

Autism Friendly Surrey



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1. Autism by Experience news

We have uploaded information from the mapping of inclusive activities we are doing onto our facebook group which we've recently set up.



These are word documents for now, but we are now creating some themed booklets as a more accessible way of sharing this information.

We are also on [Instagram](#) as Autism Friendly Surrey and recent posts have attracted over 2000 views



2

Themed booklets

We are creating a series of themed booklets on different types of venues and activities, highlighting details of their inclusive offers.

We are currently collating information for booklets on:

- Libraries
- Leisure centres
- Social and support groups
- Outdoor activities



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Themed booklets

We have designed three themed booklets to date:

- Supermarkets
- Where to find out information
- Games and gaming shops and events

Download these from our website:

<https://autismbyexperience.co.uk/autism-friendly-surrey>



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Staying safe

We have published our 'Tips for staying safe when using your local community' booklet.

We developed this in partnership with young adults from ATLAS (Surrey County Council Participation group for children and young people).

Download this from our website:

<https://autismbyexperience.co.uk/autism-friendly-surrey>



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Cinema survey

In October we plan to circulate an online 'cinema survey' for autistic people, supporters and families.

We want to find out what would make both a relaxed screening and a quiet screening as accessible as possible in relation to:

- Booking tickets
- Arrival – environment
- Lighting
- Volume
- Adverts and trailers



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Recent visits and meetings

The Autism by Experience team have been busy meeting organisations and visiting venues in and around East Surrey.

Recently we have connected with:

- Reigate Borough Council Community Development team
- Girlguiding
- East Surrey Family Centres
- Dorking Sports Centre
- Woodhatch Centre



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2. Youth groups

We have starting mapping the range of youth groups that have an inclusive offer for neurodivergent children and young people.



Please do let us know about other groups you know about.

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Limpsfield Grange

A poster for the Limpsfield Grange Girls Youth Club. It features a background of yellow tulips. The text on the poster includes the club name, location, dates, time, and a quote. There are also small icons and a booking link.

Limpsfield Grange
Girls Youth Club

Where? Limpsfield Grange school

When? Wednesday 24th September
Wednesday 15th October
Wednesday 19th November
Wednesday 10th December

What time? 4.30pm - 5.50pm

Are you aged 11 – 16? Come and join our Youth Club! Meet other Autistic girls and share your experiences through fun activities like grooming our animals, baking, crafts and much more. You will learn strategies to help you understand Autism and explore your specialist interests.

"You are unique and the world needs your unique contribution."

We can't wait to meet you ☺

To book your place and receive an application form please email mrs.solomon@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk

For girls aged 11 to 16yrs, meeting on a Weds afternoon from 4.30pm to 5.50pm.

Open to all girls living locally.

Email: mrs.solomon@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk

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YMCA – WAVES sessions

YMCA East Surrey offer WAVES sessions for young people aged between 11 to 17 years old who experience stress with school, family or friends.



Our free drop-in sessions offer a relaxed space where you can talk to other young people who have experienced similar issues.

Come along for games, crafts, cooking, discussions or just a place to unwind and relax. Groups are in Reigate, Redhill, Oxted, Tadworth and Horley.

[WAVES Sessions](#)

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Girlguiding Connect

We met with the Inclusion Lead at Girlguiding Surrey recently.

Girlguiding launched their Connect initiative in 2024.

Connect is a virtual offer for girls who are unable to attend face to face meetings.

[Girlguiding Connect](#)



Girlguiding

VIRTUAL MEETINGS
£7 per month

An alternative way to take part in the fun and adventure of Girlguiding for girls aged 4 - 18 who are unable to attend face-to-face meetings for health or social reasons. Previous membership is not necessary.

All girls have a home in Girlguiding - wherever they are, and wherever they are in the UK. We are Girlguiding Connect district - LASER.

Rainbows for 4-7 year olds
Mondays & Thursdays

Brownies for 7-10 year olds
Mondays & Thursdays

Guides for 10-14 year olds
Mondays & Wednesdays

Rangers for 14-18 year olds
Thursdays

Email: connectdistrict@girlguidinglaser.org.uk
Join: bit.ly/joingconnect
Instagram/TikTok: @ggconnectdistrict Facebook: Girlguiding Connect district

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PM Active



PM Active SEND Youth Club

Woodhatch Community Centre
Fridays, 5.30pm to 7pm.
11 to 16 year olds.
£2.50 per session.



A youth club specifically designed for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). A safe, friendly, welcoming space to socialise, make friends, and try a variety of activities, supported by experienced staff who understand and adapt to young people with additional needs.

