

AUTISM GM

NEWSLETTER

Greater Manchester Autism Consortium

www.autismgm.org.uk

SUMMER 2007 EDITION



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Hello and welcome to the Summer edition of our Autism GM newsletter.

In this edition we have two conference reports: one about autism and education and ethnicity, and one about ASD and mental health. We hope you find them interesting.

Our Information Officer, John, has also written an article about disability databases. Although it is not compulsory to register with your local database it is helpful to do so, both in order to access local information for you and your family, and to provide the local authority with vital data about the numbers of children with disabilities in their area.

Remember that parents and professionals are welcome to contact our Project about anything related to autistic spectrum disorders at any time. We have an ever growing bank of information including the many NAS factsheets, and we are able to send out tailor-made information packs in response to your enquiries.

We also continue to be on the look out for volunteers to review conferences, books or relevant DVDs and television programmes for this newsletter.

Wishing you all a happy and safe summer,

Debbie Waters
Editor

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AUTISM, EDUCATION AND ETHNICITY

CONFERENCE REPORT



André Jean Baptiste
Conference Speaker

My journey to the conference really began six months ago after a diagnosis of my then 13 year old son with Aspergers Syndrome catapulted us into a world previously unknown to us.

A local paediatrician who had diagnosed my son as dyspraxic told me that I would have to engage in a long fight to get what my son needs. He wasn't wrong there. I know this struggle is familiar to many parents regardless of background. I also know that much of our more horrific experiences were influenced by the colour of our skin. So many BME friends told me that asking white institutions for help was my first and biggest mistake. It made me wonder how many other parents of children with ASD had had bad experiences particularly those from BME families.

Getting involved in parent support groups has been an eye opener so many parent carers trying, hanging in and hanging on, hoping, praying, living and breathing for their children, fearlessly. One other thing that struck me was how few BME parents I came across. I can't help but think that ASD's would not be so discriminating and we BME parents would not be so lucky, or have they already decided not to approach white institutions for help. It was at this time that I started to ask questions of people involved in education. One local government officer told me about the 'NAS Make School, Make Sense conference' and with the help of one dedicated worker in the multi agency partnership (MAP) who obtained the help of several organisations, funding was secured for me to attend.

Conference Report

The conference was essentially to launch the research report "Missing out? Autism, education and ethnicity: the reality for families today". The survey, the biggest of its kind was drawn from BME families who hold a NAS membership so already have a diagnosis. The

findings indicated "that the experiences of families from minority ethnic communities were consistently worse than average". I can't argue with that! Other conclusions reached include BME communities "not being aware of autism, their rights and relevant services" and "services that are available do not always meet the needs of the families".

Parents commented that "...there appeared to be more of a belief that my child was bad as opposed to having special needs....I think that black children are doubly penalised within the education system....." Another family reported a SENCO suggesting that their son had a chip on his shoulder about being black. I remember the day that I had that particular comment made to me by a teacher at my son's school. In fact many of the findings of the survey and comments by the parents ring true for me. The concept of double discrimination is prevalent throughout and if like me you were unfortunate enough to have asked the wrong people for help it can be tripled by additional trauma.

Fortunately some aspects of good practice also feature. One family said "My son has made so much progress between school and home because we work together for what is best for him". I recognise this too but only in my dealings with one approachable teacher. A companion to the report is a booklet that allowed parents, children and carers to nominate individuals, teachers, and pupils etc who made a real difference. This teacher would definitely be our choice for hero. The Government has agreed to make some changes in special needs provision as a result of the research which will improve the situation for all children with ASD's. The report recognises that there is a long way to go.

The conference itself was reasonably well attended but not by as many BME parents as I had hoped. Although one participant pointed out most people employed in this particular field of work has come to it from personal experience of ASD's either their own diagnosis

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

or that of their child or other family member. The speakers were informative and so was the question and answer session. I found it saddening that in many BME communities ASD symptoms are sometimes misinterpreted as some sort of curse, punishment or possession. A great deal of awareness-raising needs to happen particularly around recognition of symptoms and diagnosis in a culturally sensitive way. Dr Deirdre Martin's workshop about this was interesting as it explored such things as not having eye contact and eating with fingers etc used to indicate ASD but actually common place and expected in some ethnic groups. The 'Taking an active role in your child's school' workshop was cancelled. Instead I attended Mal Gillam's workshop about the Phoenix School in Tower Hamlets. She explained how they engage with the BME parents through a support group organised and run from the school. A model that might be adapted to use in other schools.

