



Newsletter

Welcome to the October / November issue of Surrey News

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If you are reading this at our conference in Guildford, you're still in time to head along to a **Football Charity Fun Day at Haslemere Community Rugby Club at midday on Sunday 30th September** which is raising money for the NAS Surrey Branch, as well as the mental health charity Young Minds.

This is the second event in memory of Jaz Bush, an autistic girl who sadly died last year. Family friends Ben Susans, Carl Thayre and Adam Bicknell have already raised over £5,000 for the branch which is helping to subsidise the cost of tickets to the conference for parents, carers and people with autism.

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Don't forget that the week of 6th – 13th October will see many shops, cafés and venues joining in the **NAS Autism Hour**, when they will make adaptations to try to make their businesses more autism-friendly. There are details of local venues taking part on p4, plus a link to a map to help you find participating businesses.

Many thanks,

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

NAS Surrey Branch Contacts

Chair:

Sara Truman 07423 435413

nas@mugsy.org

Treasurer:

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bobdrake357@btinternet.com

Branch Membership:

Nancy Rowell

membership@mugsy.org

Deputy / Website & Newsletter:

Emma Whitfield

emma@mugsy.org

Events:

Please email events@nassurreybranch.org with the name of the event you're interested in in the subject line

Sarah Mead

sarah_mead@hotmail.co.uk

Emma Searle

ephillpotts@gmail.com

Jill Goulding

Jill.goulding@gmail.com

Parents of Girls' Group

Rachel Pearson

racheldpearson@gmail.com

Fathers' Group:

Martin Trenaman

trenamans@talktalk.net

Parents of Adults' Group

Hilary Dyce

hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk

Weighted Blanket Loan

E Surrey – Penny Sims po.sims@yahoo.co.uk

W Surrey – Emma Whitfield emma@mugsy.org

Blankets are suitable for a child from 25kg

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

One Stop CAMHS / BEN Pathway family support 0300 222 5755

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

Family Voice Surrey parent representation

www.familyvoicesurrey.org

Action for Carers tel: 0303 040 1234

CarerSupport@actionforcarers.org.uk

Parent Programmes

PAT-P for parents of under 5s. Replaces Early Bird course.

Cygnets for parents of children aged 5 – 19.

courses@sendteachingschool.co.uk

Tel: 020 8330 3009 ex 237

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

Activities for children and young people

NAS Resource Centre, Godalming: 01483

521 744 SEResourceCentres@nas.org.uk

interAKtive, Epsom-based charity for children with ASCs and other 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 ASCs 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

Children's Christmas Party

Our annual Christmas party for children with ASDs and their siblings aged 9 and under is on Sunday 9th December from 4.00 – 6.00pm at Woking Leisure Centre. The suggested donation is £5.50 per head including tea. We have exclusive use of the soft play area from 4.00 – 5.00pm, plus a timed slot in the sensory room. Tea, consisting of sandwiches, sausages, pizza etc, is served at 5.00pm and there will be a visit from Santa during the meal. He will hand out a small gift for each child (PLEASE BRING A WRAPPED GIFT FOR YOUR CHILD, LABELLED WITH THEIR NAME). Older siblings are welcome to join for tea only at a cost of £4 per head.

Booking essential. You can book via Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nas-surrey-branch-christmas-party-2018-tickets-50363455451> For queries, please email events@nassurreybranch.org with 'Christmas Party' in the subject line.

Seminar for Parents of Young People Thinking of Going to Uni

We have a few places left at our seminar for parents/carers of people with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) who are considering going to university, on **Tuesday 30th October from 10.00am – 2.30pm** in Guildford. The session aims to give parents an insight into some of the difficulties people with an ASC can experience in the transition to Uni; explain what support is available; how to get it and how to navigate the process. The seminar is relevant for parents/carers of young people aged 16 and above. Topics covered will include:

- Things to consider when deciding whether (and which) University is a good choice
- Difficulties often experienced by ASC 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 that works with adults with ASCs to support them in higher education and in the workplace, to find and retain work.

Suggested Donation: £15. BOOKING ESSENTIAL - please email events@nassurreybranch.org with 'Going to Uni' in the subject line.

