



Autism  
Education  
Trust

Training  
Partner



## Autism and Social Communication Team

# Parent/Carer Toolkit

Local\* sources of advice and support for parents and carers of neurodivergent children/young people

(\* with additional national sources)

### Advice and support:

- Autism and Social Communication Team phonenumber: 0114 250 6800
- Sheffield Autistic Society: a local charity for autistic people and their families:  
<https://sheffieldautisticsociety.org.uk/>
- Sparkle Sheffield: local registered charity that supports autistic children/young people and those with other social communication differences from birth to 25. They offer an extensive range of groups and activities both in person and online such as
  - Parent support groups
  - Sibling support group
  - Email advice service
  - Online social/activity groups for children/yp
  - Groups trips outSee website for full details  
<https://sparklesheffield.co.uk/>
- Autism Plus, a charity which supports adults and young people with autism & other needs with supported living, day opportunities and employment. Employment Support (18yrs and over), Positive Steps - a new six week course to help you overcome challenges and build confidence (see website for full details):  
<https://autismplus.co.uk/employment-support/positive-steps>

Please note Autism Social Communication Team are not affiliated with any of the organisations listed. They are all recommended in good faith via word of mouth and companies advertising that they are neurodiverse friendly. If you have any issues with any of the recommendations, please inform us immediately and we will remove the link from our page.

- Sheffield Parent Carer Forum: bringing together parent carers from across Sheffield to provide mutual support, exchange information, and influence policy and practice around SEND:

<https://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/>

Sheffield Parent Carer Forum run a Peer Support Service. The Peer Support Workers offer parent carers:

- Information, advice and signposting to relevant services
- Confidential one-to-one support via telephone, video call or face-to-face meetings in a community space (flexible appointment times)
- Information sessions about common issues
- Drop-in sessions where parents can meet other parents facing similar challenges

<https://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/about/peer-support-service/>

- Sheffield Carers Centre - independent charity offering support to Sheffield carers by providing high quality information, advice, advocacy and support:

<https://www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk/>

- Ambitious About Autism (a national charity based in London) community forum link:

<https://forum.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/community>

- Sunshine Support (a national organisation based in Derby) online 'Cuppa & a Chat' sessions:

<https://sunshine-support.org/events-and-webinars#cuppa>

- South Yorkshire Police, autism alert card:

<https://www.southyorks.police.uk/sign-up/autism-alert-learning-disability-alert-or-mental-health-alert-card/>

## Activities and social groups:

- All Inc trampolining:

<https://lizclay59.wixsite.com/all-inc>

- Jump Inc SEN trampolining sessions (check website for up-coming sessions):

<https://www.jump-inc.uk/activities/sen-sessions/>

- Kids Soft Play Kingdom – based in Killamarsh, has SEN play sessions on Tuesday, Thursdays and first Sunday every month (email: [killamarshsc@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:killamarshsc@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk) for enquiries):

<https://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/killamarsh-active/kids-soft-play-kingdom>

- Green Top Circus, Spectrum Circus:

<https://www.greentop.org/project/spectrum-circus-autism-friendly-classes/>

- Friends of the Willow Tree, baby and toddler plus 0-25 SEND sensory sessions:  
<https://www.friendsofthewillowtree.co.uk/>
- Sam's Space, a purpose-built soft play facility at Firth Park Methodist Church. See their Facebook and Instagram for regular updates.  
Quiet sessions in their soft play area (with access to their sensory room) are run on a Saturday every 4 weeks. Sessions limited to 6 families at a time and BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL:  
<https://sams-space.wixsite.com/firth-park/copy-of-get-involved>
- National Emergency Services Museum, under 5s sensory play sessions - not autism specific, but may be of interest to children with a passion for transport:  
<https://www.visitnesm.org.uk/sensoryplay>
- ACCT Sheffield, family, children and young peoples' social groups:
  - Acctivate:  
<https://acctsheffield.org.uk/acctivate-childrens-club/>
  - Teenage club:  
<https://acctsheffield.org.uk/teenage-youth-club/>
  - ACCTing Out, social group for young adults, 18 and over:  
<https://acctsheffield.org.uk/accting-out/>
  - Family swimming session:  
<https://acctsheffield.org.uk/swimming/>
- Flycheese digital art and animation, workshops and accredited courses:  
<http://flycheese.com/>
- Spectrum Gaming (based in Manchester), an online gaming community for autistic young people focused on building friendships, self-acceptance and advocacy:  
<https://www.spectrumgaming.net/>
- A Mind Apart: an inclusive community arts organisation running performing arts classes and clubs for children and adults:  
<https://www.amindapart.org.uk/>