When I went to the conference I still felt very aggrieved wondering what he had missed in the years without a diagnosis and how he will cope in his GCSE's. having not had proper support throughout his schooling. That fear was left with a huge dent after listening to André Jean Baptiste, a young man of 19yrs who was in my opinion the best speaker of the day. André was, like my son, diagnosed with AS at around 14yrs old having been labelled as bad, disruptive and eventually expelled from school. As every school approached refused to take him he struggled to understand his own behaviour which led to his mother (is it always us?) to research what could be wrong and eventually to request a diagnosis through the NHS which was refused. When André disclosed his mother had to sell her car to fund a private diagnosis it becomes apparent again the difficulties that families face.

André had struggled to get back into the education system, but armed with his diagnosis he is emerging as an inspiration and guiding light for so many young black men, my son being one of them. André now attends college and is going from strength to strength, I was honoured to be at his first public speaking engagement, hopefully the first of many. Go André and a big up to his Mum.

My last comment has to be about the conference bookstall. Sadly I was short of about £150 for all the books and leaflets I

wanted that I thought would help me, the school and other people my son would come into contact with. The NAS has a brilliant range and I'm saving up for Christmas as well as trying to find out who in Manchester maintains a library of them and if parents can access them. I knew nothing about autistic spectrum disorders before but now my problem is accessing all the information that I know is available.

I would like to thank Jessica, The NAS Family Services Development Project, the Gaddum Centre, Erinma, Rabeel and the speakers and participants.

Article written by Jeani Packer, Manchester Parent



Useful Information for parents



Parents living in Greater Manchester are able to use the specialist library at **The INCA Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle**. For an annual £10 subscription fee parents are able to borrow up to 3 books per month.

Access to the library can either be through attendance at the **Living With Autism** parent support group which meets fortnightly at The INCA Centre between 1pm—3pm (Tel: Sue Allison on Tel: 0161 283 4750) or you can arrange to visit the library by contacting Julia or Liz on Tel: 0161 283 4768 to make an appointment as sometimes the room where the library is kept is used as a meeting room.

Public Libraries also have an increasing number of titles available. In some authorities (including Manchester) you can now check their catalogues online. (<http://catalogue.manchester.gov.uk>)

Check with your own library as to the exact online address as each authority will vary.





Article by our regular columnist Ben Stone



Review of Snowflake BBC DVD Certificate 15

As a sci-fi/action movie fan, I normally go for movies in the mould of The Island, The Matrix and Spider-man 3 - I think you get the picture...so Snowflake wasn't exactly top of my 'must see' list, and if you're after watching a blood soaked gory horror or special effects blockbuster, you won't find these in 'Snowflake', but on reading the synopsis, I decided that the DVD disc deserved a spin or two million.

Without ruining the storyline (something I've done many a time before!) the story focuses on two characters; Alex Hughes (played by Alan Rickman, who has been in so many movies, you'll get bored if I list them all, but here's a few: Galaxy Quest, Harry Potter and Dogma). He plays an ex-convict who has just been released from jail. The other main character, Linda Freeman (played by Sigourney Weaver who we've seen in the Alien movies, Galaxy Quest - alongside Alan Rickman and Ghostbusters 1 & 2 to name just a few), plays a mother who has Autism. A cruel twist of fate brings Alex and Linda together, who otherwise would never have come to cross each other. Also starring is Carrie Anne Moss (who featured in the Matrix). She plays Maggie, who befriends Alex, and provides the kind of support to Alex that Linda is unable to.

The movie highlights how Linda lives within her own routines and dichotomous parameters, what makes her happy and what stresses her

out to the point of ultimate crisis for her. Linda's characteristics could never be a blueprint for how every Autistic person thinks, but illustrates some of the nuances of how living with Autism can be, as seen from Linda's perspective. The movie is quite gritty at times and very much character driven with convincing performances by both Alan Rickman and Sigourney Weaver. The casting is excellent with the obvious well known names, and the storyline is well written and well thought out, so even the biggest die hard blockbuster movie fan may well take something from this movie.

