

AUTISM GM

NEWSLETTER

Greater Manchester Consortium to develop local services for people with autism
www.autismgm.org.uk

SPRING 2005

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Autism GM Newsletter is produced by:

The National Autistic Society
Family Services Development Project
Anglo House
Chapel Road
Northenden
Manchester M22 4JN
Tel: 0161 998 4667
Fax: 0161 945 2703
Email: marisaeki@nas.org.uk

Editor:

Debbie Waters – Joint Project Officer

Editorial Assistants:

Wendy Naylor & Barbara Whillans

Hello and welcome to the Spring 2005 edition of the Autism GM newsletter,

It's hard to believe that six months has passed since Mari left for her maternity leave and Jane Forrest joined us on a secondment from Oldham Learning Disability Services. Jane has done a fantastic job of mastering the very varied role of Project Officer in such a short period and we will all miss her very much. Mari intends to come back for four days a week and this means that I will be continuing to cover the post for the other day. This also means that Wendy Naylor will be able to stay on as our Information Officer.

Experienced trainers in the ten local authorities are now using the Greater Manchester basic autism awareness training package and we'd like to thank everyone who contributed for their hard work on this project. Our intention is to build a database of local trainers and hold regular meetings to assess what is working well and what we might need to address in the future.

We hope you enjoy our latest newsletter. Wendy was really impressed by the commitment and skill of all the staff at the Tameside CLASS resource base and we know that several other authorities are in the process of forming their own ASD specific responses at secondary level. The need for this is something that we are very aware of from the phone calls we receive at the Project office.

Finally, another reminder to all readers that we are always looking for volunteers to review books, videos or events related to autism and Asperger's Syndrome, and that we are particularly keen to highlight examples of good practice as recommended by parents or users of services. This might be a recommendation of a service or organisation, or the chance to acknowledge the skills of a professional who has been particularly supportive.

Wishing you all the best,

Debbie Waters
Editor



PARIS is launched!

PARIS, a new online Public Autism Resource and Information Service provided by The National Autistic Society was launched on Tuesday 22nd February. For more information about PARIS please read the article on Page 12



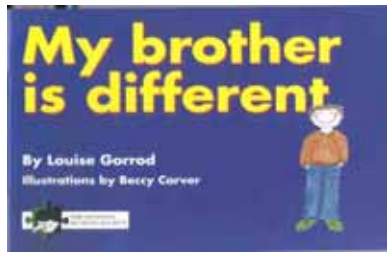
Resources for Siblings

Parents often ask us what help is available for the siblings of a child with an autistic spectrum disorder. The unfortunate, but honest, answer has to be, 'not nearly enough'. Siblings share many of the same day-to-day stresses that parents face but without the same understanding of autism, and without access to their own support systems. In addition to this siblings may feel guilty about the feelings of frustration and resentment they sometimes have, and this can stop them from asking for the extra help or attention they might require.

There is an undeniable need for more services for the siblings of children with autistic spectrum disorders given how disruptive living with autism can be to any notion of a 'normal' family life. At the very least they need time with their parent(s) without their sibling around, and regular opportunity to speak to others who understand their situation. Sometimes this is provided by respite services for the child with ASD, and through access to e.g. young carers groups, but such services are not nearly accessible or common enough to meet the significant demand for them.

Often it helps if siblings can have information about autism or Asperger Syndrome in order to understand their brother or sister's behaviour better, and to give them the words to explain to others. Here are the details of a few books that we know have been useful to some families:

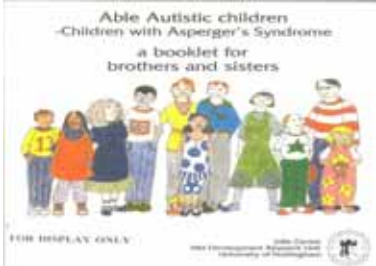
'My brother is different'
Louise Gorrod
NAS Code 233
ISBN 1 899280 50 2



This is a very simple picture book for young children where a young child is giving examples of the things that are different about her brother, and therefore her home and life. The accompanying pictures are simple, bright and humorous. At the end of the book there is a list of the positive things she can do with and for her brother. Louise Gorrod's book is a great starting point for teaching a very young child about autism although you might need to explain that all children – even those with ASD – are different as it is unlikely that their brother or sister will be identical to the one portrayed in this book.

'Children with Autism: A booklet for brothers and sisters'
Julie Davies
(Child Development Research Unit, University of Nottingham)
NAS Code 121

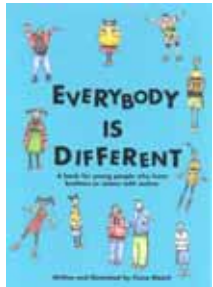
Able autistic children with Asperger's Syndrome: A booklet for brothers and sisters'
NAS Code 122



These booklets have been around for some time now but remain, in my view, the best of their kind. Each starts with a really clear explanation of autism or Asperger Syndrome and then goes on to answer some common, but difficult questions (How can we explain autism to other people? Will he ever get better? And the ever popular - why doesn't he get told off like I do?)

