

Welcome to the August - September issue of Surrey News

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Please note: Some of the articles in the front of the newsletter include information for young people and adults.

We are excited to include details of some **face-to-face parent support groups** in September including a new evening group in Leatherhead.

Going forward there will be a mixture of Zoom meetings, and meetings in venues around Surrey.

The **parents of children support group** will continue to meet once a month on Zoom and the **parents of adults group** will have online meetings every other month. Some specialist groups like the **PDA support group** will stay meeting online. Zoom meetings mean that they are accessible to members from throughout the county.

Many thanks to the new volunteers who have come forward to take on specific roles including to help with the branch email and to keep the website updated. We still need more volunteers as we start to unlock. We would like to expand our social media presence and there are events for the Surrey Branch to attend around the borough to increase awareness of the NAS and the NAS Surrey Branch.

We are planning further webinars and workshops in the autumn, starting with a webinar by **Dr Luke Beardon in September**. Hopefully we will start to be able to have some meetings face-to-face, but Zoom allows us to have speakers like Luke Beardon who are not local. It also made it easier to arrange the wonderful talk by Ros Blackburn in July.

I hope you all enjoy your summer breaks and I look forward to meeting some of you at the support groups in the autumn.

Carol Teunon
Chair (volunteer)
NAS Surrey Branch

****New email:**** surrey.branch@nas.org.uk

Website: <https://NASSurreyBranch.org>

Facebook: @NASSurreyBranch

Donations: www.justgiving.com/nassurreybranch

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Emma Ellis events@nassurreybranch.org

Parents of Children with PDA Group

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Spouses and Partners Group

Sara Truman sthumansurrey@gmail.com

POSTAL ADDRESS

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

No NAS staff or volunteers work here.

Other Useful Contacts

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

NAS website: <https://www.autism.org.uk/>
NAS membership: <https://bit.ly/3l84tBW>

Education Support

NAS Education Rights: <https://bit.ly/3BTfux6>
SEND Advice Surrey: 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 <https://bit.ly/3ll3Hlq>
Portage – support for children with SEND under 3.5 years <https://bit.ly/3zLW635>
Family Voice Surrey parent representation www.familyvoicesurrey.org
Action for Carers tel: 0303 040 1234 <https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/>

Parent Programmes

NAS Stepping Up For Autism course
Email: Surrey.FamilySupport@nas.org.uk
Pat-P (under 5s) & **Cygnat** (aged 5-16) <https://family.sendteachingschool.co.uk>

Activities for children and young people

NAS Resource Centre, Godalming: 01483 521743 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 <https://bit.ly/3f8WXTu>
AS Mentoring specialist mentoring and employment support for autistic people <https://asmentoring.co.uk/>

Benefits advice

For children: <https://bit.ly/3xblygN>
For adults: <https://bit.ly/3ydoXNq>
Cerebra Downloadable DLA guide: <https://bit.ly/3lpEoyh>

Talk by Dr Luke Beardon in September

On Tuesday 21st September at 7.30pm, the NAS Surrey Branch is hosting a webinar over Zoom by Dr Luke Beardon, Author and Senior Lecturer in Autism, The Autism Centre, Sheffield Hallam University.

Entitled, "Anxiety is not part of Autism. So why are so many autistic people anxious?" Dr Beardon will explain his perspectives on why so many autistic children and adults suffer from anxiety, what 'autistic anxiety' even is and what can be done about it.

Places are free but must be booked in advance. To book go to Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/anxiety-is-not-part-of-autism-so-why-are-so-many-autistic-people-anxious-registration-156057152143>

CAMHS Reviewing Autism & ADHD Service – Have Your Say

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust are carrying out a service evaluation of the Neurodevelopmental (ND) referral pathways, sometimes referred to as the BEN Pathways.

In plain English this means they are reviewing how CAMHS services are delivered to children and young people with neurodevelopmental needs, most commonly needs associated with autism and ADHD.