The DVD, like many now has the usual extra features, including multi language subtitles, some interesting deleted scenes, and the making of Snowflake, which features interviews with the stars and production team.

After watching Snowflake, I felt touched by many of the emotional moments in the movie, and I reckon that I know more about fate, what's it like to be Linda, and of course Snowflakes. If you're in the mood for an emotional storyline then I recommend you buy/rent this DVD, get some popcorn and possibly prepare for some tears.



More details about Snowflake
can be found at
www.snowcakemovie.co.uk



Article about a new public transport initiative by our regular columnist Ben Stone

Attention all 16-25 year olds... this is Captain Ben welcoming you aboard the GOJO express – destination independent travelling...

A few months I was asked to be involved with GOJO – a public transport initiative focusing on disabled people aged 16-25, encouraging them to be more confident and at ease with using public transport. I jumped on board at the chance (bad pun I know!) as I know myself only too well some of the barriers that people with ASD face when it comes to using public transport. I have overcome many of mine and I want others to overcome some of their transport demons too.

To quote GOJO directly, “Whatever frustrations you’ve had in the past, GOJO is here to help you get the best out of public transport. GOJO wants you to take more control and be more independent by using public transport to get out and have fun. GOJO is about independence, control and freedom.”

“You may have given public transport a go and found it difficult to use. You might have got used to being driven around, or find the idea of buses and trains all a bit daunting. But if you haven’t been on public transport for a while, you may be surprised how things have changed. There’s still a lot to be done, but due to recent legislation and improvements to access on public transport, you might find your journey easier.

“It’s true that a bad experience on public transport can be upsetting, but GOJO is here to give you help and support. GOJO can give you all the information you need to give you confidence and independence and take control of your journey.”

GOJO recently were in Manchester for their launch in this region, which I was part of, and apart from it being good fun, it carried an important message to those 16-25s who are forgotten when it comes to using public transport.

With all the track upheaval that’s set to take place with Metrolink over the next few months, I know that using public transport could be more challenging for all of us in Greater Manchester, but I think that GOJO can make a difference for many disabled people, including those with ASD. If nothing else, I think the GOJO website is worth a look where you can find information about journey planning, event guides and your rights regarding transport. GOJO are also keen to hear of people’s experiences, good and bad, of using public transport in Greater Manchester. If you are 16-25 and interested in becoming involved, or just want some info then find a PC or Mac and log on to <http://www.mygojo.co.uk>

This is Captain Ben hoping that you enjoyed your journey and hoping that you’ll travel many times again.....

For further information log onto
www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/1007/1007005_all_ aboard_for_laughter.html



NEW TRAMPOLINING CLUB



Equalibrium Sport is a new trampolining club which offers 10 week courses to children from the age of 6yrs to 16yrs, including children with disabilities.

Various sessions take place on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 5.30pm—9pm dependent upon age and ability.

Sessions for children on the autistic spectrum take place on Thursdays between 6-8pm. These sessions take place at Bramhall Leisure Centre.

Under 16's 10wk course (1hr per week) - £40

An additional fee of £20.50 is paid annually for club membership which includes British Gymnastics membership and insurance.

For more details please contact:

Contact: Gail Mitchell

Tel: 0780 725 3066

**Email:
Equalibrium5@aol.com**

**Venue:
Barlow RC High School
Parrs Wood Road
East Didsbury
Manchester
M20 6BX**

**Celebrating 10yrs
The National Autistic Society
Greater Manchester
Adult Service**

1997-2007



Congratulations to the **NAS
Greater Manchester Service**
which celebrates its 10th anniversary
in June.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PEOPLE WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS



A Report on a Conference organised by
The National Autistic Society in conjunction
with the Estia Centre and Pavilion Publishing



The purpose of the Conference was to discuss the current understanding and assessment of whether people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders are also more likely to suffer from mental health problems than the general population.

The presenters at the conference represented a wide range of medical and social care expertise from those who worked daily with people with ASD, and also the personal experiences of Thomas Madar, who has Asperger's Syndrome. A number of aspects of mental health were covered from levels of anxiety through to more serious conditions such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder.

Anxiety

The presenters were all generally agreed that people with Asperger's frequently experience high levels of anxiety. Most people with the condition would readily agree with this. It was well illustrated by a video presented by Richard Mills, the NAS Director of Research. The video featured Joe, who has Asperger's. Joe outlined the stresses he experienced each day in getting through his day's normal activities, hoping

nothing would happen to disrupt his established routine and worrying how he would cope if it did. For example, stress caused by the bus to college being full, or a stranger asking him directions.