They also run an after school club Wednesdays, 3.45pm to 4.45pm. 5 to 10 year olds. £4.50 per session.

[PM Active](#)

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The ARC Caterham

The ARC in Caterham offers a wide range of activities and opportunities:



[The ARC Caterham](#)

Pokémon Club

Every Monday from 15:30 - 17:30 with a buffet.

Special needs softplay and Sensory room

held on a Monday 15:00 - 19:00

Thursday SEN Meet

Every Thursday we run a SEN youth club for ages 12 to 18. Running from 18:00 to 20:30.

Other activities include the Include Choir and Prospero Theatre group.

Mental health and wellbeing

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support for 11-18 year olds in East Surrey

Through the Mental Health Investment Fund (MHIF) Grant Programme organisations and individuals across East Surrey are providing, community-based activities that help young people aged 11–18 thrive.

The Teen Project CIC

Peer Support Group:
Confidence Workshop for Girls 11 - 16

Merstham Youth Cafe

All Saints Church: After School Youth Café – Central Merstham

Freedom Leisure

Physical activity classes for Young People at de Stafford School - North Tandridge

Alliance for Better Care ABC

Mental Health Support for Young People in Horley & Caterham

[Website showing services offered](#)

Adventure Climb

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

We are working with them on a visual story and also delivering training on neurodivergence for their climbing Instructors.

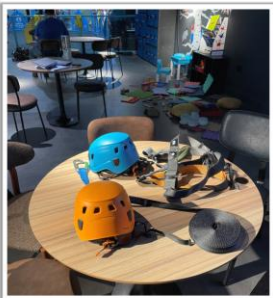
The flashing lights and music will be turned off and the sessions will have reduced capacity.



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Adventure Climb

Are you interested but unsure?



If you are interested, but not sure whether you or your child would enjoy climbing you are welcome to come and watch a relaxed Adventure Climb session. (there is no need to book – just drop in).

When we run the relaxed sessions we will have a harness, helmet and climbing rope on a table next to the climbing arena.

You are welcome to try on the helmet and harness, and this may help you decide if you'd like to book a session in the future – instructors will be on hand to help if you need it.

Built into this offer will be an invitation to families to come and watch a session and try out the harness and helmet before committing to booking a session with their child.

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3. Adult support and social groups

We have nearly completed our mapping of the range of support and social groups for adults across Surrey.



There is a wide range of groups that run very differently. Some are discussion-based support groups and others are social groups with a focus on activities.

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Support for group supporters

We are planning to continue to offer support to people who informally run social and support groups, or who are interested in setting up a group.



We have offered support to autistic adults who are informally running support and social groups in Surrey.

We are helping with developing guidelines for members, securing meeting spaces and information for potential members.

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Different groups for different people

People have very different reasons for wanting to join a social or support group.

I want to meet up with other autistic people to talk about being autistic.



I want to make more friends, maybe to go to the gym with or even for walks.



I want to meet up with other young adults to go out and have fun.



I enjoy playing complicated board games and would like to meet others who also enjoy this.

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Introducing people to groups

The more 'in common' group members have the better a group tends to run. If a new member has very different needs this can make things tricky.



I ran an unsupported group and two people with significant mental health difficulties ended up dominating the group and a lot of members left.

I went to a board games night, but the games were too complicated for me.



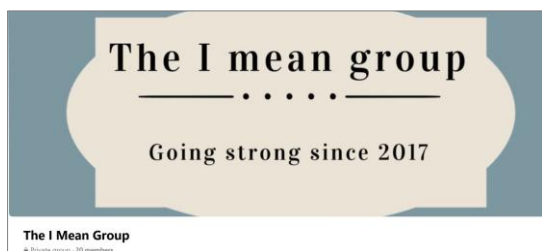
We are an informal group that meets in restaurants – we had to ban a new member, who got very drunk.



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The I Mean Group

This group meets once a month on a Weds evening for 7pm to 9pm at bars and restaurants in the Redhill / Reigate area.



It's an informal social group for anyone aged 18 to 40. It's run by two group members and we support the two members who run the group.

They organise their meetings through their facebook group.

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

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Autism Friendly Night Out

This group meets from 7pm to 9pm at The Light in Redhill, has been getting busier and busier – up to 20 people now attend.

The group now meets on the **first and the third Monday of each month** and focuses on supporting people to access group leisure activities as well as board games.

The Light are letting us use more of the upstairs space and are planning to run an autism friendly cinema screening at 7pm on the same evenings.

