

Autism Friendly Surrey

September 2026 – East Surrey Updates Meeting



1

News from East Surrey

We are keen to hear from you about any activities, events, developments happening in East Surrey related to autism friendly communities.

We will update you about the work we've been doing and planning in East Surrey since July 2026.

Please feel free to share any updates or news you may have.



2

Cinema Survey

We have collated the results of our Autism Friendly Surrey cinema survey. 40 people shared their views and experiences.

We have sent out the summary of the survey.

We are keen to work with a local cinema to pilot putting on both a relaxed and a quiet screening based of the recommendations of the survey.

If anyone else is interested, please email Mike at AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk

Autism Friendly Cinema



Autism
Friendly
Surrey

Tips for offering Autism Friendly screenings

Relaxed screenings

Autism Friendly cinema screenings are mostly aimed at children and families, and it's understood that some children may need to move around and make noise. These are often described as Relaxed Screenings.

Quiet screenings

Autistic adults often find autism friendly relaxed screenings noisier and more unpredictable than general screenings. Many adults choose screenings at less popular times or when films have been out for a week or two.

Some adults have told us that dedicated autism friendly quiet screenings would be very appealing to them.



Our cinema survey

40 people responded to our online survey focusing on autism friendly cinema screenings, including autistic adults, parents of autistic children and adults.

Our survey

27 People gave their views about Quiet Screenings

13 People gave their views about Relaxed Screenings

Our survey revealed that many autistic people have positive experiences at the cinema, but others do experience challenges and don't go to the cinema as often as they would like to.



How often people want to go to a cinema to see a film

5 People never go

24 People go once or twice a year

9 People go around once a month

2 People go more often than once a month

95% of our respondents (38 out of 40 people) said they would be very likely to go to the cinema more often if they could access screenings with appropriate accessibility adjustments.

3

Leisure Centre Survey

This autumn we will be circulating a new survey focused around people's experiences of using leisure centres.

We want to find out what is helpful for people and what barriers there are that prevent people from using their local leisure centres, such as:

- The sensory environment
- Cancellation policies

Both families with children and adults will be able to fill in the survey.



4

Autism Strategy

Opportunities for young people aged 16 to 24

The Surrey County Council Participation Team are keen to offer young autistic people opportunities to get involved in a wide range of activities – see the flyer

Email: allageautismstrategy@surreycc.gov.uk



5

Neurodivergent Youth Club

Neurodivergent youth club for teens in Epsom, Surrey, run by [Neurospicy Coaching](#).



Your kid masked all week just to get through school. Friday night, they don't have to. Every Friday, 6.30-8.30pm at NEAT HQ, Epsom, we run a youth club for neurodivergent teens (11-17) who are tired of shrinking themselves to fit in. £6 a session.

[Registration / enquiry form](#)



There is also a group for young adults as well, although we couldn't see any information about this on their website.

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Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fair

Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fair – Thurs 15th October

Autism Friendly Surrey will have a table at this event, which has been really well attended in previous years.

This is not autism specific, but there is a focus on autism / neurodivergence with talks and taster sessions in the leisure centre

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FAIR

Thursday 15th October 2026
10am to 3pm

Tadworth Leisure Centre
KT20 5FB

Find out information from health care professionals and support organisations

Support Includes:

- Health checks
- Dementia support
- Vaccinations - covid and flu
- Menopause
- ADHD & Autism
- Depression & Anxiety
- Stress & Emotional Wellbeing
- Children & Young People's Mental Health
- Financial, Money & Housing Support
- General Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Plus, other local support organisations

FREE Event!

Scheduled Talks:

- 11am
ADHD - WHAT MEDICATION CAN AND CAN'T DO WITH NIGEL
- 12pm
"AUTISM - FROM AWARENESS TO ACCEPTANCE" WITH HELEN
- 1pm
LIVED EXPERIENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH WITH DES
- 2pm
ADULT MENTAL HEALTH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION WITH NICOLE

Free Taster Sessions

Please book on the day

- 10.15am - 11am
Pilates Basics - Studio
- 12pm - 12.30pm
Circuit Training Basics - Studio
- 12.45pm - 1.45pm
Body Conditioning - Studio
(Subject to change, but similar)
- 2pm - 2.45pm
Circuit Training - Studio
(Subject to change, but similar)
- 2.15pm - 3pm
Group Cycle - Spin Studio

Reigate & Banstead
Borough Council
Banstead | Epsom | Ewell | Haslemere | Reigate

BANSTEAD
PRIMARY CARE NETWORK

CP Health Partners Ltd.
helping precious help patients

7

Wellbeing day

Salford Village Hall on Friday 25th September

Led by 'Your Well-Being Co' – a day to connect and grow together.