Free Workshops by NAS Professionals

The professionals at the NAS Resource Centre are running a series of free workshops for parents and carers of children and young people with autism. These are suitable for families whose child or young person already has a diagnosis, or who is awaiting diagnosis.

Sensory processing

Date: Friday 19th October

Time: 10:30- 1:00pm

Location: Shepperton

Social Skills

Date: Weds 21st November

Time: 10.30 – 1.00pm

Location: Woking

Places must be booked in advance - email: SEResourceCentres@nas.org.uk or call 01483 521744 (Please note, these sessions are not connected with the NAS Surrey Branch).

Free Open University Course on Autism

The Open University has developed a free online course called Understanding Autism. It is designed to take 3 hours per week for 8 weeks, though students can work at their own pace. The course uses written information and videos. You can find it here:

<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=66946>

Shops and Venues Supporting NAS Autism Hour 6 – 13 Oct

Just a year after its launch, it is fantastic to see how many shops and public venues are now supporting the NAS 'Autism Hour' campaign, which this year is from Saturday 6th – Saturday 13th October. The NAS is asking venues to make their premises more autism-friendly for an hour during the week by taking steps such as reducing unnecessary noise or turning off flashing lights, and ensuring staff understand how to help customers on the spectrum.

The Friary Shopping Centre Guildford is holding its Autism Hour on Tuesday 9th October from 10.00 – 11.00, and there will be an NAS Surrey Branch stand there for the hour. Please come along and say hello if you can.

Brooklands Museum in Weybridge is holding an Autism Hour by opening its doors early for families with members on the autism spectrum from 9.00 - 10.00am on SATURDAY 13th OCT. Reduced rate admission applies and carers enter free when accompanying a paying visitor. Booking essential – please email virginiasmith@brooklandsmuseum.com

To find out which other shops and venues in our area are holding an Autism Hour, search on this map: <https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/autism-hour/map.aspx>

Action for Carers Autism Forums

Action for Carers is running two Autism Forums for anyone with an interest in supporting people with an ASC.

- **Godalming** - Thursday 11th October from 10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. The speaker will be Mark Brown from Special Help 4 Special Needs who will talk about teenage years and behaviours, social skills and how to help development.
- **Oxted** - Thursday 25th October from 10.30am–3.00pm. Mark Brown will again be the speaker, speaking on dealing with challenging behaviour and local organisations will host information stands. Light lunch provided.

For details contact the Action for Carers Contact Information Centre tel: 0303 040 1234 (open 8am - 6pm on Mondays to Fridays, and Saturday morning, from 9am - 12noon) or email CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk

Preparing for Adulthood Event

Surrey County Council's Transition service is organising a free event for young people with SEND in Years 9 – 14 who have an Education Health and Care Plan, and for their parents. The event is being held at Leatherhead Leisure Centre from 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. on Weds 17th October.

This will be an opportunity to talk to providers from education, training and social care about their 16-25 provision in Surrey. SEN and Transport Teams from Surrey County Council will also be available to discuss how young people can be supported to prepare for adulthood and employment.

Young Minds Mental Health Survey

Young Minds, the mental health charity for young people, is carrying out a major new survey of parents or carers of young people who have needed support for their mental health. If your child has looked for support and is 25 or under, they would love to hear your views. Your input will help Young Minds to campaign nationally to improve current mental health services. The survey is anonymous and only takes 5 minutes to complete. You can complete the survey here: <http://ow.ly/nqek30lvuRu>

Free Parent/Carer Workshops on 'Getting Started' or 'Unlocking the Potential of Children' with ASCs at Eagle House

Eagle House Schools in Sutton and Mitcham are running a series of parent / carer workshops for parents of children with autism to give practical advice and ideas on how to support your child.

The workshops are delivered by Eagle House experts, who have many years' experience in working with ASD children. The multi-disciplinary team of Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Behaviour Specialists share their experience and expertise to provide practical strategies for families to use at home.

Each stand-alone workshop is open to parents/carers or relatives of a young person with ASD and is a great opportunity to meet others to share experience and advice.

For Parent/Carers of Primary & Secondary School Age Children - Unlocking the Potential of Children with Autism

Thursday mornings 10.00 am - 12.00 pm at Eagle House School, Sutton.

