



Autism: News, Research &

Community Updates

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September 2026 - 23rd edition

Editor's Note

Welcome to our **September edition** of the autism newsletter.

September often brings change, whether that's returning to familiar routines, starting something new, or adjusting after the summer months. With that in mind, this edition focuses on **transitions and new beginnings**, offering information and practical tips to help make those changes a little easier.

You may notice our newsletter has a fresh new look. We've updated the format to make it easier to navigate and to create more space for stories, opportunities and community updates.

We're also introducing new ways for you to get involved, including our **Community Spotlight**, where autistic people can share their employment journeys, and **Celebrating Our Community's Achievements**, a new section recognising successes, inspiring people and positive initiatives across our community.

In this edition, you'll also find information about community safety sessions with the Met Police, opportunities to share your views, local support groups, research projects, and events taking place in Newham and across London.

We'd love to hear your feedback on the new format and any ideas for future editions. As always, we hope this newsletter helps you feel informed, connected and supported.

Wishing you a positive September! 🌞

Warm regards,

Newham Autism Commissioning Team and guest editor

Pratyusha, Newham Volunteer.....

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.

Connect: If you have any autism-related information you would like to share, or feedback on the new-style newsletter, please email autism.commissioning@newham.gov.uk

READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE

About the Guest Editor

This newsletter has been brought together 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 the autism community.

Their commitment has helped the Newham Autism Team to continue to offer a resource that keeps autistic residents, families and carers informed, connected and supported. ❤️

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1. What's New This Month in Newham?

NEWHAM FESTIVAL OF STORIES 2026

 12–15 November 2026



Got a story to share? Newham Festival of Stories is looking to showcase the amazing events and activities already happening across the borough.

Are you an organisation, community group, charity, school, artist, creative or local resident planning something between 12 and 15 November? If your event celebrates the people, places, cultures, histories and experiences that make Newham unique, it could be featured as part of the festival.

✦ What could you submit?

- Workshops
- Exhibitions
- Performances
- Talks
- Community gatherings
- Storytelling projects
- Heritage activities — and more!

✉ Want to be involved?

Send:

-  Event title and short description
-  Date, time and location
-  Ticket price and booking information
-  Contact details
-  An image (optional)

📅 Deadline: 1 October 2026

Send your event details to: library.activities@newham.gov.uk

Please note: activities must be free or low-cost to be included in the festival programme.



Community Safety Information Sessions

Learn how to stay safe, recognise risks and get support

We will soon be hosting a series of community information sessions with the **Met Police**, covering a range of important safety issues.

These sessions are being organised to help autistic people better understand potential risks they may encounter in the community, learn how to stay safe and know where to go for help and support.

Topics will include:

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) / Violence Against Women and Men

Understanding violence and abuse, recognising the signs and knowing where to seek help.

Good Relationships, Healthy Boundaries and Mate Crime

Learning about healthy relationships, personal boundaries and how to recognise when someone may be taking advantage of you.

Fraud, Banking and Cashpoint Safety

Tips on protecting yourself from scams, fraud and financial exploitation, including staying safe when using banks and cash machines.

Online Safety

Understanding how to stay safe online, recognise potential risks and protect your personal information.

Hate Crime and Asking the Police for Help

Learning about hate crime, your rights and how to approach or ask the police for support when you need it.

Interested in attending?

The sessions will be open to members of the community. Dates and registration details will be

shared with those who register their interest.

✉ To register your interest, please email: Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk

We encourage autistic residents, as well as families, carers and anyone who feels these sessions may be helpful, to get involved.

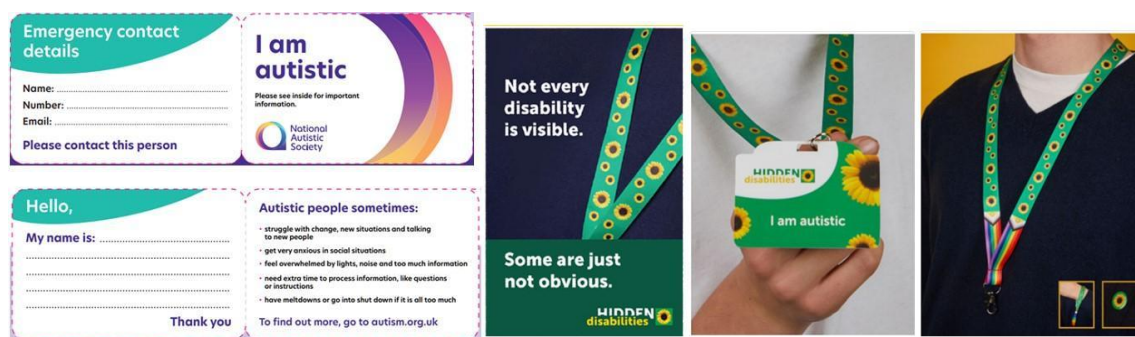
🧠 Autism Accessories & Communication Aids Available in Newham

Newham Council highlights four key communication and support tools designed to help autistic residents navigate daily life, access public spaces, and communicate needs to healthcare or emergency professionals:

- **Sunflower Lanyard:** An internationally recognized symbol for hidden disabilities, signaling to staff in public spaces that you may need extra time, help, or understanding.
- **NAS Autism Pin:** A colorful spectrum logo badge from the National Autistic Society to raise awareness, show support, or indicate that you are autistic.
- **Autism Alert Card:** A personal ID card designed to help emergency services and organizations quickly identify that they are supporting an autistic individual.
- **Autism Health Passport:** A practical tool to help autistic individuals communicate specific needs, preferences, and adjustments directly to doctors, nurses, and social care staff.

