

Autism Monthly News Round-up

August 2026

22nd edition

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Sign up now! If you would like to receive an alert to the monthly autism newsletter please email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk with subject Autism News and indicate if you would like the alert by WhatsApp or Email. (If you are an existing member of the ARAG you do not need to take any action)

Disclaimer: The information in this communication is intended to support autistic people to find out what is happening locally and nationally that may be relevant to them. Newham Council does not

endorse any information in this communication and anyone accessing any of this information, including events or activities, should do so at their own risk.

If you have anything autism related you would like to share, please email:
autism.commissioning@newham.gov

About this newsletter

This newsletter has been researched and developed by a local resident volunteer in partnership with Newham's Autism Commissioning Team. We are incredibly grateful for the time, care and dedication they have invested in bringing together information, events, support and opportunities for our autism community.

Their commitment has helped create a resource that keeps autistic residents, families and carers informed, connected and supported. ❤️



LOCAL

1	August Focus: Autism During the Holidays
	For many people, holidays are a time to relax, travel and spend time with family and friends. However, for many autistic people, holiday periods can also bring uncertainty, sensory overload and changes to familiar routines. While holidays can be enjoyable, a little preparation can make them more comfortable and inclusive. Why Holidays Can Feel Challenging Many autistic people rely on predictable routines to feel calm, safe and in control. During the holidays, everyday schedules often change—there may be travel, family gatherings, different meal and sleep times, unfamiliar places and increased social expectations. These changes, combined with busy environments, can lead to anxiety, sensory overload or fatigue. Planning ahead can help reduce stress and make celebrations more enjoyable. Managing Sensory Overload Holiday celebrations can involve loud music, bright lights, crowded venues and strong smells, all of which may be overwhelming. Some strategies that can help include: • Carrying sensory aids such as noise-cancelling headphones, sunglasses or fidget tools. • Identifying a quiet space where you can take a break if needed. • Attending events during quieter times where possible. • Taking regular breaks to recharge before becoming overwhelmed.

Remember that stepping away from a busy environment is a positive form of self-care, not something to feel guilty about.

Keeping Familiar Routines

Although holiday schedules are often different, maintaining a few key routines can provide a sense of stability.

Consider keeping consistent:

- Meal and snack times where possible.
- Bedtime and morning routines.
- Daily quiet time or favourite calming activities.
- Familiar hobbies or interests throughout the break.

Visual calendars, checklists or daily schedules can also help people understand what to expect. If plans are changing, discussing them in advance or using photos and visual support can make unfamiliar situations feel more predictable.

Making Celebrations More Inclusive

Small adjustments can help autistic people feel welcome and included during holiday events.

Family members, friends and event organisers can:

- Share plans or schedules ahead of time.
- Provide access to a quiet, low-sensory space.
- Be understanding if someone needs regular breaks or chooses to leave early.
- Respect different communication styles and sensory preferences.
- Remember that participation looks different for everyone.

Inclusive celebrations aren't about expecting everyone to join in the same way—they're about creating an environment where everyone feels comfortable participating in a way that suits them.

Holiday Survival Tips

For autistic individuals:

- Pack a comfort kit with sensory items, headphones, snacks or favourite objects.
- Plan an exit strategy before attending busy events.
- Give yourself permission to decline invitations or leave early if needed.
- Schedule downtime between activities to rest and recharge.

For families and carers:

- Talk through holiday plans in advance and prepare for any changes in routine.

	• Keep expectations flexible and avoid trying to fit too many activities into one day. • Celebrate in ways that work for your family rather than aiming for the "perfect" holiday. • Remember that every autistic person has different needs, preferences and ways of celebrating. Remember... A successful holiday isn't measured by how many events you attend or traditions you follow. It's about creating experiences where everyone feels safe, respected and able to enjoy the season in their own way. With thoughtful planning, flexibility and understanding, holidays can be both enjoyable and inclusive for autistic people and their families.
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2	In The Community
a	Peer to Peer Support Groups
i.	Carers of Autistic Adults Peer Support Group
	Drop In, First Monday of every month, East Ham, Central Park Café, inside the park, near Bartle Avenue E6. Sophie the Cafe Manager will be able to direct you to the reserved meeting spot. Following session:  Date: Monday, 7 September  Time: 11am - 12:30pm  Location: Central Park Cafe Join our WhatsApp group to chat and ask questions. To join the group, please complete this form. For information on the next group meeting, please contact: carersautisticresidentsnewham@gmail.com  Free 
ii.	Mental Health Peer Support Group
	A peer support group hosted every second Monday of the month, by VoiceAbility for autistic residents to offer support to each other around mental health. It will be a safe space to create connections, share tips and helpful services. Following session:  Date: Monday, 10 August  Time: 12:30pm - 2pm  Location: The Resource Centre, 200 Chargeable Lane, E13 8DW