- Autism: how do we communicate? – 27th September
- Making sense of sensory difficulties/life skills – 29th November
- What is behaviour telling us? – 31st January 2019
- Keeping children and young people with autism safe – 28th March 2019
- Parenting your child with autism – 23rd May 2019
- Occupying your child with autism during the school holidays – 11th July 2019

For Parent/Carers of Children in Early Years or at Primary School – Getting Started

Eagle House Primary School in Mitcham is also offering workshops on getting started. Each stand-alone workshop uses demonstration and video footage, looking at how to help in the areas parents often find most challenging.

They are designed to give parents the confidence they need to not only support your child, but also to have fun together in your own home.

Wednesday mornings from 10.00 am - 12.00 pm at Eagle House Primary School, Mitcham.

- Getting attention to learn everyday skills – 10th October
- Beginning communication and making it matter – 7th November
- Making sense of the world – 5th December
- Setting the boundaries – 9th January 2019
- Winning the meal time battle – 13th February 2019
- Learning through play – 20th March 2019
- Building independence to help themselves – 8th May 2019

If you want to book a place, or to get further information, please contact Parent Liaison Officer Adele Wadey at Eagle House, Tel: 020 8770 7788 or email: adele.wadey@eaglehousegroup.co.uk

NAS SURREY BRANCH CALENDAR October - December 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

Dorking – Mum's group evening meeting – *see next page for details.*

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

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

- Mon 29th Oct 9.15 – 11.30 a.m.
- Mon 19th Nov 9.15 – 11.30 a.m.
- Mon 10th Dec 9.15 – 11.30 a.m.

Godalming – Costa Coffee, 74 High Street, Godalming GU7 1DU

Contact: Lizzie Reszowski numpadzo@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07748 645466

- Mon 15th Oct 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon
- Mon 5th Nov 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon
- Mon 3rd Dec 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon

Guildford - Note change of date and venue from that published in last newsletter

Contact Sara Truman for details nas@mugsy.org Tel: 07423 435413.

- Tues 9th Oct 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.
NB – *the coffee morning will be held in the Friary Centre after the Autism Hour, which is from 10.00 – 11.00*
- Mon 12th Nov – Mum's group evening meeting – *see next page for details.*

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

Contact: Emily Gorvy emily.gorvy@hotmail.co.uk

- Fri 16th Nov 2.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.

Milford – The Cullum Centre, Rodborough School, Petworth Rd entrance, Milford GU8 5BZ

Contact: Hilary Baldwin HBaldwin@rodborough.surrey.sch.uk

- Weds 14th November 7.30pm with speaker about choosing a school and transition

Oxted – Morning and evening meetings - Dates & venues TBC .

Contact: Anne Pearce annepearcemcl@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07946 461566

- *Fri 5th Oct (evening) 8.00 p.m. (to be confirmed)*
- *Tues 6th Nov (morning) 10.00 a.m. – 12.00noon. (to be confirmed)*

Redhill – In member's home

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

- Thurs 27th Sept 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon
- Weds 31st Oct 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon

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

Contact Sarah Norris sarah4ian@ntlworld.com Tel: 07543 920917

- Weds 3rd Oct 10.00 a.m. – 12 noon
- Weds 7th Nov 10.00 a.m. – 12 noon
- Weds 5th Dec 10.00 a.m. – 12 noon

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Dads' Group – Fri 5th October, Banstead. Social meeting for fathers of children or adults with ASD, meets in a member's home in different locations around Surrey. For details contact Martin Trenaman trenamans@talktalk.net

Mum's Groups – Weybridge, Dorking and Guildford

Social evenings for mothers of children or adults with ASD. Contact hosts below for details:

- **Dorking** - Fri 19th Oct 7.30 for 8.00pm. – Dorking – Contact Helen Trenaman trenamans@talktalk.net 01737 360069
- **Guildford** – Mon 12th Nov 7.30pm. Contact Sara Truman nas@mugsy.org Tel: 07423 435413
- **Weybridge** – the next social evening will be in January, date TBC. Contact Fi Phippen f.phippen@talktalk.net

Parents of Girls Group – Woking and Guildford

Contact Rachel Pearson racheldpearson@gmail.com

A group for parents of girls that meets once a month during term-time.