How to collect yours: These items will shortly be available directly through local Newham libraries.

You can also read full details on the [Newham Council Autism Support Tools page](#).



Funding Available: £1,000 Grants for Autism-Led Activities in Newham

Newham Council is offering micro-grants of up to £1,000 to encourage autistic residents across the borough to lead and run peer-to-peer activities, events, or hobby groups. Designed to help build a vibrant local autistic community, this funding supports initiatives that bring like-minded people together in fun, supportive environments.

- **Grant Amount:** Up to £1,000 per application.
- **Deadlines:** Applications are reviewed monthly and must be received by the 15th of each month (funding rounds continue monthly until all funds are allocated).

- **How to Apply:** You can view the [Grant Application Guide](#) and complete the [Small Grants Funding Application](#) directly online.
- **Support & Enquiries:** If you would like to discuss or refine your project ideas before applying, email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk

Freedom Pass Service Update

Please note: The Freedom Pass online service is currently unavailable while London Councils introduces a new system to improve how applications are managed.

The service will be **unavailable until 9am on 15 September 2026**. During this time, residents will be unable to apply for a Freedom Pass, request a replacement or update their details online.

Freedom Passes will continue to work as normal, and there are no changes to who can apply. Paper application forms will also remain available.

If you have any questions, please contact info@freedompass.org or tel: [0300 330 1433](tel:03003301433)

Warm Home Discount – Eligibility

Please note: Eligible households may be entitled to a **£150 Warm Home Discount** on their energy bills this winter.

In England and Wales, eligible households may include those receiving **Housing Benefit, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit or Universal Credit**.

The discount is generally applied automatically where the eligible person is named on the electricity bill. As the previous deadline has now passed, residents who have questions or would like to check their eligibility can find more information on the [Newham Website](#).

2. Community Spotlight

Share Your Career Journey with Us

We're looking for autistic people from our local community to feature in a future Autism Newsletter Spotlight.

Everyone's path into work is different. Whether you've followed a traditional career route or found your own way, your experiences could help inspire and encourage other autistic people - particularly young people who may be thinking about their own future.

We'd love to hear about:

- Your autism journey
- How you found your way into your current career or profession

- The challenges or opportunities you experienced along the way
- Any advice or encouragement you would give to other autistic people thinking about their future

You don't need to have followed a conventional career path or have a particular job title. We want to celebrate the different journeys, skills, interests and opportunities that can lead to meaningful work and careers.

Interested in being featured?

We'd love to hear from you! Please get in touch with us at

Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk to find out more about taking part in the newsletter's **Community Spotlight**.

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In addition, we're also looking to showcase the following in the coming editions:

- **Autistic Pride & Excellence:** Spotighting an inspiring autistic individual - whether an artist, advocate, creator, or local hero, making a difference.
- **Positive Local Initiatives:** Featuring local projects, inclusive groups, sensory-friendly spaces, or community programs bringing real benefit to autistic people in Newham.
- **Community Wins:** Celebrating achievements from our own readers and local residents. No win is too big or too small - whether you completed a project, learned a new skill, advocated for yourself, or reached a personal milestone you're proud of.

How to Nominate or Share

Do you have an achievement to share, or know an individual or initiative that deserves recognition? We would love to hear from you!

- **What to include:** A brief description of the person, initiative, or personal achievement, along with a few sentences on why you're celebrating it.
- **How to send:** Reply directly to this email or send your submission to Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk
- **Privacy note:** You can choose to share your story with your name, a pseudonym, or completely anonymously.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Newham Autism Team,

I'm not sure how to start writing how I feel about the [documentary](#) I saw last night. He is a white man in the first instance in a position of privilege. I say privilege because he survived his childhood without clearly struggling with his symptoms. He got a diagnosis on the documentary. He denies he is disabled!

I am also autistic and going for my ADHD assessment soon hopefully and I'm a white female and I have masked and masked and masked and I'm so infuriated by this man

who believes he can actually whitewash the whole experience of ADHD from his own perspective.

Channel 4 have been disingenuous in this day and age to believe they have got a promising future in Media as they are clearly looking for the airtime and viral trending statistics (....like creating a public hysteria which is completely unfounded for their own gain)

If ADHD is a social construct...then we have to deconstruct society and not just expect people who are struggling to continue to isolate themselves in their fight to fit into a society which does not accommodate their needs. We need to change as a society and not just broadcast that behaviour is not acceptable in this society, as alluded to in this show. It's not just down to the person with ADHD to change their behaviour if it is a social construct.

DH

3. September Special Focus: Back to School & Transitions

September is often framed as a fresh start, but for many autistic children, young adults, and their families, it brings a wave of disruption. Moving between routines, adapting to new sensory environments, or stepping into entirely new institutions like college or university requires significant cognitive and energy expenditure.



Whether you are a parent, carer, educator, or student, understanding the mechanics of these changes helps turn a stressful period into a manageable transition.

1. Easing School Transitions

Moving up a year group, changing classrooms, or starting at a new school disrupts predictability.

- Visual Timetables & Social Stories: Ground upcoming changes in concrete detail. Use photo-walkthroughs of new routes, building layouts, or classroom spaces to build familiarity before day one.
- Low-Friction Introductions: Where possible, arrange a quiet visit to the school prior to official term start dates to meet key support staff or SENCOs (Special Educational

Needs Co-ordinators).

