

Autism Friendly Surrey

July 2026 – East Surrey Updates Meeting



1

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 !!



2

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



3

Volunteer offer

We are currently developing our volunteer offer 'Autism Friendly Surrey Reps', currently we are finalising our volunteer policy.

We would like to recruit volunteers to:

- Support our social meet-ups, meaning we can offer more meet-ups in the future
- Support a very isolated person to engage in activities and meet-ups



4

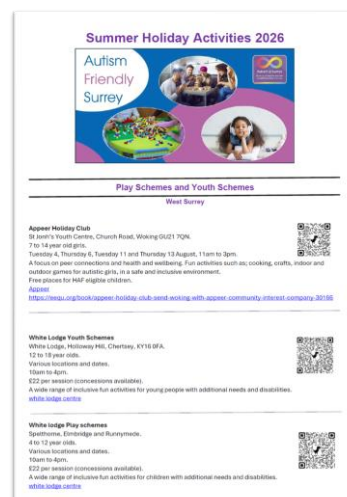
Mapping inclusive activities

We are always working on mapping ‘autism friendly’ opportunities across Surrey.

For example, we have recently published our mapping of Summer Holiday Activities 2026 for children and young people.

You will find our mapping on the Autism Friendly Surrey website.

[Autism Friendly Surrey – mapping inclusive activities](#)



5

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 May 2026.

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



6

Jam Place - Leatherhead

Dance & movement classes for children with special educational needs and disabilities, for ages 6 +.



Mondays 4.30pm - 5.15pm (6+)

Mondays 5.30pm - 6.15pm (6+)

(plus time in the Sensory Room if you wish)

Thursdays 5pm - 6pm (for POST 16 age)

(plus time in the Sensory Room if you wish)



[The Jam Place website](#)

7

Chase Farm

Equine-assisted therapy and learning for children and adults in Ashted, Surrey

Horses can feel energy and emotions that we as humans are not always tuned into. They provide us with emotional regulation - and also connection.

Equine-assisted therapy can be particularly impactful for those dealing with trauma, anxiety, ADHD, ASD and other issues.

[Chase Farm website](#)



8

Kingswood Shetlands

Equine-assisted therapy and learning for children and adults in Ashted, Surrey

Kingswood Shetlands & Friends offer unique animal experiences through Animal Assisted Interventions AAI and supports the community within Surrey.

Animal Assisted Interventions improves and supports peoples mental, physical, social and emotional functioning with the aid of animals

[Kingswood Shetlands website](#)



9

Horley Rhymetime

Horley Library offer a sensory rhymetime session - this fun, singing and signing session is specifically tailored for SEND families.

We are tucked away in a cosy enclosed meeting room space with low lighting, a bubble machine and sensory toys.

A 'quiet' room is available. The sessions are every 4 weeks on a Saturday, for 0-6 year olds and are from 10.30-11.00am.

A maximum of 6 children plus their parent/carer.

[Go to their website for more information](#)



Sensory Rhymetime at Horley Library

Saturdays: every 4 weeks
10.30-11.00am: 0-6 year olds

Aimed at SEND families, these sessions take place in an enclosed, calm space supporting play and language
Low lighting, sensory toys and a 'quiet' room available
Max 6 children plus their parent/carer

To BOOK or find out more information email:
horleylibraryevents@surreycc.gov.uk

Discover more: <https://tinyurl.com/SensoryRhymetime>



**We also run Autism
Friendly LEGO Clubs
in the school holidays:
follow our socials.**



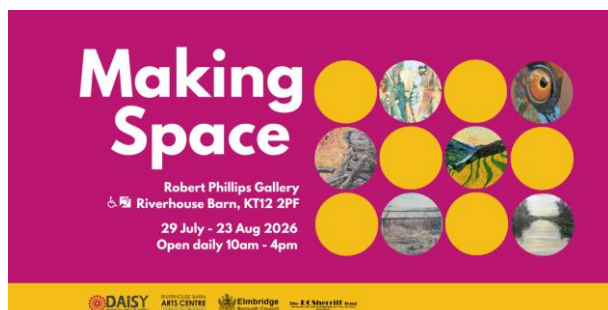
[horleylibrary](#)

facebook.com/HorleyLibrary



10

Making Space – art exhibition



DAiSY: Disability Arts in Surrey invites you to Making Space 2026, a community exhibition celebrating the creativity and diversity of artists across Elmbridge.