- **Woking (morning)** - Tues 9th Oct 10.00 a.m. Twelve Thirty Café, Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG
- **Woking (evening)** - Tues 13th Nov 8.00 p.m. The Sovereigns pub, Guildford Road GU22 7QQ
- **Guildford (morning)** - Weds 21st Nov 10.00a.m. Freedom Café, Spectrum Leisure Centre, Parkway, Guildford GU1 1UP
- **Woking (morning)** - Tues 11th Dec 10.00 a.m. Twelve Thirty Café, Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG

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. Meetings start at 7.30 p.m.

- **Farnham** - Weds 3rd Oct - contact Sara Truman 01483 822630 nas@mugsy.org
- **Reigate** - Tues 16th Oct - contact Sara Truman 01483 822630 nas@mugsy.org
- **Camberley** - Thurs 1st Nov - contact Hilary Dyce 01276 66032 hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk
- **Guildford** - Weds 5th Dec - contact Sara Truman 01483 822630 nas@mugsy.org

Spouses and Partners Group, Guildford

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

Contact Sara Truman 01483 822630 nas@mugsy.org

- Weds 31st Oct . 8.00 – 9.30 p.m.
- Weds 28th Nov 8.00 – 9.30 p.m.

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What Social Events Would Your Young Person Enjoy?

Branch volunteers are looking at organising occasional events for young people with autism to meet up and share mutual interests.

We've developed a short questionnaire to help us understand what would be most popular – please complete one copy per young person here: <https://bit.ly/2pAWejW>. Please contact Sara Truman if you need a paper copy - tel: 07423 435413.

New Support Groups in Surrey

There are three new groups in Surrey for parents of children with autism or additional needs:

Shepperton - 'Sheppertism' has been set up by Natalie Wells. It's a Whatsapp group for mums whose members meet up occasionally to share experiences or seek advice. If you would like to join, please email Natalie at nwells668@btinternet.com

Ashford – Little Stars is a Facebook and support group for parents of children with additional needs. Request to join the group here <https://www.facebook.com/groups/270454460398477/> or email Carly Ward carlypw@yahoo.co.uk

Chertsey – a new group at St Peter's Church for families with additional needs offers a safe place where parent/carers can share a simple lunch conversation, while the children play or are at school. Contact Annie Burnham, 07752 318837, email annie@stpeterschertsey.org.uk

Just a reminder of established groups locally:

NAS Surrey Branch Groups – details on p 6&7:

Morning Support Groups

FRENHAM Christine Malik christinemalik@btopenworld.com / Bonnie

Noyce jbnoyce@yahoo.com

GUILDFORD Sara Truman nas@mugsy.org

GODALMING Lizzie Reszowski numpadzo@hotmail.co.uk

HINCHLEY WOOD Emily Gorvy emily.gorvy@hotmail.co.uk

OXTED Anne Pearce annepearcemcl@yahoo.co.uk

REDHILL Helen Ruffhead h.ruffhead@ntlworld.com

WOKING Sarah Norris sarah4ian@ntlworld.com

PARENTS OF GIRLS (various locations, mornings & evenings) – contact Rachel Pearson racheldpearson@gmail.com

Evening Groups

DORKING Mums' Group – Helen Trenaman trenamans@talktalk.net

MILFORD Hilary Baldwin - hbaldwin@rodborough.surrey.sch.uk

WEYBRIDGE Mums' Group- Fi Phippen f.phippen@talktalk.net

DADS GROUP (various locations) - Martin Trenaman trenamans@talktalk.net

PARENTS OF ADULTS Guildford - Sara Truman or Hilary Dyce hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk

SPOUSES' GROUP Guildford - Sara Truman nas@mugsy.org

Other Local Groups

CHERTSEY - White Lodge, Chertsey – Little Stars.

<https://www.whitelodgecentre.co.uk/children-young-peoples-services/little-stars> Amy or Jess on 01932 577961 or email aherring@whitelodgecentre.co.uk or orjball@whitelodgecentre.co.uk

WOKING - We-shine parent-led group covering the Woking area. <http://www.we-shine.org.uk> Facebook: We shine local network

WALTON / WEYBRIDGE - ANTS – sister group to We Shine for Walton area. Facebook Additional Needs Together – ANTS Surrey

CAMBERLEY / FRIMLEY - Sparklers – parent-led group. <http://www.sparklers.org.uk/> Facebook: Sparklers charity.

