

Dear Friends

Welcome to this month's newsletter. We hope you have had a good and not too stressful summer.

This month we have details of our activities over the next month or so plus other information that may be of interest, including news of the grant we have just received to run a consultation on mental health and autism – a particularly important subject. Also, if you have had experience of the assessment process for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) then please respond to the two surveys detailed below by the end of this week – we have recently had evidence of this process being very stressful and not working well for people with autism, so feedback is very important.

Support Group Meeting

Our next support group meeting is on **Monday 19 September** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm. We welcome as our guest, **Amy Green, a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist** who works for Alex Kelly Ltd. As a company, they have developed a way to set social skills targets and measure and report on progress. This is forming the basis of some research into the effectiveness of social skills work in schools. Several of their schools have had excellent feedback because of this from Ofsted (the inspector of schools in England) and Estyn (the inspector of schools in Wales). Amy will cover a basic introduction to the area/theory of social skills, including assessment and a few key things around intervention.

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.

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

Family Youth Club

Our next Youth Club takes place on **Saturday 1 October** 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

Our next club is also on **Saturday 1 October** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church.



This is for children with autism from 8 to 13 years of age. The club is currently full but 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 Christmas will be posted on our website shortly, meanwhile, for more details, email aspsg.shants@gmail.com or contact Sue (023 8043 2612) or Tracey (07532 282301).

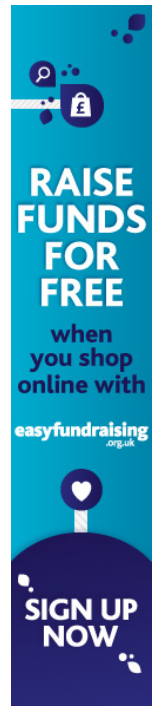
Tony Attwood conference

As you will know, booking is now open for our conference with Professor Tony Attwood on **Friday 19 May 2017** at Winchester Guildhall. To date, over 200 tickets have been sold, so if you hope to attend, please do not delay in booking your places before we sell out! Please also pass on information to any professionals you think may be interested in coming along.

We have endeavoured to keep the prices as low as possible and tickets include refreshments and a buffet lunch. We have special prices for parents/carers, people with autism, Teaching Assistants, accredited Hampshire Autism Ambassadors and other professionals.

For full details of this exciting event and to book, please visit our website at www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/TonyA

We do hope you are able to make it to this event. Tony last visited us in 2011 (which was a sell-out) and we are delighted to be able to welcome him to the UK again in 2017. His programme will cover many aspects of autism across all age groups.





Keep up to date with the National Autistic Society's campaign to challenge the myths, misconceptions and stereotypes that make autistic people feel so isolated and make society feel so unwelcoming. The time has come to end this and bring about a lasting change in the public's understanding of autism. Visit www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi.aspx

Consultation on mental health and autism

Even though mental illness can be more common for people with autism than in the general population, the mental health of people on the spectrum is often overlooked. Anxiety disorders are very common amongst people with autism.

- Roughly 40% have symptoms of at least one anxiety disorder at any time, compared with up to 15% in the general population.
- Understandably, this can lead to sadness or depression – one reason why a mixture of anxiety and depression is common.
- Mental health is a current priority issue for the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board.

We are pleased to announce that our branch, in partnership with Hampshire Autism Voice (HAV – the parent/carer/people-with-autism group of the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board) has just been awarded a grant from Healthwatch Hampshire to investigate ways in which mental health issues are addressed in the autistic community, identify any barriers that exist and find a positive way forward.

This will take the form of an online consultation during **October**, two focus groups (one of which will be at our October evening support group on **Monday 17 October**) and some 1 to 1 interviews. Additionally, we hope to hold a focus group of relevant professionals to feed into the consultation during November. It is also planned to produce a short film of the main findings of the consultation. More information about this and how you can get involved will follow shortly.

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

You may recall we had copies of these booklets available at recent meetings – in fact we still have a few left which will be available to our next support group meeting. If you have used either booklets, which are designed for families and teachers of children with autism, the authors would really value your feedback. If you can spare a few minutes to help with this, please email David Blakesley as soon as possible at david.blakesley@autismandnature.org.uk or use the feedback form at www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/Newsarchive#130916_04.

Both booklets can also be downloaded free from the Autism and Nature website at <http://autismandnature.org.uk/>

Attendance at Hampshire SENCo conferences

We attended these five conferences in June and July with our joint stand with Autism Hampshire, Hampshire Autism Voice, HCC and the Hampshire Autism Ambassador Scheme. We are pleased to report that many attendees signed up for more information from our branch and showed interest in the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board's initiative to have an Autism Ambassador in every school in Hampshire (www.ascambassador.org.uk).

Friends of In Touch

As you may know, we have a very close association with this charity (with both of us being trustees). Therefore, we are delighted to announce that the Big Lottery fund have just announced that *Friends of In Touch* will receive five years of funding following a recent grant application. The funding takes effect from January 2017.