	Email: SpeakOutNewham@voiceability.org Telephone: 0300 303 1660 Website: www.voiceability.org ♥ Free 
iii.	Beckton Friendship Club Social group for autistic residents and residents with a learning disability that gathers every second Saturday of the month. Next group session: 📅 Date: Saturday, 8 August 🕒 Time: 2pm – 3:30pm 📍 Location: Beckton Globe Library 1 Kingsford Way, London E6 5JQ To attend email shamilla.kumari@newham.gov.uk ♥ Free 
iv	Late Diagnosed Peer-to-Peer Support Group At this meeting you can expect to meet other local late diagnosed autistic people; unmask and share your experiences, hear from other like-minded autistic people, gain some advice and practical support to help navigate life post-diagnosis. Date: Tuesdays (dates and times below) Time: 6pm – 7pm Location: on-line To access this group please fill in the Late Diagnosed Autism Group – Registration Form, you will be sent a link to join the meeting. • Tuesday 11 & 25 August • Tuesday 8 & 22 Sept • Tuesday 6 & 20 Oct • Tuesday 3 & 17 Nov • Tuesday 1 & 15 Dec, 6-7pm ♥ Free

V	Workplace Coaching for Autistic Individuals An online course designed to help autistic adults in Newham build confident, healthy working relationships. You will learn clear communication tools, ways to manage misunderstandings, strategies for difficult conversations, and how to navigate workplace expectations while minimising masking and burnout. It will be a supportive and confidential space to grow skills, share ideas, and feel more confident at work. You can find more information by watching the video here You can register for the group by completing the online form here. If you are not currently in work but interested in joining this course please complete the form and you will be placed on a waiting list.  Free
vi	Staging a Musical Show Join a welcoming, inclusive in-person performance group designed specifically for autistic adults. These relaxed and friendly sessions use creative arts to help build confidence, communication, and social skills in a supportive environment Date: Thursdays (dates and times below) Time: 1pm Location: Beckton Globe, 1 Kingsford Way, London More information can be found here: You can register for the group by completing the online form here. • Thursday 10 & 24 September • Thursday 8 & 22 October • Thursday 5 & 19 November • Thursday 3 & 17 December • Until 20 May 2027  Free
vii	The Pineapple Project The Pineapple Project is a creative wellbeing community initiative supporting autistic adults with mental health challenges through art, creativity, friendship, wellbeing and community connection. The project creates safe, welcoming and sensory-aware spaces where people can express themselves, build confidence and feel a sense of belonging.

	Using creative activities such as 3D modelling, sculpture, silk fabric printing, gratitude art, exhibitions and group creative workshops, The Pineapple Project encourages participants to connect with others, reduce isolation and celebrate their individuality in a positive and inclusive environment. To register for this group please email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk with the subject line: Pineapple The first session will start in September 2026, participants who register will be notified in September.  Free
viii	Building Everyday Living Skills: A Group for Autistic Young People Are you looking for peer support to develop practical everyday living skills in a safe and understanding environment? If you are an autistic young person aged 18–25 and want to connect with others, share experiences, and support one another, please let us know. We are exploring the possibility of setting up a regular peer support group. If this is something you feel would benefit you, we would love to hear from you. Topics may include managing money and bills, running a household, and accessing local services such as GP surgeries, dentists, MH and other community support. Or it could be anything else that you would like it to be that you shape to gain the support you need. Please register your interest by email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk with the subject line: Autistic YP (18–25) Group  Free

b	Community Hub
i.	Welcome to the New East London Recovery College
	The East London Recovery College is a newly formed Recovery College covering Newham, City and Hackney and Tower Hamlets as we move to a more centralised model. The Recovery College is an NHS service that runs FREE educational workshops and courses. These are designed and delivered by people who have lived experience of mental and physical health challenges, together with people who work in health, care and community services. We call this co-production. We're excited to introduce our very first prospectus, bringing together everything you need to know in one place. It offers an overview of our courses, highlights additional services, and includes useful details about our venue as well

