

Growing Up In Greater Manchester

Supporting young people with autism to prepare
for adulthood



Greater Manchester Autism Consortium

www.autismgm.org.uk

With thanks to the original authors of Growing up In Salford

TAG – Teenage to Adult Group 07919325660

YPtransition@srft.nhs.uk

Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for young people with autism, their families and carers, who might need a little bit of extra help and support as they grow up. The booklet aims to help young people get ready for becoming an adult. It is about some of the things you may need to think about and learn in order to prepare for adulthood. We have listed some of the organisations, services and websites that can help you. There are also top tips and checklists at the end of each section.

This booklet is not a directory of services, and there will be lots of things that are not in it, but don't worry. There is space at the end of each section for you to jot down useful names, numbers and places to go.

This booklet talks a lot about being independent. This does not mean having to do everything for yourself or doing things on your own. When we talk about being independent, this is about you doing as much for yourself as possible and learning new skills. Being independent is different for different people. To be independent we often need a lot of help and support from our family, friends and community.

There is lots of information in this booklet, so it might be helpful to ask someone to go through it with you.

There will be lots of people who will help you as you grow, including your family, friends, people at school, college and youth clubs. It's important that you talk to people about anything you are worried about as you grow up.

Here are the contact details of local authority services specifically for young people:

Salford have a Transition Support team, who are here to support you as you get older. You can contact the team on YPtransition@srft.nhs.uk

The internet is very good for finding out information, but remember to stay safe and not to trust everything you read or everyone you meet online.

www.safetynetkids.org.uk/personal-safety/staying-safe-online/ is useful.

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Who to contact

Local Offers

The council have to publish a Local Offer for young people 0-25, this gives you all the information you need about help and support that is out there.

Here are the weblinks for **Greater Manchester's Local Offers** area by area:

Bolton Council Local offers

www.localdirectory.bolton.gov.uk/send.aspx

Bury Council Local offers

www.theburydirectory.co.uk/kb5/bury/directory/localoffer.page?familychannel=7

Manchester Council Local offers

manchester.fsd.org.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/results.page?directorychannel=1-7

Oldham Council Local offers

www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200368/children_with_disabilities

Rochdale Council Local offers

<https://www.ourrochdale.org.uk/kb5/rochdale/directory/localoffer.page> [Salford Council Local offers](#)

<https://directory.salford.gov.uk/kb5/salford/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>

Stockport Council Local offers

stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/localoffer.page

Tameside Council Local offers

www.tameside.gov.uk/localoffer

Trafford Council Local offers

www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/localoffer.page

Wigan Council Local offers

www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Education/Special-Educational-Needs-and-Disability/Special-Educational-Needs-and-Disabilities.aspx

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Local Special Educational Needs and Disability support:

Each local authority provides a Special Educational Needs information and advice service. Details of these can be found on your local offer page (see above). There will also be an Independent Supporter scheme listed for each area. Independent Supporters can help you with the process of securing recognition and support for your special educational needs.

You can also find advice about SEND at the Family Lives website here. They have a search facility for local services <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/special-educational-needs/>

Information about Independent Supporters and Independent Advisory Services can be found on the Council for Disabled Children's website:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network>

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/independent-support>

IPSEA are a national charity who can help and support parents to secure the right special educational provision for children and young people under the age of 25.

www.ipsea.org.uk

Local support for carers:

Bolton: www.boltoncarers.org.uk (tel. [01204 363056](tel:01204363056))

Bury: <https://www.facebook.com/BuryCarersCentre> (tel. [0161 763 4867](tel:01617634867))

Manchester: www.manchestercarers.org.uk (tel. [0161 272 7270](tel:01612727270))

Oldham: www.wired.me.uk/Oldham-Carers.asp (tel. [0161 770 1188](tel:01617701188))

Rochdale: <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/children-and-childcare/more-services/Pages/the-carers-resource.aspx> (tel. 03450 138 208.)

Salford: http://www.salfordyoungcarers.org/Carers_Centre (tel. 0161 212 5451)

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Stockport: www.signpostforcarers.org.uk/ (tel. [0161 442 0442](tel:01614420442))

Tameside: <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/carerscentre> (tel. [0161 342 3344](tel:01613423344))

Trafford: www.traffordcarerscentre.org.uk (tel. [0161 848 2400](tel:01618482400))

Wigan: www.wiganandleighcarerscentre.org.uk (tel. [01942 705959](tel:01942705959))

Parent support groups for autism in Greater Manchester:

You can find your local autism support group by visiting the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium website on www.autismgm.org.uk simply click on your area to find out what's going on locally.

