

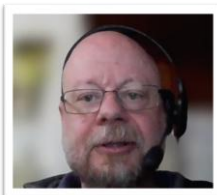
Autism Friendly Surrey



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Our team

Matt, Beth and Mike will be the team members from Autism by Experience working across the Surrey Downs area.

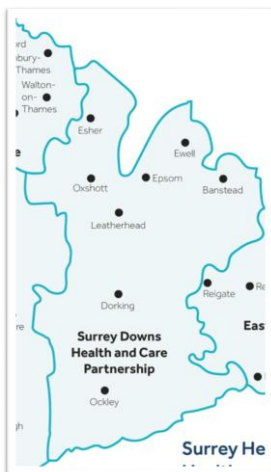


Contact us using AFC@autismbyexperience.co.uk



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The Surrey Downs area



The main towns located within the Surrey Downs area include:

- Esher
- Banstead
- Leatherhead
- Dorking
- Epsom
- Ockley

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Our plan for 2025 to 2026

Our aims for this project are:

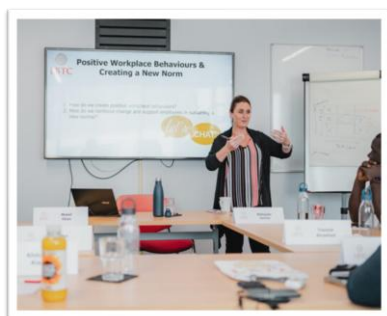
- Map out the quiet hours and inclusive activities for autistic and neurodivergent children and adults across Surrey and make this information more accessible
- Encourage new activities / groups to be set up, and further develop networks for autistic adults, and for families supporting autistic children
- Support venues to develop visual stories and offer training for their staff on autism and neurodivergence



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Our training offer

We will be delivering 10 training workshops for shops, businesses and services across Surrey – this will be 2 workshops in each of the 5 areas.



We are planning to start promoting the training workshops during August 2025 to start in the autumn

- Some workshops will be online, others in-person
- We will promote these to services and businesses aiming to encourage managers to join
- We will cover a wide range of topics including helpful adjustments and approaches

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Facebook Group

Jo has been working hard setting up a facebook group for Autism Friendly Communities across Surrey



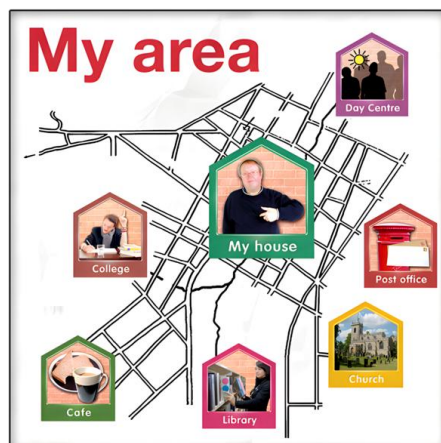
We plan to launch this group in June 2025. It will be for anyone interested in helping to make communities more autism friendly.

It will be a moderated group and we are currently finalising the rules and our approach to moderation.

We are also planning to promote our work on other social media platforms.

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Mapping Surrey Downs



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Accessible Screenings

Accessible Screenings UK is the first ever comprehensive and searchable listings database for accessible screenings in UK cinemas.



[Accessible Screenings UK](https://www.accessible-screenings.co.uk)

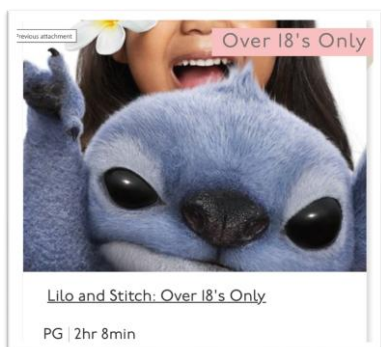
These include:

- Subtitled (ST) / Opened Captioned or OC)
- Audio described (AD),
- Autism Friendly Screenings (AF)
- Dementia Friendly Screenings (DF)..

