



Newsletter

Welcome to the December/January issue of Surrey News

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This issue has news about several courses or workshops that the Branch is running early next year to help parents learn more about issues such as behaviour management and claiming Disability Living Allowance.

We also have more ways for people to give their views, about education, CAMHS and branch activities. We know how busy everyone is, but there really is strength in numbers, and by adding your voice to those of others, you can make a difference to services in Surrey and beyond.

As Christmas approaches, please remember that you can raise money for the branch without it costing you a penny by doing your online shopping via Easyfundraising – you might even get discounts for yourself at the same time. It really is easy, you just register on the site and then you can shop with all the main retailers such as Amazon, Argos, eBay and lots of other sites. The branch gets a donation from the retailer for every purchase you make, and there are subscriber offers which save you money from some stores. To shop and fundraise for us, go to: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/nassurrey/>

Don't forget that you can get the latest news and information and seek support and information from around 900 parents and professionals by joining our online forum: <http://www.nassurreybranch.org/moderated-email-forum.html>

Many thanks,

Sara Truman
Chair (volunteer)
NAS Surrey Branch
General email: info@nassurreybranch.org
Website: www.nassurreybranch.org
Twitter: @NASSurreyBranch
Donations: www.justgiving.com/nassurreybranch

NAS Surrey Branch Contacts

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with the name of the event in the subject line

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Rachel Pearson
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Fathers' Group:

Martin Trenaman
trenamans@talktalk.net

Parents of Adults' Group

Hilary Dyce
hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk

Postal library Service

Susan Salters
nassblibrary@gmail.com

POSTAL ADDRESS

*Please note, no NAS staff or
volunteers work at this address*

NAS Surrey Branch
c/o Walton Charities,
2 Quintet,
Churchfield Road,
Walton on Thames KT12 2TZ

Other Useful Contacts

*Unless clearly stated, organisations are not
endorsed by NAS Surrey Branch or the NAS.*

NAS web site: www.autism.org.uk

NAS Helpline: Tel: 0808 800 4104 (10am –
4pm), or email autismhelpline@nas.org.uk

NAS Parent-to-Parent line 0808 800 4106

NAS national membership: 020 7903 3563
Email membership@nas.org.uk

Education Support

NAS Education Rights: 0808 800 4102

SSIASS Parent Support: 01737 737300

www.sendadvice.surrey.org.uk

SOS!SEN charity to support EHCPs etc, Tel:
020 8538 3731, Web: www.sossen.org.uk

Family Support & Representation

Portage – support for children with additional
needs under 3.5 years 0300 200 1004

Family Voice Surrey parent representation
www.familyvoicesurrey.org

Parent Programmes

PAT-P (Parenting Autism Together –
Preschool) for parents of under 5s. Replaces
Early Bird course.

Cygnets for parents of children aged 5 – 19.
Contact Vicky Jones, email:

courses@sendteachingschool.co.uk

Tel: 20 8330 3009 ex 237

Redhill CAMHS group for parents of children
with ASDs, tel: 01737-287002

Activities for children and young people

NAS Resource Centre, Godalming: 01483
521743 SEResourceCentres@nas.org.uk

interAKtive, Epsom-based charity for children
with ASDs and other communication
difficulties 07876 762178

www.interaktive.org.uk

Adult Services

Surrey Adult Social Svcs: 0300 200 1005

NAS Surrey Service Tel: 01483 861600,
email: surrey.service@nas.org.uk

Employment Support

Employability for people with disabilities
including ASDs Tel: 01483 806806, email:
employability@surreychoices.com

Benefits advice

NAS Tips page – via www.autism.org.uk

Cerebra DLA guide: <http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/>
0800 328 1159

Workshop on Behaviour in Guildford January 2018

We still have places available for our workshop on behaviour in children with ASDs on **Thursday 18th January 2018** from 8.00 – 9.00 p.m. Coffee will be served from 7.45pm. Booking essential.

The workshop is being delivered by Sue Goldman, who has taught autistic children for over 20 years at locations including the NAS Sybil Elgar School, The Little Group and Papillon House. She has experience in the 'Attention Autism' approach, Makaton and TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children).