There is a recognition in the Trust that the way services are delivered in this area needs to be addressed. The Trust is considering how the services could be delivered differently in the future and so are sending out surveys to parents/carers who have had children at any point on the pathway, from having been initially referred but not taken forward for assessment, to those that have been assessed and given a formal diagnosis.

Please have your say about CAMHS service by completing the survey:

<https://bit.ly/3zPGs6U>

NAS Education Survey

The National Autistic Society want to know how the education system in England is working for children and young people on the autism spectrum. Complete their online survey and tell them what's important to you. Your survey response will form an important part of a September Back to School report, where they will be telling the Government about your experiences and concerns for these to be considered in the upcoming SEND review.

There are two different versions of the survey:

- For parents and carers: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/PCGeneral/>
- For children and young people <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CYPGeneral/>

New School places for Children with Autism in Surrey

In previous issues we have listed various proposals to increase the number of school places for pupils with autism in Surrey which was announced by the Council last October

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/surrey-matters/young-people/send-school-places>

Most of those proposals have now been accepted. You can read a summary of recent school places in Surrey on our website: <https://bit.ly/2ViBuAT>

Family Voice Surrey Talks in August

Family Voice Surrey (FVS) champions the needs and rights of SEND families in Surrey with children or young adults up to the age of 25 who have special educational needs (SEND), chronic illnesses, including mental health conditions or disabilities.

FVS are hosting two talks that may be of interest:

Q&A with Rachael Wardell, Director of Children's Services on Facebook Live - Friday 6th August 10.00am - 11.00am <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FVSurrey/>

An opportunity to hear from Rachael Wardell, Director of Children's Services, who is looking forward to answering questions from parents and carers. She will take questions live on the day via the comments, or you can send questions to benedicte.s@familyvoicesurrey.org beforehand, even if you can't attend.

This Q&A session will be recorded and uploaded to the FVS website so you can view it at another time. Email your questions to benedicte.s@familyvoicesurrey.org

PDA event with Laura Kerbey - 10th August 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm

Monthly meeting for parent carers of children and young people who have PDA or demand avoidance traits, with or without a diagnosis. Laura Kerbey runs PAST (Positive Autism Support and Training), an independent organisation offering parenting courses and webinars, and specialises in PDA, autism and related conditions. Email woking@familyvoicesurrey.org for the Zoom login details

Keep an eye on the Family Voice Surrey website for other events.

<https://www.familyvoicesurrey.org/single-post/spring-and-summer-dates-for-your-diary>

Selected Free Places at Makaton-signed Performances

Head2Head Sensory Theatre is a Makaton-friendly charity theatre group in which all the actors use Makaton signing. They have a range of activities happening online during the summer: www.h2hsensorytheatre.com/whats-on-2021/

Family Voice Surrey are offering their members a FREE Head2Head activity. If you're not already a member, go to <https://www.familyvoicesurrey.org/become-a-member> to join for free. To book your free event, visit the Head to Head website and choose the activity you'd like to attend and email rachael.f@familyvoicesurrey.org to request your chosen performance. As long as there are places available, they will provide it free of charge. Places are restricted and are offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Autism friendly cinema screenings are back!

The autism support organisation, Dimensions, has re-started its autism-friendly screenings for children and adults at Cineworld, Showcase, Picturehouse, Odeon, Everyman and Vue cinemas.

Adjustments are made to reduce stress and sensory input, such as low lighting and sound and staff trained in autism awareness.

There will be some changes due to COVID, including a request that you don't move around the cinema while social distancing is in place. Go to the Dimensions website for more details about films being shown: <https://bit.ly/3BWogKu>

National Autism Strategy Published

The government's new national autism strategy has been announced, with a promise to invest £75 million this financial year in improving services for autistic children and adults, including diagnosis, mental health services, training for professionals in education, Job Centres and the justice system, and a campaign to increase public understanding of autism. There should be more funding in future years. For full details see: <https://bit.ly/3rMvCf7>

This new national strategy was originally due to be produced in 2019, but was delayed by COVID, amongst other things.