[Autism Friendly Night Out](#)



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The Monday adults support group

Some members of the Autism Friendly Night Out are keen to set up an alternative to the busy and often noisy group !

Starting on Monday 13th October 2025, we will be supporting members who want to take part in a quieter discussion group and talk about important issues such as friendships.

They will meet on the 2nd Monday of each month.

Email: AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk



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Mary Frances Trust

Mary Frances Trust offer two autism support groups to their members

The **Autism Peer Support Group** meets online every Monday from 7pm to 8.30pm. It's a discussion group led by a neurodivergent facilitator.

The **Autism Support Group** meets in-person in Epsom from 10am to 12noon. There is a quiet reading corner. There is a topic of discussion, art activities and a break where coffee and biscuits provided. There is a garden space.

[Mary Frances Trust](#)



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YMCA – Step Forward

YMCA East Surrey Step Forward service offers free support and social group activities for young people aged 17-30 with mental health and emotional wellbeing needs.

[Step Forward](http://www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk)



YMCA EAST SURREY

Step Forward

Emotional wellbeing support and activities for 17-30 year olds

Step Forward offers support and activities for young people aged 17-30 with mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. Meet likeminded people in a relaxed environment and take the first step towards looking after your emotional wellbeing.

Mondays 17:00-19:00 Phoenix Youth Centre, Preston Manor Road, Tadworth, KT20 5LG	Wednesdays 16:00-18:00 Phoenix Youth Centre, Preston Manor Road, Tadworth, KT20 5LG
Tuesdays 14:00-16:00 Christ Central, 3 London Road, Redhill, RH1 1LY	Fridays 15:30-17:30 Focus Centre, 9 Depot Road, Epsom, KT17 4RJ

All of our sessions are free. No need to book, drop ins welcome.

Find out more
E stepforward@ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk
www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk

YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you



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Autistic Parents

We have set up a facebook group open to all parents in Surrey who are autistic – mums and dads.

We have started our monthly evening support group meetings for 'autistic mums'. The group met for the first time this month and there were five attendees.

We can also set things up for autistic dads if there's interest.



Autism in Surrey

Surrey Autistic Parents Network

As part of the Autism Friendly Communities project we are developing a support network for parents in Surrey who are autistic.

Join our Facebook group



We have set up a facebook group called **Autistic Parents Surrey – Peer Support Network**

The facebook group is for autistic parents of any gender to connect, share information and provide mutual support.

You can join if you are an autistic parent (you do not need to have a formal autism diagnosis).

Use the QR code above, or click here to find the group.

Surrey Autistic Mum's Group



We will be hosting monthly online meetings for autistic mums to share advice and experiences.

Gill and Sophie (both autistic mums) will host the meetings. The group will initially meet on the first Tuesday of each month from 7.30pm to 9pm (unless group members vote to meet on a different evening).

Our first meeting will on Tuesday 2nd September 2025 and we will be discussing sensory differences.

To join the mailing list and receive meeting invites use the QR code above or click here.

If there is interest we will explore setting up an online group for autistic dads

Autism by Experience
Community Interest Company

These groups are supported by autistic members of the Autism by Experience team. For more information email us at AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk

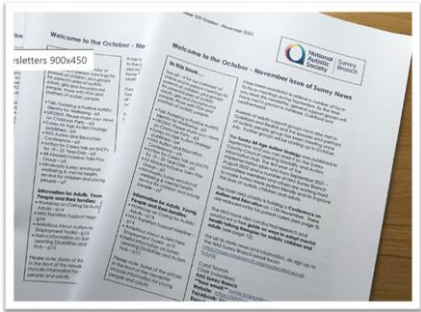
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National Autistic Society Surrey Branch support groups for families



The Surrey Branch host regular support groups for parents and carers across Surrey

NAS Surrey Branch support groups enable parents or other family members of autistic children or adults to meet up and share their knowledge and experiences.



NAS Surrey Branch

- Local in-person support groups
- A monthly online support group
- Parents of Adults Group
- Parents of Girls Group
- Spouses and Partners Group, Guildford
- Parents of children and young people with PDA

4. 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.

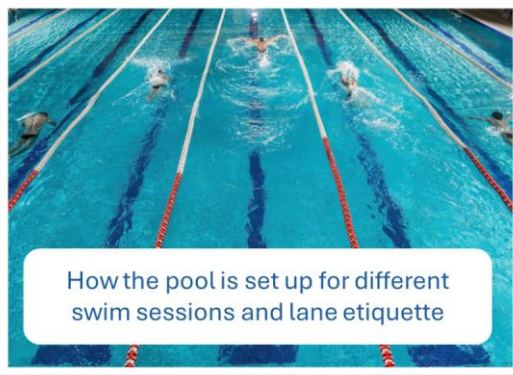
We have some updates for you.