Activities will be adapted to meet participants' needs, creating a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where everyone can take part at their own pace.

Places are limited – [click this link to go to the booking form.](#)

Wellbeing Co.

Well-Being Day

A DAY TO LEARN, CONNECT AND GROW TOGETHER

CERTIFIED AWARD-WINNING

LED BY
Your Well-Being Co.

FRIDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER

10:00AM TO 11:30AM

SUPPORTING CONFIDENCE, CONNECTION AND FRIENDSHIP
(Social Care Staff)

12:00PM TO 1:30PM

BUILDING CONFIDENCE, CONNECTION AND INCLUSION
(Adults with Learning Disabilities and Autistic Adults)

LOCATION OF...

Salford Village Hall,
Honeycrock Lane,
Salfords, Surrey
RH1 5DG

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

LET'S WORK TOGETHER FOR WELL-BEING AND INCLUSION

FUNDED BY

unum

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Showcase

Additional Needs Service Showcase Tues 3rd November – 9.30am to 2.30pm

This is a drop-in event in Caterham where you can find out about local and national services.

For families and practitioners.

Autism Friendly Surrey will have a table, so do come and say hello.



Additional Needs Service showcase

Tuesday 3rd November 2026
9:30am to 2:30pm

Oakhall Church Hall
181 Chaldon Road,
Caterham
CR3 5PL

Parking onsite and nearby, and local bus services

- ✦ Come and find out about local and national services!
- ✦ Age range 0-25 years for Children and Young People with Additional Needs
- ✦ For Families and Practitioners

If you would like further details please scan the QR code or email localoffer@surreycc.gov.uk

No need to book, just drop in!

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

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Toolkit Day - Woodhatch

Woodhatch Community Centre on Thursday 11th March 2027.

The event aims to provide practical support, advice, and wellbeing opportunities for SEND families, carers, and school Teacher Assistants – focused on children and young people up to 25yrs.

The day will feature a range of expert led talks, workshops, and drop-in sessions on topics such as Occupational Therapy, sensory tools and strategies, Speech and Language Therapy, executive functioning, disability and carer support, benefits advice, and wellbeing activities.



10

Sensory Sunflowers

A weekly play and communication session for under 5's in Redhill.

Run on a Monday from 12.30pm to 2pm.

No formal diagnosis needed.

01737 780884

redhill@welcare.org

SENsory Sunflowers

welcare
strengthening families since 1894



Mondays
excluding bank
holidays

12:30PM to 2PM

Weekly play and communication sessions for under 5s, with disabilities and/or additional needs. Enjoy tailored activities, stimuli, advice and support for parents/grandparents. **NO FORMAL DIAGNOSIS NEEDED.**

01737 780884

redhill@welcare.org

24 Warwick Road
Redhill, RH1 1BU



Southwark Diocesan Welcare is a charity registered in England & Wales. Registered charity no. 1107859.

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Christmas Family Fun at The H2H Barn Hub



Get into the festive spirit at The Barn Hub in Oxted on Saturday 21st November 2026.

Enjoy Christmas crafts for all the family, including decorating your own gingerbread person, plus delicious homemade cakes, mince pies and hot drinks.

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Accessibility Passports

[illegible]

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Surrey Hills Society

We visited the community garden supported by Surrey Hills Society at Denbies in Dorking

The Surrey Hills Society is an independent charity promoting the positive enjoyment and care of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for those who live, work in, or visit the area.

If there is interest we can support people to get involved in the work in the garden.

[Surrey Hills Society](https://www.surreyhillsociety.org.uk/)



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Substance Use

We are working with Surrey and Sussex Probation to develop workshop materials about substance use and neurodivergence.