See Sheffield Parent Carer Forum for further information on groups and a wide range of subjects relating to SEND in Sheffield:  
<https://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/>

## SEND transport:

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP), or is currently undergoing an assessment for an EHCP, they may be eligible for travel support.

- Transport for children with SEN:  
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/disability-mental-health/transport-for-children-with-special-educational-needs>

Contact Travel Assessment and Training Team tel: 0114 205 3542

- Post 16 travel support:  
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/disability-mental-health/post-16-sen-travel>

Contact Post 16 Travel Service tel: 0114 273 5611

- Independent travel training - for young people aged 10 to 19 years old who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP), or are currently undergoing an assessment for an EHCP. This service is free of charge:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/disability-mental-health/transport-for-children-with-special-educational-needs>

To apply for independent travel training:

Email: [Indetravel@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Indetravel@sheffield.gov.uk)

Tel: 0114 205 3542.

Newsletter: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/docs/disability-and-mental-health/travel-transport/Independent%20Travel%20Training%20Newsletter.pdf>

## Health and well-being:

### Hospital:

- Sheffield Children's NHS 'Tips from Parents' with a link to advice on assistance for children with learning disabilities or autism:  
<https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/tips-from-parents/>  
<https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/assistance-with-learning-disabilities/> scroll down to download 'Communication and Health Passport' and 'Pain Profile Record'
- National Autistic Society Health Passport:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/physical-health/my-health-passport>

### **Sleep:**

- Sheffield Children's NHS:  
<https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/child-development-and-neurodisability/autism-home/autism-support/sleep/>
- Cerebra (not autism specific, advice for families of children with a range of neurological conditions):  
<https://cerebra.org.uk/get-advice-support/sleep-advice-service/>

### **Toileting:**

- National Autistic Society guidance:  
<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/toileting>
- Sheffield Children's NHS Community Continence Team  
<https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/community-continence-clinics/>

### **Eating:**

- National Autistic Society guidance:  
<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/eating/all-audiences>
- Beat, national charity offering information and support on a range of eating disorders:  
<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>  
  
Beat information on ARFID (avoidant/restricted food intake):  
<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/about-eating-disorders/types/arfid/>

### **Emotional and mental health:**

- Door 43 (Sheffield Futures) mental health and wellbeing service for young people aged 13-25 who are feeling low or anxious. (Not a crisis service, referral may take around 2 weeks):  
<https://www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk/projects/door43/>
- Sheffield Children's NHS –  
'Understanding and Managing Difficult Feelings in Autism':  
<https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/understanding-managing-difficult-feelings-in-asd-videos/>  
'Managing Anxiety in Children With Autism':  
<https://library.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/managing-anxiety-in-children-with-autism/>

- ‘Energy accounting’, Purple Ella discusses a strategy for managing and balancing energy levels:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsxqOFPKi1U>
- Chris Bonello: [A survival guide for Year Sixes preparing for their SATs \(from an autistic teacher\) - Autistic Not Weird](#)
- Guide for parent-carers on autistic burnout: [Supporting Children through Autistic Burnout \(Parent/Carer Guide\) \(autisticrealms.com\)](#)

### **Making friends:**

- Ambitious About Autism (a national charity based in London) – ‘Making friends as an autistic young person’:  
<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/preparing-for-adulthood/making-friends-as-autistic-young-person>
- National Autistic Society – supporting your autistic child  
<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/family-life-and-relationships/making-friends/parents-and-carers>

Also see ACCT and Sparkle Sheffield (above) for children and young people’s social groups.