Key useful contacts and websites

If you do not have the internet at home, then visit your local library. Here are some particularly useful websites.

National Autistic Society www.autism.org.uk (tel. 0808 800 4104)

Greater Manchester Autism Consortium www.autismgm.org.uk (tel. 0161 998 4667)

Citizens Advice Bureau <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Citizens Advice Bureaus operate in many areas. You can search for your nearest office on their website, or ring: 03444 111 444

National Health Services and support www.nhs.uk for advice about health issues and long-term conditions it also has advice about being well. You can search for your nearest GP, hospital and dentist on this website. There is also information about local pharmacies and advisory services.

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Benefits information

Information about applying for benefits and other state services and support can be found at:
www.gov.uk

And for autism specific information, see <https://www.autism.org.uk/benefits>

Information and support for mental health

<http://www.mind.org.uk/>

On this website you can search for your local Mind office and support available. MIND also run a National Helpline Tel: 0300 123 3393 or text 86463

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/health/mental-health.aspx>

You can find information about autism and mental health on the NAS website. This page also provides further links and useful contacts.

<http://www.respectforall.org.uk/counselling> (tel. 07902 223743)

Respect for All is a Greater Manchester-wide counselling service for young people and adults with autism, and family carers.

Preparing for Adulthood

When you are 14yrs people will start to talk to you about what you want to do when you leave school, and grow up. If you have an Education Health and Care Plan, this will start in your Year 9 Preparing for Adulthood Review and continue from there. There will be lots of changes happening in your life over the next few years, some you will be happy with, and some you will be sad about. This is all part of growing up and there are lots of people who can help you get ready and understand the changes.

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There is lots of information and help on the Preparing for Adulthood site:

www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk

Transition: this is the change from being a child to adult. If you use children's services, this also describes the move from children's services to adult services. Your local social services can give you information about this (their details will be on the local offer pages listed on p 3)

Some of the things you might be asked to think about include:

- Education – what do you want to learn?
- Job – what job would you like; what needs to happen to get you ready for work?
- Social Life and Hobbies
- Where you will live and what help you need to be as independent as possible
- Health and support: what help do you need to stay healthy and safe?

You should be invited to visit places that you are interested in joining, and given lots of information about what is available. It is important that you attend the visits and gather information so you can make an informed decision.

This is a factsheet produced by the NAS about autism and the transition to adult social care services: www.autism.org.uk/communitycaretransition

Making Decisions

When you are 16yrs, the law says you have the right to make decisions about your life. It is important that family, carers, teachers and other people who are paid to help you give you information so that you can make an informed decision.

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An informed decision is when you have been given all the information about a topic, you are supported to look at what is good and bad about the topic, and then make a decision about what you want. Sometimes you may make a bad decision. This is also part of growing up. Sometimes people may say you do not have the capacity to make a decision. This means that people do not think you fully understand the consequences of your decision, even though they have given you as much information as possible in a way you will understand it. This is different to a bad decision. If it is decided you do not have capacity, then a Best Interest meeting needs to be held to make sure the right decision for you is made. Advocacy groups can help you gain the skills to make decisions.

Local advocacy organisations: for a full list of Greater Manchester advocacy groups and contact details, please see Greater Manchester Autism Consortium website

www.autismgm.org.uk

The law concerning decision-making and capacity is called the Mental Capacity Act.(MCA) You can find information about the (MCA) at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/making-decisions-for-someone-else/mental-capacity-act/> and,

<https://www.scie.org.uk/mca/introduction/mental-capacity-act-2005-at-a-glance>

This law is currently under review and changes will be made, so please check for up to date information.

Education and training

If you have an EHCP plan, you will have meetings or reviews to prepare for adulthood. These meetings and the Transition Plans you complete at school will help you decide what education, training or employment you want to do once you leave school. You might decide to:

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- Stay on at school (if the school has a sixth form)
- Go to a college
- Start an apprenticeship
- Go on a traineeship
- Go to another, independent school or college (possibly residential)

As you get ready to leave school, the school will help you look at the different options. Colleges might invite you to come for the day and see if you like it. You might have a number of visits to get you ready for the move. If you are worried about moving on from school, it's good to talk to your teachers or Head of Year, who can support you to get the advice and guidance you need.

