

# LEEDS AUTISM AIM NEWS

The quarterly newsletter for Leeds Autism AIM | Winter 2016/17



Leeds Autism AIM is a service providing Advocacy, Information and Mentoring to autistic adults in the Leeds area that get little or no funded support. We provide:

- The Lovell Park and Vale Circles Autism Hubs. Lovell is open every Tuesday from 1.30pm to 7pm and Vale every Thursday from 2pm to 7pm
- Info through the Autism Leeds directory, [autismleeds.org.uk](http://autismleeds.org.uk), as well as email/phone support
- We have a group of mentors with specialist training who work can meet autistic adults regularly one to one to help overcome barriers in order to reach their goals

## AIM-ing forward for next year

Leeds Autism AIM has secured further funding to run its existing services. The Leeds North CCG are continuing to support all our existing work in providing our information and signposting services.

### Continuation

This involves our drop-in service at Lovell Park, as well as information given about local autism services, online and offline.

We would like to thank the people at Leeds North CCG for giving us their support and will provide the best possible free service for autistic adults in the local area.

### Evaluation

In other recent news, an evaluation of our service was provided by Leeds Beckett University. Carried out by Dr Kris Southby, it gave a lot of positive feedback about us from volunteers and people who use the service.

One person who used our service said in the evaluation: "I've been able



Leeds Autism AIM's stall at an employment event last summer

to speak to people who know about that stuff in a confidential and supportive environment...I've got the support I need."

Another quote read like this: "When you go into the mountains to... and you go to seek somebody with all the answers that you want, a bearded person... that is what Autism AIM is."

### Happy New Year

Following an eventful 2016, we would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year.

We're looking forward to seeing and hearing from you all in 2017. whether you use the service, volunteer with us or work with us.

## AUTISM EVENT DATE/SPEAKERS CONFIRMED

**#BiggerAndBetterInLeeds**, a major annual event in Leeds celebrating World Autism Awareness Day, is back for 2017.

Next year's event will take place at the Leeds Civic Hall on **Monday 3rd April** from **9.30am to 3pm** and, once again, will be free to enter.

For 2017, there are two guest speakers. Autism campaigner Anna Kennedy OBE will discuss her work in setting up schools and residential homes, whilst author and autistic activist Janine Booth talks about autism and employment.

There will be over 20 different stalls at the event, offering information on autism-specific services throughout the Leeds area.

Most of the local autism services will be there, including Leeds Autism Services, Specialist Autism Services and Leeds Autism AIM.

To find out more information about **#BiggerAndBetterInLeeds**, you can visit their newly-built website, which is at [biggerandbetterinleeds.org](http://biggerandbetterinleeds.org). You will find plenty of information on how to get there, the speakers and previous events.

“**Advonet**  
Providing independent advocacy  
& related support”

Leeds Autism AIM is part of Advonet, a charity which provides a range of advocacy services throughout Leeds. Find out more at [advonet.org.uk](http://advonet.org.uk)

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## CARERS-DROP IN AT VALE

There is now a new monthly drop-in service for carers and parents of autistic adults at the Vale Circles Autism Hub.

Run by Carers Leeds, it will take place on the second Thursday of every month from 5pm to 6.30pm. There's also spaces for our young people's group that runs every fortnight from 4.30pm and 6.30pm.

For more info, please email us at [leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk](mailto:leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk) and we'll be in touch soon.

## CAB CAN HELP WITH PIP

Ian from the Chapeltown Citizens Advice Bureau can help you with many issues, including the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP). PIP is set to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA); everyone getting DLA has to reapply.

If you get DLA but aren't sure about what to do when applying for PIP, Ian can help. He's at the Lovell and Vale drop-ins every session the day. To book an appointment, please email [leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk](mailto:leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk).

## 2017 MENTORING TRAINING

We have recently trained up seven new volunteer mentors. They are now available to be matched with anyone looking for a mentor.

Our next mentoring training session will take place on **Saturday 28th January**.

If you would like to become a volunteer mentor or want a mentor to help to set and achieve life goals, please send an email to Flora at [flora.harvey@advonet.org.uk](mailto:flora.harvey@advonet.org.uk) with your details..

## AUTISM NEWS IN BRIEF

### DOCUMENTARY CASTING

Makers of the hit BBC documentary, *Employable Me*, are looking for people to take part in the new series. Optomen have released information on their website, looking for autistic adults who have a high level of academic achievement.

The series has helped autistic adults who have struggled to get into employment with finding a job. It received rave reviews when broadcast.

To find out more or register your interest, visit [optomen.com/casting](http://optomen.com/casting) and send them a message.

### EMPLOYMENT PETITION

Recent research by the National Autistic Society revealed that just 16% of autistic adults are in full-time, paid employment. On the back of this stat, the charity have launched a petition to help stop the gap in employment opportunities.

It has had over 12,000 signatures so far and, after reaching a certain number, will then be sent over to the government. It should play a role in helping more autistic people to get into work.

To sign the petition yourself, please visit [bit.ly/autism-employment-gap](http://bit.ly/autism-employment-gap).

### SAF COMPLETED FOR LEEDS

Leeds' Self Assessment Framework (SAF), detailing how Leeds is doing with autistic adults, is now complete and available to see.

Leeds has continued to make good progress in many areas and is now collecting views on how to build on this. The new Autism Strategy for Leeds is being completed, with the aim to launch it by March next year.

There have been lots of consultations and a draft has been completed. If you would like to have a copy of the SAF, please email Helen Gee at [helen.gee@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:helen.gee@leeds.gov.uk).

## HUBS AT XMAS

During the busy Christmas period, both of our drop-in services will be affected.

The Lovell Autism Hub will be closed on Tuesday 27th December, as it's a Bank Holiday.

The Vale Autism Hub will be open at normal times during Christmas. However, reduced services will be on offer on Thursday 29th December.

## SPECIALIST DROP-IN



We have Janet from the Leeds Autism Diagnostic Service (LADS) Team available at Vale monthly and Frances available at Lovell monthly for consultation support. Please get in

touch if you would like to book a time to see them for advice on specific problems relating to autism. It is open to autistic adults or any carers or professionals that support them.

**GET IN TOUCH:  
ONLINE  
SOCIAL  
EMAIL  
PHONE**

**Website:** [autismleeds.org.uk](http://autismleeds.org.uk)  
**Facebook:** [facebook.com/leedsautismaim](https://facebook.com/leedsautismaim)  
**Twitter:** [twitter.com/leedsautismAIM](https://twitter.com/leedsautismAIM)  
**Email:** [leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk](mailto:leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk)  
**Telephone:** 0113 244 0606  
**Mobile:** 0758 157 1380