

Bi-Borough Autism Advisory Team

Newsletter



Bi-borough
Inclusion Service

Autumn 2022

- Hello!
- Meet the Team
- Top Tips for Christmas
- Information and updates

To be added to our newsletter mailing list or to contact the team with a question/request for a forthcoming newsletter please contact us on:

Phone: 0207 854 5885

Email: AEYIT@rbkc.gov.uk

Information on services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.



www.rbkc.gov.uk/localoffer



Information on services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.



www.westminster.gov.uk/local-offer



Hello!

Dear Parents/ Carers,

We hope this finds you safe and well. This issue will focus on activities for the Christmas holidays. We have exciting developments to share with you regarding some occupational therapy input and welcoming new team members.

With the cost of living crisis impacting many of us, please remember that access to our service is absolutely free. Our team provides training and advice for parents/ carers of all autistic children in the Bi-Borough.

As always, if you have any ideas for parent workshops or coffee mornings, we would love to hear from you. All contributions are welcome so please do let us know if there is a specific area you would like further information on or are interested in.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and merry festive season and a very happy new year!

Warm regards

The Bi-Borough Autism Advisory Team

Meet Our New Advisor and Occupational Therapist

Lucy Munn (Autism Advisory Teacher)



Lucy has a background in psychology and teaching. She loves taking the train to various places for mini-explorations. Lucy likes running and also spending time on the sofa with her Labrador.

The best part of being an advisory teacher is that every autistic young person is different, so no matter what I do at work one day, the next will always be different. I love that variety! I enjoy that I get to always keep learning and work with such a range of people in the mission to make the world a more inclusive place.

Skye Sargent (Occupational Therapist)



Skye has a Masters in Occupational Therapy and has worked with children in a wide range of settings with differing neurodiverse conditions.

Skye is passionate about making therapy fun, motivating and engaging for children. She has a passion for arts and sports. She once worked alongside magicians to teach children with Cerebral Palsy magic tricks, as part of a hand therapy programme.

Top Tips for Christmas

Here are some tips from Skye to help with sensory regulation over the festive season:

1. Keep your routine as much as possible and include visuals as you usually have available to support your child for times of challenge and change.
2. Use social stories, calendars or charts to prepare for the lead up to Christmas/ school holidays.
3. Enjoy short and simple activities (eg. playing with putty or magic sand)
4. Prepare for "Christmas season sensory overload". Allow time for sensory breaks/ energy release. Christmas smells can be strong, lights flashy and bright and sounds can be too loud for longer durations. Consider your options in these circumstances and the preferences of your child. Reducing the amount of Christmas décor, bright lights and having quiet time scheduled can help with overload, as can ear defenders or preferred music on headphones to "tune out" for a bit. A blanket over two chairs/ or a table can be a quiet space and reduce the amount of visual overload. If your child is more of a "mover shaker", what are their usual calmers? Heavy work/ energy release activities such as running, jumping, swinging, squishy hugs/ bouncing on an exercise ball, taking a break in a quiet area.
5. Remember to have on hand your sensory "go to" aids whether it's ear defenders, a weighted blanket, creating a quiet den under the table/ in their room, having preferred foods and drinks available.

If you would like to ask Skye a question about OT and autism (that we can share with other parents via this newsletter) we would love to hear from you.



Thomas the Tank Engine's First Autistic Character

Bruno the Brake Car, is Thomas the Tank Engine's first autistic character. He is voiced by nine year old autistic actor, Elliot Garcia. Mattel (who own the franchise) worked with organisations including Autistic Self Advocacy Network and National Autistic Society UK (NAS UK), which helped cast Garcia in the role of Bruno.



NAS UK said that with 700,000 autistic adults and children across the country, the inclusion of a character in the show was an “amazing moment for autistic people”. “It is important that everyone sees autistic characters on our screens because there are 160,000 school-age autistic children in the UK and they want to see their stories told,” said Tom Purser, the charity’s head of guidance, volunteering and campaigns.

“But it is also important that non-autistic children get insight and understanding into what it can be like to be autistic.”

Watch a behind the scenes clip here: <https://youtu.be/o7lyHo2CjE>

Excerpt taken from the Guardian online Wed 7 September 2022

Resource of the Month: Visual Sensory Regulation Meter

The Christmas holidays can full of festive cheer, which can be fun but also very noisy and visually overstimulating. To help autistic children and young people (CYP) to regulate the levels of sensory input around them a visual meter can sometimes help.

