

The one-stop shop for information about autism support and services in Leicestershire

## A Warm Welcome

Welcome to the **Summer 2015** edition of the LAIH newsletter. We have been out and about at lots of events of the last few months.

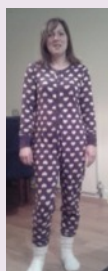
World Autism Awareness Week was busy for us and there are more details of what we did later in the newsletter.

We have also been attending other events during Carers Week in June.

Why not pop in and meet Laura and Tracey; we are at the NAS Gallery at 50E Blaby Road on the first Monday of every month from 10am to 4pm. You can find out about the information that we have and discuss autism issues.

As ever, your feedback is very important to us. We need to know that we are meeting your needs and providing a positive service; also, to make changes to anything which may not be working quite so well.

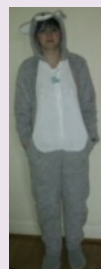
## World Autism Awareness Week



There were lots of events across the county especially in schools and services.

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April was Onsie Wednesday and the Hubs Information and Employment Coordinator Tracey Lack wore her onsie. Emma, Hub Manager Laura's daughter, also wore her onsie to school.

During the week the Hub was at an information session in Oakham and the NAS Gallery open evening at Blaby Road. We were able to signpost people to services and support and also pass on information about diagnosis as well as raising awareness of autism in the area.



## About Our Eddie-tor

We would like to thank Eddie who is volunteering as the Newsletter Editor: collating articles and information into a presentable form. Eddie 'finally' received a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome and other co-morbid conditions in 2010. He has previously been successfully employed in a variety of industries for many years as both a Systems and a Project Accountant.

Laura put some questions to Eddie and his answers and thoughts are below.

### Questions

What difference has receiving an autism diagnosis made to you? *It put my highly confusing and volatile life into a certain perspective.*

Would you have preferred to have receive your diagnosis earlier? *In principle, yes. However, having developed a number of 'coping strategies' from an early age, I am not so sure. Any effective help is only for children as opposed to 'older timers', like me.*

What challenges did you find in the workplace from an autism perspective? *For most of my career I was in a position of relative seniority; in decision taking roles. My issues were generally with those I reported TO as I rarely managed to display much respect for protocol. I was never interested in being liked but usually managed to mix with most people for a SHORT time. Since tact and diplomacy do not register with me, many of my roles were shorter-lived than expected.*

How has the LAIH supported you? *At first, LAIH operated as a signpost for me. However, they adapted to my actual NEEDS once they realised it was more practical, hands-on help that I require. This is especially since, over the last few years, I have become more and more reticent in contacting and/or meeting new people. They have been excellent in putting relevant agencies in contact with ME. For that, I am extremely thankful.*

What support would you like to see in Leicestershire for people with autism? *Somewhat outside my scope of consideration. However, any support should be universal, not just in Leicestershire. I would say that, in my opinion, the desire to assign a new label to any possible condition (particularly in children) is out of hand. Conditions that are often part of 'growing up' or just 'life' are too readily diagnosed as one disorder or another.*

*Much of the little available help is academic and therefore ineffectual. I would think it often causes more frustration than benefit (in adults).*

*These are conditions that are best helped by true experts i.e. those actually experiencing the conditions.*

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## Using Technology

Using technology – computers, gamers and other devices - is a popular leisure time activity and there are many apps available including those specifically aimed at people with an autism spectrum disorder.

One such app is AutisMe which has been developed in Leicestershire by Dr Yasmin Delargy and Alison Lehman.

AutisMe is an App for Android and iOS devices that allows people with Autism to let others know who they are, what makes them tick, how to better communicate with them and what to avoid.

AutisMe creates a unique personalised 'passport' for anyone with Autistic Spectrum disorder, it also provides information about autism and how it affects that person specifically. Data can be entered by the person or carer in pictorial or text form depending on preference.

The AutisMe profile can then be shown to teachers, friends, carers, colleagues or the police: In fact anyone who would benefit from knowing about them and their autism.

The app can be downloaded at:

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.MeMi.AutisMe>

iOS App Store: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/autism>

We would like to compile a list of apps which are useful to publish in the next issue, please let us know about Apps that you have found really useful or enjoyed using and also any apps that you have not found so good.



### **Keeping Safe with Technology**

Although technology and apps are a great tool for sure that they are used safely.

Make sure that apps that you install are from a Windows Store.

providing support and information it is important to make reputable source such as Google Play, Apple App Store or

Be aware that the content of the app is suitable for the person using it. Think about the personal information that you might be sharing on the app. When you download the app it may ask for certain 'permissions' such as using your current location for maps and directions.

Beware of 'in app' purchases, these might be things such as paying to get on to the next level of a game. Some apps may ask for credit or debit card information so that you can buy these items but may then store the information for the next time, having the information stored makes it easier to buy items during the game but can also make it easy to run up a big bill. You can use the settings on your tablet or phone so that you need to enter a password before making the purchase, this can help to stop the 'impulsive' purchases.

