

Autism Friendly Surrey



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Autism by Experience CIC



We are a not-for-profit Community Interest Company called Autism by Experience CIC.

www.autismbyexperience.co.uk

We have 13 paid staff, most of whom are autistic and we took over the lead role in the Autism Friendly Communities project in April 2025.

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Our facebook Group

We are uploading information from the mapping we are doing onto our facebook group which we've recently set up.



We have collated this information by area e.g. Frimley / North-West Surrey. These are word documents for now, but we are exploring more accessible ways of sharing this information.

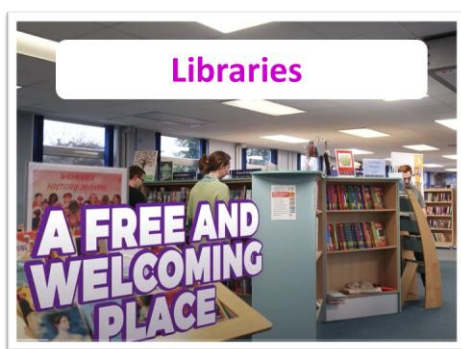
We are also on [Instagram](#) as Autism Friendly Surrey and a recent post attracted over 2000 views



3

Mapping activities across Surrey

From May to July we have continued to map Quiet Hours and inclusive activities for both adults and children across Surrey.



We are collating information about a wide range of venues and activities.

We are making contact with venues and activities and have started visiting them.

We can offer venues training on autism/neurodivergence and support to create visual stories.

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Dorking Sports Centre

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



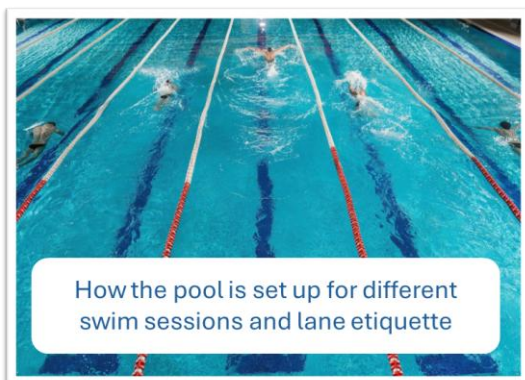
We plan to work with them on a visual story to help people to prepare for a visit.

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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Dorking Sports Centre

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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Dorking Sports Centre

Dorking Sports Centre are keen to support more autistic and neurodivergent customers to use the centre.



They currently offer an Inclusive swim, with reduced capacity on:

- Fridays – 10.30am to 11.30am
- Mondays – 1pm to 2pm

We discussed offering guided tours and taster sessions for activities in the future.

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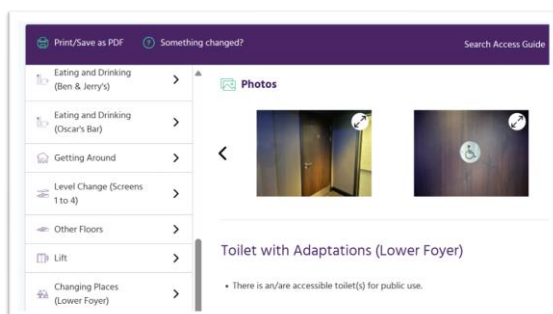
AccessAble website



AccessAble
Your Accessibility Guide

The new name for DisabledGo

We have discovered a really useful website called AccessAble.



You can search for a venue such as a cinema, hospital, theatre or leisure centre and see written information and photos that explain the venue's accessibility

[AccessAble](https://www.accessable.org/)

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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.

Epsom Library now has Super Access – those signed up can use the library seven days a week from 8am to 8pm, even when it's unstaffed.

[Find your local library](#)

[Super Access at Surrey Libraries](#)

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Include.org

The Include team are committed to creating a world where no-one is excluded because of communication needs.



The thing that makes Include unique is that the charity offers social, learning and therapeutic opportunities to everyone. No matter the origin or type of communication need.

We don't exclusively work with people who have learning disabilities or just those with dementia - we recognise people's strengths and similarities and work across communities.

[Include](#)

[Download the Include brochure](#)

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Dorking Walking Festival

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



[Dorking Walking Festival](#)

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

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Surrey Hills Wellfest

Surrey Hills Wellfest took place in East Horsley on Sunday 27th July

It was a great event and very inclusive for autistic and neurodivergent people.

We got to know the organisers and plan to work with them to develop some supported stewarding roles for autistic people for next year's event.

Join us at

Surrey Hills Wellfest

Sunday 27th July 2025 - 10am to 4pm

De Vere Horsley Estate, Ockham Road South, East Horsley, Surrey, KT24 6DT

Autism by Experience
Community Interest Company

The Surrey Hills Wellfest organisers are working hard to make the event inclusive for autistic and neurodivergent children and adults.