To book please email events@nassurreybranch.org with 'Behaviour Workshop' in the subject line. You can let us know specific issues you would like Sue to address prior to the session.

Cygnets Courses Hosted by NAS Surrey Branch in 2018

We are once again hosting two 2-day Cygnet programmes for parents of children aged 5 – 18 with autism. They are being run by trainer Liz Waters:

Dorking – Weds 7th & Thurs 8th March
Guildford – Tues 8th & Weds 9th May

The two-day programmes are designed to:

- Increase understanding of autistic spectrum conditions
- Help parents / carers develop their knowledge of how a child on the autistic spectrum experiences the world and what drives their behaviour
- Learn about practical strategies to use with children
- Find out about relevant ASD resources
- Let parents / carers meet with others to gain support and learn from each other.

Topics covered include autism & diagnosis; communication; sensory issues; understanding behaviour and managing behavior.

This two-day course is FREE for families in Surrey to attend. **BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.** To reserve your place, we require a £10 deposit per person but your deposit will be returned on completion of both days. We reserve the right to retain the deposits of people who have booked but do not attend. To book your place, please email Sarah Mead at events@nassurreybranch.org with 'Cygnet' and your preferred location in the subject line.

DLA Workshop for Parents in Leatherhead

We are hosting a one-day workshop about Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children by Cerebra, the charity that supports children with neurological conditions from **10.00am – 2.00pm on Tues 20th February in Leatherhead.**

The workshop, run by Cerebra trainer David Williams, aims to give parents and carers the skills to be able to complete a DLA claim form themselves. **PLEASE NOTE: we can only run this workshop if we receive at least 12 bookings due to costs and the distance that the trainer has to travel.**

The workshop will help with common problem areas in DLA forms, bust some of the myths about claiming and help you assess whether you are getting the correct rate of DLA for your child if you already claim it and how to challenge it if not. David will also briefly touch on related benefits.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL – please email events@nassurreybranch.org with 'DLA Workshop' in the subject line to request a booking form. Suggested donation is £10 per person, part of which will be donated to Cerebra. Please let us know if you have trouble paying.

NAS Surrey Branch Mini Survey

We are planning our (limited) resources and budgets for 2018 and would like the views of members so that we know what the most important things are for the branch to do to help support families. Just a reminder, the NAS Surrey Branch is run by parent volunteers and is focused on providing support for parents and carers – we are not involved with the children's' and youth clubs or ASSIST services which are run by the NAS Resource Centre - a separate part of the NAS run by professionals

Please spend just a few minutes completing the short survey here to help us prioritise how we use volunteers' time and spend our money, which all comes from donations:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PS3CF23>

Seminar for Parents of Young People Thinking of Going to Uni

We are hosting another seminar for parents/carers of people with an ASD who are considering going to university on **Monday 29th January, 10.00am – 2.00pm in Guildford**. It aims to give parents an insight into some of the difficulties people with an ASD can experience in the transition to Uni; explain what support is available; how to get it, and how to navigate the process. Topics covered will include:

- Things to consider when deciding whether (and which) University is a good choice
- Difficulties often experienced by ASD students
- Sources of support at University
- Disabled Students' Allowance and Assessment Process
- Strategies for Managing at Uni

The seminar is being delivered by AS Mentoring www.asmentoring.co.uk a specialist organisation which works with adults with ASDs to support them in higher education and in the workplace, to find and retain work. For more information about whether the seminar may be relevant for you, contact Rachel Pearson rachel.pearson@asmentoring.co.uk.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL with £10 deposit which can be refunded on attendance or donated (usual cost of the course is £48). We reserve the right to retain the deposit of people who do not attend. Please email events@nassurreybranch.org with "Uni Course" in the subject line for a booking form.

NAS After School & Youth Clubs – New Criteria

The After-school and Youth clubs run by the NAS Resource Centre now have to be pre-paid (£5 per session). They are open to children and young people aged 5 – 18 living in Surrey. 60% of places available are for those in mainstream and 40% can have one-to-one support.