2. Moving from School to Higher Education & College

The leap to college or university shifts structure from directed learning to self-directed management, often alongside independent living.

- Establish Support Early: Ensure Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) applications and university accessibility plans are finalized early. Request sensory accommodations for lectures and exam rooms upfront.
- Map out "Safe" Spaces: Identify quiet zones on campus, low-sensory library areas, and reliable travel routes before term begins to prevent burnout during Freshers' week.

3. Managing Sensory Overwhelm in Educational Settings

Classrooms, lecture halls, and corridors are often high-sensory zones with harsh fluorescent lights, echoing acoustics, and unpredictable crowds.

- Sensory Toolkits: Normalize the use of noise-canceling headphones, discreet fidget tools, and tinted lenses or glare filters for screens.
- Decompression Windows: Build structured "quiet breaks" into the day, even 5–10 minutes after intense group sessions, to allow the nervous system to regulate.

4. Re-establishing Routines After Summer

Transitioning back from open-ended summer days to structured mornings works best when introduced gradually.

- Iterative Adjustments: Shift sleep schedules, meal timings, and screen-free windows back by 15–30 minutes each day during late August rather than making a sudden change on day one.
- Visual Anchor Points: Keep morning and evening routines explicit with visual checklists to reduce executive function fatigue during the first few weeks back.

Quick Tips for Parents, Carers & Educators

- Educators: Provide written or visual instructions alongside verbal explanations. Offer clear escape routes or hall passes if a student experiences sensory overload.
- Parents & Carers: Prioritize post-school downtime. Expect "after-school restraint collapse" - where a child releases held-in stress after masking all day and allow space for regulation without immediate demands.

Here are some useful articles/resources:

1. [Understanding why an autistic child may struggle to attend school](#)
2. [10 Top Tips for Getting Your ADHD or Autistic Child Ready to Go Back to School After the 6-Week Summer Holiday](#)
3. [Coping with Changes in Routine: Supporting Autistic Children Going Back to School](#)
4. [Back to school: Tips to help autistic kids adjust to the new school year](#)

4. Autism Residents' Advisory Group (ARAG)

Here are the details for the next meeting:

 **Date:** Monday, 19 October

 **Time:** 11.30am - 1.30pm

 **Location:** Stratford Library, 3 The Grove, London E15 1EL

Guest speaker at the October meeting: Community Pharmacist.
She will discuss [STOMP](#) and other support available for autistic residents. Come with your questions!

The Open Support Group meeting will follow immediately afterwards.

Online attendance is an option if you can't get there in-person. A meeting link will be sent to members closer to date.

You can join the ARAG (if you aren't already a member) using the e-form [here](#). Please email autism.commissioning@newham.gov.uk if you require any help completing the form.

5. Community Hub

Peer to Peer Support Groups

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**

Mental Health Peer Support Group

The VoiceAbility peer support group for autistic residents, which usually takes place every second Monday of the month, will be taking **a brief pause in September** while a new lead officer joins the team.

The group provides a safe space for autistic residents to connect with others, share experiences, exchange helpful tips and learn about useful services and support.

Further details about the October sessions will be shared in the next newsletter.

Email: SpeakOutNewham@voiceability.org Telephone: 0300 303 1660

Website: www.voiceability.org



Staging a Musical Show

Autistic adults are invited to join a creative performance group where participants can explore **music, movement and drama** while working together towards the creation of a musical show.

The sessions offer a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment where participants can build confidence, develop creative skills and connect with others through the performing arts. No previous experience is required.

Location

Beckton Globe Library
1 Kingsford Way, London E6 5JQ

When

Thursdays at **1:00pm**

- 10 & 24 September
- 8 & 22 October
- 5 & 19 November
- 3 & 17 December

The programme will continue until **20 May 2027**.

Find dates and session details:

[Staging A Musical Show For Autistic Adults Series | Newham Libraries](#)

Register:

[Staging a Musical Show for Autistic Adults Registration Form](#)

 For more information:Email: kevinplummer65@gmail.com

Come along to express your creativity, make new connections and be part of an exciting collaborative musical production in a supportive and autism-friendly environment.

 **Free****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:** 8 & 22 September **Time:** 6pm – 7pm **Location:** Online

To access this group please fill in the [Late Diagnosed Autism Group – Registration Form](#), you will be sent a link to join the meeting.

 **Free****Workplace Coaching for Autistic Individuals (online)**

Led by an autistic coach and trainer Morwenna Stewart, the programme aims to support autistic adults in building confidence, navigating workplace relationships, and developing practical strategies to thrive at work authentically.

You can find more information by watching this [video](#)

Sessions start at **6pm on Wednesday 10th June** and continue fortnightly from then (Weds 24th June, Weds 8th July etc).

Register:

Registration form: [Work coaching group for Autistic people \(online\)](#)

For more information, email morwenna.stewart@yourcoachingpartner.co.uk

The Pineapple Project

The Pineapple Project is dedicated to supporting autistic adults who may be experiencing mental health challenges by creating opportunities for creativity, friendship and personal growth.

Through inclusive, sensory-friendly activities such as 3D modelling, sculpture, silk fabric printing, gratitude art, exhibitions and collaborative workshops, participants are supported to develop new skills, express their creativity and connect with others in a safe and understanding environment.

The project plays an important role in reducing social isolation, promoting positive mental wellbeing and helping individuals feel valued, connected and empowered within their community.