The booklets acknowledge the very real difficulties as well as the good aspects, and have lots of quotes from siblings that would hopefully help the reader feel less alone in their feelings and experiences.

'Everybody is Different: A book for young people who have brothers or sisters with autism'
Fiona Bleach
NAS Code 414
ISBN 1 899280 33 2



'Everybody is different' is a larger book (80 pages) and contains more detailed information about the nature

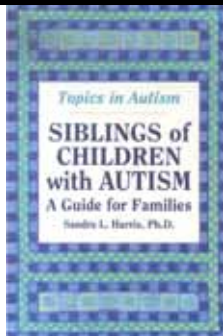
of autistic spectrum disorders, as well as looking at related behaviours in more depth. The recommended age range for the book is 8yrs–13yrs.

The book is clearly set out and is very matter of fact and easy to read with black and white cartoon drawings on most pages. There is a good section on what the sibling might be feeling and experiencing and some constructive suggestions about what they might be able to do to make life easier. It ends with lists of different therapies and different terms that the child might have heard before but not understood.

Children who aren't keen on reading factual material may prefer to read or listen to the excellent stories by Kathy Hoopmann that feature a main character with Asperger Syndrome and use these as starting points for discussion with a parent or other well-informed adult. The best of these is probably 'The Blue Bottle Mystery' which was reviewed in our second Summer 2003 edition of AutismGM newsletter www.autismgm.org.uk

Finally, parents may be interested in a book called 'Siblings of Children with Autism: A Guide for Families'

**'Siblings of Children with Autism: A Guide for Families' by Sandra L. Harris.
NAS Code 223
ISBN 1 890627 29 1**



The book is based on much direct research by the author who herself is the sister of a person with autism. It looks at the changing experiences and issues that arise at different stages for siblings, and advocates open and frequent family discussions as well as the enrolment of all possible sources of family support.

Harris concludes:-

“Living in a family is one of the most difficult things we do. There are so many competing needs that must be met, and so little time to do so. Autism is not the only source of family stress, but if you have a child with autism, the demands of family life may be even more intense because that youngster needs so much extra help to meet his potential. The stress created by those demands can be a breeding ground for anxiety, tension, sadness, jealousy and other painful emotions on the part of any family member.

Meeting the many demands of family life, and helping each family member develop a fulfilling life, may hinge in part on being able to draw on the resources around you. It makes good sense to ask family, friends and professionals to contribute what they can to helping your family thrive.....Fortunately, although family life is demanding, it can also be profoundly rewarding, and your children may emerge as richer adults for having been part of a family that included a youngster with autism.” (pp. 93 – 94)

All books can be purchased from The National Autistic Society. The NAS also produce an Information Sheet entitled “Autism: books for children and young people” available either from the Project Office or online at www.nas.org.uk

**Debbie Waters
Project Officer**

Useful links

Contact A Family have an Information Sheet for Siblings <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/siblings>

Other website links:

www.sibs.org.uk Gives support, advice and information for siblings, their parents and professionals working with siblings. .

There are also two useful siblings websites where information for siblings can be located and also the opportunity for siblings to make contact with each other. They can be found at

**www.sibspace.org and
www.thearc.org/
siblingsupport**



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Email:
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UK postage and handling:
£3.95 for orders up to £50.00, no postage and packing charge for orders over £50.00

Short cut for ordering online
www.autism.org.uk/pubs

Autism Alert card



Developed in consultation with adults with autism and parents, the new **Autism Alert card** from The National Autistic Society can be carried by a person with autism and enables them to identify their needs in situations where they may find communication difficult. This could be in a supermarket, a railway station, or to a policeman.

The Autism Alert card is designed to tell people with whom adults with autism come into contact about the condition, and asks them to show respect and tolerance. The card comprises a wallet which contains a leaflet of key facts about autism, and a credit-card style insert which can be used to include emergency contact details.

The leaflet is available in English and a variety of other languages to download from The National Autistic Society website.

**For more details, visit the Autism Alert card web page at www.autism.org.uk/card
How to order...**

Until the end of March, the Autism Alert card is **FREE** to members of The National Autistic Society and to family members who are on the autistic spectrum. To apply for the card, members need only fill out the application form on page 48 of the Spring 2005 issue of the membership magazine *Communication* and send it in to the address stated.

Alternatively, the card can be ordered through the online shop at www.autism.org.uk/card or by telephoning NAS publications distributors on 020 7033 9237. The card will cost £6.45, which includes the standard publications postage and packing charge.



