

Autism Friendly Surrey



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Our new website !



We have launched our new website.

www.autismfriendlysurrey.org.uk



Let's have a look

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Cinemas

Beth and Kira from our team tried out a 'Relaxed Screening' at The Light in Redhill during September.

The LED lights are kept on during the film in case people needed to move around. This is great for some people but distracting for others.

We will be designing an online survey to find out what would make cinemas more inclusive for autistic adults and families with autistic children.



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Cinemas

We discussed people's experiences of cinemas at our West Surrey Focus Group held in October

The foyer at the cinema can be very noisy and busy when you arrive. When putting on a quiet screening it's important to turn the music off in the foyer too.

Some people find subtitles help them to process the spoken word in the film, though other people said they would find subtitles distracting.



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Cinemas

The adverts before a film seem to be louder than the actual film. Some people enjoy the trailers, but these can be overwhelming, particularly if you are watching a film like a romantic comedy and have to sit through trailers for action and horror films !

It would help if cinemas published exactly what time the film starts and ends.

Cinemas could be creative with their autism friendly screenings and create a calming sensory environment before the film starts by playing quiet calming music and using sensory lighting.



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Sport and leisure in East Surrey



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Dorking Sports Centre

Foundation SEND Swimming Lessons

These classes are for children over four years of age with additional needs and disabilities to be supported in the water with a parent or carer.

Our qualified teacher will cover water confidence and stroke technique in these lessons alongside the essential swimming skills to ensure they learn to be safe in and around water, catering to each need and ability.



Foundation SEND Swimming Lessons

[Foundation SEND Swimming Lessons](#)

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Rainbow Leisure Centre - Epsom

SEND Soft Play

Soft Play helps children to develop in a number of different ways, including improving their motor skills and providing sensory stimulation. Our SEND sessions have reduced capacity and noise, to cater for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

- Tuesday 9am to 10.30am
- Thursday 4pm - 5.30pm



[Rainbow Leisure Centre](#)

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Sport in Mind

We met with Sport in Mind on Monday 6th October and took part in a pickleball session at Donyngs Leisure Centre in Redhill.

Sport in Mind are a charity that uses sport and physical activity to improve the lives of people experiencing mental health problems.

Anxiety and/or isolation counts as a mental health problem for Sport in Mind.

They offer activities across Surrey at a variety of leisure centres and other venues.

[Sport in Mind](#)



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Sport in Mind

Our blog post about our visit to a Sport in Mind session on Monday 6th October is on our new website.

You need to fill in a participation form. Once registered with Sport in Mind you can access their activities across the whole of Surrey (and England & Wales) which are free.

The emphasis is on participation, and their motto is 'play to challenge, not to overwhelm'. Sport in Mind staff and volunteers wear the distinctive blue T shirts.

If going for the first time there's no pressure to participate, and you are welcome to bring a supporter with you.


[Sport In Mind Surrey timetable](#)


Sport In Mind

November 2025
East Surrey

"We are Sport in Mind - the charity that uses sport and physical activity to improve the lives of people experiencing mental health problems". To find out more about sessions near you, check out our Activity Map on sportinmind.org or contact the office on our free, confidential phone line 0300 102 1400!

Day	Time	Activity	Instructor	Venue
Runnymede - Addlestone				
Tues	1-2pm	Yoga	Louisa	Mitchell Room - Addlestone Community Centre, Garfield Road, Addlestone KT15 2NJ
Reigate and Banstead - Redhill				
Mon	1-2pm	Badminton	David	Donyngs Leisure Centre, Linkfield Ln, Redhill RH1 1DP
Mon	2-3pm	Pickleball	David	Donyngs Leisure Centre, Linkfield Ln, Redhill RH1 1DP
Spelthorne - Staines				
Wed	11.30-12.30pm	Badminton	Keith	Eclipse Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, Staines TW18 1AJ
Mole Valley - Leatherhead				
Thurs	5-6pm	Badminton	Netdao	Leatherhead Leisure Centre, Guildford Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 9BL
Elmbridge - Walton-on-Thames				
Wed	12-1pm	Yoga	Kelly	Elmbridge Xcel Leisure Complex, Waterside Drive, Walton-on-Thames KT22 2HG
Epsom and Ewell				
Mon	2.30-3.30pm	Yoga	Louise	Gibraltar Recreation Ground, West Street, Ewell, KT17 1XY






www.sportinmind.org

info@sportinmind.org

0300 102 1400 (free)






Working in partnership with
Surrey Heart & Mind
Surrey Partnership
 NHS Foundation Trust

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Adventure Climb

We worked with The Light in Redhill to develop their offer of Relaxed Adventure Climbing for neurodivergent customers.