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

More peer-to-peer support groups can be found here: [Local autism peer support groups – Peer to peer support groups – Newham Council](#)

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**



Local Health & Wellbeing Support with Well Newham

Looking for local health advice, community groups, or wellness support? The [Well Newham](#) platform is your go-to hub for staying well in our borough.

- **Health Resources:** Find reliable guides and local health advice tailored to Newham residents.
- **Directory of Services (powered by Joy):** Explore an up-to-date listing of local initiatives, support networks, and community activities—with new services added regularly.

Visit the [Well Newham Directory](#) to find support near you.

Advocacy and Support Surgeries

[VoiceAbility Advocacy](#)

Our **monthly VoiceAbility independent advocacy sessions** - held every second Monday of the month for local autistic residents, will be taking a **brief pause in September** while a new lead officer joins the team.

We're really sorry for the disruption! We're doing everything we can to get sessions up and running again soon, and we look forward to welcoming you back next month.

Email: SpeakOutNewham@voiceability.org

Telephone: 0300 303 1660

Website: www.voiceability.org



VoiceAbility

Do you want to speak out, be listened to and have your voice heard in local decisions?

Are you Autistic or do you have a learning disability?

We have a drop-in group just for you.
No need to book. Just come along and say hello.

When and where?
The 2nd Monday of every month.
The Resource Centre, 200 Chargeable Lane, E13 8DW.

10:30 - 12 noon: All adults who have a learning disability
2:30 - 4 pm: All adults who are Autistic

Hot drinks and biscuits provided.

Contact us
 ■ SpeakOutNewham@voiceability.org
 ☎ 0300 303 1660
 🌐 www.voiceability.org

Open Support Surgeries for Autistic Residents

Do you need to speak with a senior professional?

Open Support Surgeries for Autistic Residents takes place every third Friday of the month. Book an in-person or online 30min slot at the next Open Surgery to have your concerns heard.

This month, on **Friday 18 September** the professionals include:

- Tony Pape: Autism Team Manager, Adult Social Care
- Jason McCulloch: Senior Commissioner, Adults Commissioning

Jason is working on the Learning Disability and Autism chapter of a Supported Accommodation Strategy for Newham. He would like to understand what is important to people about supported housing, the challenges people have faced in trying to access supported housing and what works well.

If you would like to share your experiences to help shape the Supported Accommodation Strategy please book in a 121 session with Jason either in person or online. We would welcome your input to help us shape the Strategy that reflects the needs of people in Newham.

Please note that Jason will not be able to answer specific housing queries, although he is happy to refer queries on to relevant colleagues.

Please email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk to book a slot.

Guest speakers are lined up for the rest of the year, including:

October - Metropolitan Police, Community Safety.

November - University of East London, Careers Advisor.

6. Resource Spotlight

The **Access Card** (developed by Nimbus Disability) is a recognized photo ID card designed to simplify how disabled and neurodivergent individuals communicate their accessibility needs to venues, attractions, and events across the UK.

Rather than requiring you to carry and repeatedly present private medical documents or benefit letters, the card translates your specific requirements into universal symbols—such as difficulty queuing, needing an essential companion (+1 ticket), level access, or urgent toilet access.

- Key Benefits:
 - Removes Repetitive Explanations: Instantly communicates your access needs to staff without needing to disclose personal medical details.
 - Online Integration: Links directly with major ticketing platforms to unlock accessible seating and companion tickets automatically when booking online.
 - Widely Accepted: Recognized across thousands of UK venues, including theatres, concert halls, festivals, and theme parks.
- Cost & Validity: £15 for 3 years (physical photo ID and digital pass included).

To learn more or submit an application with supporting evidence, visit the [Access Card Website](#).

If you prefer to order an Autism Awareness card holder and lanyard set directly online, options such as the [Quantum Autism Awareness Lanyard](#) are available to purchase on Amazon. This card will not however guarantee the benefits of the Access Card.



7. News & Knowledge Hub

Understanding Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD)

A recent article by Attwood and Garnett Events explores Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD): an intense, overwhelming emotional response to real, perceived, or anticipated rejection, criticism, or social exclusion. Frequently experienced by autistic and neurodivergent individuals, RSD can trigger physical and emotional distress, often turning minor social cues, like a delayed message or a change in tone, into a deep sense of personal failure or panic.

The piece highlights that RSD often develops from a lifetime of masking, social invalidation, and hyper-vigilance in environments that aren't built for neurodivergent needs. Rather than viewing RSD as an individual flaw, the authors emphasize the importance of trauma-informed support, self-compassion, and creating safe, non-judgmental spaces where individuals don't feel forced to hide their authentic selves.

 [Click here to read more](#)

Making social prescribing more accessible for autistic people

Social prescribing is when health care professionals refer patients to community-based support, activities, and groups to improve health and wellbeing. However, autistic people face barriers to accessing and getting the most from social prescribing.

Autistica has come up with a comprehensive guide to provide practical recommendations for making social prescribing more accessible and inclusive for autistic people across the entire pathway – from referral through to community engagement. It also includes case studies demonstrating how these recommendations can realistically be implemented in different service contexts.

 [Click here to access the guide](#)

Autistica Research: Evaluating Strengths and Needs in Autism and ADHD

Autistica has highlighted a major international study exploring how a structured "Strengths and Needs" assessment framework helps autistic and ADHD individuals, as well as their families, better understand their day-to-day functioning. Based on the World Health Organization's ICF framework, the tool shifts the focus away from purely measuring deficits or diagnostic symptoms toward mapping real-world functional abilities, environmental barriers, and personal strengths.