To enquire about membership of The National Autistic Society, please telephone the membership officer on
Tel: 020 7903 3563



AUTISM UPDATES

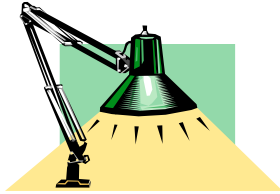
The National Autistic Society have recently produced new and updated Information Sheets on the following issues:

- Music Therapy
- Colleges for students with autism or Asperger's syndrome
- Holiday Help: A Guide
- Education Legislation: England & Wales
- Adult Establishments
- Pathological Demand Avoidance
- Mercury

- Semantic Pragmatic Disorder
- Autism: Books for Children and young people
- Use of Picture Symbols

The Information Sheets can be obtained either direct from:

**The Family Services Development Project
Office (Tel: 0161 998 4667)
or
from the NAS website: www.nas.org.uk**



AUTISM GOOD PRACTICE

St Thomas More RC High School
Town Lane
Denton
Manchester
M34 6AF
Tel: 0161 320 9506
Email: class@stthomasmore.tameside.sch.uk

In November 2004 I visited **C.L.A.S.S** at **St Thomas More RC High School, Denton** to meet the staff, spend some time seeing how a typical day takes place and to gain an insight into how the resource is organised.

C.L.A.S.S. is the acronym standing for **Communication, Language and Autistic Spectrum Support**.

AIMS

- To establish multi-disciplinary early identification, intervention and support for individuals with ASD and Specific Language Impairments.
- To increase awareness of Autism and Specific Language Impairment across Tameside by developing a training programme for staff, parents, governors etc in resource and mainstream schools.
- To develop a comprehensive Autism policy for the education and inclusion of pupils at the resource bases and for the outreach team.
- To develop effective partnerships with parents of pupils with ASD and Specific Language Impairments.
- To develop "Autism friendly" schools by: setting up teaching and learning environments and systems, which address the particular learning, communication and behavioural needs of pupils with ASD.
- To help meet the needs of children with Specific Language Impairments in mainstream schools.

The resource opened in September 2003 with a group of 5 pupils all with very different needs. There were two from year 7 and year 8

respectively with a further one from year 10. The overall capacity of the resource is for 12 pupils.

All the employed members of the Speech and Language Team come from INCA (The Inscape Centre for Autism based in Cheadle) and the Local Education Authority employs the teaching and support staff.

The resource gives advice and support to nursery and school children that have Autistic Spectrum Disorders or Specific Language Impairments along with the staff that support parents them and their or carers. The intention is to promote inclusive practice and also improve the achievements of children.

SERVICES

- Raising Awareness about ASD and Specific Language Impairments
- Giving advice to parents and staff
- Planning support by liaising with all individuals or groups who work with any pupil
- Assessing individual pupils and providing them with any specialist teaching as necessary
- Helping to differentiate aspects of the curriculum and developing resources to undertake the same
- Making submissions to IEP, planning, annual reviews and statutory assessments

The aim is to include the children into mainstream classes and lessons for the majority of the time. They are given support in every lesson and this might be in respect of social issues, adaptation or differentiation of the curriculum. Time in the resource tends to be focused on specific issues or interventions that have been identified as needing attention. So although the resource has a physical presence the ethos is very much that inclusion is the main agenda and that the building is just part of the support structure to achieving this. It is highlighted that the resource is not seen or used as a unit but as an integral part of the school environment and it could not work without the co-operation of the staff and pupils of the mainstream school. There is also much outreach work taking place.

Having said this, it is interesting to note that the physical environment has been very deliberately designed to meet the needs and challenges experienced by pupils with an ASD in respect of sensory and organisational issues. The building houses administrative rooms and a staff

refreshment area but the main part of the building has distinct zones, including an area where structured lessons occur with tables and a whiteboard, work stations with screens to aid concentration and avoid distraction, a locker area to help the pupils organise their books and other possessions and some low seating for relaxation. The teaching resources are well organised and filed clearly in drawers or cupboards with clear labelling, much of it with a visual component. The decoration is subdued and there are a few key things pinned up on the wall - all designed to aid organisation or understanding.

The pupils are given a mainstream timetable and so far as possible they adhere to this. If there is a particular reason why they are unable to cope with the session then there is scope to go to the resource base where staff are available to help resolve any issues. The access to the resource is freely accessible to the pupils as and when the need arises thus helping to deal with potentially difficult situations immediately.

Contrary to what many people might assume, the issues facing the higher functioning children with ASD who attend the resource are often complex and in particular in respect of social interaction and a large part of the work of the staff is spent trying to overcome social barriers. Therefore, the staff from C.L.A.S.S. note the importance of building relationships with the staff in the mainstream provision and providing ongoing support and learning situations. There are many difficulties for the pupils to face when coping with the mainstream provision. For example the environment is neither structured nor predictable and there are 750 other pupils to interact with. There is a need both with the staff group and other pupils to raise their awareness of issues related to autism.

Speech Therapy

There are 3 Speech and Language Therapists associated with the resource, 1 designated for Primary, 1 designated for Secondary and 1 on the outreach team.

The role of the Speech Therapists is to work with individuals and groups on things such as modifying the environment, making resources and developing communication.

There are also specific lessons given by speech therapists on various topics, for example on the day of the visit I was able to observe an excellent lesson. It was well structured and

paced and all the pupils were included in every stage of it.