The exhibition brings together artists working across a wide range of art forms, themes and ideas. Creativity blooms across Elmbridge: in local art groups, day service centres, community venues, homes and the natural world.

[Go to their website for more information](#)



11

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



12

Substance Use

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

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.



13

Meet-ups and taster sessions

Since we last met in May 2026 we have established our regular social meet-ups in East Surrey, and also run a few taster sessions.

Autism Friendly Surrey

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)

Autism in Surrey

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

Autism Friendly Surrey

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.

14

Banstead Swifts



The Banstead Swifts meet-ups went well with about 12 people attending each one (though not everyone had come through us).

One person who came has since joined our Monday evening meet-up at The Light in Redhill.

[Banstead Swifts](#)



15

Guilfest – supported offers

Guilfest took place on Stoke Park in Guildford on the first weekend in July 2026



We worked with the festival organisers to further develop the Supported Stewarding offer we piloted in 2025

We also piloted supporting a family with a teenager with a PDA profile to have a tour of the festival at a quiet time to see if they wanted to buy a ticket for the rest of the day (they did stay)

We will expand this offer in 2027.

16

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.



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

17

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.



Neurodivergent Cafe Woodhatch Community Centre



A calm, relaxed, monthly meet up for adults on a Thursday afternoon for a drink, chat, 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



Spring / Summer 2026 dates
• Thursday 14th May
• Thursday 11th June
• Thursday 9th July
• Thursday 13th August

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

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

18

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 meet-up is on Weds 26th August when hopefully it will be cooler !!

Autism
Friendly
Surrey

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. Summer 2026 dates:

- Weds 27th May
- Weds 24th June
- Weds 22nd July
- Weds 26th August

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

19

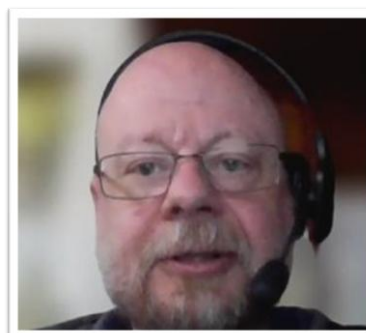
Chat with Matt

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

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

The next support group meeting will be on Friday 7th August 2026.

For more information email Matt at:
Matt@autismbyexperience.co.uk



20

Woking Board Games

This is initially a one-off taster session for people keen to meet on a Saturday afternoon for a chat and playing some board games.

Whilst this event is happening at Woking Library we are keen to repeat this in other areas of Surrey if it is a success.

[Link to sign up for the event on Eventbrite](#)

Autism
Friendly
Surrey

Woking Library - Adults Board Games Afternoon

A free, supported meet-up for autistic / neurodivergent adults



Saturday 8th August 2026 from 1pm to 4pm
See below for details about booking your place



Wendy and Mike from the Autism Friendly Surrey team will be supporting this meet-up.



Wendy



Mike

Wendy and Mike will welcome you on arrival and support you to get involved in the games.

Address: Woking Library, Gloucester Walk, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6EP

Games we will have include:



Details of the meet up

- We have exclusive use of the large meeting room in Woking Library. We can control the lighting and noise levels to create a sensory friendly space.
- We will have lots of games to choose from, including popular cooperative games which are relatively stress free to play. You can bring your own games.
- You can bring food/drink into the library and there are toilets.
- You don't need to be a board games expert, we can help you learn the games.
- There is no cost and booking in advance is essential.