Most colleges will offer extra support for students with disabilities or additional needs. It is best to apply early to give the college time to arrange the extra support for you.

Details about local colleges and other education and training related options should all be on your Local Offer pages (see links on page 3 of this document). Here are some other websites you might find useful:

- www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/work.aspx
- www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk – guidance for autism education post 16 yrs
- www.careerpilot.org.uk – Advice for 14+, 16+ and 18+ students. Plan your study and work.
- www.gov.uk/browse/education
- www.university.which.co.uk – Find out what A Levels are needed for which degree and what degree is needed for which job

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Transport to and from school and travel training

Just because you got transport to and from school does not automatically mean you will get transport when you are 16 years old. When you are 14 years old, think about how you can get to school or college independently – by yourself.

If you want to learn to travel independently, your SEN Team may have an independent Travel Trainer who can teach you how to travel from place to place.

Find out what help you can get with transport to school or college and travel training.

Here are some **services** and **websites** that might help you:

- **Pure Innovations Travel Training offered to young people living in Bolton, Bury, Stockport, Tameside, Oldham and Rochdale:**
www.pureinnovations.co.uk/what-we-offer/independence/travel-training/
- **Manchester Travel Training Partnership – offering travel training to students who qualify for home to school transport:**
www.mttp-travel-training.org/pages/about-mttp.php
- **Oldham Independence Training:**
www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200675/student_travel/166/fares_for_disabled_students/2
- **Trafford Independent Travel Training:**
www.trafford.gov.uk/residents/schools/docs/independent-travel-training.pdf
- **Wigan Travel Training:**
www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Resident/Education/School-Travel/liberty-leaflet-2014.pdf
- **Transport for Greater Manchester – journey planning and maps to areas of GM:**
<https://tfgm.com/>
- **Transport for Greater Manchester – ASGMA travel training guide for people with ASD:**
http://archive.tfgm.com/accessible_transport/Documents/ASGMA_Training_Guide.pdf
- **Driving:**
www.autism.org.uk/about/family-life/everyday-life/driving.aspx

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- **ASDAN Roadwise short course:**

The ASDAN RoadWise Short Course can accredit up to 60 hours of activities relating to the consequences of dangerous driving, dangers on the road, the law, transport and the environment, vehicle maintenance and vulnerable road users. The course provides a focus for work with young people around issues of road use.

www.asdan.org.uk/courses/programmes/roadwise-short-course

Money for going to college

Depending on your personal circumstances, you may be entitled to help with the cost of college. Speak to your college about this to find out more information and to see if you are eligible.

If your parent/carer claims child tax credit for you, then you can still receive this until you are 19 years old if you are in full time education. However, it is very important they let the tax credits office know what school or college you are at, and what courses you are studying.

Your local SENIAS (Special Educational Needs Information and Advice Service) can help you to explore your educational options and needs. Independent Supporters can also help with securing support through Education and Health Care Plans. Details of these services will be on your Local Offer pages (see page 3 for links)

You can also find information about local support for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities at <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/special-educational-needs/>

Where you live

One of the first things you need to think about as you grow up, is where you will live as an adult. Many young people choose to stay at home. There are lots of good reasons to stay living at home. You get support there from family and carers, it is cheaper to live at home, or you and your family don't want you to leave yet.

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This can be good, but you still need to think about developing your independence at home. Talk to your family or whoever supports you about learning how to cook simple meals, learning to tidy up and use the equipment in the house like a vacuum cleaner or ironing your clothes. There is lots of equipment and ways your property can be adapted so that you can be more independent at home. There are simple gadgets that you can buy from the internet or the high street. As you get older you may want to start spending some time in your home alone. This may sound scary at first but there is lots of equipment for example that consists of sensors that can monitor your home and let someone one know if you might need help

Moving into your own place

You may have to move out of your current home, or decide that you are ready to live independently. The first thing you need to do is sign up to **your local Home Search type service**, so you can register and bid for a property. If you are planning to move into your own home, it is important that you have the following:

- ✓ Your own bank account
- ✓ Benefits in place
- ✓ Photo identification e.g. passport

Your local Housing Advice team will be able to advise you about what help and support is available to support you to find a home and to manage your tenancy. If you need extra support they will make the necessary referrals.