The lesson was outlined first of all so that there would be no surprises, time was spent ensuring that the content and language of the story had been understood and any ambiguous words or phrases were explored to ensure that understanding was accurate. The tone of the lesson was positive and encouraging and all the pupils appeared to be fully engaged throughout. There were clear visual resources and comic-strip conversations were included in a very natural way giving a good insight into the value of this approach to aid clarity and

STAFFING LEVELS

- Team Leader
- 15 hours of administrative support
- A resourced based teacher
- 3 resource SSA's
- 3 outreach teachers
- 4 outreach SSA's

understanding.

Support Assistants

Support Assistants are an important and integral part of the staff team. They are given lesson plans from the teaching staff and then work to change these if necessary and differentiate the work to suit the needs of the individual pupils. It is their responsibility to prepare any materials to undertake the amended lessons. They also work closely with other members of the staff team in ensuring that the environment is appropriate for enabling communication and social interaction.

One of the support workers has been working on a number of Life Skills Worksheets covering a range of skills pertinent to this age group these include:

- Making a cup of tea, a sandwich, toast or microwave meal
- Going to the shops
- Learning how to deal with money at the bank or building society
- Learning how to make appointments with people such as plumbers, the library, the dentist or doctor

It was very interesting and informative to spend some time at the C.L.A.S.S. resource where the staff were extremely welcoming and helpful in

trying to help me comprehend the service that they provide. There was an obvious enthusiasm and commitment from the staff that I met both in their approach to the pupils they support but also to the concept of inclusion by such a provision. This was an excellent model of appropriate provision for pupils with ASD that is flexible and dynamic whilst being closely linked and responsive to the needs of individual pupils. It also demonstrated the importance of working in a pro-active way with parents and staff from mainstream provision.

Wendy Naylor
Information Officer

A CD Rom , which has proved particularly useful in developing the work of C.L.A.S.S. is called **Out and About**, published by SEMERC (ISBN 184124916-5) and produced in collaboration with Home Farm Trust and Keele University. Cost is £59

Details can be found on www.semerc.com



Volunteering Opportunities

Recruitment of committee members urgently needed.

Respect for All
Counselling
12 Stroud Close
Middleton
M24 1RA
Tel: 0161 643 4257

We are a voluntary body offering a team of counsellors who are familiar with the needs of learning-disabled people, people with Aspergers, and their families and carers. The name **Respect for All** was suggested by Manchester People First, a self-advocacy group of learning-disabled people. We work with adults and young people from 12rs old in Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport and Trafford areas.

We are looking for people who both understand and support our aims, AND have experience of voluntary organisations, AND can assist with obtaining funding. We have a dedicated and enthusiastic band of committee members who give their time to support the organisation.

Our Philosophy and Approach—We believe that each person is unique and has potential. From our experience counselling has enabled people to grow in confidence and advocate for themselves.

We show our respect through taking the time and effort to communicate with clients at a pace and in a way that is both helpful and empowering. What is discussed in counselling sessions is confidential to client and counsellor. Where our work would be more effective with an understanding of communication or health issues we may, with the client's permission, seek advice from people about these.

Our major difficulty has been obtaining funding for our work, so that the service can be free for the client. We became a Voluntary Body with a Management Committee in August 2003 and this enabled us to obtain grants from Manchester and Rochdale Community Chests and Manchester Carers Fund. Other applications for funding are in the pipeline.

Please contact us at the
above address
if you are interested in
joining our Committee.



Child Safe



Child Safe



Are you anxious about losing your child in a public place and concerned that they couldn't communicate with the person who found them? The NAS and Child Safe Zones are working together to offer you a service and product that could help.

Child Safe Zones is a national scheme to help reunite a lost child with their family as quickly as possible, whether in the UK or abroad.

Colourful, friendly tags and wristbands can help anyone finding your child to quickly contact you directly or through the 24-hour support line.

As well as contacts and a photograph, families can store details of their child's special needs or medical information with Child Safe Zone. For the parents of children on the autistic spectrum, that means being able to pass on to anyone finding their child how best to communicate, or how to deal with their behaviour.



If your child is missing then a call to the Child Safe Zones support centre authorizes access to a photograph and other emergency information stored to help in a search. Only a parent can authorise access to the child's details or instruct circulation to appropriate authorities.

My son can't tell anyone who he is, and he regularly runs off...I used their tags on holiday, in fact my son has one on his shoe all the time now. I think Child Safe Zones is a brilliant idea, and it relieves some of the worry."

A Mum, Bournville, Warwickshire'



NAS members, their family and friends can save £5.00 when they register with Child Safe Zones for £10.00 (plus £1.50 p&p) per family for a year, which includes a free accessories pack. In addition Child Safe Zones will donate £1.50 to the NAS for every member who registers. When asked for a promotional code enter: NASCSZ.

For further information or to register visit www.childsafezones.co.uk or call 01444 892203



Running for the NAS!

The 2005 London Marathon will take place on 17th April with over 95 people running on behalf of the NAS. Last year an amazing total of £170,000 was raised and it is hoped to exceed that figure in the 2005 London Marathon. 70 guaranteed places are already filled and we are now recruiting runners with their own places.