Gill and Mike from The Autism by Experience team will be there to greet anyone who wants to come along but may be anxious.

We will be based around the information tent.

Gill and Mike will be wearing T-shirts with our logo on and have ear defenders and sensory toys for people to use.

If you'd like to come along but need a bit of support, either turn up on the day and find us, or email us in advance.

Tickets to the event cost £5 for the day and you can book online or pay on the day.

Details about the event including travel and inclusive activities can be found on their website www.surreyhillswellfest.org

AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk

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RecoveryFest

The Recovery College will be hosting its annual RecoveryFest on Wednesday 6 August 2025, from 1pm to 4pm.

This year, the event will take place at Stoke Park, located off Nightingale Road, Guildford, GU1 1ER. Entry is free and no need to book.

The annual RecoveryFest is all about bringing people together, to raise awareness of local mental health and wellbeing support and to create space for meaningful connections across the community.

[RecoveryFest](#)



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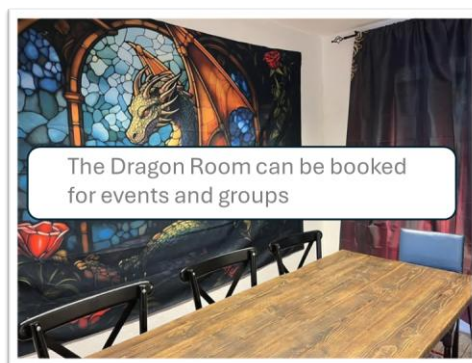
Game n Play - Dorking

Game n Play opened on Sunday 13th July 2025. Come and play board games in the shop on 280 Dorking High Street, or buy a ukulele.

- Mondays closed.
- Tuesday to Thursday 10am to 9pm
- Friday and Saturday 10am to 10pm
- Sunday 10am to 4pm

Come and visit us for fun, frolics, music, gaming, drinks, snacks and more. Everyone will be welcome to come along!

[Game n Play](#)



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Barclays bank

Barclays bank launched their national roll out of their Quiet Hours on 7th July 2025.

We have worked with Richard Burrows from Barclays in Redhill to help set this up and are really excited to see it launch.



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Men's Pit Stop

Men's Pit Stop is where men can come together to foster a supportive community, enabling them to navigate life's complexities and challenges.

It is a space for mutual assistance, understanding, and positive change, helping men to rediscover their strength through peer-to-peer support.

Men's Pit Stop support groups meet weekly across several towns in Surrey and groups are supported by trained facilitators.

[Men's Pit Stop](#)



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Our goals for July to September 25

We have set ourselves targets to achieve by the end September 2025



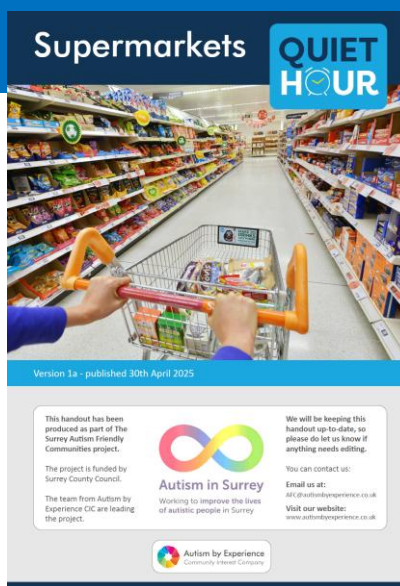
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1. Collate our mapping

We plan to create a series of themed booklets on different types of venues and activities, highlighting details of their inclusive offers.

By the end of September 25 our target is to create booklets focused on:

- Libraries
- Games shops and café's
- Cinemas and theatres
- Leisure centres
- Social and support groups



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2. Launch the website

We have purchased the domain www.autismfriendlysurrey.org.uk

By the end of September 25 our target is to launch this website, which will:

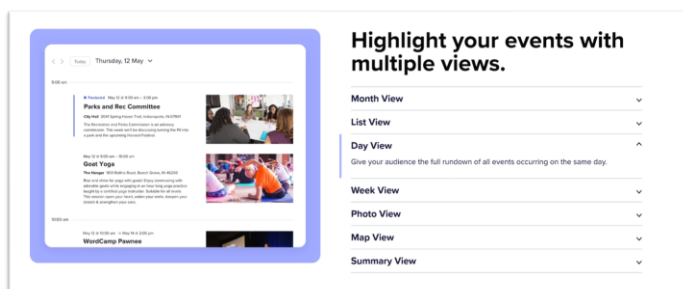
- Host the themed booklets we're designing
- Host the presentations and notes from our Autism Friendly Communities meetings
- Host a blog we will use to keep people updated in between meetings



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3. Pilot an events calendar

We have researched into calendar apps and think that [The Events Calendar app](#) is the best suited to our needs



This won't be ready to launch at the end of September 2025, but we aim to have started piloting it.