This NAS factsheet provides more information and things to think about when looking at various housing options: <http://www.autism.org.uk/supportoptions>

Who to contact

Housing and Support Alliance – Offers online information about housing and support for people with learning disabilities and their families. Website: www.housingandsupport.org.uk

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Disabled Living www.disabledliving.co.uk

Disabled Living Foundation – has a specific tele-care section: www.dlf.org.uk

(tel. 0300 999 0004)

Shelter www.shelter.org.uk for those facing homelessness or experiencing bad housing

Centre Point www.centrepnt.org.uk also for young people at risk of homelessness

There should be local contact details for housing information in each area on your local offer pages (see page 3 for links).

Money

Money is very important. As you get older you need to think about:

1. How you get money
2. What you do with your money

Getting a Job

The best way for young people to get money is by getting a job. The earlier you start to think about getting a job the better.

There are lots of different ways to find a job; tell friends and family you are looking for a job and they may know someone who can help

- Go to local shops and businesses, ask them if they have any jobs and give them your CV.
- Use the newspaper or internet to look for jobs
- Speak to your college tutors or a training centre as they can help you get ready for work, and give you the skills to look for and keep a job.

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- Visit your local job centre which has an up to date list of available jobs and people who can help you. Ask for a disability employment officer. Sometimes a supported employment service can also help you look for, find and keep a job.

Support with employment

Who to contact

To find or contact your nearest Job Centre Plus, use the local search facility at this gov.uk address: www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus/how-to-contact

Supported Employment organisations in Greater Manchester

- www.pureinnovations.co.uk/
- www.unitedresponse.org.uk/trafford-employment-services
- www.breakthrough-uk.co.uk/#!employment--skills/cxpn
- base-uk.org/about/members/bury-mbc
- base-uk.org/about/members/tameside-borough-council
- <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Jobs-Careers/Supported-employment/index.aspx>
- www.shaw-trust.org.uk/shaw-trust-in-your-area

This NAS factsheet may also be helpful: www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/work.aspx

Benefits

When you are 16yrs, you will be asked if you want to receive benefits in your own right. You may be able to get new benefits as well, even if you are still in education.

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If you are worried about looking after your own money, you can decide whether to ask someone to help you manage your money. This is called an Appointee. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) need to agree this. They will visit you and your Appointee. The money is still yours and can still go in your bank, it just means that someone can fill in the forms or talk to people about your money on your behalf. The Citizens Advice Bureau can give you more information about benefits.

- **Citizens Advice Bureau**

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Information about all benefits: www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities

You can also contact **Turn2us** www.turn2us.org.uk/ which is a charity helping people to claim all the money available to them through benefits and grants.

You can find out information about autism and claiming benefits on the NAS website:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/benefits>

Borrowing money

If you need to borrow money, **Credit Unions** can be good places to go. You can also ask your bank.

- **Credit Unions in Greater Manchester**

<http://www.creditunions.co.uk/manchester/>

Some companies offer **payday loans**. These are a very expensive way to borrow money. You will always have to pay back much more than you borrow. Do not give payday loan websites your personal information.

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Worried about money?

If you are worried about money, ask for advice before you get into difficulty. You can contact **Debt line**. <https://www.nationaldebtline.org> or telephone 0808 808 4000

You can also visit your local **Citizens Advice Bureau**. These are free and trustworthy services.

MoneySavingExpert www.moneysavingexpert.com is full of advice for saving money, vouchers, calculators, guides and price comparison tables. There are also many discussion forums including 'Disability and Dosh'.

What to do with money

As you're getting older, you will get more money either through work or benefits. This money is not just for spending on clothes or buying computer games. Your money is to help you pay for all your living costs including:

- The bills in the house
- Food
- Rent
- Clothes
- Hobbies and interests
- Travelling around
- Mobile phones

You also need to think about:

- If you are living at home with family, do you have pay 'keep'? If so, how much will this be each week?
- If you are living on your own or living with other people, what is your share of the bills?
- How much do your hobbies and interests cost? Can you afford to do all of them?

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If you do not pay your rent, bills etc, you can get into a lot of trouble. It is important that you learn to budget so you don't end up owing lots of money. There are lots of people who can help you learn to budget, including school, college and www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Bank Accounts

It can be difficult to apply for a bank account when you're over 18yrs so it is important that you get one when you are 16yrs.

