

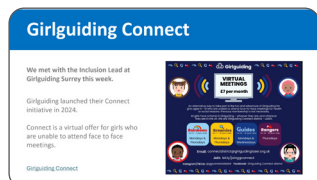


**Autism in Surrey**

Working to improve the lives  
of autistic people in Surrey

# East Surrey Autism Friendly Communities Group

## Notes from our November 2025 meetings



[Click here](#) to go to our website where the slides and these notes can also be downloaded.

### Slides from our November 2025 update meeting

The slides from our November update meeting are live on our website and have been emailed to people on the East Surrey Autism Friendly Communities mailing list.

The slides have a lot of new information on inclusive opportunities across East Surrey, a summary of the work we have been doing in East Surrey and ideas for future development.

### Developing an East Surrey Young Adults Peer Network



**Our November focus group meeting was attended by young adults, parents and students from Limpsfield Grange School.**

We made the focus for the meeting discussing ideas for developing a Peer Network for young adults across East Surrey.

East Surrey doesn't have such a well established network of support and social groups as West Surrey and people are keen to develop more opportunities.

**One theme that has emerged strongly from our work since April 2025 is the potential for people to connect with others through their interests.**

- We are aware that many autistic young adults can find it difficult to maintain friendships after they leave school / college where they see their friends regularly.

**When thinking about developing a peer network people told us what they feel is important:**

- **Structure** - To have organised activities and meet ups, recognising that some autistic young adults struggle to self organise.
- **Safety and Support** - People want to feel safe. Guidelines for members are important and some activities would need to be supported by experienced adults to ensure any issues arising can be solved.
- **Sustainable** - By supporting young adults (and perhaps family members) to help run the network there would be limited need for funding.

## Developing an East Surrey Young Adults Peer Network (continued)

Whilst the focus for this idea is on young adults (aged 18 to 39), some of the activities and meet ups we plan could be open to people aged under 18 and others open to people aged 40+.

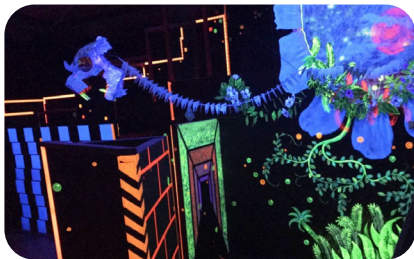
**Sam and James from the Redhill Autism Group told us about how the group had developed and how they use their facebook group to plan activities and meet-ups.**

They have recently named the group 'Neurospicy Ninjas' and they organise a monthly meet up in a restaurant on a Wednesday evening. [See the box on the right for more information.](#) →

**Sam and James are keen to expand their group with new members and also offer a wider range of events and activities.**

Through our work to help make communities more autism friendly we will be supporting Sam and James.

In 2026 we will be organising a series of taster events for young adults in East Surrey to help to grow this network. Suggestions for activities from young adults include:



**Laser Quest in Crawley**



**Ceramic painting in Reigate**



**Lego cafe in Caterham**



**Supported online gaming**

### Neurospicy Ninjas



The group was set up in 2017 by The National Autistic Society (NAS) and was supported by staff until 2024. There was also a budget for room hire.

When the NAS stopped supporting the group, members took over running it themselves.

To join the group a young adult needs to join their facebook group.

Sam and James put a poll in the group each month and people choose the date and venue for their next meet up.

**We will be focusing on safety and support as our next step.**

There could be different levels of support for different activities.

- **Supported** - where a named supporter stays with the group and has emergency contact details for attendees.
- **Semi-supported** - where a named person is 'on call' and nearby in case issues arise.
- **Unsupported** - where people organise their own meet-ups and attendees need to be fully responsible for themselves.

**We will be discussing the East Surrey Young Adults Peer Network further at our January 2026 meetings.**



## A Neurodiverse Night Out



Generally, autistic people attend social activities in venues much better suited to non-autistic people.

The idea behind a Neurodiverse night out is that the venue is adapted to better suit autistic and neurodivergent people, but neurotypical friends and family are also welcome.

We are keen to set up some neurodiverse nights out.

- At our meetings people generally supported the idea of a neurodiverse night out that is open to everyone, but highlighted the need for 'autistic only' spaces such as support groups.
- Some people mentioned that they'd had experiences of going to an event on their own and feeling left out as other people all seemed to know others or have come with a group. We discussed the need to have identified 'peer buddies' at a neurodiverse night out whose role would be to support those who have come on their own and don't know anyone. This is a role Autism by Experience team members have taken on at our recent supported taster sessions.
- Laura from Autism by Experience told us about Autscope which is a conference with a difference. Rather than talking to a primarily non-autistic audience about autism, this conference is specifically by and for autistic people.

**Click here** or use the QR code to visit the Autscope website.



- At Autscope they use a colour-coded badge system so people can visually tell others their preference for interactions. For example, a green badge indicates they would like to socialise, but have difficulty initiating, whereas a red badge means please do not initiate any interaction with me.

## Glow at RHS Wisley SEN Session - Thursday 11th December 2025



The Glow winter illuminations return to RHS Garden Wisley in Woking, Surrey. They are hosting a special Glow evening adapted to have fewer visitors, minimal noise and less distractions for those with sensory needs on Thursday 11th December - 4pm – 9pm.

**Click here** or use the QR code to find out more.



## Our January 2026 meetings

**Our next West Surrey Autism Friendly Communities meetings will be held on Teams on:**

- Update meeting - Tuesday 13th January - 10am to 12noon
- Focus group - Wednesday 21st January - 6.30pm to 8pm



Please note the time of the focus group is 30mins earlier to accommodate students from Limpsfield.

**Email Autism by Experience for more information:** AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk

