelly, is running a programme of seminars at Speaking Space, Fleming House, Alma Road, Romsey, SO51 SEP from 7.00 to 9.00pm during the year. Entry is a £5.00 contribution at the door towards the costs and cake! All the dates and topics can be found at <http://alexkelly.biz/2017/03/15/parent-forums-2017>. If you are interested, email office@alexkelly.biz or phone on 023 8098 7134.

Clarks Trials Quiet Hour Appointments

This service is available in the Southampton, Above Bar store on Sundays, 9:30am – 10:30am to offer consumers a quiet and relaxed environment for fitting appointments. You are also encouraged to bring toys, sensory aids, tablets and other appropriate items to ease the experience. To ensure that your appointment goes as smoothly as possible, you are encouraged to make an appointment in advance by calling the Southampton store on 023 8022 4515.

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

Both shopping centres now run a *Sensory Sunday* on the last Sunday of each month. Most of the shops lower their lighting levels and reduce the volume of music and announcements during the day. All customer-facing Swan Centre staff have undergone training from our NAS Branch to help them understand the issues that people with autism face in a busy shopping centre and have an understanding on how to support customers with sensory issues.

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 (<https://www.dimensions-uk.org/families/autism-friendly-environments/autism-friendly-screenings/vue-autism-friendly-cinema-screenings>) hold special SEN sessions and Autism friendly screenings.

Inspiring You Inclusion Weekends

At Avon Tyrrell Outdoor Centre, Bransgore, BH23 8EE: Enjoy two nights in the main house, a range of exciting adventure activities and delicious meals to help you refuel. Have a go at Climbing, Archery, Pioneering, Bushcraft, Kayaking and more... The activities are led by experienced instructors who will support you and help you challenge yourself, build confidence and try something new. These *Inspiring You* events are a fantastic opportunity for families to spend time in a safe and friendly environment, with specialised equipment and fully trained staff. Thanks to funding from Hampshire County Council, they are able to offer this for just £55pp. If you live outside of Hampshire, they would love you to join them too, so please contact them for alternative pricing. Breaks are being held on **27–29 October, 8–10 December** and **15–17 December**. For details and to book, contact H info@ukyouth.org or online by visiting https://www.avontyrrell.org.uk/inclusion_weekends.html or call 01425 672347.

Visiting the Hampshire Countryside and Exploring the New Forest by Bus booklets

We still have a few of these booklets left which will be available at our next support group meeting. These are designed for families and teachers of children with autism and can also be downloaded free from <http://autismandnature.org.uk/>

Free Autism Support and Information Programme for parents in Hampshire and Southampton

Hampshire CAMHS, Southampton City Council and Autism Hampshire invite you to a free programme of sessions offering learning, support, and advice in various aspects of autism during your child's assessment, or following their diagnosis. Each session will cover a different aspect of the condition with the aim of increasing your understanding of your child's unique way of looking at the world, and how this may show itself in how they behave. If you prefer a less public forum, you may also book a 5-minute 1:1 slot with any of the panel members. These groups take place in each of the seven Hampshire CAMHS areas and in the city of Southampton – full details and dates at www.shantsnas.org.uk/Support/camhs

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 and soft play and lots more activities. Suitable for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs aged 3-16 years. Siblings are also welcome. There is no charge, this is a free session for all families! Donations for refreshments. For more information contact Claire Headington on 02380 721234 or 07823 353887 or email claireheadington@roseroad.org.uk. The sessions are funded by BBC Children in Need.

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. The venue 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 will be held from 9.00 to 10.00am on Sundays: **29 October, 26 November** and **17 December**.

Evening sessions will be held from 6.00 to 8.00pm on Wednesdays: **1 November** and **6 December**.

For more information or to book, call Jessica on 02380 018336 or email jessica.campbell@partyman.co.uk

Minecraft and Meltdowns Fun Fridays

Relax with your friends and family over coffee and meet members of Aspergers Adventures–Minecraft and Meltdowns. Plus, from Dobble to Warhammer, the expert Games Masters from Board in the City will help you rediscover how fun board games can be. Only £1 each to access the huge games library. Barista style coffee; WIFI; Meepcraft demos; homemade food and drinks; gluten-free and vegan options; quiet room; be yourself! At Board in the City, 38–40 Onslow Road, Southampton, SO14 0JG from 6.00 to 8.00pm on **13 & 27 Oct** and **10 & 24 Nov**.

Get ready for World Autism Awareness Week 2018

World Autism Awareness Week 2018 will be **26 March–2 April**! If you would like to keep up-to-date with important information about the week, please sign up using the NAS' enquiry form at www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/world-autism-awareness-week/film.aspx.

Dimensions autism-friendly cinema screenings

Dimensions work with ODEON, Cineworld, Vue and Showcase to host Autism Friendly Screenings at over 250 cinemas nationwide. See what autism-friendly cinema screenings are coming to a cinema near you at <https://www.dimensions-uk.org/families/autism-friendly-environments/autism-friendly-screenings/>

Family Information and Services Hub

To view activities taking place in your local area, visit

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

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/>

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 the Hampshire Local Autism Directory at <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/directory/#stepbystepguides>

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

Friends of In Touch

This registered charity in Eastleigh, funded by the BIG Lottery, supports children and young people with autism. 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 self-confidence, self-esteem and coping skills. Lots of fun 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 21). Both groups are currently full but anyone interested in being added to the waiting list should contact info@friendsofintouch.org.uk or call 07474 539539. Both 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.

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 £2000.**

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.