Matt presented at a 'Neurodiversity Event for staff this month – over 40 people attended.

We are developing workshops for autistic / neurodivergent people to better understand their neurodivergence which is crucial to them accessing the right support during their recovery journey.

We plan to run these workshops in early 2027.



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Meet-ups and taster sessions

Since we last met in July 2026 we have further established our regular social meet-ups in East Surrey, and are planning to offer more.



Crawley Leisure Park Monthly Social Meet-Up



6.30pm to 8.30pm once a month on the fourth Wednesday evening of the month.
For autistic and neurodivergent adults. (no diagnosis required)



Neurodivergent Night Out - Redhill



A twice monthly group to meet friends and take part in activities at The Light in Redhill from 7pm to 9pm



Neurodivergent Cafe

Woodhatch Community Centre

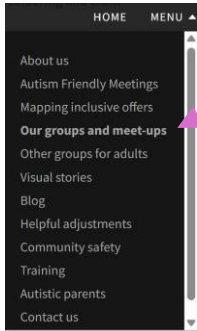


A calm, relaxed, monthly meet up for adults on a Thursday afternoon for a drink, chat, craft and quiet board games.

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Our events calendar

We have now collated the details of all our regular social meet-ups and taster sessions in one place on our website.



We update this most days so that the information is always current. At the bottom of the webpage you'll see the flyers with more info

[Click here to visit page](#)



Our Meetings, Taster Sessions and Social Meet-ups

The Autism by Experience team are hosting a number of taster events and regular social meet ups for autistic people across Surrey. This is an opportunity to meet new people and try out activities in a more sensory friendly environment. Our team will be there to welcome and support people.

At the bottom of this page you can download flyers for many of our taster sessions & social meet ups.

We also host the Autism Friendly Surrey meetings online for both East Surrey and West Surrey.

Date	Event Name	Time	Location
12/7/2026	Guildford Autism and ADHD Friendly Meet up	2pm - 4pm	in Person
13/7/2026	Guildford Spectrum Monthly Silent Screenings Meet Up	5pm - 7pm	in Person

Download flyers for our events



Redhill Autism Friendly Activities Group (pdf)

Download



Woodhatch Centre Neurodivergent Cafe (pdf)

Download



Crawley Leisure Park - summer 2026 - flyer (pdf)

Download

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Volunteer offer

We have now started recruiting and on-boarding volunteers to help us run our social meet-ups.

We have eight volunteers currently being onboarded – Four in the West and four in the East.

- People are currently shadowing at our events, getting their DBS checks and completing safeguarding training.
- Having a volunteer team widens the range of meet-ups we can offer.



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Our guidelines

We have developed our guidelines for social meet-ups.

We have worked in partnership with some of our meet-up members to develop these and the aim is to provide safe and welcoming environments at our meet-ups.

We will publish these soon.

Guidelines...

...for Autism Friendly Surrey Groups and Meet-ups

To maintain a safe, friendly, welcoming and respectful environment, we ask that all members agree to these guidelines at our in-person and online meetups, and any group chats such as Facebook or WhatsApp groups.

Please do:

✓ YES

- Respect all group members' privacy. What is shared within the group should remain confidential. However, if you are concerned about someone's safety, please inform a member of the Autism Friendly Surrey team so that we can offer support.
- Treat all group members, team members and volunteers with kindness, dignity and respect.
- Be mindful that other group members may have different experiences, sensitivities and triggers. Avoid graphic or distressing discussion topics.
- Respect other people's personal space and boundaries. Always seek consent before initiating physical contact, such as hugs or touching.
- Follow any guidance provided by the Autism Friendly Surrey team to help ensure the group remains a safe and positive environment for everyone.

Please do not:

✗ NO

- Use any sexualised, discriminatory, threatening or abusive language or behaviour, including threats to harm yourself.
- Make excessive use of swear words or use swearing to insult another group member.
- Attend Autism Friendly Surrey events if you are intoxicated by alcohol, medication or drugs, or become too intoxicated during the group.
- Debate or attempt to influence other group members about politics or religion.
- Pressure another group member to share their contact details with you.