If you are struggling to open a bank account, you can phone the government department and ask them to open a Post Office card account www.postoffice.co.uk/post-office-card-account

Information about how to open a bank account:

<http://www.bild.org.uk/resources/easy-read-information/money/>

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/managing-money.aspx>

Getting Around

There are different way to travel to places including, getting a lift, walking, cycling, or using taxis, buses, trains and trams.

Your family, school and college can help you learn the skills you need to travel on your own or with friends. This is called travel training. My Own Fone www.myownfone.com (tel: 08006996699) is a cheap mobile phone which just stores the numbers you need. This can be good if you do not want to carry a real mobile phone with you.

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Tips for travelling to somewhere new:

- Only learn one new route at a time – start with walking to the local shop.
- Do the route with someone else a few times first.
- Plan with someone you trust what to do if something goes wrong.
- Ensure your mobile phone has credit so you can phone someone if you get stuck

Your 'phone may have a GPS in it. Make sure someone you trust has your phone number and password so they can find you if you get lost. Sometimes it is called 'find my phone'.

Public transport

Disabled people (including those with mental health problems) may be entitled to reduced fare or free public transport. However, just because you had a free Bus Pass once, does not mean you will automatically get one for life. You will have to re-apply when you are 16yrs and 18yrs for a Bus Pass as it is not automatic and it will depend on the eligibility criteria.

There are different types of Bus Passes available. For more information visit

<https://www.tfgm.com/tickets-and-passes/passes-for-disabled-people>

Taxis

If you cannot use any public transport, **Transport for Greater Manchester** provides a Travel Voucher Scheme, which can pay for taxis and door-to-door services

http://archive.tfgm.com/journey_planning/Tickets/Pages/tickets_travel_vouchers.aspx

Taxis can be expensive, so speak to friends and family who are going to the same place as you to see if they can share the taxi and split the fare. There are some taxi firms who specialise in supporting people with disabilities and/or additional needs

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Learning to drive

At 17yrs, you can learn to drive, you can find out about learning to drive at:

<https://www.safedrivingforlife.info/starting-drive> . If you have a disability www.disabledtraveladvice.co.uk/learning-drive-when-disabled.html gives lots of useful information. There are some conditions which mean you will not be able to drive, such as if your eyesight isn't good enough or if you have epilepsy which is unmanaged. www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions

Here is a factsheet about autism and learning to drive: www.autism.org.uk/about/family-life/everyday-life/driving.aspx

Who to contact

- **Transport for Greater Manchester – journey planning and maps to areas of GM**

<https://tfgm.com/>

- **Transport for Greater Manchester – ASGMA travel training guide for people with ASD**

http://archive.tfgm.com/accessible_transport/Documents/ASGMA_Training_Guide.pdf

(For details of local travel training schemes, see page 10 of this document)

Support for hobbies, interests and a social life

When you finish college you may have a lot of free time, so taking part in activities or having hobbies and interests outside of the home can help you meet new people, keep fit, stay active and be happy.

There are lots of clubs and groups, some are especially for young people with additional needs and others are open to everyone.

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You can find information about what is available on your local offer page (see page 3 of this document for links), and you can look at www.autismgm.org.uk for information about autism specific groups and opportunities.

ASGMA offer social and leisure services to people with high functioning autism across Greater Manchester. There is a charge for these activities. <http://asgma.org.uk/> (tel: 0161 866 8483)

Community centres, leisure centres, many churches, and other religious centres also have events that you could join.

Resources and useful websites:

- **Aspirations** <http://asgma.org.uk/project/aspirations/>
Social/leisure group for children and young adults with Asperger syndrome managed by The Autistic Society Greater Manchester Area (ASGMA). There is a charge for activities.
- **Bolton Adults Autism Support** <http://www.boltonadultautismsupport.org.uk/>
- **42nd Street** www.42ndstreet.org.uk
Mental health charity working with young people in Greater Manchester (currently funded by Manchester, Salford, Trafford and Tameside) aged 11-25yrs.
- **CEA Cinema Exhibitors Card** www.ceacard.co.uk
The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas by the UK Cinema Association (UKCA), formerly the Cinema Exhibitors' Association (CEA). The scheme was introduced in 2004 and is one of the ways for participating cinemas to ensure they make reasonable adjustments for disabled guests when they go to the cinema; in particular it ensures a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them.
- **Artism** www.artismuk.webs.com
A not-for-profit organisation providing support for artists on the autistic spectrum.
- **Special Virtuosi** www.specialvirtuosi.co.uk
A music group which provides music opportunities to students of various ages, musical abilities and with various educational needs.