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3. Re-organise these groups



We are planning to merge our five Autism Friendly Community Groups into two groups. The main reasons for this are:

- Current meetings are all held during office hours which can be difficult for autistic adults and family carers who work
- The meetings can be repetitive as we are often sharing similar information at each meeting



**MERGE
AHEAD**

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3. Re-organise these groups

The two groups will be West Surrey and East Surrey.

West Surrey

This will combine the current North West Surrey, Guildford and Waverley and Frimley Groups.

East Surrey

This will combine the current East Surrey and Surrey Downs Groups.

We will simply merge our current mailing lists – no-one will need to sign up again. The meetings will be 2hrs long to allow time for us to focus on each area.

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3. Re-organise these groups

Both the West Surrey and East Surrey groups will meet every other month, but once in office hours and again in an evening.

West Surrey

Tuesday 19th August – 10am to 12noon
And
Thursday 21st August – 7pm to 9pm

East Surrey

Tuesday 16th September – 10am to 12noon
And
Thursday 11th September – 7pm to 9pm

This will mean people have a choice of the daytime and evening group, and people would only need to come to one meeting in the month.

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4. Have 'taster sessions' to promote

We will work with venues to offer 'taster sessions' for autistic / neurodivergent children and adults.



Visiting a new venue and trying a new activity for the first time can feel daunting.

Our team are keen to support people and can arrange taster sessions which we can meet people at the venue to look around and support them to try an activity out.

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5. Visual stories

We are offering support for venues wanting to develop visual stories.

By the end of September 2025, we plan to have published visual stories for:

- Guildford Spectrum Leisure Centre
- Surrey Libraries for both 'joining your library' and the 'induction for Super Access'
- Waythrough Community Connection services
- Dorking Sports Centre

The
Lightbox

Guide for visitors with Sensory Needs

This guide is designed to give you all the information you will need to plan your visit to The Lightbox.

Before you arrive

- Read our accessibility guide: <https://www.accessibilityguides.org/content/lightbox>
- Come for a pre-visit – if you buy a Membership on this visit you can then re-use it anytime you come back within the year.
- Look through this guide so you know what to expect when you arrive.



Recommended times to visit.

The quietest time to visit is on weekdays or weekends after 3.00pm. If you are visiting at the weekend or during school holidays then our busiest time is in the middle of the day from 12.00pm – 2.00pm.

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6. Community Safety Guide

We are working with young people to design an easy-to-read guide to staying safe in the community.

Staying safe when:

- Using buses and trains
- Using social media
- Meeting new people



Our target is to publish this booklet by end September 2025

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7. Publish our training offer

We are developing our ideas for autism / neurodivergence training for venues in local communities and aim to publish this by end September 2025.



Our current thinking is to advertise training sessions targeted at venues offering similar services.

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7. Publish our training offer

We are planning to offer three different levels of training for people working in different services and venues.



Level 1 – two different dates

A 1.5hr workshop aimed at people working in places that **people pop in and out of** such as café's, shops, supermarkets and pubs

Level 2 – two different dates

A 2.5hr workshop aimed at people working in places that **people may spend a few hours in** such as libraries, leisure centres, theatres, soft play and gaming café's

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7. Publish our training offer

We are planning to offer three different levels of training for people working in different services and venues.



Level 3 – 4 different dates (two for adults and two for children)

A 4hr online workshop aimed at people working for community organisations where they offer supported activities and social groups

We will run a workshop for people supporting children and people supporting adults

Likely people to come to these are community connection services, social and support groups and places like Green Hub, Pit Stop and Steps Forward

We also plan to offer a further two workshops aimed at employers

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8. Develop Peer Networks

We ran some online meetings for autistic adults in July 2025. The aim was to get autistic people views on developing peer networks.

We will be setting up a facebook group open to all parents in Surrey who are autistic – mums and dads.

We will be setting up monthly evening support group meetings for 'autistic mums' starting in early September 2025.

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



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 group is for parents who are autistic to connect, share information and provide mutual support.

You can join if you are an autistic and a mum or dad (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



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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Support and social groups

We are keen to support the further development of social and support groups for autistic adults in Surrey.



There are existing groups that meet regularly.

- Some of these groups are funded and supported
- Some groups are run by members themselves and unsupported – we plan to support these

By the end of September 2025, we plan to have met with all these groups and will publish a list with detailed information about them.

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People who are very isolated

We are keen to focus time on considering those children and adults who may be **very isolated**. 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 are keen to further discuss what we may be able to do to connect with these people and families.

Some of the Autism by Experience team are meeting in August to discuss this with the aim of setting up a wider meeting for interested people in September.

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