All presenters were agreed that tackling high anxiety levels was a key factor in helping those with ASD.

Depression

Thomas Madar, who now has a successful career in IT mentioned that he had suffered some periods of depression which he believed had been caused by experiencing prolonged spells of high stress and loss of confidence. This was, Thomas believed, brought on by college or employers making demands on him which showed a lack of understanding of his Asperger's - for example criticising him for not socialising with his colleagues, or for not wanting to be a team leader to progress his career.

Some evidence indicated that those with a late (adult) diagnosis of ASD were more likely to suffer depressive illness. This is not surprising, as such people may have suffered for many years

without knowledge of the nature of their condition or how to try and cope with it.

Schizophrenia and Bi-Polar Disorder

Dr. Peter Carpenter mentioned that evidence to date indicates that people with ASD are not more likely than the general population to suffer from these conditions. Unfortunately, sometimes people with ASD have been incorrectly diagnosed with schizophrenia, in some cases taking unnecessary medication for a number of years. On occasion, this misdiagnosis was due to the person presenting with a complex of Autistic Spectrum and related conditions (such as ADHD) which were misinterpreted. Dr Judith Gould, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist outlined the use of behavioural 'profiling' techniques to minimise the risk of such misdiagnosis.

It was also mentioned that misdiagnoses should hopefully reduce as knowledge of ASD improves in the psychiatric community.

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Interventions and Services

Dr Tom Berney a Consultant Psychiatrist with the NHS emphasised that it was key to understand each individual's needs in deciding any course of treatment and services. Any treatment programme for somebody recently diagnosed should include all groups who can help the individual (i.e. be 'multidisciplinary'). Its aim should be to:

Explain the nature of the condition

- Counsel the individual.
- Counsel family members and other relevant people.
- Address any obvious problems such as anxiety and behavioural issues.

- Address issues such as suitable education provision.
- Where necessary, adjust the person's environment to reduce exposure to stressful situations.

Dr Berney mentioned that whilst 'there is no drug treatment for autism' some drugs had been successfully used to treat associated behavioural issues.

Offending Behaviour

Dr Staufenberg presented on current thinking on offending behaviour in people with ASD. He reassured everybody that contrary to newspaper headlines, offending behaviour by people with ASD was rather rare, and certainly no more likely than the population generally.

He mentioned though, that more work was needed with the police and courts to ensure that those in the criminal justice system can

recognise if anybody before them has an autistic condition and that this is taken into consideration.

Summary

All the speakers emphasised the need for further research to understand the complex overlap between Autistic conditions and mental health. This will enable better diagnosis and treatments to be made available for people with ASD.

As the parent of an adult son with Asperger's Syndrome, I found the conference very interesting. It was reassuring to know that professionals fully recognise the levels of anxiety that those with ASD endure on a daily basis. It is hoped that further research in these areas can result in better treatment and services, and a better understanding by the community at large.

John Davies
Information Officer



HM TREASURY

department for

education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

£340 MILLION TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF DISABLED CHILDREN

A package of policies to support disabled children and their families was announced today by Economic Secretary Ed Balls and Education Minister Lord Adonis, as they published the report ***Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families***. Part of the wider Policy Review of Children and Young People. The Review sets out clear action across

health, social services and education, to provide a better coordinated approach to service provision, and enhance equality and opportunity for disabled children and their families. It focuses on three priority areas: access and empowerment, response services and timely support, and improving quality and capacity of services.

The report *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families* is available on the Treasury website at

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

DISABILITY DATABASES

Local councils are required in accordance with the Children's Act to keep records of the number of children with disabilities who live in their area.

They collect vital information about the needs of these children usually in the form of a computer database. The purpose of the database is to help the councils, local health services and voluntary organisations plan the right kind of support the children and their families need. Registration on the database is voluntary.

The effectiveness of the database depends very much on how much resource the local authority put into the collection and maintenance of the database, and how much use they make of the information. This varies considerably within our own local authorities, some having a full time coordinator with managerial authority, in others it is only a part time clerical activity.