COBHAM / BOOKHAM – PAST Positive Autism Support and Training.

<https://www.positiveautismsupportandtraining.co.uk/>

Facebook @postiveautismsupportandtraining

Carers' Rights Information Sessions

Action for Carers is running a series of events to explain Carers' Rights – you can attend, wherever you live, but some of the sessions require pre-booking.

Woking and Egham

There will be a number of professionals in attendance to give you advice and information about your rights, plus information stands from other organisations.

There will be a solicitor, a benefits advisor, someone from the Transition Team and Adult Social Care, plus information on services such as Blue Badge criteria, Carer Break Payment criteria, Trading Standards, as well as information from the National Autistic Society and several other organisations.

Egham

Time: 1.00 – 4.00pm

Date: Thursday 29th November

Venue: Hythe Centre, Thorpe Road, Egham TW18 3HD

Woking

Time: 10.00am – 1.00pm

Date: Friday 30th November

Venue: Parkview Centre, Blackmore Crescent, Woking GU21 5NZ

There is no need to book for Woking and Egham events.

Reigate

A carers rights information fair will be held in collaboration with local Adult Social Care and Community Mental Health and Recovery Service Teams. There will be stands from other organisations and a speaker - to be confirmed.

Time: 10.00am – 1.00pm

Date: Wednesday 28th November

Venue: Woodhatch Centre, Reigate.

Light lunch provided. Booking Essential – see below.

Leatherhead and Walton

An informative session run by Downs Solicitors regarding common issues raised by carers including Power of attorney, Court of Protection, Paying for Care, Wills and Trusts and the legislation corresponding to professionals sharing information with Carers.

Leatherhead

Time: 10.30am – 2.30pm

Date: Friday 30th November

Venue: Leatherhead Theatre, 7 Church St, Leatherhead, KT22 8DN

Walton-on-Thames

Time: 10.30am – 12.30pm

Date: Tuesday 27th November

Venue: Walton Library Meeting Room, The Heart, Walton-on-Thames

Light lunch provided.

**To book, call 0303 040 1234 or email CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk
Action for Carers website <https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/>**

Autism-friendly Performance of 'Peter Pan in a Pickle' in Shepperton

Head2HeadTheatre is staging an autism-friendly performance of the play 'Peter Pan in A Pickle' at Manor Mead School in Shepperton on Monday 22nd October at 2pm and Tuesday 23rd October at 11.15am or 2pm. Pre-booking is essential - £5 per person with some free places for families on Income Support or Income Related ESA.

There is also a familiarisation session from 12.00noon – 1.45pm on 22nd where small groups can explore the sensory tent, craft & game activities before the show. Cost £8 per family of 4, with some free places available for families on Income Support or Income Related ESA. Please bring along a picnic.

For more details or to book, email office@head2headtheatre.co.uk or call 01372 278021 / 07519 747 290. Their website is <http://www.head2headtheatre.co.uk>.

SEND 'Invest to Save' Proposals for Surrey - Have Your Say!

Family Voice Surrey is co-ordinating a survey to get feedback from parents on Surrey's budget plans for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support. Liz Mills, the Director of Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture for Surrey, is putting together a proposal to take to Surrey CC Cabinet, which will set out the reasons why:

- Budget cuts and savings alone will not stop the spiralling costs of providing SEND services
- Reducing spend across the board will not allow the crucial improvements needed to the quality of SEND services and the resulting poor experience for families
- An Invest to Save model is necessary to stop children with moderate SEND needs hitting crisis point and requiring more intensive support through a statutory EHC Plan
- Earlier intervention is the key to transforming the system and improving the experience for children with SEND and their families

Family Voice Surrey is looking for support for this proposal from parents and carers and wants us all to be able to influence how this investment money should be spent, so that it has the biggest impact for our children. Please take the short survey here <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FVSInvestToSave> and share with anyone it's relevant to.

Information for Adults

Mental Health & Wellbeing Support in Surrey: How Does It Work?

On Wednesday 7th November a free event is being held about community mental health services in Surrey. People with mental health problems, their family members and friends, as well as professionals, can find out information about accessing services, listen to personal experiences and discover how the Community Connections mental health service works in your area.