In Surrey last year, the council and NHS developed the Surrey All Age Autism Strategy, which volunteers from the NAS Surrey Branch and many other people have been contributing to, and - not surprisingly - many of the same issues came up in both the national and local consultations. To see the Surrey All Age Autism Strategy Framework, go to: https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/263390/All-Age-Autism-Strategy-Framework-2021-2026.pdf

More details of the Surrey Strategy will be published in September.

New Mental Health Crisis Line for Children

A new 24-hour mental health crisis line for children, young people and families in Surrey has been launched by the NHS mental health trust: Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. It's accessed via a freephone number – **0800 915 4644** (the same number as the adult mental health crisis line). Help for children and young people from the age of six and their families is available by selecting option one.

The crisis line is staffed by a team of trained call handlers and mental health nurses. It provides emotional wellbeing support, advice and signposting to a range of community services for children and young people who are in a mental health crisis and their families and carers.

The Reason I Jump Documentary

The award-winning documentary *The Reason I Jump*, directed by Jerry Rothwell, went on UK release on 18 June. The film is based on the memoir of Japanese autistic writer Naoki Higashida, first published in Japan in 2007. It was then translated by Keiko Yoshida and her husband, author David Mitchell, and published in the UK in 2013. For further details see: <https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/news/the-reason-i-jump-documentary>

'Brighter Futures' Speech and Language Campaign

Surrey County Council and Education partners, including Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) and early year providers, have come together to share five simple and fun ways for parents, carers and grandparents to help develop speech and language with their young children.

The 'Brighter Futures' offers a toolkit of activities to help develop children's speech and language. The campaign features a [short video](#) filmed at Dorking Nursery School, in which Speech and Language therapist Jack Davies gives tips to help your child's speech and language development. <https://bit.ly/3jfl9QQ>

Book on PDA for School Staff

A new book for teachers and other school staff about Pathological Demand Avoidance has just been published, which has been written by a local teacher known to many branch members – Clare Truman.

It is called “The Teacher’s Introduction to Pathological Demand Avoidance” and is published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. After explaining how PDA affects a pupil’s learning, the book offers school staff strategies to reduce anxiety and enable the PDA pupil to learn, such as how to phrase demands and adapt language.

Clare Truman is an autism specialist teacher who set up Spectrum Space education consultancy. She is currently completing a PhD focusing on pathological demand avoidance. She is also the sister of an autistic man and daughter of former NAS Surrey Branch chair Sara Truman.

No-Riding Horse Experiences for Autistic Children and Young People

‘One with the horse’ offers ground-based, no-riding experiences with horses where autistic children and young people can learn through interaction and connection with the horse. The experiences are designed to stimulate the senses, build emotional bonds, clear the mind and increase self-awareness and confidence.

For more information: <https://www.onewiththehorse.co.uk/horse-experience>

Sessions are in Ottershaw on 4th and 18th August from 3.00 to 3.45pm and Lower Morden on 10th and 17th August from 2.00 – 2.45pm. To book online go to:

<https://www.onewiththehorse.co.uk/store/Events-c89634942>

Reminder: Courses for parents of autistic children

Free courses called Stepping Up for Autism are run by the NAS professional service in Surrey (not the NAS Surrey Branch). They will be run at several venues around the county next term, as well as online. For details email Surrey.FamilySupport@nas.org.uk

There are also free parent courses run by Surrey County Council: PAT-P (Parenting Autism Together - Pre-school) for parents of under-5s, and Cygnet for parents of school-age children. For more details see: <https://family.sendteachingschool.co.uk>

National Disability Strategy – Easy Read Version

Some people with autism receive services and support which are covered in the National Disability Strategy, which was updated in July 2021 with £1.6bn being promised for a wide range of services and support.

The government has said that disabled people are set to benefit from plans to upgrade job support and opportunities, housing and transport as part of a strategy to improve employment prospects for disabled people.

It includes £300m investment in support for children with special educational needs and disabilities in schools and an online work passport to help disabled students move seamlessly from education to work

You can read the easy-read version of the National Disability Strategy here:

<https://bit.ly/3jdHZg>

Surrey User Voice and Participation and ATLAS Groups

ATLAS (Accept, Teach, Listen, Access, Support) is one of the participation groups run by the User Voice and Participation (UVP) Team at Surrey County Council.