Children's Clubs

Godalming – Tues 6.00 – 8.00 p.m. (age 5 – 11)

Reigate - Thurs 6.00 - 8.00 p.m. (age 7-14)

Staines - Tues 5.00 – 7.00 p.m. (age 5 – 11)

Youth clubs (Age 11 - 18 year olds)

Woking - Thursday 7.00 - 9.00 p.m.

Godalming – Thursday 7.00 – 9.00 p.m.

All Ages (5 – 18 years old)

Horsham – Thursdays 5.30 – 7.30 p.m.

Please contact the NAS SE Resource Centre direct for details and a booking form by emailing SEResourceCentres@nas.org.uk or tel: **01483 521 743 (option 3)**.

Charity Football Day in Haslemere in aid of NAS Surrey Branch

On the 10th December, there will be a charity football event and fun day at Haslemere Rugby Club, Woolmer Hill, Haslemere, GU27 1QA to raise money for the NAS Surrey Branch and Young Minds, the charity that works to help young people who suffer with mental illness. The day is in memory of Jasmine Bush who died in August after a two and a half year battle with depression and anxiety. She had been diagnosed with autism and PDA.

There will be four teams participating in a tournament, plus a raffle, an auction, a bouncy castle, face-painting, food and a bar as well as plenty of other activities going on to raise funds. For details, go to <http://www.eventgoat.co.uk/haslemere/jaz-bush-football-charity-day/> or contact Ben Susans bensusans@aol.com.

Surrey CC Webinars with Families of Children with SEND

Surrey County Council are developing a Virtual Family Reference Group to engage with families with children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The group will be established through a series of webinars across the year and the aim is to involve a broader range of children, young people, parents and carers in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of SEND services.

Before they launch, they would like to find out what topics families are most interested in. Their aim is to launch the webinars in the New Year once they have collated survey responses and established a timetable, which will be published and promoted in advance. To find out more go to: <https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/44676a14/>

SOS!SEN Conference - Speakers Announced

The charity that supports families dealing with educational issues for their special needs child is running a conference for parents entitled '**Changing Lives**' on **Saturday 13th January 2018** at Amnesty International in London. Speakers are:

Morning Plenary session:

The Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP

Professor Dorothy Bishop - leading researcher in the field of specific language impairment

Adam Friel - solicitor

Mark Greaves - barrister

Angela Jackman - solicitor

Louise Williams - Sensory qualified Occupational Therapist

Eleanor Wright - solicitor and co-ordinator for SOSSEN

In the afternoon, parents will have the chance to attend two break-out workshops:

- **16-25 years - what help is out there?** Adam Friel Solicitor, Education Law, Sinclairs Law
- **Exclusions** - Mark Greaves Barrister at Old Square Chambers and Former Director of the Schools Exclusions Project
- **SEN and Social Care** - Angela Jackman and Eleanor Wright Solicitor, Education Law and Coordinator of SOS!SEN
- **Chill out and Chat** - A chance to speak with other parents and professionals and an opportunity to ask any SEN-related questions.

Tickets are £45 per person, which will also include lunch and refreshments, via Eventbrite <http://sossen15event.eventbrite.com> SOS!SEN is a national charity receiving over 4,000 helpline calls per year, operating nine free walk-in advice centres around the UK, as well as workshops and one-to-one advice. <http://www.sossen.org.uk/>

NAS SURREY BRANCH CALENDAR DEC 2017 – Jan 2018

NAS Surrey Branch local meetings are a great way to meet up with other families who understand autism to share experiences, find out information and seek support. Please always contact the volunteer host before going along to make sure nothing has changed. Most meetings run during term-time only.

If you can't see a meeting in your area, why not host one yourself? To find out more, contact us at info@nassurreybranch.org

Guildford – Caffe Nero, 66 North Street, Guildford GU1 4AH

Contact Sara Truman nas@mugsy.org 01483 822630

- Mon 8th Jan 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon
- Fri 2nd Feb 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon

Woking – Wyevale Garden Centre, Egley Road, Mayford, Woking GU22 0NH

Contact Sarah Norris sarah4ian@ntlworld.com 07543 920917

- Wed 17th Jan, 10.00am – 12noon
- Wed 21st Feb, 10.00am – 12noon

Hinchley Wood – Hinchley Wood Primary School, Claygate Lane, Esher KT10 0AQ

Contact Juliette Sturge juliettesturge@gmail.com

- Date to be confirmed, Jan 2.00 – 3.15 p.m.