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Accessible Screenings

Different autistic people find different types of cinema showings meet their needs:



For example:

- Relaxed performances often appeal to families as children moving around and making noise is tolerated
- Many adults simply choose to go to the cinema to see a standard performance at quieter times
- Some cinemas even have over 18's showings of animated films

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Silvermere Soft Play - Dorking



[SEN Exclusive Sessions](#)

**Tuesdays - fortnightly during term time
at 15.30 - 17.00**

- Reduced capacity - 1 carer per child goes free
- Quieter environment and music - Zen den
- Weighted blankets and noise cancelling headphones

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Hobbledown - Epsom

What's on

Off peak (Monday – Friday)

9:30am – 10:30am: Exclusive use of the play barn for SEND bookings.

10:30am – 11:30am: Quiet time – Exclusive use of the Imaginarium for SEND bookings.

11:45am – 12:15pm: SEND guided tour around our animal walkthroughs.

12:15pm: Lunchtime collection and able to eat in the tepee or party rooms – Exclusive to SEND bookings.

1:15pm – 2:00pm: SEND animal workshop drop-in with the animal team.

Peak (Saturday and Sunday)

9:00am – 10:00am: Exclusive use of the play barn for SEND bookings.

10:00am – 11:00am: Quiet time – Exclusive use of the Imaginarium for SEND bookings.

11:15am – 11:45am: SEND guided tour around our animal walkthroughs.

12pm: Lunchtime collection

1:10pm – 1:45pm: SEND animal workshop drop-in with the animal team.

Hobbledown offered a week of activities aimed at children with additional needs and disabilities.

- We believe this was in March 2025, and we are planning to contact them for more information.
- Free carers tickets are also offered at all times

[Hobbledown World Autism Acceptance](#)

Patchwork Gardening Project

Celebrating ten years of the

Patchworking Garden Project

HOME WHAT WE DO WHO WE ARE EVENTS



WELCOME

The Garden

We are a social horticultural project established in 2014 in a walled garden on the outskirts of Dorking and in the lee of Box Hill.

Run entirely by volunteers we offer gardening, crafting and the opportunity to learn new skills in a safe and friendly space for those living with a physical or mental health condition, learning disability or a challenging life situation.

[Patchwork Gardening Project](#)

Surrey Hills Wellfest – Sunday 27th July



Surrey Hills Wellfest is Neurodivergent friendly

Every Wellfest element can be adapted to accommodate any one with additional needs. It's in East Horsley.

They have also brought together a panel of experts to curate a program of experiences, talks and activities specifically for the neurodiverse and their families.

We will also have a sensory sanctuary for any of our guests who find themselves overwhelmed.

[Surrey Hills Wellfest](http://www.surreyhillswellfest.org)

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Guilfest 2025 – 5/6 July 2025



Guilfest offers supported stewarding opportunities, that we try to tailor to individuals needs.

Supported stewards often bring a supporter (staff or family) and work together for up to 4 hours during the afternoon – litter picking and staffing entrances and exits. People get a crew meal and free access to the festival after their shift.

Email Mike Leat at stewards@guilfest.co.uk for information about Supported Stewarding

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Visual stories



We have worked with Kung Fu & Tai Chi Academy in Epsom to create a visual story for their Junior Autistic Exercise Class

[Junior Autistic Exercise Class](#)

This is the door to the studio. This is the door to the toilet.

We want you to feel happy and safe

If you need a break, or some quiet time, you can go to our kitchen. We have colouring pens and paper in there.

You can tell Jasmine if you are worried, or you need a break. She will look after you.

Information for parents and carers

- We will be limiting the number of children to eight so everyone has plenty of space
- Each class will cost £15
- We will put on more classes if there is the demand for them
- There's plenty of free parking outside the Academy
- There is a bar/café just across the road where you can go for a drink while you wait

For more information please contact Neil and Jasmine:

- kungfutaichi@hotmail.co.uk
- 07971 069615
- www.kungfutaichi.co.uk

This visual story was designed by Autism by Experience CIC
www.autismbyexperience.co.uk

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Surrey Libraries – Super Access



LIBRARY

Super Access in Surrey libraries - Extended opening hours

Watch on YouTube

Meet with friends or join a social group.