Click here or use the QR Code to reserve your place on Eventbrite
Email any questions to: AFC@autismfriendlyexperience.co.uk



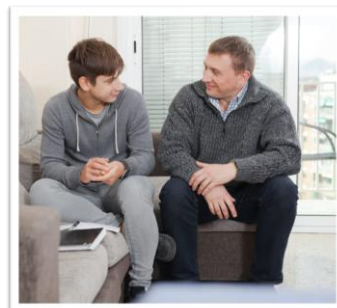
21

Taster sessions and social meet ups

We understand that some of our meet-ups may be a bit too busy for people who may be very isolated.

We have had some success in supporting people who are very anxious to join us at some of our groups and meet-ups.

The support of family members, and also sometimes support staff, has really helped the person feel comfortable.



If a person needs support to attend on an ongoing basis that's fine with us !

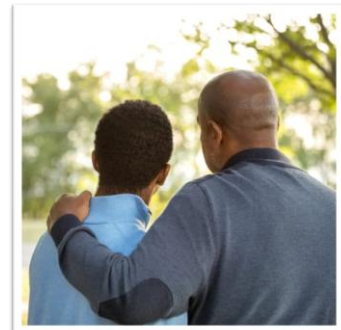
22

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.



23

Covering East Surrey



We are aware that we've not organised any meet-ups yet in the Elmbridge, Mole Valley or Epsom and Ewell areas of East Surrey, and this will be a priority between now and March 2027.

24

Gamers Lounge – East Surrey?



Gamers Lounge is a retro gaming event where people can play games form 1908's to 2000's on the original consoles.

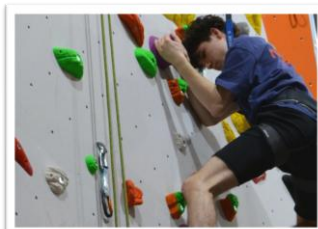
The events in Woking and Guildford have been popular, and we are looking for a venue in East Surrey.

25

Potential taster sessions



Leith Hill Place is open at weekends until the end of September. Ideal for a meet-up, café and a walk.



Xcel Leisure Centre in Walton-on-Thames has a climbing wall which may be a good taster session



A Tai Chi taster session at a studio in Epsom – with the added attraction of meeting Matt in person !

26

Community centres

Community Centres are not just for older people, many offer a wide range of activities for all ages.



Community centres are ideal Safe Spaces for very anxious people and we recently did a talk at Elmbridge Borough Council who are keen to promote their centres.

We could perhaps organise some open days in the future.

27

Community centres

Leatherhead Community Centre is a good example of how community centres could be a great resource for many autistic and neurodivergent people.



Advice Café



Crafting with Imogen



Gardening for Wellbeing



Games Group

[Leatherhead Community Centre](#)

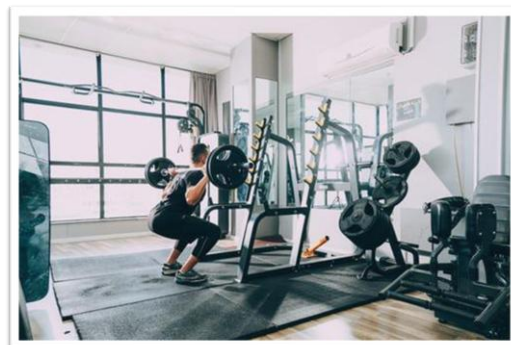
28

Leisure Centres and exercise

Fallon has been doing a piece of work for us around accessibility of Leisure Centres.

We will be designing and publishing this over the summer and it will cover issues including:

- Cancellations
- Bringing a companion
- Memberships
- Music and sensory issues



29

Surrey Inclusive Activity Network

We have joined the Surrey Inclusive Activity Network, run by Surrey Coalition of Disabled People and Active Surrey

This network includes all the companies who run leisure centres across Surrey.

We have offered to work with these companies to map the inclusive activities offered by leisure centres as these are not always easy to find on the leisure centre websites.



30

Sensory Friendly Exercise Class

Fallon and Beth are also scoping out an idea for a sensory friendly exercise class, which would have sensory lighting.