We designed a visual story and also delivered training on neurodivergence for their Instructors.

The flashing lights and music will be turned off and the sessions will have reduced capacity.

We ran a free taster session in October which was really well attended and The Light will soon publish details of their offer.



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Adventure Climb

We used the draft visual story during our Monday evening taster session.

Starting your session

At the start of your Adventure Climb session the instructors will talk to you about the safety rules.



An important rule is not to run when you are in the climbing arena.

You can ask the instructors for help at any time. They will also show you how the ropes and harnesses work.

You can take a break from climbing if you need to.

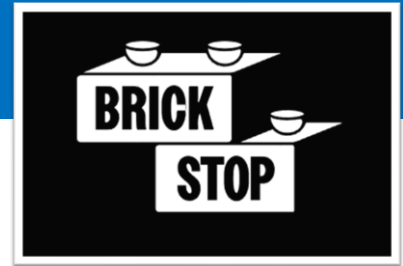
We have a visual timer which can help you keep track of time and be prepared for when your session will end.



A couple of people were unsure about doing climbing, and the visual story helped them to decide whether to try it or not.

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Brick Stop Lego Cafe



We are planning to run a taster session in January at Brick Stop Lego Café in Caterham.



Brick Stop is London's first LEGO® cafe. Aimed at adults and kids who find fast paced and loud environments overstimulating.

Brick Stop is a pay per hour calming space that offers over 100 LEGO® sets to choose from.

[Brick Stop Cafe](#)

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Surrey Libraries



We are working closely with libraries across Surrey.

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Autism Friendly Libraries

Surrey libraries are keen to make their services inclusive as for autistic and neurodivergent people.

We are working with the library teams to design an 'autism friendly guide to Surrey Libraries'.

This is in development, but we have made progress and will soon have a draft ready to go through with Library Service Managers.

Introduction to Surrey Libraries

Joining your local library is free

Surrey library membership allows you to borrow and return books to all Surrey libraries.

You can join at your local library.

Click here or use the QR Code to find your nearest library. You will need to bring some identification with your name and address on, such as a driving licence, bank statement or recent utility bill.



You can also join your library online



When you join online you will be given a temporary membership which allows you to access eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, eComics and eNewspapers. Temporary membership expires after 2 years. You can upgrade to full membership at any of our libraries.

Click here or use the QR Code to join your library online.



Surrey libraries virtual tours



Thanks to funding from LibraryOn, virtual tours of a number of the libraries in Surrey have been created.

This gives you the opportunity to navigate through the library ahead of your visit to understand how the space is laid out.

You can explore using your keyboard and mouse to see where key areas are located such as the children's library and computer area.

Click here to visit the Surrey Libraries Virtual Tours webpages or use the QR Code above.

Surrey libraries offer much more than books!



In this booklet we will tell you about the wide range of services and events offered at Surrey Libraries, including:

- Free wifi, computers you can use and printing / photocopying
- Inclusive activities such as lego clubs and sensory rhymetimes
- Bus pass renewals and signposting to community information

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Autism Friendly Libraries

Surrey Libraries are currently reviewing their Library Resources for Surrey Additional Needs and Disabilities webpage and would love to hear your thoughts.

Your feedback will help them ensure the page is useful, inclusive, and accessible for everyone.

While much of the current content is geared towards children, they are keen to explore ways to better support adults with additional needs too.

There is an online form you can fill in to have your say – the deadline is Friday 28th November 2025.

[Link to online form](#)



[View the Additional Needs and Disabilities webpages](#)

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Gamer's Lounge

Gamer's Lounge have started to run a monthly Saturday afternoon retro gaming event at Woking Library.

A member of the Gamer's Lounge team ran a pilot event at Woking Library in September and will run their first open event on Saturday 22nd November.



We are offering free tickets as one of our taster sessions to support the event.



Gamers Lounge
At Woking Library



A chance to play computer games from the 90's and 2000's on the original retro consoles - for adults and children

Saturday 22nd November - sessions at 12noon or 2pm

Woking Library
Gloucester Walk,
Woking
GU21 6EP



Mike, Daniel and Kira

This is a new project set up and run by Andrew who is passionate about retro gaming. Mike, Daniel and Kira from Autism by Experience will be there in support.