To join the team please contact the Events Team on 020 7903 3522 or email londonmarathon@nas.org.uk



DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT REVIEW

Mary McBride - Regional Development Officer for Contact a Family North West has emailed the Family Services Development Project to let us know about the progress of the Disabled Facilities Grant Review.

Here's what she has to say:

"The Disabled Facilities Grant Review in England has now been completed and it is vital to get as many MPs as possible on side to ensure that legislation goes through to remove the means test that leaves families in huge

debt paying for adaptations or unable to make their home accessible to their disabled child.

Please contact your MP and ask him/her to sign Early Day Motion 298.

108 MPs have signed so far, only a sixth of the total.

An Early Day Motion shows the level of interest in any particular issue, so the more signatures, the louder the message it sends to Government. You can check the wording of the Early Day Motion and who has signed at the following web address:-
If your MP has not signed,

<http://edm.ais.co.uk/weblink/html/motion.html/ref=298>

make sure they have all the reasons why they should. If s/he has signed, drop him/her a note anyway, to say how pleased you are with their support and hoping they will continue to take an interest.

Pass the word on to friends, family and colleagues. Combined pressure brought about a change to the law in Northern Ireland: let's see if we can do it in England, too".

Disability Rights Commission investigates health inequalities experienced by people with autism

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has launched a formal investigation into the health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities or mental health problems. Autism will be included in this investigation.

The DRC investigation is taking place because there is evidence pointing to the fact that disabled people get a poor service from some doctors and nurses. This will be a major piece of work addressing access to health care services and measures to reduce inequalities for people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions in England and Wales. The investigation, for people of all ages (children and adults), mainly looks at primary care services (GP surgery, health centre or clinic) and runs until June 2006. The initial phase of the investigation is about gathering evidence of the inequality of treatment.

The deadline for returned questionnaires is **31 March 2005**. Stage 2 will begin in April and will run until autumn 2005 when the DRC will arrange

workshops to interview people face to face to obtain more information.

So for instance have you, (if you are a person with an autistic spectrum condition) your son or daughter been to the GP with a health problem and the GP has not been able to help or been dismissive? Alternatively does your GP understand autism and is able to give you flexible appointments or knows when to refer to a specialist?

To fill in the online questionnaire from the DRC please go to: www.drc-gb.org/health. Alternatively please contact the NAS Policy and Campaigns Team and they will send you a hard copy of the questionnaire.

For further details email: Policy@nas.org.uk or call 020 7903 3558.

MENCAP

Understanding learning disability



An information pack to help people with a learning disability vote at the next general election is being launched by the Disability Rights Commission, the 'Valuing People' Support Team and Mencap.

The **'Right to Vote'** pack gives useful information to people with a learning disability and their families and carers about registering to vote. It also explains what to do at the polling station.

Most people with a learning disability will be able to be included on the electoral register. This means they will

have the same choice as every other citizen about whether to vote or not.

The general election is likely to be in May this year. If that is the case people need to register by the middle of March.

Electoral administrators can give advice or support if you are not sure about how to register. If you do have any problems please let us know. And just remember: don't lose your right to vote!

Find out more

- You can get the 'Right to Vote' information pack by phoning the Disability Rights Commission helpline on 08457 622 633.
- You can also download it from the Mencap website from the beginning of February. Go to www.mencap.org.uk/publications

MENCAP

Understanding learning disability

Mencap has also produced a new resource to help children with a learning disability complain about the services they use. **The Listen Up pack** will help staff at places like play schemes and hospitals listen to the views of disabled children and act on their concerns.

Mencap believes all children have the right to express their views and children with a learning disability are no exception. Some of the ways these views are expressed can be quite subtle and staff need training and tools to help them really "listen up".

The Listen Up pack – produced with money from the Community Fund – includes cards, posters and a board game. It uses symbols to help children express their likes and dislikes. A training video and workbook is available for staff and a leaflet about complaints for parents.

Jo Williams, Mencap's Chief Executive said: *"Despite the introduction of complaints procedures for children, they are often not accessible for disabled children. Children with severe learning disabilities pick up from parents and professionals the scarcity of resources and the lack of choice and they do not want to risk services being taken away from them. Parents are often expected to be grateful recipients of services and are regarded as demanding and difficult if they raise any concerns on behalf of their child. The Listen Up pack will give disabled children, parents and professionals the tools they need, so that disabled children's views are valued and they get the services they want and need."*

Halivia, mother of Tania who has severe and profound learning disabilities said: *"Tania needs 24 hour care and it is not always easy to get the right kind of support. It takes lots of time to get to know Tania, what she likes and dislikes because she does not communicate verbally. There are no complaints procedures set up that really help. I hope the pack will help staff to see children with severe learning disabilities as individuals, respond to their needs and act on parent's complaints on their behalf."*

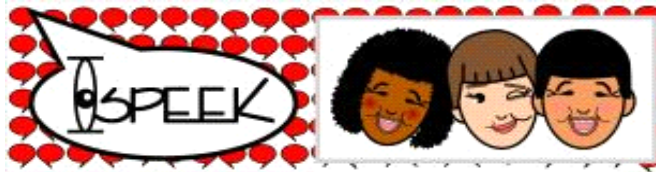
The Listen Up pack provides the tools to enable children to complain and supports staff in responding to them. The packs include posters, complaints cards and a board game for children. There is a training video and workbook for staff and a leaflet about complaints for parents. There is also CD-ROM of extra resources to help parents and staff customise any of the products for individual children.