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- **Manchester Art Gallery** Free Open Doors Drop In session for children with ASD aged 5-16yrs
www.manchesterartgallery.org/blog/autism-awareness-seminar-gem-north-west/
- **Manchester Museum** – Free Early Opening Drop-In session every month for children with ASD <http://events.manchester.ac.uk/event/event:g27-iy38htu-vt97tk/autism-friendly-early-opening>
- **NAS Adult Services Social Group** meets monthly for people aged 18yrs + with Asperger syndrome and HFA
www.autism.org.uk/directory/resources/14555.aspx

Friendships and Relationships

Staying in Touch with Friends

Young people often tell us that the most important thing to them is keeping in touch and having places to go to with their friends.

Remember when using social media sites it's important to keep yourself safe, and tell your parents, tutors or carers if you feel worried or bullied when using social media.

There are lots of ways you can keep in touch with your friends, which include, swapping 'phone numbers, using social media sites, such as Facebook, using Skype or 'live' computer gaming.

If you want to see your friends in person, you may want to meet up to go to each other houses, or go out and do something together such as the cinema, something to eat, or to a local pub. If you struggle to organise getting together, ask your family or college tutor if they can help you to arrange to meet up. It can be helpful to have a set date that you meet up with friends.

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Useful resources for young people:

- **e-Buddies a Best Buddy International Programme**
www.ebuddies.org/about/
- **PenPal section of NAS publication called The Spectrum** – free subscription
<https://www.autism.org.uk/thespectrum>

Falling in Love

As you get older you may want start to ‘fancy’ someone, and want to be their boyfriend/girlfriend. This can be exciting but you might be worried about whether the person likes you or how to go about asking a person out. Talk to someone you trust, who can give you help and advice.

This information page is targeted at parents and professionals, but there are many useful links about sex, puberty and growing up at www.autism.org.uk/sexeducation

Other useful resources about puberty and sex education:

- **Jessica Kingsley, publisher**
<http://www.jkp.com/uk/>
- **FPA – Family Planning Association** www.fpa.org.uk
Resources also include info for parents/carers towards individuals who are themselves on the spectrum although again they may find some of the content useful.
- **Life Support Productions** Have produced DVD’s and resources for special educational needs, Primary and Secondary. Highly recommended for children and young people with autism: www.lifesupportproductions.co.uk
- **Brook Young People** www.brook.org.uk/our-services
Charity for young people under 25yrs providing relationship and sex information

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- **Sex Education Forum** <http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk>

The Sex Education Forum is a membership organisation and works together with its members and other stakeholders to achieve quality sex and relationships education

Members include schools, colleges, youth settings, local authorities, NHS trusts, local and national organisations and individuals.

Understanding your emotions and sexuality can be difficult. If you are confused about your sexuality, or know that you are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, the following contacts may be of use.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender resources:

- **A.S.P.E.C.S. LGBT Autistic Network Bi-Monthly Meeting 7-9pm**

An informal bimonthly get-together and discussion for LGBT people with autism as well as relatives and friends of LGBT autistic people and those in the support profession, particularly LGBT support workers. Currently meetings are in Manchester and Sheffield and are open to people aged 16yrs and over. For more information contact Dan Kahn on 07896 474 243 or dan@alacroart.com. You can also request to join their Facebook group.

- **Gendered Intelligence** website with resources

<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/trans-community/resources>

- **GALOP – National LGBP domestic abuse/anti violence helpline** Tel: 0800 999 5428

<http://www.galop.org.uk/>

- **Emily Brooks** is a journalist with ASD who writes on the topic of sexual orientation and Autism

<http://www.emilybrooks.com/>

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Missing Someone

Sometimes people we love leave. This can be because we have fallen out with them, they have left the area, or they may have died. It's normal to feel anger, guilt, fear and depression. This is called grief. If you feel like this it is important to talk to someone you trust. If you are constantly feeling sad and angry, you may need to speak to a counsellor who can help you manage your feelings. If you want to speak to someone about how you feel, confidentially you can call the following organisations.

Support lines and counselling:

- **SAMARITANS:** This helpline is for everyone and is open 24 hours a day. You do not have to be feeling suicidal to ring them. Tel: 116 123 (this is free and the number will not show up on your telephone bills). You can also email jo@samaritans.org
- **CRUSE Bereavement Care:** Helpline Tel No 0808 808 1677
<http://www.cruse.org.uk/> - for help managing feels related to loss and bereavement

Being Bullied?