The evaluation revealed that over 90% of caregivers found the assessment accurately reflected their child's unique profile, with roughly half reporting an increased awareness of environmental adjustments that could help in daily life. Crucially, over 60% of respondents identified the structured report as a valuable tool for advocating for appropriate support across healthcare, education, and social services.

 [Read the full study here.](#)

Connective Tissue Disorders Far More Likely Among Neurodivergent: New Study

A major study analyzing data from 117 million people reveals that autistic and ADHD individuals are significantly more likely to have connective tissue conditions, including joint hypermobility and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. Autistic individuals were found to be over three times more likely to experience hypermobility spectrum disorders than their neurotypical peers, with the highest overlap seen in those diagnosed with both autism and ADHD.

These findings help validate physical symptoms that are often overlooked in neurodivergent individuals, such as chronic pain, joint instability, fatigue, and digestive issues. Recognizing this mind-body connection allows healthcare providers and individuals to better target physical support—like joint protection, strength training, and tailored occupational therapy—alongside standard autistic care.

 [Read the full study here](#)

Funding Opportunity: Unlimited Partner Awards 2026

Arts commissioning body Unlimited has launched its latest funding round, committing £280,000 to support disabled and neurodivergent artists. Eleven awards of £15k–£40k are up for grabs across all creative disciplines. Beyond project funding, winning applicants get partnered directly with major arts venues and organizations to help bring their ideas to stage or screen.

If you're an artist looking to develop a new project, head over to Unlimited's site for full details and accessible application materials. **Applications close 28 September.**

 [Read the full article here](#)

New Study Introduces "Triple Empathy Theory" for Neuroinclusive Design

A new paper published in *Disability & Society* by Charles Josefson proposes **Triple Empathy Theory**: a framework aimed at redesigning physical and social infrastructure for true neuroinclusivity. Expanding on Damian Milton's groundbreaking *Double Empathy Theory*, the study argues that achieving inclusive environments requires moving beyond individual social interactions. Instead, it calls for interdisciplinary networks across research and practice to build relational, human-rights-rooted systems that support dynamic, reciprocal communication across different neurotypes.

Key Concepts of Triple Empathy

- **Environment as an Active Participant:** The physical and social environment (e.g., classroom layouts, workplace policies, sensory noise, rigid bureaucratic processes) actively dictates whether empathy and understanding can occur.
- **Beyond Individual Effort:** Inclusive communication cannot rely solely on two people trying harder to understand each other. If the environment itself causes sensory overload, anxiety, or structural barriers, natural reciprocal communication becomes impossible.
- **Designing for Reciprocal Attunement:** The theory calls on designers, urban planners, educators, and policy makers to build environments that naturally facilitate

mutual understanding, rather than forcing neurodivergent people to adapt to spaces designed exclusively for neurotypical norms.

 [Read the full study here](#)

New Mental Health Personalised Care Framework from NHS

The NHS has published a new **Mental Health Personalised Care Framework**, setting out expectations for assessing, planning and managing safety and risk in secondary mental health care for people of all ages.

The Framework comes as longer-term plans develop, alongside priorities including **reducing out-of-area placements, improving timely access to support for children and young people, strengthening continuity of care, and providing the right support before people reach crisis.**

Additional guidance has also been published to support implementation of the Framework in **children and young people's mental health services.**

 [Read the Mental Health Personalised Care Framework here](#)

Latest LeDeR Report Highlights Progress and Continuing Health Inequalities

The latest **Learning from Lives and Deaths (LeDeR) report** highlights both positive progress and the continued need to address health inequalities experienced by people with a learning disability and autistic people.

The proportion of deaths considered **avoidable has fallen to 39%, down from 46.3% in 2021**, while the median age of death has also increased slightly, continuing a positive trend. However, avoidable deaths remain almost twice as common as in the general population, highlighting the inequalities that people with a learning disability and autistic people continue to experience.

Importantly, **LeDeR will continue.** While this is the final independent academic report from King's College London, the programme will continue to learn from individual deaths. A revised review process will look at factors that could have been changed or improved, including barriers to living a longer and healthier life.

The Government has also committed to developing a new patient-level dataset linking health outcomes for people with a learning disability, autism, ADHD and Down syndrome. Further details will be shared in due course.

 [Read the latest LeDeR report here](#)

New Guidance on Community Support

NHS England has published new guidance, **co-produced with autistic people**, people with a learning disability, families, clinicians and other stakeholders, setting out what good community support should look like for people of all ages.

The guidance aims to **strengthen community services and reduce reliance on inpatient care, while supporting preparations for Mental Health Act reform**. It encourages local areas to identify gaps in existing support and work together across health, social care, education, housing and voluntary sector services.

Key areas include person-centred support, reasonable adjustments, better access to services and preventing crises before they happen.

 [Read the new community support guidance](#)

New Guide on Preventing Choking Deaths

A new good practice guide has been developed to help reduce the risk of **choking among people with learning disabilities who receive care**.

Created by a multidisciplinary group of social care, speech and language therapy and sector professionals, the guidance highlights the importance of **early identification of risks, proactive assessment and consistent, person-centred care plans**.

It also emphasises that keeping people safe at mealtimes should go hand in hand with **dignity, choice, culture and quality of life**. The guide encourages skilled staff, good communication and record-keeping, and closer working between different professionals to help prevent avoidable harm.