Helen Jackson, Team Manager, Norfolk County Council said: *"Listen Up is a really valuable pack. We need to enable disabled children to understand their right to make choices about their lives and to complain when services aren't right for them. It has been fun working on the development of the pack and I hope the Listen Up materials will support staff in putting the message across that all children have the right to make choices. It will be good to have quality, well produced resources to support our work."*

Listen Up is funded by the Community Fund and FREE packs are available from Mencap's Learning Disability Helpline on 0808 808 1111 (England) or visit www.mencap.org.uk/listenup to order online.

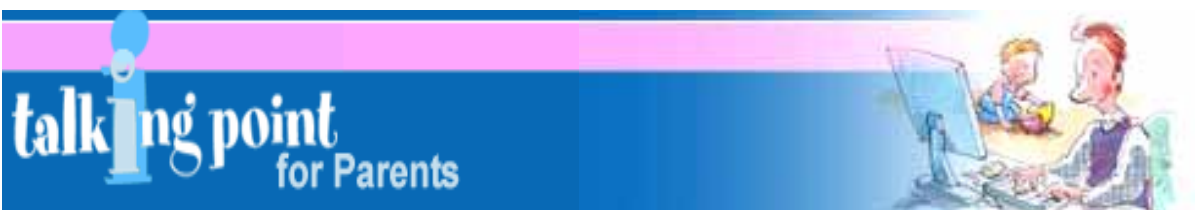


James and Oliver Phelps, who play the Weasley Twins in the Harry Potter films, met some of the children who worked with Mencap on Listen Up at the pack's launch.



The Project was contacted recently by Janet Dixon who has worked in a school specialising in ASD for over 5 years and is herself a mother of a young person with Asperger's syndrome. She has created her own library of communication symbols and now has a website called www.ispeak.co.uk

Ispeak is language in picture format; word and phrase images to use as a tool in communication which can be useful in areas where verbal or written communication is limited. Take a look at the examples and find out what Ispeak offers on its CD.



Talking Point is a website all about speech, language and communication difficulties in children. It has a range of information and resources for parents and carers of children and also for professionals. Talking Point is run by ICAN working with the Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists and Afsaic. **The website address is www.talkingpoint.org.uk**

On this site you can find:

- [Information](#) about speech and language difficulties in children
- [Frequently asked questions](#) about speech, language and communication difficulties in children
- A [Directory of Resources](#) such as useful organisations, books and factsheets
- [News](#) from the sector
- A [Glossary](#) of commonly used terms.



NAS INFORMATION SHEETS

The National Autistic Society have Information Sheets on the following subjects:

- Speech & Language Therapy
- Visual Support
- The use of picture symbols

Copies of the above Information Sheets can be obtained from the NAS Family Services Development Project (Tel: 0161 998 4667) or by downloading from the NAS website www.nas.org.uk



PARIS, a new online service provided by the National Autistic Society, was launched on Tuesday 22nd February.

PARIS (Public Autism Resource and Information Service) is designed to help people with autistic spectrum disorders, their families and the people who work with them professionally to find out more about the services available to them.

Through simple searches and browsing, you can use PARIS to find your nearest parents' support group, respite service, play scheme or diagnostic service, and much more.

Funded by Vodafone, PARIS will also provide valuable information to professionals working with people who have an autistic spectrum disorder, including details

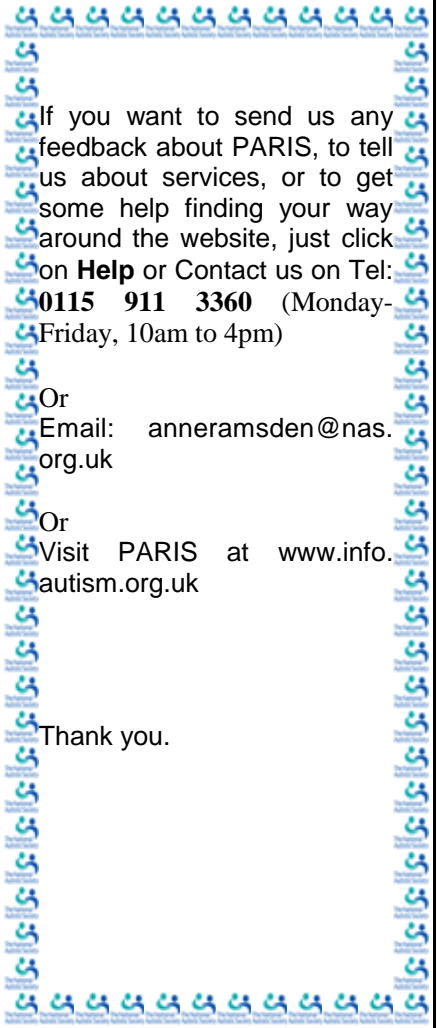
about training courses, events and professional networks.