Bullying can often be things like name-calling, hitting, happy-slapping or someone stealing your things. Bullying can happen anywhere, including at school, college, on social sites, or at work. Bully can make you feel sad and scared. There are lots of reasons that people get bullied including because of their clothes, music they like or because of their disability. It is not your fault but it is really important that you tell someone you trust such as a family member, college tutor or carer. If someone is nasty to you because of your disability, sexuality, culture or religion, this is classed as a **hate crime** and is very serious. If you think you have been victim of a hate crime it is important that you report it.

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Greater Manchester Police Hate Crime (reporting Tel No 101)

<http://www.gmp.police.uk/content/section.html?readform&s=C4D5E39C4F3817F680257961004019B9>

Peer pressure is when you think you should do something so that people will like you and be your friend. Sometime people can pretend to be your friend, and then take advantage of you by making you do things you do not want to do, such as spend your money, smoke, drink or even have sex for the first time. Sometimes you can get into trouble because of these friends. It's normal to want to fit in but it's important that you learn to make your own choices and become friends with people who like you for who you are. Sometimes this is called '**mate crime**'

Domestic Abuse

Bullying and being picked on can also happen in your home. This is called domestic abuse. It may be that someone hurts you physically (eg hits you), sexually (touches your private parts without your permission), financially (takes your money without asking), emotionally (is constantly not nice to you) or by neglect (where someone does not give you enough food or clothes or keep you warm). None of this is OK, you must tell someone you trust who will help you get the support you need. You can contact **ChildLine** (0800 1111) if you are under 18yrs, or 'phone **Victim Support** if you are over 18yrs: 0330 303 0162 or 0161 200 1950. You do not need to have reported something to the police to get help from Victim Support services.

Locally, each area will have a Board or Group that meets to ensure children and vulnerable adults in their area are safe. If you search the Internet for 'safeguarding' and your local authority, you should be able to find local information and support.

Bolton <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/safeguarding-protecting-adults/safeguarding-adults-risk#tab5>

Bury <https://www.theburydirectory.co.uk/kb5/bury/directory/service.page?id=6tt9WUgy19Q>

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Manchester <https://www.manchestersafeguardingboards.co.uk/concerned/>

Oldham https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/100010/health_and_social_care/1618/oldham_s_multi-agency_safeguarding_hub_mash

Rochdale <https://www.rbsab.org/>

Salford <https://safeguardingadults.salford.gov.uk/>

Stockport <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/concerns-about-an-adult>

Tameside <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/adultabuse>

Trafford <https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/advice.page?id=xlKB9Y8bCol>

Wigan <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/resident/health-social-care/adults/report-abuse-or-neglect-of-a-vulnerable-adult.aspx>

Your responsibilities and staying on the right side of the law

It is very important that you know the law so that you know what acceptable behaviour is, and what you might get into trouble with the police and Court system. Sometimes people with autism get into trouble with the police because one side misunderstands the others' intention or behaviour. You can get an e card from Greater Manchester Police that explains you have autism and that you may need help from an appropriate adult if such a misunderstanding arises. Information about this card and how to obtain one can be found at:

https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/service.page?id=HAeHIYy_3P4

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More autism specific information about encounters with the law, information and support, can be found on the National Autistic Society's website here-

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/the-law.aspx>

Staying Healthy

Staying fit and healthy is important no matter what your age and it can be good fun too. Research shows that people who are physically active and fit experience better mental health too.

How can you improve your wellbeing?

Exercise classes and groups for all ages and abilities take place in all leisure centres and gyms, as well as community centres, church halls and other venues. In every area Information for leisure services for people with SEND under the age of 25yrs should be on your Local Offer pages (see page 3 of this document for links) It is a good idea to find something you enjoy to do each week. Even walking 2 or 3 times a week has big benefits for your health and wellbeing.

Drugs and alcohol

Sometimes when we grow up we may try things that are not good for us, such as smoking, drinking or drugs. This can lead to an addiction. An addiction is when you can't get through the day without something. Addiction can take over your life and make you unwell. If you think you have issues with drinking or drugs you can contact your local **Drug and Alcohol team**, who can offer help and advice on how to stop or manage your addiction. If you want to **stop smoking**, go to <https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree> to find out what support is available in your area.