 [Read the Good Practice Guide](#)

Minneapolis occupational therapist launches sensory-friendly hijab

Created by occupational therapy student Najma Omar, SereniHijab is a sensory-friendly hijab designed specifically to help individuals with noise and touch sensitivities. Inspired by her autistic sister Nasteho, Najma developed the headwear to eliminate the fabric weight, pressure around ears, and sound amplification that traditional hijabs can cause for neurodivergent individuals.

- Key Features: Crafted from a lightweight jersey-spandex blend, featuring padded areas around the ears to reduce sound overstimulation while maintaining comfort and modest coverage.
- Impact: Allows Muslim women with sensory processing challenges to honour their religious identity comfortably without enduring physical overload.
- Learn More: Distributed through the mental health initiative Submerge in Sensory.

 [Read the full story here](#)

8. Share Your Views

Help Shape More Inclusive Boxing

Union Jab is supporting a King's College London research project exploring the experiences of neurodivergent athletes and the coaches who work with them.

Research focus

- Neurodiversity in boxing
- Athlete experiences
- Coaching experiences
- Barriers to participation
- Supportive and inclusive practice
- Future boxing policy and provision

The research will consider what helps people participate, what creates barriers and how boxing environments, coaching and policy could become more inclusive.

Participants' information will be anonymised, and the findings will be analysed with the intention of contributing to a published academic paper.

[Click Here to Take Part in the Research](#)

Open to eligible participants aged 18 and over. Participation can take place online or in person.

Questions about the research can be sent to:

Emily Lowery

King's College London
emily.lowery@kcl.ac.uk

[Click here to read more.](#)

Share Your Experience Seeking an Autism or ADHD Assessment

With formal NHS care complaints tripling over the past five years and over 60% of individuals waiting more than a year for assessments ([The Guardian](#)), **Autism Action**, alongside the **University of Nottingham and Bournemouth University**, has launched a national survey to document the full impact of the current assessment crisis. The evidence gathered will be presented directly to policymakers to demand systemic reform.

Who can take part: Anyone with experience seeking an assessment (NHS, Right to Choose, or private) from **2014 onwards** - whether for yourself, a child, or someone you care for. You can participate regardless of where you are in the assessment process.

- **Time commitment:** Approximately 30–60 minutes.
- **Deadline:** Closes at 9:00 AM on **Monday, 7 September 2026** (may be extended).
- **Content Warning:** The survey contains questions regarding mental health difficulties and experiences of suicidality related to seeking an assessment.

[Click here to take part in the survey.](#)

Does your autism affect how you hear sounds?

University College London (UCL) Ear Institute is looking for autistic adults to take part in a research study exploring how autistic people perceive and process different sounds.

Interested? You may be eligible if you:

- are aged 18-40 years
- have a formal autism diagnosis
- do not have hearing problems

You'll be invited to the UCL Ear Institute (near King's Cross) for a single session lasting approximately 2.5 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 email NHS.NORTH.EAST.LONDON@r1.dotdigital-email.com



Paid Research Opportunity: Communicating About Parental Mental Illness

Paid Paid Research Opportunity: Communicating About Parental Mental Illness

Researchers at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford, are seeking parents and partners to share their lived experiences to help develop a training resource for healthcare and social care professionals. The project aims to equip professionals with better tools to support families in having open, honest conversations with children about parental mental health.

- **Who can take part:** Parents aged 18+ with experience of a mental health condition (such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder) or their partners.
- **What's involved:** Participation in a one-off 3-hour online workshop (via Microsoft Teams) with up to 5 other participants.
- **Payment/Remuneration:** £75 for taking part.
- **Deadline:** September 2026.

How to join: To express interest or learn more, email compass@psych.ox.ac.uk or visit the [University of Oxford Research Page](#).

Research Study: How Shame Affects Cisgender Gay Men's Monogamous Relationships

Samuel Fall, a Doctoral Trainee in Clinical Psychology at the University of Hertfordshire, is conducting a qualitative research study exploring how shame—shaped by societal stigma, internalised norms, and marginalisation—impacts intimate, monogamous relationships between gay cisgender men. By examining shame as a "relational" phenomenon between partners, the study aims to inform more inclusive mental health services and support for LGBTQ+ communities.

- **Who can take part:** Couples who both identify as gay cisgender men (18+), live in the UK, and have been in a monogamous relationship for at least 6 months.
- **What's involved:** Participation involves two online interviews via Microsoft Teams (approx. 90–120 minutes total across both):
 1. **Individual Interview:** 30–45 minutes with each partner individually.
 2. **Joint Interview:** 60 minutes with both partners together.
- **Remuneration:** Unpaid voluntary research.
- **Deadline:** **September 30th 2026**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Samuel Fall at S.Fall@herts.ac.uk

How to join: To express interest and fill out a short demographic form, visit the [Expression of Interest Form](#).

Upcoming Project/Study: Reforming the Mental Health Act Code of Practice

[Imroc](#) and The PSC (Public Service Consultancy) have launched a 21-month project on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to help reform the Mental Health Act Code of Practice. The project team is seeking lived experience insights to help shape guidance for mental health professionals on key areas, including Care (Education) and Treatment Reviews (C(E)TRs), Dynamic Support Registers (DSRs), and support for children and young people.