The UVP Team empowers children and young people, their parents and carers to share their views and opinions about the services they use. UVP is not specific to autism, but there are many autistic young people involved.

The User Voice and Participation Team have just announced a new ATLAS participation group, ATLAS Juniors, for young people aged 8 to 13 with additional needs and disabilities. Meetings will take place every second Thursday of the month from 4.30pm-6pm, over Zoom.

The participation groups are a safe and confidential place for young people to talk about topics related to additional needs and/or disability that are important to them, learn skills and make friends. The feedback they share is then passed on to relevant services to help bring about positive changes. Please watch this video for more information about the monthly sessions: <https://youtu.be/NF3nNhsIT-k>

If any children and young people would like to join these sessions, their parents, carers and/or guardian will need to email: ATLAS@surreycc.gov.uk to request a health and safety form beforehand.

Visit the ATLAS website for more details <https://surreyatlas.uk/about-us/> or follow them on social media:

Facebook: [/SurreyATLASYouthAdvisors](https://www.facebook.com/SurreyATLASYouthAdvisors)

Twitter: [@SurreyATLAS](https://twitter.com/SurreyATLAS)

Instagram: [@SurreyATLAS](https://www.instagram.com/SurreyATLAS)

There are regular **blogs**, some by autistic young people, on the ATLAS blog website <https://surreyatlas.uk/our-blog/> See the adults section for a link to one.

Support from Action for Carers

Action for Carers offers a range of support groups, including one for parents of autistic adults, information and seminars for carers who are registered with them. It is free to register here: <https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/register-with-us/>

Support groups

Action for Carers runs a support group for carers of adults on the Autistic Spectrum. It takes place on the fourth Tuesday of each month from 7.30 – 9.00pm. Booking is essential. You can book by visiting the website events section www.actionforcarers.org.uk/events/, calling 0303 040 1234 (option 1) or emailing CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk

Carers' Checklist Booklet

Action for Carers have published a new booklet, *A Carers' Checklist*, to help carers understand what's available for them. It covers all sorts of matters including health, legal, social services, etc, so that you can check you are getting all that you should in terms of support in Surrey. It will be useful whether you've been caring for a while, or are new to caring. Call them for a copy (print, or PDF) on 0303 040 1234, press option 1, or email CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk

NAS SURREY BRANCH CALENDAR August – October 2021

We are aiming to re-start face-to-face support group meetings in September, but **PLEASE NOTE, dates are provisional at this stage**, depending on approval by NAS Head Office. **Please always contact the host by email for confirmation that the meeting is going ahead and to let them know you're coming along.**

Zoom Support Group for Parents / Carers of Autistic Children in Surrey

Zoom support group meeting monthly, alternating Wednesday mornings and Monday evenings. Your child does not need a diagnosis for you to attend.

To go on the mailing list to receive the Zoom links for these meetings, contact Emma Phillpotts at support@nassurreybranch.org

Wednesday 15th September 10.00 am

Monday 18th October 8.00 pm

LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS

In-person support groups run by parent-volunteers for parents / carers of autistic children in Surrey. Your child does not need a diagnosis for you to attend.

Ashtead – The Leg of Mutton and Cauliflower, 48, The Street, Ashtead, KT21 1AZ

Contact: Tarah Basu tarahbasu@googlemail.com

Wednesday 29th September 10.00 am

Wednesday 20th October 8.00 pm

Guildford – various venues

Contact: Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com

Mon 6th Sept 7.30 – 9.30 p.m. **The White House, 8 High Street, Guildford GU2 4AJ**

Fri 8th Oct 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon **Caffe Nero, 66 North Street, Guildford GU1 4AH**

Leatherhead - The Penny Black, 5 North Street, Leatherhead, KT22 7AX

Contact: Carol Teunon Surrey.Branch@nas.org.uk

Thursday 9th September 8.00 p.m.