More information about using apps safely can be found at:

<http://consumers.ofcom.org.uk/phone/mobile-phones/safety-and-security/using-apps-safely-and-securely/>

There is a Social Media Café every Friday from 12noon to 2pm at the West End Centre, Andrewes Street, Leicester LE3 5PA. This is an informal drop-in group that can provide support with using apps and other forms of social media.

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## 'Keep Safe' Cards



### Keep Safe Card

Keep Safe Cards have been made for people who live in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and are cards which can be kept in a purse or wallet and hold important information such as emergency contact numbers and medical information.

They can also be used to record any communication difficulties someone may have.

Stickers to be used in the cards are now available for people on the autism spectrum.

The wording on the sticker is:

"I have an autism spectrum condition" means:

- I have social communication difficulties
- I am likely to be extremely anxious in unfamiliar situations
- My behaviour may appear strange or threatening
- I will need the support of an adult/intermediary



The cards can be used if someone has an emergency such as an accident or if they became anxious, and can also be used alongside the Keep Safe Places which are a network of libraries, shops and businesses which have agreed to act as good citizens, whenever vulnerable people feel upset, concerned or are being bullied when they are in the town centres.

Keep Safe Places will display the Keep Safe logo in their windows

## Rutland Autism Friendly Launch



The LAIH attended the Rutland Autism Friendly Launch on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. We were also joined by other members of the NAS who came along to give support, information and advice.

The event was very successful and well attended by family and friends of Rutland.

Dr Julia Malkin MBE presented the 5 successful applicants with their Techno – Me iPad, then went on to talk about her career and life experience as an adult with Aspergers Syndrome.

Many thanks to Naomi Edwards-Simms and Emma Jane Perkins for putting together a really good event.

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The University of Nottingham are looking for persons 18 and over who have, or think they may have, one of the autistic spectrum disorders. We are also interested in recruiting neurotypical people. The study examines (using an on-line questionnaire) the distress that can be experienced when people or life places demands on you. We would like to see if this distress is due an aspect of autistic spectrum disorder, or simply the sort of person you are.

The task will take 20 to 30 minutes, is conducted over the Internet, and completely anonymous. Your participation will help us to develop measures that screen demand-related distress in adults.

The study has been approved by the University of Nottingham's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, the PDA Society, The Neurotypical Site, Autistic Spectrum Australia, Special Needs Jungle, and Aspies Central.

To learn more about the study and participate, go to: <https://nottingham.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/adultpda>

### Carers of people who have autism support group

The group is open to parents, carers and friends and has speakers at some of its meetings. It is an informal group where those attending can discuss issues concerning them. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of alternate months at

The Carers Centre, Unit 19, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Matrix House, Constitution Hill, Leicester LE1 1PL

The next dates are 16 July, 17 September, 19 November; meeting times are 10.00am to 12.30pm.

For more details please contact Debbie/Charles – 0116 2510999 or Alyson/Jane – 0116 4542323 or ring the LAIH Helpline on 0808 800 0125

### Other Support Groups

**The Monday Club** – meets on a Monday evening from 7-9pm at the Peepul Centre contact details  
Tel 07873 311610 email [themondayclub@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:themondayclub@hotmail.co.uk)

**Translate** – meets on the first Monday of the month at Salvation Army, Burleigh Road Loughborough contact details are Tel: 01509 554797 or email [translate\\_as1@ntlworld.com](mailto:translate_as1@ntlworld.com)

**Hinckley Support Group** – for parents, carers and relatives of people on the autism spectrum. The groups meets on alternate Fridays from 1pm to 3pm at Burbage Constitutional Club LE10 2DE contact [kim.sharpe@ntlworld.com](mailto:kim.sharpe@ntlworld.com) or 07939 025222

### **Leicestershire Autistic Society**

Various support groups across the county – [www.leicestershireautism.org.uk/index.html](http://www.leicestershireautism.org.uk/index.html)  
Tel: 0116 291 6958



### Calendar Dates

The LAIH will be at Workclub at the following libraries to provide information and support from 10.00am to 12pm

#### **Coalville Library - Fridays**

17<sup>th</sup> July 14<sup>th</sup> August 18<sup>th</sup> September

#### **Wigston Magna Library - Mondays**

20<sup>th</sup> July, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 7<sup>th</sup> September

#### **Loughborough Library – Tuesdays**

21<sup>st</sup> July 11<sup>th</sup> August 15<sup>th</sup> September

#### **Hinckley Library - Wednesdays**

1<sup>st</sup> July 5<sup>th</sup> August 9<sup>th</sup> September

#### **Melton Mowbray Library – Tuesdays 2-4pm**

21<sup>st</sup> July 11<sup>th</sup> August 15<sup>th</sup> September

We are planning to add dates at other libraries and will add these to our calendar of events as they are confirmed.

We also have a drop in session at the NAS Gallery at 50E Blaby Road South Wigston Leicester LE18 4SD on the first Monday of every month from 10am to 4pm