Providing residents with extra hours of additional access

Surrey Libraries are installing new technology which provides longer and more convenient opening times for residents, extended opening hours which are in addition to the existing staffed hours.

Surrey Libraries are installing new technology which provides longer and more convenient opening times for residents, extended opening hours which are in addition to the existing staffed hours.

Libraries offering this include Dorking.

We are meeting library managers this month to discuss create a visual stories to guide people through signing up for Super Access and using it.

[Surrey Libraries – Extended opening hours](#)

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Gyms and Leisure Centres



With Fallon's help we have begun mapping what gyms and leisure centres offer in the Surrey Downs area.

We will continue this work and have this as an agenda item at our August meeting.

We want to promote quiet times, visual stories and inclusive sessions. We want to promote the benefits of exercise for autistic/neurodivergent people, as well as awareness of and strategies for compulsive exercise.

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Developing Peer Networks



This is all about connecting autistic and neurodivergent people across Surrey

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Networks for families

The [National Autistic Society Surrey Branch](#) offer support groups for families, a bi-monthly newsletter and moderated email forum.

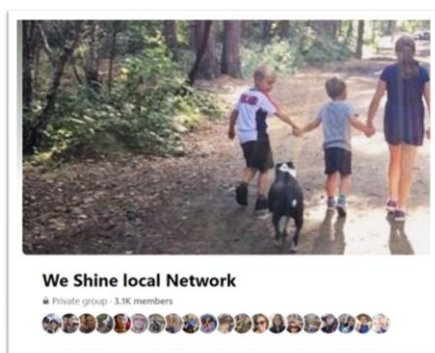
The Surrey Branch is run by families and also has a helpline.



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Networks for families

We Shine Local Network is a private Facebook group (content can only be viewed by members).



- The group has over 3000 members and is run by parent carers.
- It is an online network of parents and carers who have children with SEND (diagnosed or not).
- It provides a safe space to seek support as well as to network and find local groups and resources.

[We Shine Facebook group](#)

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Groups for young people

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.

[WAVES Sessions](#)

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YMCA

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](#)

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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Adult support and social groups

The National Autistic Society (separate to The Surrey Branch) run funded support groups for adults



- Godalming Women's Group (adults - once a month every third Saturday afternoon)
- Guildford Aspire (adults – once a month on a Thursday evening)
- All Surrey virtual social group (adults - Last Friday evening of each month)

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Adult support and social groups

Mary Frances Trust offer a range of activities and peer support groups, including two groups specifically aimed at autistic adults.



Inspiring Mental Wellbeing

One in four people will experience some kind of mental health issue in the course of a year. It can affect people of all ages and backgrounds. We support adults (16+) living in Surrey through a variety of services.

- Monday 9.30am -10.30am - SEN Parent Peer Support. In person in Leatherhead.
- Monday 10am -12noon - Autism Support Group. In person in Epsom
- Monday 7pm -8.30pm - Autism Peer Support. Online using Zoom.

[Calendar of activities](#)

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Autistic Peer Network

We are planning some evening meetings for autistic adults on our mailing list to discuss how we could help further develop an autistic adult peer network.



Facilitating meet ups at inclusive activities we're mapping?



Helping people to connect online and in-person through shared interests



A Facebook group for autistic and neurodivergent people in Surrey?

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Autistic Peer Network

We will be advertising the following online meetings for autistic adults in early June 2025. We will also have an online survey for people not able to join the meetings.

Autistic Adults Peer Network Consultation evenings:

- Tuesday 24th June 2025 – 7pm to 8.30pm
- Thursday 10th July 2025 – 7pm to 8.30pm

Autistic Parents Peer Network Consultation evening:

- Tuesday 1st July 2025 – 7pm to 8.30pm



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Staying safe in the community

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