Thursday 14th October 8.00 p.m.

Lower Kingswood

This new group will be starting in October.

Dates and venue to be confirmed.

Contact: Sophie Leighton sophieleighton7889@yahoo.co.uk

Weybridge - Oatlands Chaser, 25 Oatlands Chase, Weybridge KT13 9RW

Contact: Fi Phippen f.phippen@talktalk.net

Wednesday 22nd Sept 8.00 pm

Woking - The Plant Centre Cafe, Egley Road, Mayford, Woking GU22 0NH

Contact Sarah Norris sarah4ian@ntlworld.com

Wednesday 8th Sept 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 pm

Wednesday 6th Oct 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 pm

Frensham and Godalming groups may re-start in January 2022.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Zoom Support Group for Parents of Children & Young People with Pathological Demand Avoidance

To receive the Zoom link contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com

Thursday 26th August 8.00 pm (to be confirmed)

Thursday 30th September 8.00 pm

Thursday 28th October 8.00 pm

Zoom Support Group for Parents of Housebound Autistic People (children & adults)

This group meets over Zoom on Tuesday evenings once a month.

To go on the mailing list for information about meetings or to request the Zoom links, please contact Emma Ellis at events@nassurreybranch.org

Tuesday 24th August 8.00 pm

Tuesday 14th September 8.00pm

Tuesday 12th October 8.00 pm

Parents of Adults Group

The group will resume face-to-face meetings in West and East Surrey in September, but will still also have regular meetings over Zoom.

Contact the relevant host for venues/links.

Wednesday 11th August **Zoom** 7.30 pm. Contact Sara Truman

strumansurrey@gmail.com

Wednesday 1st September **Guildford – in-person** 7.30pm. Contact Sara Truman

strumansurrey@gmail.com

Monday 13th September **Redhill – in-person** 7.30 pm. Contact Sara Truman

strumansurrey@gmail.com

Friday 1st October **Zoom** 2.00pm Contact Hilary Dyce hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk

Thurs 21st October **Zoom** 7.30 pm Contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com

Spouses and Partners of Autistic People Group - Guildford

Evening meetings for the partners of people on the spectrum. NB your partner does not need to have a diagnosis for you to attend.

Contact Sara Truman strumansurrey@gmail.com

Wednesday 29th September 8.00 – 9.30 p.m. Guildford Institute, Ward Street, Guildford GU1 4LH

Wednesday 27th October 8.00 – 9.30 p.m. Guildford Institute, Ward Street, Guildford GU1 4LH

Appeer CIC Groups for Girls and Women

Appeer is a parent-run community interest company offering support and activities to autistic girls and women and their parents and carers in Surrey and beyond.

They run a range of online and ad hoc activities arranged to support autistic girls, teens and parents/carers, including Minecraft groups for girls in August and September. Find out more at www.appeer.org.uk or via their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/positivepeerapproach/>

Emergency Care Plan and Seminar

Action for Carers has recently updated its Emergency Care Plan which you can complete with details of how you care for your loved one and any other relevant information if you are unable to continue caring.

If you would like a copy of the new plan in print or a PDF, then call 0303 040 1234 opt 1 for admin, or email CS Admin@actionforcarers.org.uk

You can also download the plan from their website:

<https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/how-we-help/practical-support/emergency-planning/>

Action for Carers is running an **information session** on the Emergency Care Plan on **Thurs 12 August from 10.00 -11.30am**. The session will cover why having an emergency care plan is vital for carers. In the session you will discuss how to complete the plan document, and explore what you need to consider.

See previous page for details of how to register with Action for Carers.

Consultation on Core Capabilities for the Transition of Young People into Adult Services

Skills for Health is running a consultation on a new *Core Capabilities Framework for the Transition of Young People into Adult Services* for the health care sector. Young people, parents and carers are invited to give their views, along with healthcare members of staff. Currently there is no national framework that addresses this need.

The Framework describes the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by all healthcare staff working with young people who are transitioning to adult services.

It supports the ongoing work of the need for the successful transition of young people between children's and adult services as identified by the NHS Long Term Plan.