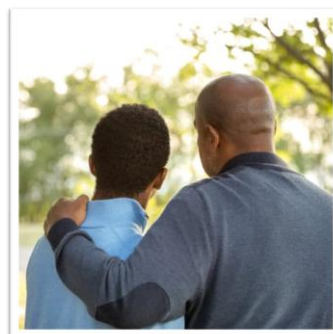
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Come and have look and a chat !

We are keen to encourage people to come and have a look at any meet-ups they may be interested in joining.

A person can come with a family member or other supporter. Also, a person's family member can come on their own on their relative's behalf if that is helpful.

We will always find time to have a chat with you, discuss the different social meet-ups on offer and how we can help the person you support to join us.



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The Light Redhill

The twice monthly Neurodivergent Night Out at The Light in Redhill continues to grow

Most people choose to do an activity such as bowling, karaoke, darts or climbing at the meet-ups.

Some people just relax in the meeting room we use.

We always welcome families/supporters who often provide additional support for people who are anxious about attending.

October dates are Monday 5th and 19th.



Neurodivergent Night Out - Redhill



A twice monthly group for adults to meet friends and take part in activities at The Light in Redhill from 7pm to 9pm

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month - 7pm to 9pm



The Light
3-11 Gallery Walk,
High Street,
Redhill, Surrey,
RH1 1RA



The group is hosted by The Light in Redhill and supported by Beth, Kira and Mike from The Autism by Experience team.

Details of the meet up

- This is a social activities group rather than a support/discussion group.
- We have use of the Red Room upstairs in the cinema foyer. People can sign up (with Beth) on arrival for an activity such as bowling, karaoke pool or darts. There are also a range of board games to use in the Red Room.
- It is free to attend, though there is a cost for activities such as bowling.
- Most group members are in their 20's and 30's, but anyone over 18 is welcome. You can buy food and drink at The Light, though there is no obligation to.



No need to book a place, though please do let us know if you plan to attend as a group of three or more people. Email info@autismbyexperience.co.uk

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Crawley Leisure Park

We've had between 9 and 12 people attending this new meet-up.

The attendees have mostly been young adults aged 18 to 35, but this is open to all adults of any age.

The heatwave has been an issue as both our June and July dates have been on incredibly hot days.

The next date is **Weds 23rd September**



Crawley Leisure Park Monthly Social Meet-Up



6.30pm to 8.30pm once a month on the fourth Wednesday evening of the month.

For autistic and neurodivergent adults. (no diagnosis required)

This regular social meet-up is supported by Beth, Kira and Mike from Autism by Experience alongside James and Sam from Neurodiversity Ninjas.



Crawley Leisure Park, London Road, Crawley, RH10 8LR. Dates for autumn / winter 2026:

- Weds 23rd Sept
- Weds 28th Oct
- Weds 25th Nov

Summary of the meet up - please see page two for more details

- This meet-up would suit adults who are keen to meet new people, connect with old friends and have a fun night out.
- We will use Hollywood Bowl as a base as there is a spacious bar area to meet in.
- Our team's role is to help people to get to know each other and help to organise people into groups for any activities they want to do whilst at the Leisure Park.
- There is no charge to attend, but people need to pay for their own activities, food and drink.



Hopefully the details on page 2 will answer most questions you may have, but please do email us with further questions. Email: AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk

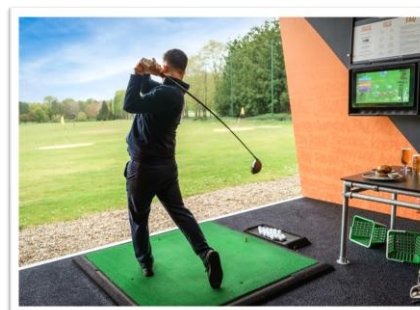
Hoebridge golf driving range

Following on from our taster session in June, we now have a small group of young adults meeting monthly at Hoebridge Driving Range (near Woking).

These young adults are keen to get better at golf, and we meet at Hoebridge once a month on a Tuesday evening.

We use a VIP bay which is enclosed, so very sensory friendly. The next date is **Tuesday 29th September from 6.30pm to 8.30pm** and the cost per person for the bay is £8.20

If anyone else is interested, please email Mike at AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk



Woodhatch Centre

This group has now met three times and we have 6 regular members

This is aimed at adults who are looking for a quieter meet-up, and this may really suit people who have a lot of anxieties.