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. Lots of fun activities include cooking, arts and crafts, bushcraft, games, construction toys for the Junior group and cookery, pamper evenings, film nights, quizzes, bowling, book club, sports, meals out and BBQs for the Senior group.

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). Holiday groups are also planned. For more details visit www.friendsofintouch.org.uk. Anyone interested should contact Chris@friendsofintouch.org.uk or call 07474 539539 prior to attending the groups.

Autism-friendly screening

Harbour Lights Picturehouse in Southampton is presenting an autism-friendly screening of **The BFG** [PG] at 10.30am on **Sunday 9 October**. This is especially for people on the autism spectrum or with other special needs and their families, friends and carers. For more information visit https://www.picturehouses.com/cinema/Harbour_Lights/film/the-bfg-2d. Harbour Lights are very keen to rejuvenate their autism-friendly screenings and we are currently talking to them about a number of possibilities.

Share your views with Government on Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

The Government is conducting an independent review of how the assessment process for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is working. A call for evidence has been launched as part of this review to gather the views of individuals who have claimed PIP for themselves, or on someone's behalf, about their experiences of the process. Sharing your views will help to inform the review's final conclusions on the effectiveness of the PIP process, which will be presented to government.

Visit <http://survey.dwp.gov.uk/index.php?sid=63591&lang=en> to respond online. Alternatively, you can submit a response by post to PIP Independent Review Team, Department for Work and Pensions, Floor 4, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA. This call for evidence closes at 5.00pm on **Friday 16 September**.

You can also let *Independent Lives* know about your experiences of PIP. They are responding to this call for evidence and are keen to include experiences of local disabled people in their response. Tell them how PIP has supported you to live independently by completing their online survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PIPSurveyIL or by calling 01903 219482. If you complete their survey you will be entered into a prize draw to win £30 Amazon voucher.

GO! Club Mini's and GO! Club

These two clubs, GO! Club Mini's for 3 to 7 years and GO! Club for 8 to 18 years, are running in Eastleigh every two weeks up until 21 December with something new every week. Siblings are welcome, this is a short break so parents can leave their children with their friendly and trained team. Children can take part, make friends and have fun in a safe and friendly environment.

You can access the Eastleigh and Mini's club pages and event dates at <http://www.greatopportunities.org.uk/eastleigh-go-club/> and <http://www.greatopportunities.org.uk/eastleigh-go-club-minis/>

To book places on any club session until Christmas, call 01256 636288 or email bookings@greatopportunities.org.uk.

New Forest AS/HFA Parent Support Group

The next parent support group meeting will be held on **Thursday 22 September**, 7.00 to 9.00pm, at Milford on Sea Library, Village Hall, Park Road, Milford on Sea, SO41 0QU. There is a large 'Pay and Display' car park in the centre of the village, just around the corner from the Library. At this meeting the topic is 'Teaching and Learning Social Skills – Top 5 Favourites'. All parents and family members welcome. For more information and to let them know if you will be attending, please email office.sjtealconsultancy@gmail.com.

Hampshire Constabulary Disability Roadshow, Hamble

Hampshire Constabulary is holding their Disability Roadshow on **Friday 30 September**, 10.30am-2.30pm, at Police Training College, Hamble Lane, Hamble, Southampton, SO31 4TS. Go along and meet your local police officers and staff. Enjoy games and activities, police uniforms, vehicles and more. Save the date!

Low cost art, photography/film and drama activities in Fareham

This **September** and **October**, Sticks are running a series of free workshops from their base in Fareham. These workshops include photography/film/collage making and a theatre workshop for Adults with ASC and learning difficulties, and children with SEN and their families. A history talk from a local historian is for an over 60s group. For further information and a social story of each activity, visit <http://sticksgallery.co.uk/heritagetrail/>.

Transitions: Navigating the barriers along the Autistic Journey

The Autism Diagnostic Research Centre (ADRC) is hosting its first major conference entitled 'TRANSITIONS: Navigating the barriers along the Autistic Journey' on **18 October 2016** at Saint Mary's Stadium, Britannia Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO14 5FP. The keynote speakers are:

- Dr Francesca Happé, Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, Director of the MRC Social, Genetic & Developmental Psychiatry Centre, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, School of King's College London
- Professor Digby Tantam, Emeritus Professor at the University of Sheffield and Consultant Psychiatrist at Dilemma Consultancy Ltd
- Dr Ewelina Rydzewska, Research Associate at the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory

The programme will also include video presentations of patients that ADRC has diagnosed talking about the transitional challenges and barriers they have faced.

Visit www.adrc.co.uk/conference-2016 for full details and for fast, easy, secure booking.

Delegate Rate £195 per person. Concession rates are available for people with autism, parent/carers and students – please contact: 023 8020 2631.

New report shows parents still face long battles to get right support for children

The National Autistic Society's new education report finds that far too many parents and carers of autistic children in England face long and exhausting battles to get the education and support their children need.

School Report 2016 is based on surveys of around 1,000 parents, carers and children and young people on the autism spectrum. Two years on from the introduction of a new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) system in England, the NAS wanted to find out whether the new system is meeting their needs.