	as answers to common questions. It's the perfect starting point to explore how we can support you. Summer Prospectus 2026  Free To enrol onto the courses, click onto the link below and create an account, click the 'BOOK NOW' link on the top navigation bar to book onto sessions. East London Recovery College - Home
ii.	East London Recovery College - Young Adult Social The East London Recovery College runs a free weekly Young Adult Social group specifically for ages 18 and over who are navigating mental health and life recovery. There is no need to register – just turn up on the day. Join the next session on  Date: Every Wednesday  Time: 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM  Location: 86 Old Montague Street, London, E1 5NN  Free 
c	Community Campaign: In Our Hands – Small Changes, Big Difference  Healthy Eating and Autism: Small Steps That Work for You Healthy eating looks different for everyone. For many autistic people, food choices can be influenced by sensory sensitivities, routines, anxiety or conditions such as Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID). This means that eating a limited range of foods doesn't always reflect a lack of interest in healthy eating - it may be linked to how food feels, smells, tastes or is experienced. Making changes to eating habits is often easier when overall wellbeing and mental health are supported first. Reducing stress, respecting sensory needs and introducing changes gradually can help people build a healthier relationship with food over time. Support should focus on understanding the reasons behind eating patterns, rather than encouraging people to simply "eat differently." The Eat Well Newham campaign offers practical tips to help families make small, manageable changes towards healthier eating. While every autistic person has different needs, the campaign includes ideas that can be adapted to suit individual preferences and routines. If you or someone you support is experiencing significant anxiety around food, is eating only a very limited range of foods, or you think they may have an eating

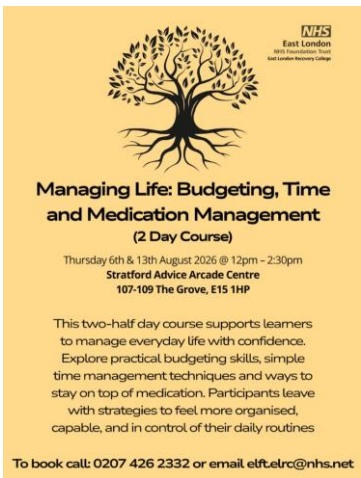
	disorder or ARFID, it's important to seek advice from your GP or another healthcare professional. Early support can make a real difference. 🚦 Explore healthy eating tips and resources: Eat Well Newham Healthy eating is in our hands: Healthy swaps Healthy eating is in our hands: Carer's story Healthy eating is in our hands: Portion sizes Together, we can support healthier choices and show that healthy eating is in our hands. If you have any questions, please contact: ✉️ PHHealth.Promotion@newham.gov.uk ✉️ WellNewham@newham.gov.uk
d	Autism Friendly Hair Care in Newham Getting a haircut can be a challenging experience for some autistic people due to sensory sensitivities, unfamiliar environments or changes to routine. A new autism-friendly hairdressing service is being trialled in Newham to help autistic adults and young people access a more comfortable and supportive hairdressing experience. The service will be based at 📍 200 Chargeable Lane, Plaistow, London, E13 8DW and will be led by Mercy, a hair professional with 14 years of experience in hair care. Mercy is passionate about supporting people with sensory hair needs and creating a more positive haircut experience. If you or your child are autistic, you are invited to try the service and book an appointment. Introductory offer: 15% off bookings until 27 August To book an appointment, please complete the booking form. For more information, contact: ✉️ Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk To book an appointment, please fill in this form.



3	Advocacy and Support Surgeries
a	<u>VoiceAbility Advocacy</u> Independent Advocacy Support for Autistic Residents every second Monday of the month.  Date: Monday, 10 August  Time: 2:30pm – 4pm  Location: The Resource Centre, 200 Chargeable Lane E18 8DW Advocacy support is by appointment only, you can self refer here: VoiceAbility Make a referral Email: SpeakOutNewham@voiceability.org Telephone: 0300 303 1660 Website: www.voiceability.org 
b	Open Support Surgeries for Autistic Residents Do you need to speak with a senior health or care professional? Open Support Surgeries for Autistic Residents takes place every third Friday of the month. Tony Pape, Autism Adults Team Leader (SAIL Team) will be available this month plus a second professional tbc. Book an in-person or online 30min slot at the next Open surgery on 21 August to have your concerns heard. To book a slot you must be a local autistic resident, priority will be given to ARAG members. Please email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk to book a slot.