One person who came to our June meeting had not left their house for months.

Please do share as we are keen to grow the group.

Our October date is Thurs 8th October



Neurodivergent Cafe
Woodhatch Community Centre



A calm, relaxed, monthly meet up for adults on a Thursday afternoon for a drink, chat, craft and quiet board games.

We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month - 2pm to 4pm

Woodhatch Community Centre
Whitebeam Drive
Reigate
Surrey
RH2 7LS



Autumn / Winter 2026 dates

- Thursday 10th September
- Thursday 8th October
- Thursday 12th November
- Thursday 10th December

This meet-up is hosted by Woodhatch Community Centre and supported by Beth, Mike and Millie from Autism by Experience.

Details of the meet up

- This meet-up would suit people who are keen to connect with others in a calm, safe, supported environment. The Woodhatch Community Centre team are really friendly and welcoming.
- Beth and Millie will be there to welcome people and help people to get to know each other.
- Woodhatch Community Centre is less busy on a Thursday afternoon and we will be using the cafe area which is just off the main foyer as you enter the centre.
- It is free to attend, and you are welcome to bring your own games and craft projects.



This is a drop-in, so no need to book a place
Email AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk for more information

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Facilitating sharing experiences

At these quieter meet-ups people are very keen to share experiences with each other.

The games and activities help to facilitate the discussions. For example, whilst playing a game called 'Colour Brain' this card led onto a 20min discussion between people around food sensitivities.



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More quieter meet-ups in East Surrey

These quieter meet-ups are really popular and we need more of them in East Surrey, particularly at weekends.

We are approaching both **Epsom Library** and **Oxted Library** to ask about the hire of their meeting rooms on a Saturday afternoon once a month.

We run similar meet-ups in West Surrey e.g. at Woking Library.



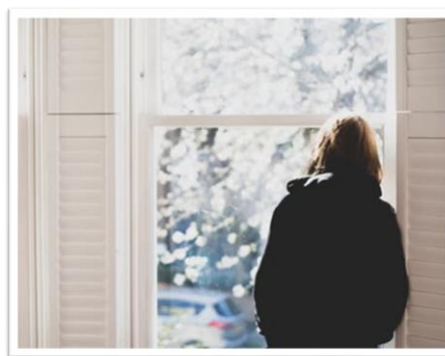
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Focus on Isolated People

In July we ran an online meeting focusing on the needs of very isolated people, and 24 people joined the meeting.

The two main actions for us after the meeting were:

- Collate information about online opportunities for people who may be very isolated.
- Collate information about community transport options.



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Mapping online opportunities

Many people who spend most of their time at home may connect with others online.

These online opportunities are offered across the UK and being online there are no issues around travelling.

Autism Friendly Surrey have researched and collated a list of online opportunities for both children and adults. **We will design these into handouts in the next few weeks.**

NeuroHub Community

<https://neurohubcommunity.org/community/?v=788544a4642e>

- Accessible information to build wellbeing.
- Supportive community space to connect with others.
- Educational programmes to better understand yourself.

For neurodivergent adults.
Free or paid membership options.

National Autistic Society Online Community

<https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/community>

- Welcoming space for peer support.
- Build connections.
- Ask questions, share stories with those who understand.
- Dedicated spaces for different areas of interest e.g. women and girls, mental health and wellbeing, parents and carers, introduce yourself etc.

For neurodivergent adults and / or their family members.
Free to join.

Society for Neurodiversity (SfND)

<https://www.sfnd.org/>

Online hub designed for connection, peer support and shared experiences.

- Private supportive space.
- Join stimulating conversation in forums and discussion boards, join groups based on specific interests, share valuable resources and personal insights.
- Connect directly with fellow members in a neurodiversity-affirming and secure space.

For neurodivergent adults and / or their families.
Free membership.

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Travel

Travel is a very real barrier for many autistic / neurodivergent people, particularly for people living in rural areas.

The 'Connect to Support Surrey' website has a section on Community Transport, which is long !

We have gone through this section and listed these offers that may be of help to autistic people. We will design this info into a flyer over the next few weeks.