To download the report visit www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2016-09-02-school-report-2016.aspx

Save the Date! Special Needs Information Day 2017, Yateley

Support4SEND and Parent Voice are pleased to announce that their next Special Needs Information Day will be held on **Saturday 25 March 2017**, 10.00am to 3.00pm, at Yateley School, School Lane, Yateley, GU46 6NW. They have been holding these free events for many years, giving families and practitioners the opportunity to gather information about support and services available across the county. They have become increasingly popular, not only with families but also with exhibitors, who welcome the opportunity it gives them to meet families and offer their support.

The whole event is free to visitors, other than refreshments and food, which will be available to buy. There will be ample free parking on site and disabled access. Several workshops and talks will be on offer, alongside the exhibition, and further details about these will be published in the coming months. They also hope to offer activities for children and young people. Our branch will be there with our stand.

If you would like to know more about the event, or to see the report about last year's event at Horndean, please do register your interest by emailing enquiries.support4send@hants.gov.uk, and they'll be in touch. Support4SEND and Parent Voice look forward to seeing you there!

Marks & Spencer launch autism-friendly school wear

The National Autistic Society is delighted to have teamed up with Marks & Spencer to support the development of their brand new 'Easy Dressing' school uniform collection.

Following a product development campaign called 'Inventors Wanted', M&S received lots of feedback asking them to do more for people who struggle with clothing – especially children on the autism spectrum. After consulting with professionals working with autistic children, they decided to develop an 'Easy Dressing' school uniform range.

As well as working with the charity to develop the range, M&S will also be donating 10% from every item sold to The National Autistic Society. Visit M&S website at www.marksandspencer.com/s/kids/school-uniform/help-and-inspiration/easy-dressing-school-uniform for further information.

Reminders:

Gambado, Eastleigh – exclusive admission times for SEN guests

Gambado hold SEN indoor soft-play sessions where they welcome young children with all types of disabilities and special educational needs at Unit L10, Swan Leisure Centre, Eastleigh, SO50 5SF from 9.00 to 10.00am. Upcoming dates are **Sundays 18 September, 16 October, 20 November and 18 December**. Standard child ticket (includes 1 adult) £5 and additional adult £1. For more information or to book, visit www.gambado.com/events/eastleigh/sen-sessions or call 02380 018336.

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/>.

Hampshire Specialist Parenting Support Services (HSPSS)

The Hampshire Specialist Parenting Support Service (HSPSS) has been commissioned by the Children and Maternity Collaborative of the five Hampshire CCGs. The service provides parenting programmes across Hampshire both in a group setting and individually in family homes for parents/carers who have children aged 5-17 that:

- Are diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Are displaying troubling or challenging behaviours associated with mild-moderate conduct disorder
- Are teenagers displaying anti-social behaviour including child to parent violence.

Please either email hampshire.parenting@barnardos.org.uk or call 01489 799178 to find out more.

Avon Tyrrell Inspiring You Events 2016-17

Avon Tyrrell has released its Inspiring You programme for 2016-17. These are held at Avon Tyrrell UK Youth Outdoor Activity Centre, Bransgore, BH23 8EE. There will be a wide variety of activities available. The dates can be found at <https://www.avontyrrell.org.uk/IYou.html>. In addition to the Inspiring You weekends, they also offer additional support to enable young people to attend Funday sessions throughout the year, which are a great way to develop independence and confidence, while experiencing some of the activities Avon Tyrrell has to offer.

The Monday Night Project

The Monday Night Project is a weekly social group for young people with additional needs aged 10 to 14 years, based at The Box Youth Centre, Hedge End, every Monday, 5.30pm to 8.00pm. It will help young people with autistic spectrum difficulties/SEN or confidence issues. Young people take part in cookery, arts and crafts, table tennis, films, games, trips, music, recreation and fun activities! Membership is by referral only. This may be through parent/carer, school, self/young person or partner agency. For more information or a referral form please contact Youth Team Manager, Donna Love, on 01489 789638 (Mob: 07534 563424) or email donna.love@hedgeend-tc.gov.uk.

NAS Surrey Branch information day

Saturday 1 October is NAS Surrey Branch's information day about Women and Girls with Autism. Speakers include Sarah Hendrickx, Dr Louise Connor, Bettina Stott and Sarah Wild, plus other people who have autism and an open forum. Leatherhead Leisure Centre, 10.00am to 4.30pm. Tickets, including lunch, for parents/carers/people with autism are £30. For Professionals (including care staff): £60. Book at <http://www.nassurreybranch.org/women-and-girls.html>. For more information contact Sara Truman at conference@mugsy.org or phone 07989 315609.

Adult support groups

Autism Hampshire's Serendipity Social Group Project now has a Facebook page, to keep you up to date with social group dates and activities: <https://www.facebook.com/Serendipity-Social-Groups-Project-1708225532774212/timeline>.

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/>

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/myworld.

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 well 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

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.