### **Siblings:**

- Sibs, a national charity supporting people who grow up with or have grown up with a disabled brother or sister  
<https://www.sibs.org.uk/youngsibs/>
- Twinkle, a sibling support group for children aged 7-16yrs who have an Autistic sibling (SEE SPARKLE SHEFFIELD and scroll down):  
<https://sparklesheffield.co.uk/what-we-do/>  
email: [info@sparklesheffield.co.uk](mailto:info@sparklesheffield.co.uk)

### **Bereavement and loss:**

- National Autistic Society website, advice on bereavement for parent/carers:  
<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/mental-health/bereavement/parents>
- Cruse website, Signs of Grief in a Child:  
<https://www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/grief-experiences/children-young-people/signs-of-grief/>
- Hope Again, Cruse’s youth website:  
<https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/>

## Sensory toys and equipment:

- Fledglings – a ‘not for profit’ shop, part of the charity ‘Contact’:  
<https://www.fledglings.org.uk/>

## General advice around benefits:

- ‘Contact for Families’ charity:  
Disability Allowance (DLA) for children under 16:  
<https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/benefits-financial-help/benefits-and-tax-credits/disability-living-allowance/>
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for individuals over 16:  
<https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/benefits-financial-help/benefits-and-tax-credits/personal-independence-payment/>
- ‘Carers Allowance – top 5 questions’  
<https://contact.org.uk/about-contact/news-and-views/carers-allowance-your-5-top-questions-answered/>

## Exploring autism and autistic identity:

- Ambitious About Autism:  
What is autism? <https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/understanding-autism/what-is-autism>  
How to talk about autism: <https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/understanding-autism/how-to-talk-about-autism>
- National Autistic Society: [Helping young people to understand their autistic identity \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk/helping-young-people-to-understand-their-autistic-identity)
- Spectrum Gaming and The Autistic Advocate, statement on neurodiversity:  
[Neurodiversity Affirming Practice | Autism Barriers to Education](https://www.spectrumgaming.org.uk/neurodiversity-affirming-practice-autism-barriers-to-education)
- Mae Grant, autistic teenager shares her story in a CBBC film:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP\\_ngrfP\\_yM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP_ngrfP_yM)
- Autistic people and masking, National Autistic Society: [NAS information on masking.](https://www.autism.org.uk/news/interesting-stories/nas-information-on-masking)
- ‘Stimming’ and repetitive behaviour, Ambitious About Autism:  
<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/information-about-autism/behaviour/repetitive-behaviours-and-stimming>

## Online, social media and podcasts:

- Purple Ella, an autistic mum who shares content on autism on YouTube/Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/TikTok

YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzske-KMAJYQn84rz6oD\\_yA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzske-KMAJYQn84rz6oD_yA)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/purpleellaandcoco/?hl=en>

- Authentically Emily, a student who is a mental health activist and autism advocate: <https://www.authenticallyemily.uk/>
- Autistic Not Weird, created by Chris Bonnelo an autistic ex-teacher, author and autism advocate. He shares content on Facebook/Instagram/YouTube/Twitter: <https://autisticnotweird.com/>
- Dan Beadle, autistic YouTuber: [Dean Beadle - YouTube](#)
- BBC Bitesize 'Schooling tips for parents of autistic children': <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zb7vn9q>
- Autistic Girls' Network – a registered charity which campaigns for better recognition and diagnosis of autistic girls, with a website and a Facebook group: <https://autisticgirlsnetwork.org/>
- Free online magazine, AuKids - the first UK magazine for parents of autistic children, co-founded by a parent and a Speech and Language Therapist: <https://www.aukids.co.uk/>
- Sally Cat: an author, blogger and illustrator, Sally Cat shares her experiences of demand avoidance (in her own words, Sally Cat identifies as “an adult PDAer”) through her website, on Facebook, YouTube and TikTok and has authored her own book on the subject: <http://www.sallycatpda.co.uk/>