Stockport Disability Database

I went to talk to **Elaine Mounter** who runs the award winning Stockport Disability Database with her administrator Jane Dwyer to find out the secret of their success.

Elaine emphasised that the purpose of the Stockport database is to empower registered families as much as possible by providing information on services and funding to which they may be entitled. She personally visits each new family that is referred and wish to register. She explains the purpose of the service and talks through an information collection form covering education, health and social services needs of the child for entry on to the database. Elaine leaves the family with an A5 binder full of information on available services, many of which the family may not be aware of. The collection form was designed in conjunction with a parents' focus group to ensure it captures the right information. The database is run on two 'stand alone'

computers provided by the NHS and is not

connected to either local authority or NHS IT systems. This provides higher confidentiality and reduces impact from other's IT problems.

Elaine mentioned that up to 10 children a week are added to the database, the referrals coming from a number of sources including school and health services. She regularly briefs many groups including nursing staff, speech therapists, paediatricians and social workers, plus voluntary agencies who deal with disabled children, often as part of their training.

Elaine is concerned that more and more children who are being registered have Autistic Spectrum Disorders – 380 out of over 1500 on the database, and that service provision is patchy. She has used these statistics to campaign for better provision with the local authority, and a new hands on service to help families with children on the spectrum is being developed as a result.

On her own initiative, Elaine has now extended the database to cover adults as well as children. A regular newsletter is sent to all families on the database, updating them with information on services and contacts.

Keep up the good work Elaine and Jane!

Let's hope, when armed with the statistics, good use of the disability database can lead to better service provision for both children and adults with ASD across Greater Manchester.

If your child is not already registered, please contact the Co-ordinator for your local authority listed on Page 10.

John Davies
Information Officer



GREATER MANCHESTER DISABILITY DATABASE CO-ORDINATORS

AUTHORITY	CONTACT	TITLE	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
BOLTON	Sheila Morris (Gaynor Dale is on secondment)	Disability Database Co-ordinator	Children with Disabilities Services Bolton Social Services Crescent House Lever Street Bolton BL3 6NN	01204 337102
BURY	Karen Robinson	Co-ordinator Bury Children's Disability Database	Red Centre Morley Street Bury BL9 9JQ	0161 763 3939
MANCHESTER	Steve Glass (Gill Baldwin is on secondment)	Co-ordinator Manchester Multi-Agency Partnership for Disabled Children and Young People	Manchester Social Services Dept 102 Manchester Road Chorlton M21 9SZ	0161 0881 8116
OLDHAM	Margaret McGawley	Database Co-ordinator	Services for Children with Disabilities Team Woodfield Centre Netherfield Close Manchester Road Oldham OL8 4ET	0161 627 1749
ROCHDALE	Susan Reeves	Link-Up Co-ordinator	Rochdale Register for Children with Disabilities Floor 10, Municipal Offices Smith Street P O Box 65 Rochdale OI16 1XQ	01706 865209
SALFORD	Kerry Jones	Database Co-ordinator	Salford Families Project 222 Eccles Old Road Salford M6 8AL	0161 707 0222
STOCKPORT	Elaine Mounter	Disability Database Co-ordinator	Floor 4, Beckwith House Wellington Road South Stockport SK4 1AF	0161 426 5514
TAMESIDE	Averil Bell	Disability Database Co-ordinator	Tameside Social Services Jubilee Garden Gardenfold Way Droylsden M43 7XU	0161 371 2060
TRAFFORD	Christine Harris	Disability Database Co-ordinator	Trafford Social Services 4th Floor, Waterside House Waterside Sale M33 7ZF	0161 912 5777
WIGAN	Amilia Krajnovic	CWD Database Co-ordinator	Claire House Lower Ince Health Centre Phoenix Lane Wigan WN3 4QX	01942 481180

The Police Vulnerable Witness Pocket Guide



A credit card sized guide for police officers is set to make a big difference to the lives of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and victims.

The pocket guide gives frontline officers information on how to identify and help those witnesses and victims who need extra assistance in giving evidence. It is the result of a unique partnership between the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and three learning disability charities – VOICE UK, Respond and the Ann Craft Trust.

“Some witnesses and victims are particularly vulnerable. They can have trouble making themselves understood and find giving evidence distressing” explains Deborah Kitson, Director of the Ann Craft Trust. “Extra help is available to them in police interviews and in court through special measures like video-link evidence and intermediaries. It’s easy to see that a child victim needs this help, but it can be harder to identify the adult with learning disabilities, a mental health problem, dementia or other disability who needs extra assistance to give their best evidence.”