After that, please feel free to share any updates or news you may have.



Dorking Sports Centre

Fallon, Beth and Mike visited Dorking Sports Centre in July and met with Sue Robinson Area Community Sports Manager.



How the pool is set up for different swim sessions and lane etiquette

We plan to work with them on a visual story to help people to prepare for a visit.

The visual story will include photos and written information on a range of different things people visiting may feel uncertain about.

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Sport in Mind

We have recently made contact with Sport in Mind.

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

They offer activities across Surrey, and we will be visiting one of their sessions over the next few weeks to find out more and discuss how we can work together.

[Sport in Mind](https://www.sportinmind.org)



September 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](https://www.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 2NI
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 2JG
Epsom and Ewell				
Mon	2.30-3.30pm	Yoga	Louise	Gibraltar Recreation Ground, West Street, Ewell, KT17 1XY



@sportinmind www.sportinmind.org info@sportinmind.org 0300 102 1400 (free)



Attendee Sign Up



Sport In Mind



Working in partnership with
Surrey and Borders Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

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Get More Active



One to one appointments

Have a chat with our friendly physical activity expert.

Weekly peer support group meetings

Chat to others that are already taking part in activities or meet others that would like to get involved.

Regular updates on activities that are local to you

We regularly share activities in the area that you can get involved in. From open water swimming to parkrun to Boccia and lots more.

[Get More Active](#)



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Active Wellbeing Coaching

Funded by the Surrey Mental Health Investment Fund and Suicide Prevention Fund, Active Wellbeing is free for all participants aged 18 or over in East Surrey.

Active Wellbeing Coaching offers a comprehensive range of workshops, 1:1 coaching sessions, events, activities, and support designed to help you achieve your personal goals and create a customised wellbeing plan.

This programme, provided by Active Prospects, is tailored for adults with neurodivergent and mental health needs.



[Active Wellbeing Coaching](#)

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World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day is on Friday 10th October 2025.

We will collate information about events happening, so please do let us know anything you hear about.

The Light in Redhill are putting on a series of free activities on the day, including mini-golf and bowling.



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Epsom Library

The newly modernised Epsom Library is now open.



The transformed library now has a fully flexible layout with space for events and performances, improved furniture, increased study space, and two flexible-use meeting rooms.

[Find your local library](#)

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Dorking Walking Festival

Dorking Walking Festival is from 20th to 28th September 2025.



There are a number of supported walks as part of the festival, including:

Monday 22nd September 10.30am to 11.30am
Surrey Coalition of Disabled People – Surrey Coalition’s St Martin’s Stroll

Saturday 27th September 11am to 1pm
Include.org – Stroll and Sign Inclusivity Walk

[Dorking Walking Festival](#)

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Sensory Rhymetime – Horley Library



[Horley Library Events](#)

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5. People who are very isolated

We are keen include those children and adults who may be very isolated. Recognising for some people, others may think they are isolated, but they prefer a more solitary life.



There are people who rarely leave the house and find the outside world stressful and overwhelming.

We had a discussion with some families about 'safe spaces' for very isolated people, and members of our team met this month to explore what we might be able to do to connect with very isolated people.

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People who are very isolated

It's important that we recognise that some autistic people are happy with a fairly solitary life, but that others are isolated due to things like anxiety and burnout.

My son can't currently manage demands and is out of school. He wants to go out, but his anxieties are too intense.



I'm in my 30's and live with my parents. I hardly leave my room, but I do connect with others through online gaming.



I've been off work with burnout for 6 months. The thought of going out and doing anything is so overwhelming.



After leaving college I lost touch with my friends, so I feel pretty lonely these days.

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What we think is important

Some of the Autism by Experience team have personal experiences of being out of education or being very isolated.

- It's important to connect with people through their interests
- People need to feel safe
- Measure progress by inchstones rather than milestones
- Help people work out what an ideal life might look like
- Supporters need to understand autism



One idea is to perhaps have a meeting for people supporting someone who is very isolated to share ideas – families can become isolated themselves.

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The dates for our November 2025 meetings are:

Tuesday 11th November - 10am to 12noon

Wednesday 19th November – 7pm to 8.30pm

At our November meetings we will be showcasing the new Autism Friendly Surrey website, promoting our free training offer for organisations and sharing the latest news.

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