4	Share Your Story
a	Newham Carers Strategy Survey
	Newham Council is refreshing its Carers Strategy and is inviting unpaid carers across the borough to share their experiences and help shape future support and services. The survey aims to understand what matters most to carers in Newham, the challenges they face, and the changes that could make the biggest difference to their wellbeing and quality of life. Whether you provide care for a family member, friend, neighbour or someone else in your community, your views are important. Your feedback will help ensure the refreshed strategy reflects the experiences and priorities of local carers. The survey responses will remain confidential. The survey has 8 sections and should take around 8 minutes to complete. The closing date is Sunday 16 August 2026 Have your say and help shape the future of support for carers of autistic people in Newham. Link to the survey 
b	Newham's Supported Accommodation Survey
	Newham Council is asking residents to share their views on the future of supported accommodation in the borough. Your feedback will help shape how supported accommodation develops in Newham and ensure future services reflect the needs and experiences of local residents. It is especially important that the voices of autistic residents are included in this conversation. The survey is available in different formats, including Easy Read and Plain Text versions, to make it accessible for everyone. 👉 Complete the survey: Supported Accommodation Strategy Survey 👉 Easy Read version: Supported Accommodation Survey - Easy Read

5	Local Media
a	Autism Hour NuSound Radio Radio show: Last Friday of every month 12pm-1pm autism slot. Tune in to hear guest speakers discuss autism. If you can't listen live, recordings of some previous Autism Hour programmes are available in the Radio interviews archive. 
6	Courses and Training
a	Get Ready with Octopus Energy Interested in the energy industry? Want to get a feel of what it is like to work in an environment like Octopus Energy and hear from industry professionals? Then this may be the programme for you. This one week programme gives you a real insight into the industry and the various different career pathways. You'll visit Octopus Energy headquarters and learn about electricals, plumbing and low carbon heating and gain access to panel events where you can ask the experts all the questions you like about what a career in energy looks like and how to start that journey. You will also receive support to enhance your CV and interview skills, and get support from our friendly team every step of the way. Course dates: 24 Aug- 28 Aug 26 Ages: 18 -30 Sign up here: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=aAtwVheHd02CavK-NeA3_0kzxhKelitNmrDBatkIxzHUMUtXUzIFQUpZQzkzQ1JUWIY0SkxVS1YzUC4u&route=shorturl&dm_i=7LPB,2VJDM,RI874,7476B,1,0,0,0

b	Managing Life: Budgeting, Time & Medication Management
	Looking for practical tips to help you stay organised in everyday life? East London Recovery College is running a free two-day "Managing Life" course designed to help participants build confidence in managing daily routines. The course covers practical budgeting skills, simple time management techniques and strategies for staying on top of medication, helping you feel more organised and in control.  Dates: Thursday 6 August and 13 August 2026  Time: 12:00pm – 2:30pm  Location: Stratford Advice Arcade, 107–109 The Grove, London E15 1HP If you'd like to book a place or find out more, call 020 7426 2332 or email East London Recovery College. 

NATIONAL

1	Neurodiverse resources & information
a	University of Cambridge Receives \$34.5 Million for Autism Research
	The University of Cambridge has received a gift of US\$34.5 million from the philanthropist K. Lisa Yang to fund autism research and care. This is the largest single philanthropic gift to its School of Clinical Medicine since the school was formed in 1976, and one of the largest ever made for autism research to a UK university. The donation will be split: \$28 million will create the K. Lisa Yang Centre for Autism Research at Cambridge, while \$6.5 million will fund the K. Lisa Yang Autism Clinical Centre, to be based in the new Cambridge Children's Hospital. This is expected to be constructed by 2030. Read more here: https://fundraising.co.uk/2026/07/17/university-of-cambridge-receives-34-5-million-for-autism-research/
b	GPs 'Under Pressure' to Diagnose Autism and ADHD for Benefit Entitlement, Report Finds
	GPs are 'coming under pressure' to diagnose conditions such as autism and ADHD that lead to benefit entitlement, despite disbelieving that these diagnoses 'fairly reflect or will solve children's difficulties', a new report has argued. Three quarters of GPs believe clinical diagnoses for autism or ADHD are 'given out too easily' where behavioural interventions 'would be more appropriate', according to a poll of 1,000 GPs carried out by the Centre for Social Justice.