- **Who can contribute:** Autistic people and individuals with a learning disability (aged 14+) who have experienced—or been at risk of—detention under the Mental Health Act, as well as their family members and carers. (*Participants aged 14–15 require consent from an adult*).
- **What's involved:** A mix of group and individual engagement sessions to share views and experiences safely and meaningfully.
- **Next Steps:** Full details and Expression of Interest (EOI) forms will be available in early September.

Register Your Interest: If you would like to find out more or receive an interest form when details are released, email us at Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk

9. Volunteering

Volunteers Needed: Barts Health PLACE Assessments 2026

Barts Health NHS Trust is inviting local residents, patient representatives, and community members to take part in the [PLACE 2026 Assessments](#). PLACE assessments give patients and local people a direct voice in evaluating non-clinical hospital services - including cleanliness, food quality, privacy, dignity, and sensory/dementia-friendly environments.

- **What's involved:** Online training sessions are provided ahead of 2-day on-site hospital assessments (9:30 AM – 4:00 PM). You can volunteer for one or multiple days across Barts Health sites.

Assessment Dates by Location:

- **St Bartholomew's Hospital:** Wednesday, 9 September 2026 (1 day)
- **Whipps Cross Hospital:** Tuesday 29 & Wednesday 30 September 2026
- **Royal London Hospital:** Tuesday 13 & Wednesday 14 October 2026
- **Newham University Hospital:** Tuesday 10 & Wednesday 11 November 2026

How to join: To sign up for the online refresher training or RSVP for assessment days, email Reza.Miah1@nhs.net. Training and guidance documents are also accessible via [NHS England Digital](#).



10. Courses & Training

Social Welfare Alliance Training Programme

The Social Welfare Alliance supports all frontline professionals, volunteers and champions with information and referral pathways to support residents on a range of topics.

The [training sessions](#) enhance the skills you already have and make every contact count. It applies to any of the borough-wide workforce who engage with residents through support services, and in community, food, or clinical settings where there are underlying issues affecting their health.

All training sessions are free to attend and are delivered online, including:

- [Employment Rights and Employment Support Services in Newham](#)
- [Financial Wellbeing Training](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Awareness Training](#)
- [Adult Safeguarding Awareness Training](#)

- [Children Safeguarding Awareness Training](#)

11. Things to Do in September

Newham

Ageing-Well Festival 2026 for Newham Residents Aged 50 and Over

We are delighted to invite residents aged 50 and over to our **Ageing Well Festival 2026**. This **free** community event brings together local services, activities, entertainment and opportunities to help residents stay healthy, active and connected.

Whether you want to discover new hobbies, access health and wellbeing support, meet new people or find out how you can help shape services in Newham, there will be something for everyone.

 **Date:** Saturday, 26 September

 **Time:** 10am to 4pm

 **Location:** East Ham Leisure Centre, 322 Barking Road, E6 2RT

On the day you can expect:

- Health MOT's
- Vaccine clinics
- Newham's Got Talent
- Free International food court
- Glass painting and Embroidery
- A range of activities i.e. yoga, dance, exercise etc.



Autism Film Club – East London (Mile End)

A new, **free** monthly film club designed specifically for autistic and neurodivergent community members in East London, delivered by BLOC Cinema in partnership with London Borough of Newham.

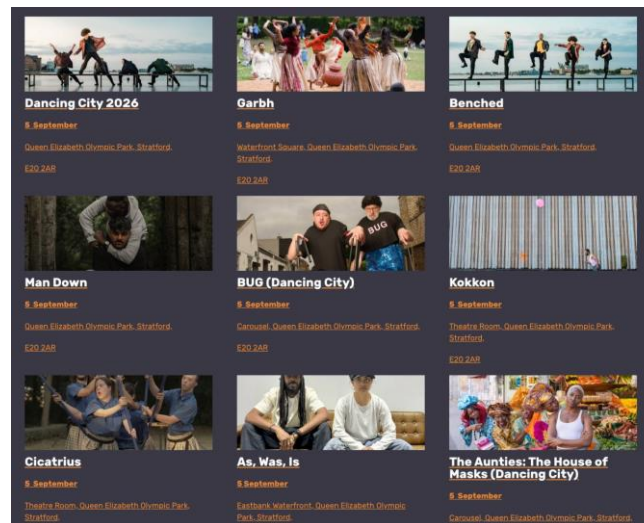
- **When:** Last Monday of every month
Launching **Monday, 28 September 2026** (6:00 PM – 8:00 PM)
- **Where:** BLOC Cinema, Mile End (*Nearest stations: Mile End and Stepney Green*)

- **Cost: Free**
- **How to Register:** Email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk to join the registration list. Official booking links will be sent out in September.

An essential companion or carer are welcome to join.

Greenwich & Docklands Festival

London's leading festival of free outdoor performing arts is currently underway! Running through **6 September 2026**, GDIF brings world-class theater, dance, and spectacle to streets and parks across East London, Greenwich, and Thamesmead. Most events are completely **free, unticketed, and open to all**.



Be sure to check out the events taking place at the Queen Elizabeth Park this September on the [GDIF Event Page](#).



Across London

Exhibitions to Visit at Wellcome Collection

1. [Rudy Loewe: Intimacies of Care – Spaces of Grief and Possibility](#) (Until 7 Feb 2027)



Multidisciplinary artist Rudy Loewe reimagines a mental healthcare system that is equitable, supportive, and empathetic. Centring the lived experiences of Black people navigating UK mental healthcare shaped by structural racism, this exhibition features sculptures, paintings, text, and sound to explore alternative, hopeful approaches to care.