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Burview Hall Open Afternoon

The Open Afternoon took place on Weds 12th August.

Around 40 people attending and it was fascinating to see how the attendees used the space at Burview Hall.

Mark and Val are keen to build on this day and are exploring setting up a regular 'autism café'.

[Elmbridge mencap](#)



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Lived Experience Advisory Service

We have been commissioned to develop a service to organise and support the involvement of autistic adults in service development.

Areas of work to focus on include:

- Housing Strategy
- Adult Social Care
- Suicide prevention
- Trading standards



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Involving people

We plan to have numerous ways in which autistic adults can input their experience into the development of these strategies:

- Online surveys
- Connecting through our social meet-ups
- One to one meetings
- Attending professional meetings
- Online group meetings



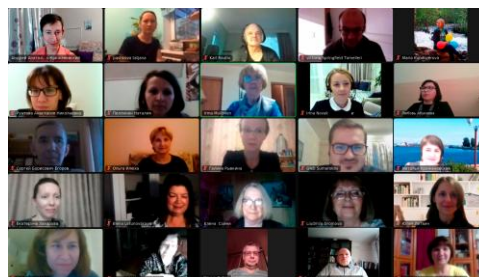
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Developing our online offer

Through this Lived Experience service we will further develop our online offer, which will build a network of people who may input into strategies.

Many people are keen to connect with other autistic adults who have similar life experiences to them.

This is particularly true for adults recently diagnosed.



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Chat with Matt

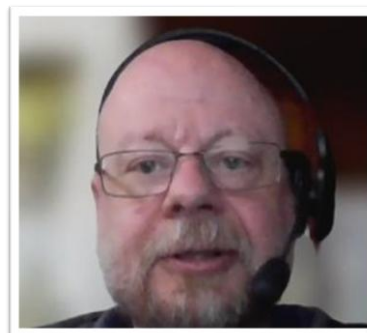
Matt from our team is hosting a monthly online social meet-up for autistic adults who may be socially isolated.

This is on the first Friday of each month from 1pm to 2.30pm.

The next support group meeting will be on Friday 2nd October 2026.

For more information email Matt at:

Matt@autismbyexperience.co.uk



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Late diagnosed online meet-up

We plan to launch this online meet-up in November 2026.

This will be hosted on a regular weekday evening once a month.

The discussions will be facilitated by late diagnosed members of our team sharing their experiences.

For more information email Mike at:

afc@autismbyexperience.co.uk



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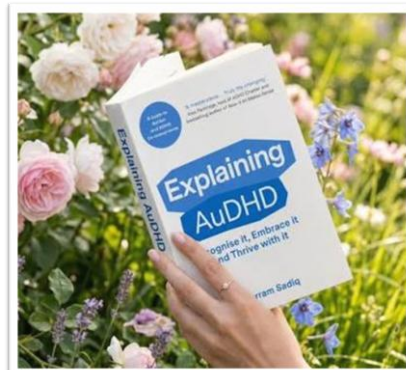
AuDHD online meet-up

We plan to launch this online meet-up in November 2026.

This will be hosted on a regular weekday evening once a month.

The discussions will be facilitated by AuDHD members of our team sharing their experiences.

For more information email Mike at:
afc@autismbyexperience.co.uk



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Young adults online meet-up

We plan to launch this online meet-up in November 2026.

This will be hosted on a regular weekday evening once a month.

The discussions will be facilitated by the younger members of our team sharing their experiences.

For more information email Mike at:
afc@autismbyexperience.co.uk



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Autism Friendly Surrey funding

The funding for Autism Friendly Surrey has been extended to 31st March 2027, which is great news for us !

From 1st April 2027 two new Councils, East Surrey and West Surrey will be operational, so things are uncertain, but as well as continuing to liaise with the Councils we are working on a National Lottery Bid.

It could be us !!



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National Lottery

The National Lottery fund we plan to apply to is called 'Reaching Communities', and we feel we meet their criteria which includes:

Helping people come together through inclusive places, spaces and activities (either physical or virtual), especially for communities where people are least able to come together

Helping children and young people thrive by developing positive social and emotional skills

Tackling health inequalities by addressing the conditions in which people live, work and grow



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