Weybridge/ Cobham

Contact Fi Phippen f.phippen@talktalk.net Tel: 07377 549490

- Fri 15th Dec 8.00 – 10.00 p.m, Oatlands Chaser, Oatlands Chase, Weybridge
- Fri 26th Jan 9.30 a.m. – 11.30 noon Silvermere Golf Club, Redhill Road, KT11 1EF
- Fri 23rd Feb 8.00 – 10.00 p.m, Oatlands Chaser, Oatlands Chase, Weybridge

Frensham – The Holly Bush, Frensham, GU10 3BJ.

Contact Christine Malik christinemalik@btinternet.com or Bonnie Noyce jbnoyce@yahoo.com

- Mon 18th Dec, 9.15 – 11.30 a.m.
- Mon 22nd Jan 9.15 – 11.30 a.m.
- Mon 26th Feb 9.15 – 11.30 a.m.

Godalming – In a member's home

Contact Cindy Barry cindybarry75@gmail.com, Tel: 07961 279518

- Mon 11th Dec 9.30 – 11.30 a.m.
- Mon 15th Jan 9.30 – 11.30 a.m. (tbc)
- Mon 19th Feb 9.30 – 11.30 a.m.

Redhill – In a member's home

Contact Helen Ruffhead 01737 212043 h.ruffhead@ntlworld.com

- Thurs 25th Jan 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon

Parents of Girls Group – Woking and Guildford

Contact Rachel Pearson racheldpearson@gmail.com

An active group for parents of girls that meets approximately once a month during term-time.

- Fri 8th Dec, 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon Woking
- Tues 23rd Jan 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon Guildford
- Fri 9th Feb 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon Woking

CALENDAR / *Cont'd*

Dads' Group – In a member's home

Contact Martin Trenaman trenamans@talktalk.net

A quarterly social meeting for fathers of children or adults on the ASD spectrum.

- Fri 12th Jan. Venue to be confirmed.

Spouses and Partners Group, Guildford

Contact Sara Truman 01483 822630 nas@mugsy.org

Evening meetings for the partners of people on the spectrum (no diagnosis necessary).

- Weds 31st Jan 8.00 – 9.30 p.m.
- Weds 28th Feb 8.00 – 9.30 p.m.

Parents of Adults Groups – Locations around Surrey

A chance to meet parents and carers who have an adult offspring on the spectrum for an informal meal or drink and to seek support. Meetings run throughout the year.

- Weds 6th Dec – Farnham - contact Hilary Dyce 01276 66032 hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk
- Thurs 4th Jan – Camberley - contact Hilary Dyce 01276 66032 hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk
- Weds 7th Feb – Guildford – contact Sara Truman 01483 822630 nas@mugsy.org

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Evening Group for Mums?

Long-standing member Helen Trenaman is keen to set up a group for mums who would be interested in meeting up with others in the evening every 2 or 3 months. She is particularly keen to find out if working mums who can't attend daytime groups are interested. The plan is to meet at a pub or take it in turns to host the group at home. If you are interested in joining this group please contact Helen Trenaman on 01737 360069 or email trenamans@talktalk.net

New Play Scheme in Elmbridge

Aspens Charities has been commissioned by Surrey Short Breaks to provide an inclusive play and leisure provision for disabled children and young people in Elmbridge.

The schemes offer opportunities to try new activities, make friends, have fun and access social and leisure facilities in a friendly, safe and secure environment. They are holding three sessions in December at Burview Hall in Walton:

- 10 and Under – Mon 4th Dec 4.30 – 6.30
- Age 11+ Mon 11th Dec 4.30 – 6.30
- All ages – Sun 17th Dec 10.00am – 3.00pm

To find out more, email: childrensurrey@aspens.org.uk or call 0345 450 0060 ext 114.