	And 57% believe 'financial entitlements linked to autism or ADHD diagnoses strongly influence parental requests for assessment'. The report said: 'GPs are, again, coming under pressure to diagnose conditions that lead both to benefit entitlement and education, health and care (EHCP) and special educational needs (SEN) plans, despite disbelieving themselves that these diagnoses fairly reflect or will solve children's difficulties.' Read more here: https://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/news/clinical-areas/paediatrics/gps-under-pressure-to-diagnose-autism-and-adhd-for-benefit-entitlement-report-finds/ If you'd like to share your thoughts on this topic, please email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk
c	Stereotypes of Autism in TV and Film May be Linked to Delayed Diagnosis, Stirling Study Finds Stereotypes of autistic men in films and TV programmes may contribute to delayed diagnosis of autistic women and non-binary people, a new University of Stirling study has found. Research conducted by a group of autistic and non-autistic researchers and led by Sarah Dantas of the University's Faculty of Natural Sciences, has found that women and non-binary people may experience delayed diagnosis because dominant images of autism in the media don't match their own experiences. The study showed that portrayals in the media lacked diversity, often focusing on white, socially awkward, mathematically gifted male characters such as Sheldon Cooper in The Big Bang Theory and Raymond Babbitt in Rain Man. Read more here: https://www.stir.ac.uk/news/2026/may-2026-news/stereotypes-of-autism-in-tv-and-film-may-be-linked-to-delayed-diagnosis-stirling-study-finds/
d	What Do Autistic People Want from Health Services? Everyone should be able to access healthcare that understands and supports their needs. However, many autistic people continue to experience barriers when accessing health services, from communication difficulties to environments that do not consider sensory needs. A recent Healthwatch report explored the experiences of autistic people and highlighted four key areas where change is needed: 1. Better Understanding of Autistic Needs Many autistic people shared that healthcare staff do not always recognise or understand their individual needs. Differences in communication, processing information or expressing distress can sometimes be misunderstood, leading to people feeling unheard or unsupported.

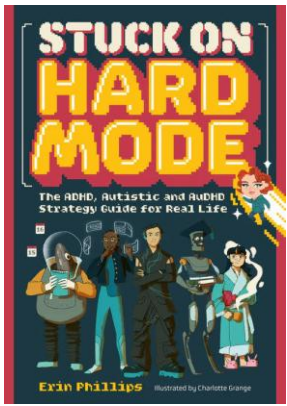
	Greater autism awareness among healthcare professionals can help ensure autistic people receive care that is respectful, understanding and person-centred. 2. More Accessible Appointments and Environments Healthcare settings can sometimes feel overwhelming due to factors such as noise, bright lighting, busy waiting rooms or unexpected changes. Autistic people highlighted the importance of adjustments such as clearer information, quieter spaces, more time to process information and flexibility around communication methods. 3. Consistent Reasonable Adjustments Small adjustments can make a big difference, but many autistic people reported having to repeatedly explain their needs across different services. Consistent use of reasonable adjustments can help make healthcare experiences less stressful and more accessible. 4. Autism-Informed Mental Health Support Many autistic people experience challenges accessing mental health support that understands the relationship between autism and wellbeing. People highlighted the need for services that recognise autism as part of a person's overall experience, rather than treating it separately from their mental health. How Can We Create Better Healthcare Experiences? Listening to autistic people's experiences is an important step towards creating more inclusive health services. Simple changes—such as providing clear information, adapting communication styles and creating calmer environments—can help autistic people feel safer and more supported when accessing care. Healthwatch's findings highlight the importance of ensuring autistic voices are included in conversations about the future of healthcare. Read the full article here: https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/blog/2026-07-08/what-do-autistic-people-want-health-services?utm_source=ACTIVE+-+202108170+Updated+News+and+alerts+list&utm_campaign=c82b781365-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_20260708_AUTISM_PUBLIC&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f0f81f8d0e-eadfe5ebec-247130326&mc_cid=c82b781365&mc_eid=7aa70d8ef2  Shared by a local autistic resident
e	Research Spotlight: Exploring Long-Term Outcomes in Autism
	A recent study explored long-term outcomes for individuals diagnosed with autism in childhood, looking at changes in autism characteristics, social functioning, and the role of family relationships and parental wellbeing.

	Researchers followed 64 individuals seven years after their initial diagnosis to understand factors linked with autism outcomes. The findings highlighted the important connection between autism characteristics, social skills, parental mental health, empathy and the quality of parent–child relationships. The study suggests that supportive relationships, parental wellbeing and understanding of individual needs can play an important role in supporting autistic people’s development and quality of life over time. Read more here: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/eip.70186
f	Children’s Mental Health: Key Takeaways from the Annual Briefing The Children’s Commissioner’s Annual Briefing on Children’s Mental Health Services 2024–25 highlights the growing need to ensure children and young people can access the right support at the right time. The report looks at children’s experiences of mental health services, demand for support and areas where improvements are needed. Some key takeaways include:  More children are seeking mental health support The number of children being referred to mental health services has continued to rise, with over 1 million children having an active referral in 2024–25. This shows the increasing level of need among children and young people across England.  Many children are still waiting for help While more children are receiving support, demand continues to grow faster than services can respond. Long waits can mean children and families do not receive help when they need it most.  Listening to children’s voices matters The report highlights the importance of involving children and young people in decisions about their care. Understanding their experiences helps services provide support that is more responsive and personalised.  Support should focus on early help and wellbeing The briefing calls for a stronger focus on early support, reducing barriers to accessing help and recognising that children should not have to reach crisis point before receiving support.  Supporting children’s mental health is a shared responsibility Families, schools, communities and services all play an important role in creating environments where children feel understood, supported and able to thrive. Read the full briefing: https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2026/06/Childrens-Mental-Health-Annual-Briefing-24-25.pdf