Details of the meet up

- There is no charge for the 22nd November sessions (future sessions will cost £5)
- You can choose from a 12noon or a 2pm start - each session is 2 hours long
- Woking library is in the middle of Woking Town Centre - we will be in the meeting room
- You can take a break anytime you need to - it's very relaxed and friendly
- For under 16's a parent / carer needs to stay in the library during a session
- You do need to book in advance for a free taster sessions - details below

You can book your place or ask any questions by emailing Mike Leat at Autism by Experience

Email: AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk



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Youth Clubs and Groups



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Youth Groups

We have published our mapping of youth clubs, groups and inclusive activities across Surrey

You can download this booklet from our website. We will be keeping it updated.

The booklet is formatted into Surreywide, West Surrey and East Surrey.

[Mapping Inclusive Activities](#)

Youth Groups, Child Play Sessions and Activities



The Autism by Experience team have mapped clubs, sessions and activities across Surrey.

This list is broken down into East Surrey and West Surrey. We will keep this handbook updated so please do let us know anything you think should be added or updated. Please just email us at:

Email: afca@autismbyexperience.co.uk

Version 1b – November 2025

Surrey Wide

Surrey Libraries

Libraries across Surrey offer a range of inclusive activities for children and young people, including:

- Sensory Rhymetime sessions
- Autism friendly Lego Clubs
- Craft activities
- SEN Stay and Play sessions



Each library advertises their events on their pages on the Surrey County Council website. Use the link below to find your local library and see what events they offer.

[Find your local library](#)

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National Autistic Society Surrey Branch

The NAS Surrey Branch newsletter is a great resource to find out about youth groups and inclusive activities.

In their Oct to Nov 25 newsletter there is information about lots of different events including:

- Children's Christmas party in Woking
- Dungeons and Dragons in Godalming
- Drama Club for Autistic Children and Young People

[NAS Surrey Branch](#)



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Inclusive festive activities

We have researched and mapped inclusive festive activities across Surrey, including:

- Relaxed shows and pantomimes
- Inclusive Santa visits
- Inclusive illumination events
- Other festive events



You can download our booklet from our new website

[Mapping Inclusive Activities](#)

Autism Friendly Communities Surrey Christmas events and activities



Shows and pantomimes



Jack and the Beanstalk at The Leatherhead Theatre

The Leatherhead Theatre, 7 Church Street, Leatherhead, KT22 8DN.
Thursday 11 December at 5pm.

Relaxed performance of Leatherhead's Panto: Jack and the Beanstalk.

[Jack And The Beanstalk 2025 - The Leatherhead Theatre](#)



Aladdin at Camberley Theatre

Camberley Theatre, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3SY.
Wednesday 17 December at 6pm.

Relaxed performance of Camberley's Panto: Aladdin.

[Aladdin | Camberley Theatre](#)



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Adult social and support groups




We are keen to help people to find the right group for them.

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Adult social and support groups

We have collated information about social and support groups on our new website

Current groups open to new members

			
<p>Guildford Autism and ADHD Friendly Meet Up</p>	<p>Autism Friendly Night Out - Activity Group (Redhill)</p>	<p>National Autistic Society Aspire Groups</p>	<p>The Autism Reference Group</p>
<p>This is a free group for people who are autistic and/or have ADHD</p> <p>We meet in Guildford once a month on a Saturday afternoon to catch up and arrange other activities between us. The group organise their meetings via the Meet-11n</p>	<p>The free group runs from 7pm to 9pm on the first and third Monday of each month at The Light in Redhill.</p> <p>On arrival people join us upstairs in the red room and can sign up for an activity such as howline crooks.</p>	<p>The National Autistic Society (NAS) are funded to support a range of free support groups.</p> <p>Email: aspiregroups@nas.org.uk for more information. You need to register with the NAS to join their groups.</p>	<p>The Autism Reference Group is a group that has been set up to give the opportunity for autistic adults to have input into the Autism Strategy and the work that is being done to implement the strategy in Surrey.</p>

[Adult Social and Support Groups](#)

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National Autistic Society Groups

The National Autistic Society are re-starting their Surreywide online group and their Women's Support Group.

Women's Support Group - For autistic women of all ages.

1st Wednesday of each month, 6.30 – 8.30 pm. Until March 2026 meetings will be online. After that they will alternate between online meetings and face-to-face in Godalming.

All Surrey virtual social group - For autistic men and women over 18.

Meets online on the 3rd Wednesday of each month 6.30pm – 8.00pm

[National Autistic Society Aspire Groups](#)



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East Surrey Young Adults

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 also aware that many autistic young adults can find it difficult to maintain friendships after they leave college where they see their friends regularly.