The event is being held at Leatherhead Leisure Centre from 10.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. People can drop in at any time during the day. To register to get more information, go to: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-surrey-how-does-it-work-tickets-49950187355>

Information for Adults / *Cont'd*

Crowdfunding for Family Seeking Inquest

This is an upsetting but important message: Christopher Laskaris was an autistic man who was murdered in Leeds in November 2016 aged just 24, by a man who had made it seem like he was his friend.

Christopher's mother lives in Surrey and is a Branch member. She had battled for years to get her son diagnosed and then to make sure he got the support that he needed to live independently, safely. In the lead up to his murder, she had again been trying to get him help from local health and care services in Leeds.

The murderer has been jailed for life, but Christopher's family needs to understand exactly what went wrong and all the failures that led to his tragic death. One chance to do that is by having an inquest. In an inquest, a coroner can look at all the issues, such as his vulnerability, and whether his social care and mental health needs were being met.

The NAS is backing their crowdfunding campaign so they can meet the family's legal costs. By backing the Justice for Christopher Laskaris campaign, the NAS hopes that the coroner will look at all difficulties Christopher and his family faced in trying to get the right help from health, social care and housing as well as the actions of police and probation so that no other autistic person ever faces a similar situation.

Please help to ensure that lessons are learnt from this terrible tragedy. You can make a donation here <https://www.gofundme.com/justice-for-christopher-laskaris>

Autism Forward Grants for Transition to Work

Autism Forward is a charity which provides grants to fund specialist mentors for autistic adults to give them the support and advice they need to make the transition from education to work, and to find paid or voluntary employment. It also provides resources for employers, colleagues, friends and families of autistic adults.

Applications for grants must be made through specialist mentor organisations which have been approved by the trustees of Autism Forward. Individuals cannot apply direct for grants. There is a list of approved organisations along with other information on the Autism Forward website: <http://www.autismforward.org.uk/>

Talk on Wills & trusts and Power of Attorney in Camberley

Action for Carers is hosting a talk on Wills, Trusts and Power of Attorney on Tuesday 23rd October from 9.30am – 12.00noon in Camberley. This is an informative session which will be led by Debbie Duggan and held café style with refreshments provided. For details or to book, contact Action for Carers 0303 040 1234 or email CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk

'Radiant Daze' Club Nights for People with Additional Needs

The Boileroom in Guildford has set up special needs club nights and have another one coming up on Monday 12th November. The sessions give over-14s the chance to catch emerging DJs and artists, and an eclectic mix of sounds, with interesting visuals.

Tickets are £4 in advance or on the door, or book online <https://theboileroom.seetickets.com/event/radiant-daze/the-boileroom/1254417?aff=id1theboileroom> To find out more about The Boileroom and for location and contact details go to <http://www.theboileroom.net>

Why Not Try Basketball in Merrow?

Guildford's Basketball team the Surrey Scorchers is running basketball sessions for adults and young people over 14 with a learning disability at St Peter's School, Merrow. The sessions, which run on Mondays from 6.00 – 7.00pm, are designed to let people try basketball and learn new skills. The first session is free, then £5 per session thereafter. For details email foundation@surreyscorchers.co.uk or call 07810 122389.

Research on Social Influences – Volunteers Wanted

Louisa Thomas is doing a PhD at Royal Holloway University of London and is looking for young people with autism aged 16 – 24 to help with her research into social influences.

The study is about investigating individual differences in economic choices, and participants will be asked to complete three computerised tasks (two economic decision-making tasks, and one questionnaire), which will take around 45 minutes in total. Participants can go to the Royal Holloway campus in Egham, or the central London offices, or Louisa can travel to them. Participants can enter a prize draw to win an Amazon voucher and there will be several winners. For those who are travelling to meet her, travel expenses will be paid in full. For more information please contact Louisa Thomas Louisa.Thomas.2013@rhul.ac.uk

Mencap 'Treat me Well' Survey

Mencap is campaigning to improve the way people with a learning disability are treated in hospital. They want to hear from people with a learning disability and parents/carers about their experiences in hospital. You can complete the survey here:

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/current-campaigns/treat-me-well/treat-me-well-surveys>

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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