2	Share Your Views
a	Share Your Voice: Autistica Network Survey
	As part of the new CEO's first few months, Autistica has launched a short survey to better understand what matters most to members of the Autistica Network. Your feedback will help shape the organisation's future priorities and ensure they continue to reflect the needs and experiences of the autistic community, alongside their existing 2030 goals. This is an ongoing survey that will only take a few minutes to complete, and every response will help inform Autistica's future work. Link to the survey
b	Research Opportunity: Take Part in an Autism and Hearing Study
	A postgraduate student at the UCL Ear Institute is recruiting autistic adults to take part in a research study exploring how autistic people perceive and process different sounds. You may be eligible if you: • Are aged 18–40 • Have a formal autism diagnosis • Do not have hearing problems If you choose to participate, you'll be invited to the UCL Ear Institute (near King's Cross) for a single session lasting approximately 2.5 hours (up to a maximum of 3 hours). During the visit, you'll listen to a range of sounds and complete simple listening tasks, while researchers record your brain activity using a safe and non-invasive electroencephalography (EEG) headset. Participants will receive £25 in gift vouchers (£10 per hour) as a thank you for taking part. If you're interested in contributing to autism research and would like to learn more, please get in touch with Reem Badghaish: reem.badghaish.24@ucl.ac.uk.
c	Share Your Voice: The Autism and Ageing Project
	The Autism and Ageing Project is exploring what it means to grow older as an autistic person. The project aims to better understand the experiences, challenges and strengths of autistic adults across different stages of life, helping to build knowledge that can improve future support, services and awareness for the autistic community. As at May 2026 they have 60 active participants : • 32 aged 50-59 • 22 aged 60-69 • 6 aged 70+

	If you're aged 50 and over and are interested in sharing your experiences or learning more about the project, you can find further information and opportunities to get involved on the project website. The deadline for the survey is 30 September 2026. Link to the survey Find out more: The Autism and Ageing Project 
d	Research Opportunity: Help Improve Care After a Suicide Attempt A researcher from the University of East Anglia and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust is developing a study to better understand the care people receive after surviving a suicide attempt, including which types of support may help reduce the likelihood of future attempts. The study will combine anonymised NHS records with interviews from people who have experienced this type of care. Before the research begins, the team is inviting people with lived experience to help shape the study by sharing their views on what should be measured, what aspects of care matter most, and how the research should be explained in clear and accessible language. Who can take part? The team is looking for: • Adults aged 18+ • People with lived experience of a suicide attempt and the care (or lack of care) received afterwards • People from all backgrounds - no previous research experience is needed What is involved? Participants will take part in a 60–90 minute conversation between August and mid-September 2026. Sessions can take place online via Zoom or Microsoft Teams, or in person in Cambridgeshire. The conversation will be relaxed and open-ended. Participants can choose what they do and do not wish to discuss, and questions will be shared in advance. The session will follow a trauma-informed approach, with support information available. Participants will be paid £27.50 per hour, with reasonable travel expenses covered for in-person sessions. The expected total commitment is around two hours. If you have lived experience and would like to help shape future research and support, you can express your interest by contacting the research team. Deadline to express interest: Friday 21 August 2026, 5pm Contact: 

	Dr Punita Panchal, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust / University of East Anglia — Punita.Panchal@cpft.nhs.uk
e	Research Opportunity: Help Shape Research About Communicating Unusual Mental Experiences A trainee clinical psychologist at the University of East London is developing a qualitative research project exploring what it is like for people to communicate unusual mental experiences, such as hearing voices or experiencing hallucinations, with therapists. The researcher wants to better understand how people describe these experiences, what it feels like to put distressing or unusual mental imagery into words, and how conversations with therapists can support understanding and care. The team is looking for people to take part in a consultation to help shape the research project, including the research questions, design and important considerations for the study. Who can take part? The team is looking for people who: • Are aged 16 or above • Have experience of unusual mental imagery, such as hearing voices or hallucinations • Have experience of receiving mental health treatment or therapy related to these experiences No research experience is needed. What is involved? Participants will take part in a one-hour conversation with the researcher during July or August 2026. The session can take place online or in person, depending on what is most convenient. During the consultation, participants will be invited to share their views on: • The value and focus of the research • The research questions being considered • The study design and any important factors the researcher should consider Participants will receive £27.50 in shopping tokens as a thank you for their time. Contact If you would like to share your experiences and help shape future research, please contact Isabel Sutton at the University of East London u2071660@uel.ac.uk