We are exploring developing a peer network for young adults in East Surrey. This idea is at a very early stage of development.



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East Surrey Young Adults

We have discussed this idea within our team and also with young adults who are members of social and support groups in East Surrey.

Defining young adults

Group members have suggested that a young adult would be classed as someone aged 18 to 39.

What people would like

People have told us they would like a network where they can connect and keep in touch with other young adults and take part in activities but also plan their own events and activities.



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East Surrey Young Adults

After talking with young adults in East Surrey we feel these are really important aspects of developing a peer network

Structure

To have organised activities and meet ups, recognising that some autistic adults struggle to self organise.

Safety and support

People want to feel safe. Guidelines for members are important and there could be a pool of 'Event Hosts' for activities who would be there on the day (perhaps in the background) with emergency contact details for members.



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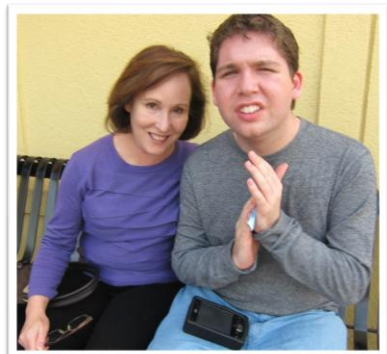
East Surrey Young Adults

After talking with young adults in East Surrey we feel these are really important aspects of developing a peer network

Sustainable

By supporting young adults (and perhaps family members) to help run the network there would be limited need for funding.

Autism by Experience would support this all the time the Autism Friendly Communities work was funded.



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East Surrey Young Adults

We could build on existing networks such as The Autism Friendly Night Out in Redhill and the existing young adults group (now called Neurospicy Ninjas)

A facebook group

The Neurospicy Ninjas have a facebook group which could be used as a platform for a wider network.

This group could be used to advertise current meet ups and also offer more. With support and safety considerations members could also organise their own meet ups.



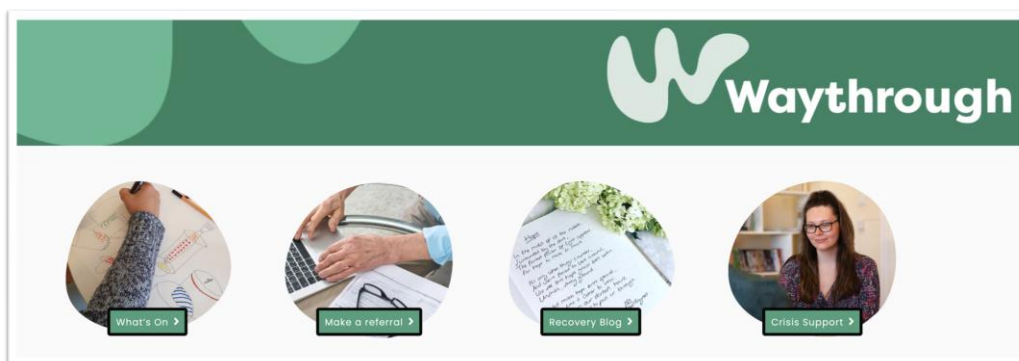
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News and updates



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Waythrough Community Connections



Waythrough have a new website for their Community Connections service

They are also working on a visual story about their services

[Waythrough Community Connections](#)

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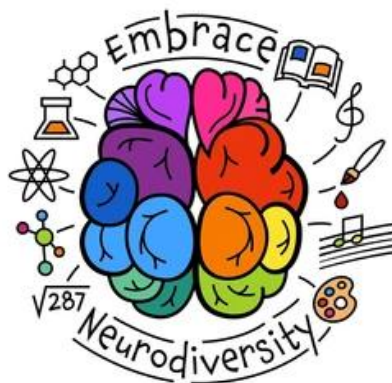
A Neurodiverse Night Out

We are developing the idea of a 'Neurodiverse Night Out' and have had discussions about what this might look like.

An evening that is open to everyone, but set up to consider the needs of neurodivergent people.

Bring your neurotypical friends and family !

A quieter, calmer sensory experience doesn't make an activity inaccessible for those not neurodivergent.



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Training in 2026

We have planned a series of online workshops for businesses and services starting in mid January 2026

There are three types of workshops

- 1.5 hr
- 2.5 hr
- 4 hr

The details are on the flyer on our website, and we will be promoting these very soon.