The Framework will provide the health sector with a starting point to identify education and training currently available, as well as identifying any gaps. It is designed to help build a consistent approach to training for clinical and non-clinical staff to improve the successful transition of young people between children's and adult services.

The survey closes on Sunday 22nd August. For more information and to complete the consultation survey go to:

<https://skillsforhealth.org.uk/have-your-say-on-the-transition-of-young-people-into-adult-services-core-capabilities-framework/>

Autistica Research Festival

The charity Autistica held a 5 day online conference in July about the latest research in the autism field. Videos from the conference should appear on their YouTube channel any time now.

To find out more, go to Autistica's YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOcZrUsUjmBbUMPT0HlgGKg>

Gamers' Lounge Events for Children and Young People

The next session of the Gamers Lounge event for children and young people is at The Boileroom in Guildford on **Saturday 7th August**.

There are two sessions: 12noon to 2pm, and 2pm to 4pm. Tickets are £5 (plus booking fee), and available from <https://www.theboileroom.net/>

There will be a range of consoles to choose from, and capacity has increased to 10 people per session. People are also welcome to bring along their Nintendo Switches and game with others using these.

Hygiene protocols are in place, and consoles are cleaned between use. People will be asked to wear masks unless exempt.

If you go to accompany a child/young person, but you're not gaming yourself, you only need to buy a ticket for the gamer/s.

If you have a child/young person who's interested, but uncertain about coming to a new event for the first time, you're welcome to drop in for 10 minutes and have a look, email or phone/text in advance or on the day.

Email Mike Leat at mike.lead@asmentoring.co.uk Tel: 07884 430703.

The Curly Hair Project

The Curly Hair Project (CHP) is a social enterprise that supports autistic people and those around them. Its resources are used by GPs, psychologists, speech and language therapists and teaching professionals.

It was founded by autistic author Alis Rowe who uses animated films, comic strips and diagrams to make the books, webinars and e-courses interesting and easy to understand.

Members of NAS Surrey Branch can get a 10% discount off Curly Hair Project webinars, e-courses and books. Use the code NASSURREY at checkout to access the 10% discount.

There are a range of webinars available in August. For details and to book go to: <https://thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk/services/events/>

- Sensory Processing and Autism Wednesday 4th August at 8.00 pm
- How do I make and keep friends? For autistic children Saturday 7th Aug 10.00am
- Anxiety and Autism Monday 9th August 8.00 pm
- Meltdowns and Shutdowns Wednesday 11th August 8.00 pm
- Emotions and Autism Thursday 12th August 8.00 pm
- What is it like to be autistic? Wednesday 18th August 8.00 pm

If you need any help with accessing the discount, please email surrey.branch@nas.org.uk

NAS Surrey Branch AGM – Report on Talk by Ros Blackburn

At the NAS Surrey Branch AGM over Zoom on 12th July, Carol Teunon was re-elected as Chair and Haywood Drake was re-elected as Treasurer.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Ros Blackburn, a 52-year-old autistic woman who was diagnosed at 18 months old as severely autistic but with average intellectual ability. Ros now lectures nationally and internationally giving insight into her own experiences and the care and education practices she has observed. She also talked about how she managed during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Ros told the meeting about all she learned from her parents in dealing with social situations and potentially stressful circumstances. She said that her parents weren't a soft touch and made her follow and obey social rules, something which she found hard at the time but which she says she is now grateful for.

In a mainstream school, she had to learn to tolerate things that were difficult for her such as fluorescent lights from an early age. She freely admits that she used to blame teachers or her parents for her outbursts, which could involve hitting other pupils when she was young.

She was asked by a parent about supporting their non-verbal child and stressed that he may be pre-verbal, and just not motivated to talk yet.

On behaviour, she said that autistic people don't have to be sociable, they just have to be socially acceptable.

Another parent asked about dealing with bullying in school. Ros said that for every bullying attempt, there are 'trillions of kindnesses'.