	Sessions will take place during July and August 2026, with timings arranged to suit participants. Shared by a local autistic resident
3	Book Spotlight: The Neurodivergent Friendly Strategy Guide to Life A fun, practical guide designed to help autistic, ADHD and AuDHD people navigate everyday life. Using a gaming-inspired approach, the book shares strategies for managing daily tasks, burnout, relationships and self-understanding — helping readers create a “play style” that works for them. It is available from the publisher in paperback at Stuck on Hard Mode Jessica Kingsley Publishers - UK, in multiple formats at Amazon or as an audiobook on Spotify. Shared by a local autistic resident 

Things to Do	
LOCAL	
a	Discover Children’s Story Centre – Stratford Mighty Mega is one of London’s most established SEND programmes for children. Designed for disabled children and children with SEND aged 5–11, these relaxed sessions combine storytelling, arts and crafts, LEGO, creative workshops and sensory-friendly activities. The sessions are intentionally flexible: ● children can arrive late or leave early ● breaks are encouraged ● children can join activities at their own pace ● siblings are welcome  Date: Saturdays until 29 August 2026  Time: 10:30am - 12pm  Location: Grassroots Children’s Centre, West Ham, E15 3DB, Newham Workshop places are limited and can be booked from the week before by emailing bookings@discover.org.uk or call 020 8536 5555  Free
b	Therapeutic Gardening at Cody Dock

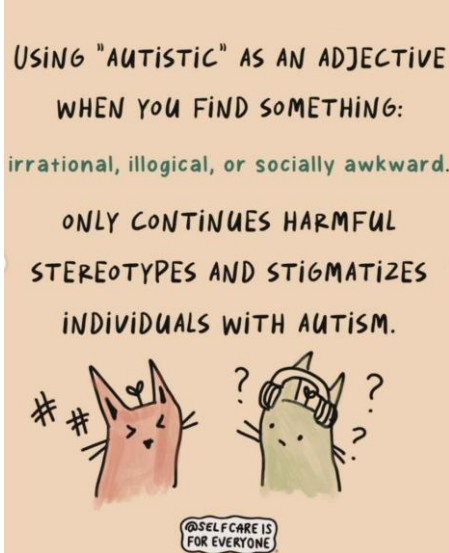
	Looking for a relaxing way to connect with nature and improve your wellbeing? Cody Dock's Therapeutic Gardening Programme offers free weekly 2.5-hour gardening sessions in a peaceful outdoor setting. Open to anyone aged 16 and over, the six-week programme is designed to support mental and physical wellbeing through gardening, creative activities and connecting with others. No previous gardening experience is needed - just an interest in spending time outdoors. Participants are provided with all the tools, gloves, materials and guidance they need. Interested? You can refer yourself directly, there's no need for a professional referral. Visit the sign-up page to find out more and register for the next available programme. Sign up here: https://tfaforms.com/5072139 ♥ Free	
c	Discover - Story Street x LEGO Group Throughout August, Discover hosts a month of LEGO-inspired creativity, including building, storytelling, crafts, music, yoga and imaginative play. The programme has been developed with input from Discover's Mighty Mega SEND Club, helping make activities more welcoming for neurodivergent children and families. 📅 Date: 1-31 August 2026 📍 Location: Discover Children's Story Centre, E15 4QZ, Newham Book your spot here: https://discover.org.uk/who-we-are/childrens-forum/childrens-forum-and-story-street-x-the-lego-group/	
d	Toy Story 5: Bonnie's Playtime The Experience - Sensory Sessions Westfield Stratford City is hosting a free Toy Story 5 exclusive interactive kids experience. The experience has been designed for children aged 4 years and over, and some activities are recommended for this age group only. Younger children are welcome to attend with their family; however, certain activities may require parental assistance or may not be suitable for younger participants. Book your free slot here: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/toy-story-5-bonnies-playtime-the-experience-sensory-sessions-tickets-1992570428791?aff=ebdssbdestsearch ♥ Free	