As PARIS Development Officer for the North of England, Northern Ireland and Scotland, I have been working with the staff at the Greater Manchester Family Services Development Project and the North Regional Development Team over the last 8 months to gather information about services in Greater Manchester.

The website is currently holding information about over 3,500 services, 125 in Greater Manchester, and I'd like to thank everyone who has helped by telling us about groups and services they have contact with, and by filling in questionnaires.

The number of services and support groups listed on PARIS is growing every day, and if you know of any services, support groups of professional networks that aren't listed on PARIS, please do get in touch. We'd also love to hear what you think of the PARIS website, and how it can be made even better.

Anne Ramsden



If you want to send us any feedback about PARIS, to tell us about services, or to get some help finding your way around the website, just click on **Help** or Contact us on Tel: **0115 911 3360** (Monday-Friday, 10am to 4pm)

Or
Email: anneramsden@nas.org.uk

Or
Visit PARIS at www.info.autism.org.uk

Thank you.



Conferences & Events

SENSORY PERCEPTUAL ISSUES IN AUTISM

Speaker: OLGA BOGDASHINA
Conference held in November 2004 at Action for ASD

As a member of the ASGMA Greater Manchester Parent Support Network, which provides telephone support and advice to other parents on issues about autism, I was given the opportunity to attend a conference organised by Action for ASD. My attendance was kindly funded by ASGMA.

The guest speaker was Olga Bogdashina who is experienced in autism through teaching, lecturing and carrying out research and who has a teenage autistic son. She gave a fascinating talk entitled

"Sensory Perceptual Issues in Autism" in which she proposed an alternative way of considering autism.

The main thrust of her argument seemed to be that for individuals with autism, perception itself is experienced differently and that this has profound consequences not only on their daily lives but perhaps more crucially it affects development and the growth of their understanding. A basic tenet of her discussion was that for many, sensory perceptual issues rather than being a subsidiary consideration are of dominant

concern and that often as parents or professionals we don't give sufficient credence to the impact they can have.

Olga described to us how she had become drawn to look at the issues in more depth partly from the difficulties she observed her own son experiencing. She has also spent much time reviewing literature on the subject as well as having discussions with individuals with such as Donna Williams who stressed the importance of paying attention to sensory considerations.

The talk was full of much detail and

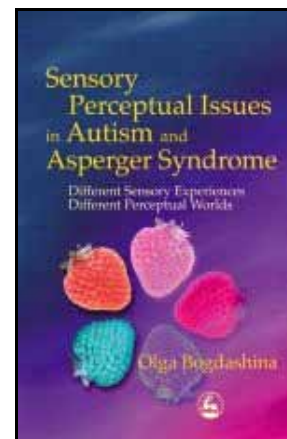
illustrated with many pertinent examples and anecdotes drawn from her wide examination of the topic. She contrasted the way some people with autism experience the world compared to the way people without autism do and she asked the audience to consider whether we can really think of it as dysfunctional, she would rather term it as "Different Sensory Functioning". Much attention was given to describing the differing sensory experiences that have so far been identified. Such as Gestalt Perception, fragmentation and prosopagnosia (face blindness) amongst others. To compliment this she also highlighted many useful strategies to help individuals cope and advocated that all people with autism might benefit from having a sensory profile carried out. Details of how to do this are included in her book described in her book.

This Review is far too brief and indeed does not do justice to the wealth of information she gave. I would certainly recommend everyone to either attend one of her lectures or read her book.

If you would like to read my more detailed review then please contact the NAS Family Services Development Project on Tel: 0161 998 4667.

Wendy Naylor
Information Officer

Sensory Perceptual Issues in Autism and Asperger Syndrome: Different sensory experiences – different perceptual worlds (2003)
Publishers – Jessica Kingsley.



The NAS have produced a booklet entitled 'Sensory world of the autistic spectrum: a greater understanding. Available from NAS Publications (Code NAS 552). Cost is £1.50

*Emotional
 Units 2-3 Gales Gardens
 Birkbeck Street
 London*

*E2 OEJ
 Tel: 020 7033 9237*

Email: naspublications@e-motional.org or order on-line at www.autism.org.uk/pubs

The Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card



The above card can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one **FREE** ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. It can be used in most national cinemas. A processing fee of £5 is charged per card but cards are valid for 3 years.