Ros says that we all share behaviour as we're all human. She encouraged the parents listening to have high expectations of their autistic children, but to offer appropriate support.

She has co-authored a book with Patricia Howlin entitled Autism and Asperger Syndrome: Preparing for Adulthood

RESEARCH REQUEST: Social Development & Communication in Autistic Children

Phoebe Morris is a PhD researcher at the University of Essex, working within the School of Sport, Rehabilitation, and Exercise Science and the School of Psychology. Her research focuses on the social development and communication skills of children diagnosed with autism, and how to enhance these skills through the successful use of physical activity and movement.

She is currently working on a project that involves autistic children playing the exercise game '*Just Dance*' with their parent / carer at home. It is believed that the game could act as a vehicle to enhance social-communication skills in autistic children - and it is a really fun game to play at home with parents or caregivers.
/cont'd

She is looking for autistic participants aged between 8 and 12 years old and their parents/caregivers to be involved in the initial feasibility study. The study will not involve any travelling and everything will be done within the participant's home online or via telephone.

An online taster session to recruit participants for the initial feasibility study will be held on the 15th of September. During the online session, parents will be informed of the eligibility criteria to participate in the project with their child, what the project will involve, time commitments to the project, and what outcome measures will be used to test the effectiveness of participating in *Just Dance* to enhance social-communication skills. **All cameras will be off** for the taster session so that everyone joining in can remain anonymous until they consent to take part in the project.

Parents can register their interest in the taster session at https://essex.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3wli9nyuVTJDhfE, and a date, time, and link for the online session will be sent via email once potential participants have registered their interest.

INFORMATION FOR ADULTS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

New Surrey Supported Learning Directory

Surrey Supported Learning has launched the new course directory for adults with learning disabilities for 2021/22: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/adult-learning/courses/learning-disabilities>

Surrey Supported Learning offers courses for people with learning disabilities which are designed to promote independent living, personal development, and employment skills opportunities.

The seven main centres are in **Sunbury, Esher, Molesey, Woking, Guildford, Farnham, and Camberley**. Courses are open to those aged 19 or over (or aged 16+ if from eligible SEN schools). Sessions are also delivered online via Zoom. The aim of the courses is to help learners thrive and achieve as they explore learning led by teams of experienced Tutors, Supported Learning Assistants, and dedicated volunteers.

For details, contact Surrey Supported Learning on 0300 200 1044.

Employment Survey

Ambitious about Autism would like to find out more about autistic young people aged 16-25 and their experiences of employment.

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. It can be completed by young people, or by parents, carers or relatives on behalf of a young person.

The results will help Ambitious About Autism understand the needs of young people who are in or seeking employment and will inform their policy, campaigning and project work going forward. You can complete the survey here:

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

Autism Partnership Board Reference Group

This is a group for autistic adults where members can share their views with representatives from Surrey County Council as part of the Surrey All Age Autism Strategy.

Senior members of staff from Surrey County Council attend the meetings and update members on progress with the implementation plans for the Strategy.

It is open to autistic adults living in Surrey who do not have a Surrey County Council Adult Social Care package. The groups alternate between afternoon and evening meetings. Members can take part in the Reference group by talking in the meetings, writing in the chat, or by email outside the meeting.

The next two meetings will be taking place on:

- Monday 9th August at 7.00 pm
- Monday 20th September 2.00pm

To request to join the group please contact: Imogen Osborne, Engagement and partnership Officer by phone/text on 07929 863582 or email:

imogen.osborne@surreycc.gov.uk

Surrey Group for People with a Learning Disability and/or Autism

The Surrey People's Network was set up to give people a voice, find opportunities, and encourage positive change.

The group meets online on the first Wednesday of the month for an hour and a half. You can stay online after the meeting to have a cup of tea with friends.

Members can suggest topics for the agenda and talk about things that are important to them. Previous meetings have talked about independence, community inclusion, health inequalities, and other projects people care about. The group is growing and always welcomes new members.

