

Growing Up In Greater Manchester – A Guide for Young people with Autism and their Supporters

SECTION: HOBBIES, LEISURE AND SOCIAL LIFE

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT:

- What am I interested in and how might I be able to share those interests with other people? Libraries and the internet are good starting places to find out what is available in your area
- How do I feel about telling people I have autism? Are there things I could tell them that would help them to support or include me?
- Is anxiety or depression stopping me doing things I would ideally like to do? See the mental health section of Growing up in Greater Manchester for resources and services that can help if so
- Be sure you know the basics around online and face to face safety and rules

TOP TIPS:

- Discuss your hobbies and interests with a parent, supporter or friend
- Are there any suitable buddy or mentor schemes in your area that could help introduce you (or your son and daughter) to some new people and activities?
- Find out about local clubs and activities you might enjoy. The Local Offer contains information about leisure opportunities for young people with SEND
- Find out how much your hobby costs and if you can afford it
- Use social media sites to link in with groups of people who share your interests e.g Tumblr or Twitter. Once you have found someone you connect with, you can converse offline by email, chat or messenger

SKILLS CHECKLISTS:

Bronze level suggested targets -

- I know what I like to do and what I'm interested in
- I have had the opportunity to try some different activities
- I understand that different people are interested in different things
- I can explain what I like or what I know about my hobby or interest
- I understand when and when not to do my hobby
- I have tried different activities

Silver level suggested targets -

- I know to take turns in conversation and can allow someone to have a different opinion to me
- I know what situations I need support in and how people can help me join in
- I know how to use the internet to find online and local groups around my particular interests and hobbies
- I understand about being safe while pursuing my interests, including being safe online
- I can follow a familiar route to a familiar place

Gold level suggested targets –

- I know what to do if I get into difficulties and can ask for appropriate help
- I understand what a real friend is and what it isn't
- I would feel confident attending a new group or activity around one of my interests or hobbies
- I can use public transport to access my local community independently
- I understand how alcohol and drugs can affect my social life
- I can keep myself out of trouble and danger

RESSOURCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES:

- **Aspirations** www.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)
- **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.
- **Local Offer** www.gov.uk/find-local-council
A Local Offer gives children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families information about what support services the local authority think will be available in their local area. Every local authority is responsible for writing a Local Offer and making sure it is available for everyone to see.
- **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.
- **Royal Exchange Theatre and Manchester Camerata**
www.royalexchange.co.uk/songlines
Songlines offers a special opportunity for young people with ASD and their peers to explore their creative side and devise a brand new piece of music theatre with a team of experienced artists from Manchester Camerata and the Royal Exchange Theatre.
- **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 aged 5-16yrs
www.events.manchester.ac.uk/event/event:cs2-is7javo5-hsu8oi/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