2. [The Coming of Age](#) (Until 29 Nov 2026)



With one in ten children in the UK now expected to live beyond 100, this exhibition explores what it truly means to age well and how society, culture, and physical environments shape our experience of growing older. It features striking works by artists including Serena Korda, Rory Pilgrim, and Paula Rego.

3. [Audrey Amiss: The Surviving Exhibitions](#) (Until 7 Feb 2027)



Artist Audrey Amiss spent decades creating work that challenged societal perceptions of psychiatric systems and detailed her own lived experiences. Following her passing in 2013, her archive of over 800 sketchbooks, protest signs, notes, and artworks has been pieced together to showcase the exhibitions she built throughout her life.

4. Tell your story through the Wellcome Photography Prize

Are you a photographer passionate about how health is experienced, represented and understood? Do you create scientific or medical images?

Open to everyone, everywhere and free to enter, the prize welcomes images exploring everything from urgent health challenges to scientific discovery. Approaching its 30th anniversary, the prize continues to champion powerful visual storytelling that explores the relationship between health, science and human experience around the world.

Enter now to be in with a chance of winning up to £10,000. **Entries close 21 October 2026.** [Find out more here.](#)

5. [The Friendship Effect](#) (24 September & 26 November)

Celebrate friendship and its role in our health and wellbeing with an evening of live music, drinks, talks, performances and workshops all exploring the complexities of one of the most fundamental human relationships, plus after-hours access to our galleries and shop.

Sensory accessories are available at the venue.



Free Gigs & Live Music at The Old Blue Last

At The Old Blue Last, you can catch regular free gigs, ranging from jazz to indie rock, doo-wop, and experimental noise, at this Shoreditch boozier.

[Check out what's on for the month of September here.](#)



Brick Lane Curry Festival 2026

Following its hugely successful comeback in 2025 after a nine-year hiatus, the festival returns to the heart of Brick Lane for an even bigger celebration of food, music, culture and community.

On **20 September, from 12pm to 7pm**, Brick Lane itself becomes a stage.

The festival is free to attend, but registering through Eventbrite means you'll receive a special code giving you 20% off your bill at participating Brick Lane restaurants across the festival weekend.

[Reserve your spot here.](#)



♥ Free

National Autistic Society Coffee Mornings (Lambeth Branch)

A monthly meet-up (First Friday of every month, term time only) for parents and carers of autistic children and individuals of all ages in Lambeth and neighbouring boroughs. Held free of charge, each session features a guest speaker discussing key autism-related topics requested by attendees.

📅 **Date:** 4 September

🕒 **Time:** 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

📍 **Location:** Carnegie Library Hub (SE24 0DG)

♥ Free

National Autistic Society coffee mornings



For parents & carers of autistic children

First Friday of every month (term time)
9:30 - 11:30

Free of charge

Open to parents/carers of autistic people of all ages in Lambeth & neighbouring boroughs

Carnegie Library Hub
SE24 0DG

Each month we invite a different guest speaker to come and talk to parents & carers about an autism-related topic they would like more information about.
www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/branches/Lambeth/events
for more details



Carnegie
Library
Hub



12. Media

Local Radio

NuSound Radio

Join us on **25 September** for Autism Hour, where colleagues from the Council's Enablement Team will introduce their new pathway of support, designed to promote wellbeing and help people live more independently, including how autistic people can benefit from this service.

The programme airs on the **last Friday of every month from 12pm–1pm**, featuring guest speakers and conversations about autism and the local community.

You can listen back to previous programmes via the [Radio Interviews archive](#).

Other speakers are lined up for the rest of the year, including:
October - Precious Homes, how they support autistic residents
November - Community Mental Health Services, outlining the support available.



Book

London-based comic creator Hamish Steele has released a new graphic novel, [Go-Man vs. the Star Dragon](#) - the second book in his *Go-Man* series.

The story follows Tobi, an autistic young boy living in a world of giant monsters and superheroes. As Tobi navigates friendships, identity and the challenges of growing up, he also has a rather unusual secret: he can transform into the superhero Go-Man!

Hamish, who was diagnosed as autistic as an adult, has drawn on his own experiences and interests to create the series. The books are a celebration of imagination, creativity and seeing the world in your own way.

Go-Man vs. the Star Dragon was released on 25 August 2026, making this a very recent creative achievement to celebrate.



TV

Channel 4's recent documentary [The Great ADHD Myth?](#) - presented by NHS psychiatrist Dr Max Pemberton, explores the surge in ADHD diagnoses and questions whether the condition is a neurodevelopmental disorder or a "social construct" driven by modern environments. The film has drawn significant pushback from neurodivergent advocates, ADHD charities, and leading scientists, who argue it relies on sensationalist framing and misrepresents clinical consensus. Over 90% of respondents in a post-airing ADHD UK survey noted that the programme increased stigma around diagnosis and medication.

To share your thoughts on this, please email Autism.Commissioning@newham.gov.uk



Instagram

Back to School can mean a new routine, new classroom or school, new teachers... a whole

lot of change and sensory challenges! Here are some tips in tricks to help make it as successful as possible ahead of time and on school mornings ♥

Click to view the full post:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Davjpd1iWD3/>



Youtube

[Dr. Mary Barbera](#) discusses some strategies to ease back to school transitions for children with autism. If you're looking for an autism back to school plan, here are three tips to get started.

Click to view the full video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oee7a3iXENc>