To be eligible you will need to either be in receipt of DLA, be registered blind or hold a Disabled Person's Railcard. To apply contact:

The Card Network
The Technology Centre
Rossmore Business Park
Ellesmere Port
CH65 3EN
Tel: 0151 348 8020

Applications are also available from participating cinemas across the UK. Or you can download an application form from www.ceacard.co.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN THE REGION

The National Autistic Society Parent Seminar

Transitions into Adulthood 5th March 2005

10am—3pm

Stonecross Manor Hotel, Milnthorpe Road,
Kendal LA9 5HP

Contact: Suzie Franklin, Regional Administrator
Tel: 0161 998 7860

Email: suziefranklin@nas.org.uk

The Inscape Centre Training Events

Autistic Spectrum Disorders: An Insight Tuesday 1st March 2005

9.15am - 3.30pm

Cost: £70 professionals; £45 INCA members. A limited number of places are available for parents at £30. This includes refreshments and lunch.

An Introduction to Autism (MMU Module PDP083)

5th & 12th March and the 16th April 2005

Cost: £125 (including course books, tea/coffee)

Aspects of Asperger's syndrome

Speaker: Dr Tony Attwood

Friday 29th April 2005

9.15am—4.30pm

Cost: £120 professionals; £85 InCA members. A limited number of places are available for parents at £50. This includes refreshments and lunch.

PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)

19th & 20th May 2005

8.15am - 4.30pm

Cost: £240 professionals, £210 INCA members. A limited number of places are available for parents at £100. This includes refreshments and lunch.

The Inscape Centre
Boys & Girls Welfare Society
Schools Hill, Cheadle, SK8 1JE

Tel: 0161 283 4761/4750

Contact: Joanne Halliwell

Email: joannehalliwell.bgws@virgin.net

Action for ASD, Half-Day Seminar

Luke and Jacqui Jackson

6th April 2005 10am –1pm

Clayton Park Conference Centre, Accrington
Luke will introduce the Jackson family and their respective idiosyncrasies and issues around the TV documentary and will give his perspectives on Asperger's syndrome. After the break Jacqui will talk about dietary issues..

Cost: £25 parents, £45 professionals

What is an Autistic Spectrum Disorder?

Luke Beardon

11th May 2005

9.30am—4.30pm

Burnley Football Club, James Hargreaves Street
Harry Potts Way, Burnley

Luke will introduce the basic concepts and theories relating to Autistic Spectrum Disorders and provide practical strategies for living and working with individuals with ASD's

Cost: £40 parents, £100

Contact: Action for ASD

Tel: 01282 412021

British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD)

Social Stories and Play Skills for Children on the Autistic Spectrum

15th April 2005

Warrington (venue to be confirmed)

This one day event offers an introduction to social stories and play for children and young people with ASD

Cost: £132.19 (BILD members
£146.87 (non members)
£58.75 (unwages/Family Carers)

Contact: BILD

Tel: 01562 723025

Email: learning@bild.org.uk

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

BOLTON

Bolton Autism Action Group

Tel: 01204 371768

Contact: Dave Scowcroft

Email: davidscow@aol.com

BURY

Bury Autism Parent Society

Tel: 0161 761 0132

Contacts: Joanne & Tony
Moran

Website:

www.baps-online.co.uk

MANCHESTER

The Winnicott Centre Parent Support Group

Tel: 248.9494

Contact: Liz Crabtree

OLDHAM

OSCA

Tel: 0161 688 6156

Contact: Jo Palmer, Secretary

Email: osca@bigfoot.com

Website: www.bigfoot.com/

~OSCA

ASPACE (Asperger's support for Parents & Carers)

Tel: 01706 847455

Valerie Foster, Chair

Pam Butler, Secretary

Tel: 01706 847455

ROCHDALE

RAGS

Tel: 01706 374525

Contact: Margaret

Rochdale Parents of Autism, Asperger's Liaison Society

(This group doesn't meet
formerly but the members are
happy to provide telephone
support to Rochdale parents).

Tel: 07714488817 (Hazel

Crossland) or

Tel: 07752293076 (Deirdre

Leavers)

SALFORD

ADD Action Project

Tel: 790 1455

Fax: 790 1422

Contact: Carol Weston

Email: info@addfocus.co.uk

STOCKPORT

Stockport National Autistic Society Branch

Tel: 431 3525

Contact: Sue Shaw

Email: stockportnas@msn.com

Living With Autism Support Group

Tel: 486 1136 (Wendy Naylor)

TAMESIDE

Tameside Asperger's syndrome Support Group

Tel: 331 5268

Contact: Julie Scrymgeour

TRAFFORD

Parent Support Group for children with ASD in mainstream schools

Tel: 912 1179

Contact: Liz Cooper

Email: liz.cooper@trafford.gov.

uk

WIGAN

SPECTRUM

Tel: 01942 513053

Contact: Janet Sumner

(Secretary)

Wigan SCOPE

Tel: 01257 423939

Contact: Caroline Tomlinson

GREATER MANCHESTER

Asperger's syndrome Parent Support Group

Tel: 0161 707 6669

Contact: Lesley Roberts

This group is supported by the Autistic Society Greater Manchester Area (ASGMA)
And is open to all parents/carers.