NATIONAL	
a	Babylon Park: London's Underground Theme Park London's first-ever underground theme park is packed with exciting rides, awesome arcade games, and the city's only indoor rollercoaster. It's fun for all ages. Get your tickets today to enjoy unlimited access to 2 floors of epic rides and arcade games. https://feverup.com/m/309703?utm_source=direct&cp_smn_source=secretldn&cp_smn_content=london-things-to-do-august-2026&cp_smn_term=listicle_module_buy_button&suid=7970f1e4-eedc-43c6-93fb-6f118ef24359  Dates and Times: select your date & time directly in the ticket selector  Opening Hours: Monday–Friday & Sunday: 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.  Location: Babylon Park, Camden, London 
b	Wired Different: Your Brain and Music Wired Different is a lived experience, pioneering sober, underground music-led social engagement designed specifically for neurodiverse communities in London. It's not a therapy session, a support group, or a conventional music programme. It's a house party - reimagined as a health intervention.  Date: Tuesday, 18 August  Time: 6:30pm - 10pm  Location: 33's The Old Grocery Store London, 33 Salisbury Road London N4 1JY, Haringay Get your tickets here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wired-different-your-brain-and-music-tickets-1994012095856?aff=ebdglgoogleliveevents
c	Kids Week 2026 Looking for an affordable family day out this summer? Kids Week 2026 is back, giving families the chance to enjoy some of London's biggest theatre shows at a reduced cost. During the promotion, one child (aged 17 and under) goes free with every full-paying adult, and up to two additional children can attend for half price. There are no booking fees, making it a great opportunity to experience West End theatre together. Running 20 July to 31 August, more than 50 productions are taking part, including family favourites such as <i>Wicked</i>, <i>The Gruffalo</i>, <i>Bluey's Big Play</i>, <i>Matilda The Musical</i> and <i>The Play That Goes Wrong</i>. Many participating shows also offer free workshops,

	interactive activities or post-show curtain calls, giving children an even more engaging theatre experience. Find out more here: https://officiallondontheatre.com/kids-week/
d	Kids Eat Free This Summer  Looking for an affordable family meal out during the summer holidays? Until 1 September, children can enjoy a free meal with every adult main course purchased at participating Big Table Group restaurants across the UK, including Bella Italia, Frankie & Benny's, Banana Tree, Las Iguanas and Chiquito. The offer is available every day throughout the summer holidays, making it a great way for families to enjoy a meal together for less. The offer gives children a complete meal, including a main course, sides, dessert and drink (menu inclusions vary slightly by brand). The age limit for kids to eat free at The Big Table Group restaurants varies slightly by specific chain, but generally targets children aged 11 and younger. Check first. Read more here: https://www.mylondon.news/whats-on/food-drink-news/restaurant-group-over-200-venues-34338133
d	Great British Summer Savings Scheme - Butterfly Farm at Stratford-upon-Avon Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm is taking part in the Government's Great British Summer Savings scheme. Running from 25 June - 1 September, families can enjoy fantastic savings on a visit to the Butterfly Farm, making it easier to spend quality time together. Whether you're planning a family adventure or a fun-filled day out, now's the time to discover the wonder of tropical butterflies in our unique rainforest setting. Click here for summer bookings: https://butterflyfarm.digitickets.co.uk/event-tickets/78445?catID=73648& 
e	Everyman on the Canal Whether you want to enjoy a romantic date night or curl up in front of a family favourite film, they have something every day to delight and entertain.

	August screenings here: https://www.kingscross.co.uk/media/KINGS-X-programme-2026-72-dpi-updated-w2-digital-posters-.jpg ♥ Free 
f	Children's Walk for Gaza This family-friendly walk brings children and families together to take purposeful steps in support of children and families facing humanitarian hardship in Gaza. Together, you can raise vital funds to support emergency aid for those in urgent need. 📅 Date: Saturday, 22 August 🕒 Time: 11am - 1pm 📍 Location: Wandle Park, Croydon 📄 Fundraising Target: £100 per child  Reserve your free spot here: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/childrens-walk-for-gaza-in-croydon-wandle-park-tickets-1988302869406?aff=ebdssbdestsearch Please note This walk is not political in nature. It is a peaceful, community-led initiative focused solely on raising funds to support children and families in humanitarian need through essential aid such as food, clean water, medical care, and shelter. You will be added to a WhatsApp group for communication, and a giving page will be set up so you can share the link with your family and friends to help raise vital funds supporting families in Gaza. ♥ Free

Social Media

	Instagram
a	 View the full post here: https://www.instagram.com/p/DWuEULcmoo2/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==
b	 View the full post here: https://www.instagram.com/p/DYhc4iXoUva/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

YouTube	
c	The Innate Loneliness of Being Autistic & How We Can Create Sustainable Friendships  View the full video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSeOr_7JSyl
Podcast	
d	Audio sitcom for autistic people launched  An audio sitcom about members of an autism support group who acquire magic powers is being released online. The eight-part It's A Superpower?? has been created by Sara Gibbs, the co-editor of The Daily Tism, the satirical news platform "by and for autistic people". Join the website free to listen to the episodes: https://www.patreon.com/TheDailyTism