Eagle House OT-led Workshops for Parents

Eagle House School in Mitcham is continuing its programme of monthly, free Parent workshops offering expert advice, guidance and support to families and carers of children of nursery or primary-school age with a diagnosis of autism or Asperger syndrome. The workshops, which are led by Occupational Therapists, run on Wednesday mornings from 10.00 am- 12.00 pm.

For details go to <http://eaglehousegroup.co.uk/early-years-workshops/> or contact Parent Liaison Officer, Adele on tel: 0845 074 2972 or email parent.support@eaglehousegroup.co.uk.

Relaxed Performance of Dick Wittington at Yvonne Arnaud

The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford is putting on an autism-friendly 'relaxed' performance of the popular pantomime Dick Wittington for a matinee on Weds 3rd January at 12noon. The house lights will be left on low, sudden noises are reduced or muffled and people can move about more than they would at other performances. You can also opt to have a familiarisation tour before the show. Tickets are £12 per person.

For details, call the box office on 01483 440000.

Please Give your Opinion on CAMHS BEN Pathway in Surrey

Healthwatch Surrey wants to hear from families whose children or young people have used the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in Surrey or who are waiting to access the Behaviour and Neurodevelopmental (BEN) pathway.

As the local health and care watchdog, **Healthwatch Surrey**, has continued to hear that children, parents, carers and guardians in Surrey are not getting timely access to mental health services, despite £2.3m additional funding to help address the issue.

They therefore want to hear your experience of using Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Surrey so that they can help make the service better. Please contact Jade at Healthwatch Surrey by email: engagement@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk or text [07592 787 533](tel:07592787533).

You can also call the helpdesk on 0303 303 0023 to share your experience and access information, advice and advocacy services.

They are also looking for 'Citizen Ambassadors' to independently influence and improve the quality of health and care services in Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey and Surrey Downs. Details are at <https://www.healthwatchesurrey.co.uk/ca/>

We have alerted Healthwatch Surrey to the results from the Family Voice survey (below).

Family Voice Surrey CAMHS Survey Findings

The findings of the Survey about Surrey Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAMHS) have now been published Recommendations have been accepted by Surrey County Council's Children & Health Select Committee and raised with Surrey's cabinet.

Recommendations include:

- Two thirds of respondents said the referral process was ok/good, but this concealed a more complex picture with parent carers needing to find supportive professionals and often having to escalate referrals as their child's condition worsened
- Only 14% of respondents were aware that the Single Point of Access (One Stop) offered support for parents and carers while waiting for a CAMHS appointment
- 52% said they had to wait 3 months or longer for assessment, with 23% waiting longer than 6 months
- 64% were offered treatment after assessment
- Only 7% said treatment outcomes were mostly achieved. 58% said treatment outcomes were not achieved at all

You can read all the highlights from the survey here in an article which explains how families have to fight to get the right mental health support for their young people:

<https://www.familyvoicesurrey.org/single-post/2017/11/29/Survey-highlights-families-struggle-to-get-mental-health-care-for-their-children>

Woking Leisure Centre Autism-only Sensory Room Sessions

Woking Leisure Centre is now running autism-only sessions in the sensory room on Sunday mornings from 10.00 – 1.00am for under eights and 11.00am to 12noon for 9 years +. Tickets are £5.50 for £1.70 for concessions. Call 01483 771122 or email wokinglc@freedom-leisure.co.uk for details.

Research Request: 'Smiles & Laughter' Project

A research project in collaboration with Nottingham Trent University and Kingston University is investigating humour understanding in children with ASDs in order to develop interventions to help children who are confused by joking and humour.

The researchers are looking for **children with ASD aged 7 to 10 years old** to take part. This would involve either a visit to your house or your child's school at a time convenient for you or you can go to Kingston University.

During this visit your child will be asked to watch some videos where a person is telling some jokes and to complete two short pen-and-paper tasks. The whole session usually takes one hour and will stop should you (or your child) not wish to take part any further. Your child will receive a small present in return for his/her participation.

Find out more by downloading the flyer here:

https://mathautism.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/flyerasd_parents.pdf

Please Share Your Views with Surrey CC Cabinet Member

If you subscribe to our NAS Surrey Branch online forum, you will have seen the recent post following one of our members recently attending the Westminster Education Forum.