[Training information on our website](#)

FREE TRAINING ON AUTISM AND NEURODIVERGENCE FOR BUSINESSES AND SERVICES

Online workshops to help your business or service better understand the needs of autistic and neurodivergent people

THESE WORKSHOPS WILL BE DELIVERED BY AUTISTIC ADULTS SHARING THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCES

The Autism by Experience training team are informed by the latest research and are keen to share knowledge about approaches and adjustments that will help make your service or business as inclusive as possible - bringing you new customers.

THERE ARE THREE WORKSHOP OPTIONS

LEVEL 1 • 1.5 HOURS	LEVEL 2 • 2.5 HOURS	LEVEL 3 • 4 HOURS
A short introductory workshop suited to people working in places like shops and cafes. Exploring both sensory sensitivities and communication differences.	A longer workshop suited to people working in places like leisure centres, cinemas and libraries. Exploring a wider range of topics than in Level 1.	Our most in-depth workshop, suited to community groups who offer support to autistic and neurodivergent people. Exploring key topics in much more detail.

Signing up is easy - Click here to go to our online sign up form or use the QR code

Autism in Surrey

Autism by Experience
Community Interest Company

For more information email: AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk or visit www.autismfriendlysurrey.org.uk

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Very isolated people

We are hosting an online meeting on the evening of Tuesday 25th November from 7pm to 8.30pm to discuss connecting with children and adults who are very isolated.

This meeting is open to all and will be hosted by our team members who have experience of being very isolated.

Support staff, families and autistic people are all welcome to join us.

A focus on very isolated people

As part of the Autism Friendly Communities project we are keen to focus on the needs of autistic children, young people and adults who are very isolated.

What we mean when we say 'very isolated'

There are autistic people who enjoy a more solitary life, and whilst others may feel they are isolated, they are fairly happy.

There are also children, young people and adults for whom the outside world does not feel safe and they spend most, if not all, their time at home.

They would like to connect with others but issues like anxiety, fatigue and burnout have a huge impact on them.

We have set up an online meeting on Tuesday 25th November from 7pm to 9pm to discuss this issue.

If you are very isolated yourself, or support someone who is you are very welcome to join us. The meeting is hosted by members of the Autism by Experience team who have experience of feeling very isolated.

We will explore things like:

- Creating safe community spaces for people
- Online networks for very isolated people and their families/supporters
- Helping people to connect with others through shared interests

There is no need to book your place in advance, just click the link below to join on the evening:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88540258810>

The meeting will take place on Zoom, and there will be no pressure on anyone to speak at the meeting - it's okay to just come along and listen. It's also okay to keep your camera off.

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

Autism by Experience
Community Interest Company

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Neurodiverse walk

Beautiful 6 mile linear walk along Hogsmill river from Berrylands Train station to Ewell West station where you can get train back.

This is free and Mike from Autism by Experience will be there in support.

The walk is led by Mark from Kingston Ramblers.

Sunday 23rd November 11am to 2.30pm



Neurodiverse Walk
For autistic/neurodivergent adults



Beautiful 6 mile linear walk along Hogsmill river from Berrylands Train station to Ewell West station where you can get train back.

Sunday 23rd November from 11am to 2.30pm

The Berrylands
107 Chiltern Drive
Surbiton
KT5 8LS



Mike and Sarah



Mark

The walk will be led by Mark from Kingston Ramblers who will be wearing high vis. Mike and Sarah from Autism by Experience will be there in support.

Details of the meet up

- Meeting outside Berrylands Station at 11am. We are setting off at 11.20am.
- Free parking in all side streets. Bus: K2 stops nearby.
- Everyone is welcome. Friendly and inclusive. Dogs welcome but please keep on lead.
- There is the option to stop for refreshments on route at Toby Carvery and Tolworth Court Garden Centre and there are toilet stops on route.
- There are more details on the Eventbrite page linked to below.

You can book your place on Eventbrite - there is no cost other than your own refreshments. [Click here](#) or use the QR code to sign up.

Email Mike: AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk for more information



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Our November focus group

We will be hosting a focus group meeting later this month to discuss topics from this meeting and plan further events.

We will meet online using Teams on Wednesday 19th November from 7pm to 8.30pm. Topics we will be discussing in more depth include:

- Ideas for an East Surrey Young Adults network
- Connecting with very isolated people
- A Neurodiverse Night Out
- Our experiences of leisure centres



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The dates for our January 2026 meetings are:

Tuesday 13th January - 10am to 12noon

Wednesday 21st January – 6.30pm to 8pm