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Local drug and alcohol services:

Bolton <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/achieve>

Bury <https://www.talktofrank.com/treatment-centre/one-recovery-bury>

Manchester <https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/manchester-integrated-drug-and-alcohol-service-zion-centre>

Oldham <http://wellbeing.turning-point.co.uk/rochdale-and-oldham/our-services/>

Rochdale <http://wellbeing.turning-point.co.uk/rochdale-and-oldham/our-services/>

Salford <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/achieveyoungpeople>

Stockport <https://www.healthystockport.co.uk/getting-support/mosaic>

Tameside <https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/my-recovery-tameside>

Trafford <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/achieve>

Wigan www.addaction.org.uk/services/wigan-and-leigh-recovery-partnership-1

Looking after your own health

As you get older it becomes your responsibility to look after your own health, this includes keeping up with appointments such as going to the dentist or the optician.

It is good to talk to your family, carers or school or college about teaching you how to make health appointments and practice going to the surgeries etc.

If you have any worries about your health then go and see your doctor. If you had help from a health professional when you were younger and feel you still need support but don't know how to access the service, the best bet is to see your GP who can make a referral.

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Some people with a learning disability and/or autism will get a yearly invitation to have a full health check, but if you don't get this invite – then just go along to your doctors to see if you are entitled to one. Most doctors offer well-person checks – and anyone can ask for one of these.

Getting help to complete Health Action Plans (known as HAPs) may help you understand how to look after your health needs. Health action plans are booklets that you can use to record information about your health. There are many different types of HAPs and you can choose the one that best meets your needs. The HAP can be used to record things like allergies, medications and past operations. It can also cover any present health issues that you may have. It can be taken to health appointments so that the health worker can understand more about you and your needs. The things discussed at the appointment can be added to your HAP so that you have an up-to-date health record. If you want any further information about the HAPs (or want a copy for yourself) then either ask your GP, school nurse, teacher or your carer or support worker.

There is lots of information about looking after your own health and where to go for help on the National Autistic Society website.

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/health.aspx>

Feeling stressed?

Growing up can be extremely stressful. The stuff that happens as you get older may make you feel anxious and stressed. This can affect your health and wellbeing. Feelings of being anxious or stressed can include, feeling sick, being unable to sleep, feeling irritable or worthless. This can make it hard to cope. If you have feelings of running away, self-harming, not wanting to get out of bed or taking your own life, it's important you confide in someone. You can speak to a family member, school nurse, teacher or GP. If you want to talk to someone about how you feel confidentially you can call the **SAMARITANS**. This helpline is for everyone and is open 24 hours a day. You do not have to be feeling suicidal to ring them. Tel: 116 123 (this is free and the number will not show up on your telephone bills). You can also email jo@samaritans.org

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Information and support for stress and anxiety

- <http://www.mind.org.uk/> On this website you can search for your local MIND office and support available. MIND also run a national helpline on 0300 123 3393 or text 86463
- You can find information about autism and mental health on the NAS website here: <http://www.autism.org.uk/about/health/mental-health.aspx> This page also provides further links and useful contacts.
- <http://www.respectforall.org.uk/counselling> **Respect for All** is a Greater Manchester wide counselling service for young people and adults with autism, and family carers.
- **42nd Street:** www.42ndstreet.org.uk – Mental health charity working with young people in Greater Manchester (currently funded by Manchester, Salford, Trafford and Tameside) aged 11-25yrs.

Knowing where to turn

Hospital Accident and Emergency Departments treats patients who have experienced a medical or surgical emergency or accident which results in serious injury.

If you are looking for advice or for local health services, you can try the **NHS website**. When you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency, **NHS 111** is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time.

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If you need more support – getting help from social care

Sometimes you may need more support than you can arrange for yourself or that your friends, family or community can give you. This is when social services may be able to help.

Things you need to know about Adult Social Care

- Adult social care is all about promoting independence and will aim to make you as independent as possible
- The Care Act states who is eligible for support. This means that just because you had a service in children's services does not mean you will get the same type of service from adult services. It also means that just because you didn't get a service as a child doesn't mean that you won't get help and support as an adult.
- There may be a cost to you for the services you get.
- People over 18yrs with a diagnosis of autism are entitled to a Care Act assessment of their needs. This may or may not lead to support from social care. It should lead to you being signposted to other sources of support, even if you don't meet the local authority's criteria.

You can find out more about social care

<https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/position-statements/adult-services-england2.aspx>

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