Among the audience was Mary Lewis, Cabinet Member for Education at Surrey County Council, and she responded to a question about what Local Authorities were doing about addressing the problems with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision. She spoke as there were no representatives from any local authorities on the panels.

The member reported that at the event, Mary invited parents with SEND children in Surrey to get in contact to share their experiences as part of a programme to improve things – details of how you can do this are at the end of this article.

As many people will know, Surrey was inspected by OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in October 2016, and wrote a report which found significant areas of weakness in local practice.

Following this, the local authority and the clinical commissioning groups have been required to submit a Written Statement of Action which you can read on the Surrey Local Offer here:

https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/surrey/fsd/files/surrey_send_written_statement_of_action.pdf

We contacted Mary Lewis after the event and she sent us this statement:

"Neither I, nor my Cabinet Colleague, Clare Curran, who is the Cabinet Member for Children, have any illusions about the need for improvement to SEND in Surrey. We, and our new team of senior Officers in Children, Schools and Families at SCC, know that families have been let down and are determined to improve the service, as well as doing restorative work."

Please Share Your Views with Surrey CC Cabinet Member / Cont'd

"I was also moved to comment [at the Westminster event] because none of the panels at this SEND course had any Local Authority representation on them, at either Officer or Member level, which seemed a ridiculous omission.

"We have a high-level Improvement Board in place in Surrey which includes partners such as Surrey Police, NHS colleagues and Education leaders. This reflects the fact that our most recent SEND Inspection was a Local Area Inspection and run jointly by Ofsted and CQC.

"In order to make things better, all organisations working with children in the county need to do better. The work of the Improvement Board is supported by the DfE. We also have a close working relationship with Family Voice who are represented in key SEND improvement workstreams.

"Clare and I also encourage parents who have any concerns about SCC SEND services to get in touch with their local County Councillor who will make sure we know about problems. We regularly hear from parents ourselves and have done a live webinar as well as meeting parents at consultation events.

"So the short answer to your question is Yes, please do tell parents who are experiencing any current problems with SCC SEND services to get in touch in one of these ways. If all 900 of your members were to write to us individually, I don't think it would really help the improvement work, as it might deluge the system, but we are happy to help where our service is not responding.

"One issue raised by parents since the Westminster Forum has been the shortage of provision in Surrey for children and young people diagnosed with ASD.

"You will be aware that four Cullum Centres have been opened in Surrey with the support of the NAS.

"Surrey CC have also supported two successful free school applications that have been approved by the Secretary of State.*

"So part of the improvement to SEND is better analysis of need and ensuring that the right provision is in place in the County, so that children and young people can be educated close to home, where the evidence shows that the long term outcomes are the best for them."

*NOTE: Our understanding is that the two new free schools are approved in principle but awaiting final contract agreement. There is some information on the Linden Hill / LIFT Partnership website here <http://www.lindenhill.co.uk/>.

If you wish to have your say, please either contact your local councillor OR if you wish to give your feedback directly to Mary, email us at info@nassurreybranch.org with 'Information for Mary Lewis' in the subject line.

We will collate replies and send them on. As a default, we will send your information anonymously. Please only include your name or your child's name within the email if you are happy for this to be passed on - we cannot edit the content of your emails.

Information for Adults

Y-Mania Nightclub for Adults with Disabilities

YMCA is running a nightclub experience for adults with disabilities and additional needs on Friday 15th Dec from 7.30 – 10.30pm in Redhill. To book contact Katie Gatt on 01737 779979 or email Katie.gatt@ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk

New NAS ASSIST venue

The NAS ASSIST service offers adults with autism one-to-one appointments for discussions with autism specialists. It is for people who are not eligible for support from adult social care. ASSIST was already running in Godalming, Reigate and Aldershot, and has now added sessions in Farnborough too. Days and times are:

Godalming – Thursday, three weeks a month, 5.00pm - 9.00pm. Saturday, monthly from 10.00am - 3.00pm.

Reigate – Tuesday, twice a month 3.00pm – 8.00pm.

Aldershot – Saturday, monthly 10.30am – 3.30pm.