The meter can be used to indicate sensory input levels to others or it can be used to help regulate autistic children and young people, by indicating to them visually, and checking in with them if they are becoming overstimulated.

Here is an example (for younger children use 3 sections instead of 5):




Parent/ Carer Coffee Morning

Are you a parent / carer of a child who is on the diagnostic pathway? Have you been waiting for an autism assessment and feel you would like some support?

Join us to discuss and think together in an informal forum on Wednesday 30th November @ **10am – 11.00am via Microsoft Teams**

Register your interest here:
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Support Group: Parents of Autistic Boys (Under 11's)

Are you a parent / carer of a boy under 11 years of age, who has a diagnosis of autism?

Would you like to meet other parents / carers of autistic boys?

Join us for the introductory group on **Thursday 1st December @ 10am – 11.30am via Microsoft Teams**

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PARENTS / CARERS OF AUTISTIC BOYS – SUPPORT GROUP

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Support Group: Parents of Autistic Boys (Over 11's)

Are you a parent / carer of a boy over 11 years of age, who has a diagnosis of autism?

Would you like to meet other parents / carers of autistic boys?

Join us for the introductory group – **Wednesday 30th November @ 4pm-5.30pm via Microsoft Teams**

Register your interest: AEYIT@rbkc.gov.uk



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MANGA CLUB 'XPRESS

Our highly regarded 'Manga Club 'Xpress is open to 10-16 year olds.

It's held at the Westbourne Park Family Centre. Young people can access a range of social activities such as role-playing games (Dungeons and Dragons) and sharing ideas and tips on Manga characters and art.

Sessions run on Wednesdays from 4.30- 6pm.

For more information please visit:

www.westbourneparkfamilycentre.org.uk



Barbican Relaxed Cinema Screenings and Events

The Barbican Centre offers relaxed cinema events every month, a wide variety of accessible screenings, and a free Access Membership. As an Access Member, you'll be able to let the Barbican know about your requirements and book access tickets. If you need the assistance of an essential companion, you'll also be able to book a free ticket for them. You can join here:

Join Access Membership | tickets.barbican.org.uk

barbican

FIT FOR LIFE YOUTH

Fit For Life Youth (FFLY) will be running an SEND Inclusive session at Lancaster Youth Hub on Mondays and Tuesdays! The open access session will be an opportunity for young people aged 11+ to get involved in physical activity in a safe environment, meet new friends and learn all about nutrition/exercise.

To support young people attending, FFLY will be holding a taster session to help young people visualise the space and feel comfortable attending future session.

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/FmFttJns3B7KVqhv5>

For any questions, please contact Leonardo leonardo@fitforlifeyouth.co.uk



Information and Updates

Parents Autism Awareness Course (PAAC)

Our highly commended Parents Autism Awareness Courses (PAAC) will run again in the Spring Term 2022-2023.

We will be running the PAAC Secondary and PAAC 5yrs+, which will run on Wednesday mornings. The PAAC – Puberty and Relationships. All sessions will be delivered via the Teams platform.

You can register your interest by emailing AEYIT@rbkc.gov.uk with your name and which course you are interested in attending.



2022-23

- **Autumn Term** – PAAC Under 5s; Over 5s
PAAC Siblings
- **Spring Term** – PAAC Over 5s; Secondary;
PAAC Puberty and Relationships
- **Summer Term** – PAAC Under 5s; Secondary

For further information please email:
AEYIT@rbkc.gov.uk

Free Mindfulness Sessions for Parents/ Carers

Ziekelle (Advisory teacher for ASD) and Carolyn (Advisory teacher for SLCN) are offering an hour long stress reduction using mindfulness techniques for parents of children and young people with ASD/DLD. It will run for 6 weeks from Monday 31st of October until Monday 5th of December inclusive and will be an hour online, free session for any parent/carer.

Mindfulness is really just about using the breath as an anchor to being in the present moment. Being in this moment can support the relief of anxiety and stress as we stop worrying about what might happen or ruminating about what has already happened, and just be in the present. We will also explain a little bit of the theory about how our brains react to keep us safe and how we can learn some techniques to notice and override that reaction to lead to better and calmer interactions with our children, families and friends.

Please contact Carolyn cgelenter@westminster.gov.uk or Ziekelle znoakhes@westminster.gov.uk for further details or for a place on the sessions.