A Home Office report found that police officers had difficulty identifying those who could benefit from special measures, with less than half of vulnerable or intimidated witnesses being identified.

“If vulnerable and intimidated witnesses aren’t identified at an early stage, they are not going to get help from special measures and so are not going to give the best evidence they can. This makes it harder for officers to gather quality evidence and for the CPS to present a good case in court” says Kathryn Stone, Chief Executive of VOICE UK.

“The Police Vulnerable Witness Pocket Guide addresses this issue by telling officers how to identify vulnerable and intimidated witnesses,

what the law says and where they can get assistance” says Richard Curen, Director of Respond. “This will make for stronger prosecutions and increase the chances of vulnerable people getting justice. It’s a small card that will have a big impact.”

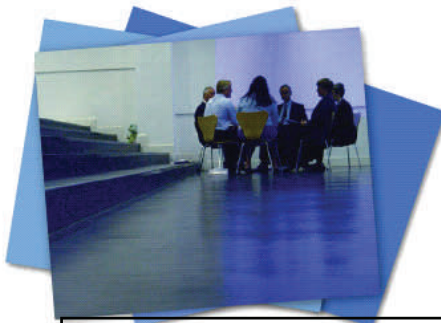
Richard Crompton, ACPO lead on the Vulnerable Witness Pocket Guide and Deputy Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police: “ACPO is committed to ensuring that the service does everything possible to give vulnerable victims and witnesses access to the criminal justice system and appropriate specialist support.

“For police officers this small card is ideal for carrying with their pocket book and serves as a reminder to consider issues of vulnerability when dealing with witnesses and victims. Although the provision of special measures has been available for a number of years, a significant proportion of those who are eligible for special measures are still not being identified. If officers can use this card to help them identify the vulnerable then we can start ensuring people get access to the support networks in place.”

170,000 Police Vulnerable Witness Pocket Guides have been produced and distributed to every frontline police officer in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The guides were produced with the kind support of national charity for people with learning disabilities, HFT, and the University of Derby.

To view the Police Vulnerable Witness Pocket Guide on-line visit the VOICE website

www.voiceuk.org.uk/card.htm



FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN THE REGION

D.A.R.T.S.: Approach to managing behaviour for children with ASD

Monday 11th June 2007
(originally listed as the 20th)

The Inscape Centre
Schools Hill
Cheadle

Cost: £70 Professionals
£35 Parents/Carers

Contact: Julia Heatley
Tel: 0161 283 4761 or 4768

Understanding the working of challenging behaviour A Lecture by Donna Williams

Wednesday 19th September 2007

The Castlefield Rooms
33 Collier Street
Castlefield
Manchester M3 4NA

Cost: Professionals £20
Autistic individuals and parents £10

Contact: Spectrum First Limited
Email: Christine.breaky@spectrumfirst.co.uk
Tel: 0114 2669731

Autism—A Hands On Approach

Wednesday 31st October 2007
8.50am—5pm

4th national annual conference organised by professionals and parents in partnership discussing key concerns, practical issues and sharing evidence-based approaches.

Pinewood Medical Education Centre
Stepping Hill Hospital
Stockport

Cost: Professionals £100
Parents £30

(Includes refreshments, delegate pack and certificate)

The National Autistic Society Help! Programmes in Greater Manchester

One Day help! programme Tuesday 10th July 2007 (Parents/Carers of children aged 3-12yrs)

Bolton Technical Innovation Centre
Minerva Road
Farnworth
Bolton BL4 0HA

One-Day help! programme Wednesday 11th July 2007 (Parents/Carers of children aged 3-12yrs)

Morley Green Club
Morley Green
Wilmslow SK9 5NP

6 Session (20hrs) help! programme 17th September—4th October

Platt Bridge Community School & Children's
Centre
Rivington Avenue
Platt Bridge
Wigan WN2 5NG

Help! 2 Parent Seminars

Eccles Masonic Hall Ltd
Elm Bank
Halfedge Lane
Eccles

12th July: Meeting your child's sensory needs

13th July: Anti-bullying support and strategies for your child with ASD

All help! programmes are **FREE** to Parents/
Carers of children with ASD.

