

LEEDS AUTISM AIM NEWS

June 2015 | The monthly newsletter for Leeds Autism AIM

Leeds Autism AIM is a service providing Advocacy, Information and Mentoring to autistic adults in the Leeds area. We provide:

- The Autism Hub, a weekly drop-in service held every Tuesday for info groups and peer support. It starts from 1.30pm, ending at 7pm at the Lovell Park Hub, Wintoun Street, Leeds LS7 1DA
- Information through the Autism Leeds directory - autismleeds.org.uk - as well as email and phone support
- We have a group of mentors with specialist training to meet regularly and help overcome barriers in order to reach personal goals



WHO HAVE WE HELPED SO FAR?



Since the creation of Leeds Autism AIM in November last year, we have supported over 150 people across all areas of the project. Now we have completed our pilot of the project, we have received some continuation funding from the Autism Partnership board.

AUTISM HUB SUCCESS

The Leeds Autism Hub, which was set up on 13th January and has been held every Tuesday since. There, 92 people have visited, with an average of 15 attendees per week.

So far, 50 people have received information or advice from peers/advocates or a specialist from the Citizens' Advice Bureau, with more receiving it informally. 35 have attended one of our groups for women, cooking, relaxation and employment.

In the future, we are developing links with other services to increase our employment support. We're also looking at creating more effective groups in areas such as social skills and anxiety management.

MENTORING MATCHES

On the mentoring side of things, we now have 14 mentors in total (two of which are currently in training). We have made 11 matches, while eight people are on the mentoring waiting list.

Meanwhile, five of those eight people have had initial mentoring assessments and will receive help when more mentors are fully-trained.

We have supported people in issues like employment, education, benefits, isolation, access to services and coping strategies.

INFO AND SIGNPOSTING

A big part of the Leeds Autism AIM service has been information and signposting. We have run the Autism Leeds Directory - www.autismleeds.org.uk - since last summer and have helped to point autistic people and carers towards relevant info through it. The site currently gets over 600 visits per month, hosting news, documents and lists of services for autistic people in Leeds.

55 people have been helped directly through Leeds Autism AIM, receiving signposting towards relevant services by phone and email.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

We have had plenty of positive feedback about what we have done so far.

One being mentored said: "It feels like when you fall in a canal and are drowning and someone throws you a life belt."

About the Hub, an attendee said: "It helps with my confidence and enables me to spend time in a relaxed environment where I can choose to socialise or sit in a quiet room if things get too much."

"I think the Hub is a valuable asset and as someone who receives no other support, I would take backward steps without it".

Speaking about the whole service, one parent said: "Above all, it has given him hope from a point of total despair."

We are open to suggestions for how we can improve. If you have any ideas, email leedsautismaim@leedsadvocacy.org.uk.

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SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PUT ON IN JUNE

One of the things we always like to do at the Hub is something fun to help make the timetable a little more varied.

With that in mind, the steering committee and regular visitors have suggested showing more films and putting on a wider range of games and social activities.

We already have a couple of games ready, but we would also like to develop a social evening once a month.

We're open to more ideas for games and monthly social activities. If you have any, please speak to Luke or Wendy at the Hub or contact us via our social media sites.

RELAXATION SESSION NOW PERMANENT

Following a successful trial last month, the Relaxation and Meditation workshop at the Autism Hub will be held on a monthly basis. Held by Hub volunteer Paul Lewis, half a dozen turned up to learn how to relax in stressful situations.

Paul took everyone attending the session through different ways of unwinding when the stresses and strains of daily life become too much for us.

To come along to Paul's next session, visit the Autism Hub on Tuesday 16th June at 5.30pm. All are welcome to attend, while the session is likely to finish before 6.45pm.

CONNECT WITH US ON OUR TWITTER PAGE!

Leeds Autism AIM has had a Twitter account since mid-January, but after some initial teething problems, we're ready to connect with you.

If you're interested in what we do at the Autism Hub, would like to be a mentor or want some advice on all things autistic, all you need to do is give us a follow.

You can find and follow us at twitter.com/leedsautismAIM, where we'll update you on goings on at the Autism Hub and elsewhere in Leeds.

If you follow us, we promise to follow you back right away!

AUTISM NEWS IN BRIEF

LAS EXHIBITION PICTURE PERFECT

This August, Leeds Autism Services (LAS) are to host a picture exhibition at the Leeds Corn Exchange throughout the month to help raise funds and awareness.

The images on show are from LAS' donors, but they are looking for keen amateur and professional photographers to contribute their works.

If you're a photographer and want to share some of your best pictures, all you need to do is get in touch with LAS through this webpage - <http://www.las.uk.net/news/charity-photo-exhibition> and email Karl Wilson at karl.wilson@las.uk.net.

SURVEY ON OPINIONS OF AUTISM IN MEDIA

As part of a plan to work out how autistic people, their friends, relatives and professionals feel, a new survey has been released relating to autism and the media.

The poll asks those taking part whether they feel that autistic people and their issues are covered positively or negatively in print, TV, film, radio and online.

It also asks for suggestions on how media portrayals of autistic people can improve. A link to the survey can be found at <http://www.autismleeds.org.uk/how-do-you-feel-about-media-coverage-autistic-people/>. It only has eight questions.

LAA TO HOST BIG SUMMER FUNDRAISER

Leeds Asperger Adults (LAA) are to host the first of their fundraising events for 2015 this August. All money raised will go towards the charity's running costs as well as funding new public events and other initiatives.

LAA are hoping that the event will be the first of many to help keep them in the public eye, offering fun as well as insight into what it means to have Asperger's.

This will be the first event LAA will hold since December's Start of a Dream, which raised something in the region of £200 for the group.

JUNE 2015: TIMETABLE OF WORKSHOPS AT THE HUB

DATE	2.30PM TO 3.30PM	3.30PM TO 5PM	5.30PM to 6.45PM
TUE JUNE 02	COOKING LESSONS	GAMES/QUIZZES/ART	LEEDS ASPERGER ADULTS MEETING AT LEEDS CIVIC HALL - 6.45PM
TUE JUNE 09	INFO/CAB AS USUAL	GAMES/QUIZZES/ART	EMPLOYMENT PEER SUPPORT
TUE JUNE 16	COOKING LESSONS	ACTIVITIES	MEDITATION/RELAXATION
TUE JUNE 23	WOMEN'S SUPPORT GRP.	ACTIVITIES	FILM EVENING
TUE JUNE 30	COOKING LESSONS	GAMES/QUIZZES/ART	SOCIAL (PROVISIONAL)

GET IN TOUCH WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Facebook: facebook.com/pages/leedsautismaim
- Twitter: twitter.com/leedsautismAIM