Farnborough – Monday, monthly 1.30pm to 6.30pm

Appointments can be in person at one of the venues, or by telephone, email or Skype. This is not a “drop-in” service – appointments must be made in advance. For more details contact Mike Leat Email: mike.leat@nas.org.uk Tel: 07436 261194

ASpire Social Groups

ASpire offers social groups for adults with autism who can manage within the group independently, without an individual supporter. There are three groups:

The **ASpire group for over 25s** has moved from Godalming to Guildford and meets twice per month:

1st Thurs of each month – business meeting:

- 6.30 – 7.30pm: Social hour
- 7.30 - 9.00pm: Discussion and business session focusing on key issues relating to autism.
- The group is run by members, supported by one member of staff.

3rd Thurs of each month – social meeting:

- Meet in pub for drinks/food at 7pm (this meeting is unstaffed).

There are also two **ASpire groups for young adults** age 18+:

Guildford Group

For young adults aged 18 – 25yrs. For young people who can manage within the group independently, without a dedicated supporter. Two staff run the group.

Fortnightly Wednesdays 7.00- 9.00pm.

Two out of three meetings are building based involving discussions & activities, and one meeting out of three involves visiting a local pub.

Redhill Group

For young adults aged 18+ (there is not a strict upper age limit). For young people who can manage within the group independently, without a dedicated supporter. Two staff run the group.

Fortnightly Wednesdays 7.00- 9.00pm (alternate Weds to the Guildford group.)

Meetings alternate between building-based discussion & activity sessions and social evenings at a local pool/snooker club.

All venues are within easy walking distance of train and bus stations. For more details contact Mike Leat Email: mike.leat@nas.org.uk Tel: 07436 261194.

Multi-Charity Petition to Improve Support

As part of the Care and Support Alliance, the NAS is campaigning with over 80 other leading charities for a properly funded care system and is asking people to put pressure on the Government to end the suffering of over a million disabled and older people and sign the petition today.

The numbers of people needing help have **gone up by 50% in the past seven years** and are only going to get worse. The Care and Support Alliance are worried that the Government is going back on its promise to bring forward their plans to create a care system that is fit for purpose. They need **100,000** petition signatures to make them listen, so please sign and share to spread the word:

http://careandsupportalliance.com/petition/?utm_source=The%20National%20Autistic%20Society&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8895028_CSA%20Email&dm_i=YA3,5ANG4,A2G70U,KFV7D,1

'Safe Havens' for People Experiencing a Mental Health Crisis

Safe Havens, a service providing people experiencing a mental health crisis with professional out of hours support, is now available across Surrey.

With professional staff, including mental health practitioners able to carry out mental health assessments if needed and wellbeing workers, and increasingly, peer support in a welcoming setting, Safe Havens can offer an appropriate alternative to A&E for those experiencing mental health challenges. There are Safe Havens in Surrey and North East Hampshire in Aldershot, Epsom, Guildford, Redhill and Woking. For opening times and addresses go to:

<http://communityconnectionssurrey.com/safe-havens/>

About the NAS Surrey Branch

The Surrey Branch of the NAS is a volunteer-run parent-to-parent support group for families in Surrey affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders. It's FREE to join (although a small donation is appreciated) and we have around 1,500 members. The branch holds regular meetings and organises social events, local coffee mornings and special interest groups, and represents parents in meetings with health, education and social services. We host an active Yahoo! online forum, and produce this newsletter every two months. To join, go to www.nassurreybranch.org or email emma@mugsy.org for a membership form.

If you are a member of the NAS at national level, you can nominate us as your branch by emailing supportercare@nas.org.uk which means we receive a percentage of your annual subscription.

*We're part of **The National Autistic Society**, a national charity founded by parents in 1962 which runs a wide range of services such as schools, clubs and adult centres. It has over 20,000 members, 100 branches and works in partnership with more than 50 local autism societies. The NAS exists to champion the rights and interests of all people with autistic spectrum disorders and to ensure that they and their families receive quality services appropriate to their needs. **National Autistic Society, 393 City Rd, London EC1V 1NG** www.autism.org.uk. **The National Autistic Society is a registered charity, number 269425. Company limited by guarantee number 1205298.***

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