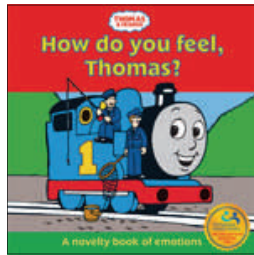
Contact: Clare Naylor Tel: 0161 946 1193 for
One-Day and 6 Session help! programmes

Help! 2 Parent Seminars are for parents/carers
of school age children, young people or adults
with a diagnosis of ASD.

Contact: Sian Figg or Jill Steward on
Tel: 0115 847 3531



How Do You Feel, Thomas?



The adventures of Thomas The Tank Engine and his friends have been enjoyed by generations of children all over the world. They are popular both as bedtime stories read by parents, and later, as books children love reading themselves.

The great charm of Rev. Awdry's characters is the way the faces on the engines are used to show how what is happening in the story. This helps children identify how the engines are feeling page by page as the story unfolds. The colourful and clear illustrations in the books make them eye catching and easy for children to follow.

Now a special 'Thomas' book has been written to help young children with Autistic conditions. It helps them understand how to read 'faces' and the emotions they display, something that children with autism can find difficult to work

out. Each page shows a picture of Thomas or one of his friends showing a different emotion. The accompanying text explains what is happening and asks how the engine feels. Different 'pop ups' are then used to confirm the emotion displayed.

The approach is simple but very effective, and a useful starting step in helping children understand facial expressions using characters they know and love.

It is also a good lead in to 'The Transporters' DVD which use the same method of using stories and associated pictures to help children understand emotions.

'How Do You Feel Thomas' is published by Egmont UK in conjunction with The National Autistic Society. Price £5.99, of which 30p goes to the NAS.

The website at www.thomasandfriends.com contains fun pictures and lots of information about Thomas and his friends.



John Davies
Information Officer



New and Updated Information Sheets



The following Information Sheets have recently been updated.

- Driving
- Going to the doctor's
- How many people have autistic spectrum disorders?
- Information for parents/carers about how to support siblings of people with an ASD
- Restricted diet
- Social Skills
- Education legislation: a guide to resources (England and Wales)
- Holiday guidelines
- Sex education and children and young people with ASDs.

- Circle of friends
- Broaching the subject
- Carer's Allowance
- Claiming Disability Living Allowance
- Organising, sequencing and prioritising

All the above Information Sheets are available online www.nas.org.uk Or by contacting The NAS Family Services Development Project Tel: 0161 998 4667

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: 761 0132
Contacts: Joanne and Tony Moran

MANCHESTER

The Winnicott Centre Parent Support Group

Tel: 248 9494
Contact: Alison Hunter

OLDHAM

OSCA

Tel: 07913672175
Contact: Cathy Williams,
Jackie Calow or Maria Aspin
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 Hazel and Deirdre are happy to provide telephone support to other Rochdale parents).
Tel: 07904 193 725 (Hazel)
Tel: 07752293076 (Deirdre)

SALFORD

ADD Action Project

Tel: 790 1455
Contact: Carol Weston
Email: info@addfocus.co.uk

STOCKPORT

Living with Autism

Tel: 0161 283 4750
Contact: Sue Allison

TAMESIDE

TASCA (Tameside Action for social communication & Autism support group)

Tel: 366 5705
Email: tasca4u@ntlworld.com
Website: www.freewebs.com/tasca4u

TAMESIDE /continued

Tameside Asperger's syndrome Support Group

Tel: 303 4902
Contact: Julie Srymgeour

TRAFFORD

Families with Autism Support in Trafford (FAST)

Tel: 912 1091
Contact: Amanda Window

WIGAN

SPECTRUM

Tel: 01942 513053
Contact: Janet Sumner,
Secretary

Embrace Wigan & Leigh

Tel: 01942 513053
Contact: Caroline Tomlinson
Email: c.tomlinson@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk

OPEN TO ALL GREATER MANCHESTER PARENTS

The Autistic Society Greater Manchester Area have 2 parent support groups which meet regularly.

A group for parents of children with 'classic' Autism
A group for parents of children and adults with Asperger's syndrome.

For further information re dates and times please contact the
ASGMA Information Officer

Tel: 0161 866 8583
Email: information@asgma.org.uk