Other adaptations we could make to a regular exercise class include:

- A visual story
- A list of things you'll need to bring
- Lower volume music
- Option to bring a supporter
- Exercises focused around mindful movement and self regulation



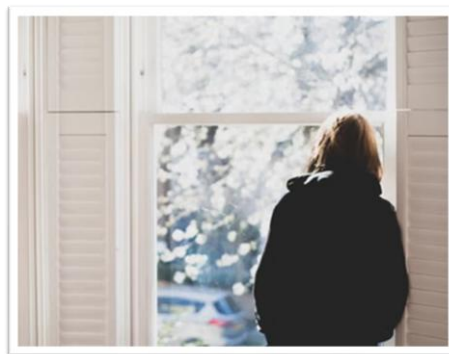
31

Focus on Isolated People

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

We organised the meeting in partnership with Action for Carers Surrey and it was attended by families as well as autistic adults.

Some actions came out of the meeting which we will explain.



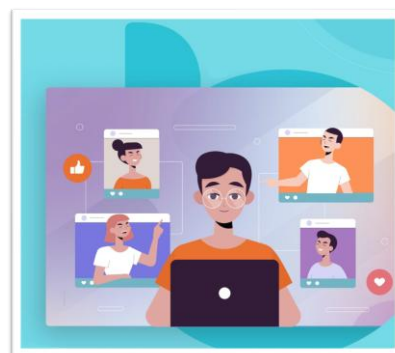
32

Mapping online opportunities

Many people who spend most of their time at home connect with others online, often gaming.

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

Autism Friendly Surrey will research and compile a list of supported online opportunities that may be of interest to autistic / neurodivergent people.



33

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 plan to go through this and produce a signposting handout for East Surrey on the most relevant.

[Connect to support - travel](#)



34

Burview Hall Open Day

Elmbridge mencap have a resource centre in Walton-on-Thames.

They run a variety of activities for people with a learning disability and/or autism, including a day service, youth club, cinema night and family fun days



The centre has a games room, two sensory rooms and outdoor space including a sensory garden and woodland. This could be a good venue for a 'safe space' for very isolated people as different rooms can be hired.

[Elmbridge mencap](#)

35

Burview Hall

The Open Afternoon will take place on Weds 12th August. 1pm to 2.30pm is adult only and 2.30pm to 4pm is for families.

This may be of interest to individuals who are isolated and anxious.

We have planned the afternoon carefully, making sure it's not too busy and there are things for people to do on arrival and whilst they are there.

[Elmbridge mencap](#)



36

Burview Hall

There are a wide range of activities including:

- Sensory rooms
- Pets as Therapy
- Gamers Lounge
- Arts and Crafts
- Gentle Yoga
- Music sessions
- Board Games

info@elmbridgemencap.org.uk

Elmbridge mencap **Autism in Surrey**
 Autistic people improve the lives of everyone around them

EXPLORE ELMBRIDGE MENCAP

Wednesday 12 August 2026

A welcome afternoon at Burview Hall. Come and discover our fantastic space and the support available through Elmbridge Mencap.

Join us for a relaxed afternoon to explore Burview Hall, meet the teams from Elmbridge Mencap and Autism Friendly Surrey, and find out more about the services and support available locally. Explore at your own pace – join an activity if you'd like to, discover our facilities, or simply relax with a cup of tea and some cake. Optional activities include gentle yoga, arts and crafts, our games lounge and meeting our Pets as Therapy animals.

1:00pm – 2:30pm
Adults only
 A calm welcome session
 A quieter opportunity for adults to:

- Explore our sensory rooms and facilities
- Take a relaxed tour of Burview Hall
- Meet the teams and ask questions about the services
- Take part or join in our activities

2:30pm – 4:00pm
Family Session
 Families and children welcome
 An opportunity to see the building and enjoy:

- Arts and crafts
- Music and activities
- Pets as Therapy, 3–4pm
- Explore the sensory garden
- Refreshments and time to chat

What you can expect:

- ✓ A welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment
- ✓ Quiet spaces available throughout the afternoon
- ✓ No pressure to join activities
- ✓ Stay for as little or as long as you like

Booking is required
 To book your place please email:
info@elmbridgemencap.org.uk