If you would like to attend, please email to ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk

and a member of the team will be in touch. You can view their website here:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/disability-and-mental-health/spb/spn>

Interesting Articles on Autism on the ATLAS site

There is a range of interesting articles on the new ATLAS (Accept, Teach, Listen, Access, Support) group run by the User Voice and Participation Team at Surrey County Council (see p7 for details).

In one article Sarah Foreman, the lead facilitator for ATLAS, says "there still is a lot of misunderstanding and judgement". You can read the article here:

<https://surreyatlas.uk/2021/04/09/advocating-for-change-autism-awareness-and-acceptance/>

In another article, an autistic ATLAS member talks about how they manage anxiety, what coping strategies they use and what professionals can do to help

<https://surreyatlas.uk/2021/07/01/my-anxiety-asd-and-me/>

New Learning Disability and Autism Information Hub launched

Surrey County Council and its health partners recently launched a new website for people to find out more about learning disabilities and autism. It includes a range of resources in accessible formats: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/disability-and-mental-health/spb>

It also includes information about how to get involved with Valuing People Groups, Autism Reference Groups and Surrey People Groups, and enable you to read the minutes from their meetings.

The site now has new videos to watch, and over time this will be developed further with added podcasts, personal stories and pictures.

For more information on joining any groups, or to give your feedback about the website changes, please contact Imogen Osborne, Engagement and Partnership Officer in the learning disability and autism team by email at: ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk

Information on the hub includes:

Autism Services and Support in Surrey

The Hub webpage gives details of a range of services for autistic people, from employment skills and advocacy to social groups.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/disability-and-mental-health/spb/apb/services>

Understanding Autism

Learn more about autism and how it affects adults using these helpful factsheets on communication, diagnosis, the health service and useful strategies for life.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/disability-and-mental-health/spb/apb/understanding-autism>

Accommodation Types

There is a short video about a new-build supported living accommodation in Surrey including an interview with one of the residents.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/disability-and-mental-health/spb/living-independently>

'Shared lives' Longstanding Care

Shared Lives is a longstanding form of care that centres on sharing home, family, and community life to support people to lead fulfilling and active lives.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/disability-and-mental-health/spb/living-independently/shared-lives>

Residential Care

The site includes information on full-time, often long-term care given to an individual in a registered setting rather than in their own home.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/disability-and-mental-health/spb/living-independently/accommodation>

About the NAS Surrey Branch

NAS Surrey Branch is a volunteer-run, support group for the parents of autistic children and adults, and the partners of people with autism, and is part of the National Autistic Society. It's FREE to join (although a small donation is appreciated) and we have around 2,000 members in and around Surrey.

We hold regular support group meetings and special interest groups and represent the views of parents in meetings with health, education and social services.

We host an active online forum and produce this email newsletter every two months. To join for free, go to <https://nassurreybranch.org> or email NASSurreyBranch@nas.org.uk to request a membership form.

If you are a member of the National Autistic Society at national level, you can nominate us to receive part of your subscription by emailing supportercare@nas.org.uk.

We are part of the National Autistic Society (NAS). The NAS works for autistic people and runs a wide range of services such as schools, clubs and adult centres. It has over 20,000 members and 100 branches and works in partnership with more than 50 local autism societies.

The NAS exists **to transform lives** by being a trusted source of support and practical advice for autistic people and their families at key stages in life and **change attitudes** by working with businesses, policymakers, autism professionals and the public to reduce isolation and open up opportunities in society as a whole.

By joining the NAS, you can help boost funds, as well as providing additional information for you and your family.

The individual member price is £26 for card payment/£24 for direct debit
The joint member price is £32 for card payment/£30 for direct debit

Joint membership allows two adults living in the same household to take advantage of publications discounts and to vote in elections for the NAS' Council of Members. It also gives family members a chance to be involved and to show their support.

Parents often take out joint membership with an autistic child who is over 18.

**National Autistic Society, 393 City Rd, London EC1V 1NG www.autism.org.uk.
Registered charity, number 269425. Company limited by guarantee number 1205298.**

The NAS Surrey Branch is part of the National Autistic Society - Registered charity, number 269425. Company limited by guarantee number 1205298.

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