

**THE TELFORD AND WREKIN
DIRECTORY OF SERVICES AND
INFORMATION**

FOR

**ADULTS WITH
HIGH ABILITY AUTISM**

OR

ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

May 2014

INTRODUCTION

This publication provides information about current services and support that is available to adults with high ability autism or Asperger's syndrome and their carers/families in the Telford and Wrekin Council area. It was originally produced by the Senior Practitioner for People with Asperger's Syndrome at Telford and Wrekin Council but is now kept updated by Sara Heath from the Autonomy Self-Help and Social Group. This is the most recent issue of the directory which was updated in May 2014.



CONTENTS

	Page Numbers
Introduction	2
Contents	2
What is Autism?	3
What is Asperger's syndrome?	4
1. Advocacy, social support, mentoring and self help for people with Asperger's syndrome and high ability autism	6
2. Support for Parents/Partners and Carers	8
3. Publications/Resources	9
4. Other Organisations	10
5. Online Resources	12
6. Safety in the Community	13
7. Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Services	14
8. Education	15
9. Employment, Work Experience and Volunteering	17
10. Welfare Benefits	17
11. Support with Benefits and Appeals	18
12. Awareness Training (in Autism and Asperger's Syndrome)	19
13. Additional support group information	21

WHAT IS AUTISM?

You may hear many different names used to describe autism. These could include:

- Classic autism
- On the autism spectrum
- Kanner's syndrome
- High-functioning autism
- Able autism
- High-ability autism
- Atypical autism
- Asperger's syndrome
- Semantic pragmatic disorder (SPD)
- Autistic tendencies
- Pervasive developmental disorder (PDD)

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASCs) are umbrella terms that are often used to describe the broad spectrum of difficulties that make up the condition of autism. The idea of a spectrum (or continuum) is useful because it acknowledges that people with a diagnosis of autism can range from having average or above average intelligence to having severe learning disabilities, and that the way he/she shows his or her autism will be unique for each individual. Many people with autism do not like the use of the term "autism spectrum disorder" prefer to use "autism spectrum condition" instead.

Some Facts about Autism

- It is a 'hidden disability' because people with autism are usually no different in appearance from anyone else
- It is now believed to affect as many as 1 in 60 people
- It is believed to be 4 times more common in males than females
- It is a lifelong disability, but getting the right help and support from people who understand can really make a difference.
- Nobody knows for certain what causes autism, but it occurs in the womb and research points to a genetic link.
- People with autism can be very sensitive to sounds, tastes, smells, touch or the sensations caused by what they see.
- People with autism may have additional health needs or mental health difficulties.

Autism

Autism affects the way a person relates to other people and this can cause difficulties with social interaction, communication, and flexibility of thought. In addition, the person may have difficulties with empathy and also understanding and expressing emotions.

Communication – Talking and Understanding

People with autism may have language difficulties may range from no speech at all to

fluent talking. They may not be able to make “small talk” and their speech may often be repetitive and one sided, focussing on their own areas of interest, rather than true reciprocal conversation. Some people with autism have a delay in processing speech and language, which significantly affects their understanding. Others may not recognise a person’s body language, gesture, tone of voice and/or facial expression.

Social Interaction – Getting on with other people

Social difficulties may include problems making and maintaining relationships and the misunderstanding of social rules or other people’s behaviour. A person with autism may not cope well in social situations. He/she may misread people’s feelings, make inappropriate comments, or may not seem to be interested in being with them.

Flexibility in Thinking and Behaviour

People with autism often have difficulties in making sense of the world, and being flexible. They are often rigid in their way of thinking and behaving and they often have narrow interests and enjoy repetitive activity. Many people with autism have problems with coping with change, and being out of routine can cause them anxiety and distress.

What can Help?

Clear Language

- Keep your own language simple
- Keep sentences short and to the point
- Use the person’s name to get their attention first
- Give time for the person with autism to process what you say and to respond
- Avoid ‘flowery’ phrases and abstract ideas
- Speak clearly and watch for signs of understanding of what is said
- Give visual clues, if appropriate, to aid understanding e.g. photos, lists, calendars.

Clear Structure

- Provide a clear structure to a day so he/she knows what to expect and when
- Keep to predictable routines
- To minimise anxiety, try to explain any changes in advance

From ‘A Guide to Autism’ by autism.westmidlands

WHAT IS ASPERGER’S SYNDROME?

People with Asperger’s syndrome are usually of average to high ability and many have high level academic qualifications and creative abilities.

People with Asperger syndrome have similar problems to those with autism, eg communication, social difficulties and inflexibility of thought and behaviour; but their main problem is they are often highly intelligent and seem to be more independent and able than they really are. People with Asperger’s syndrome appear to cope well in some areas of life whilst having unexpected gaps in ability in others; the mismatch of intelligence versus performance can frequently lead to a misunderstanding of the person with Asperger’s syndrome. In many cases, individuals with Asperger’s syndrome are not diagnosed until adulthood and often have had to cope without specific support or understanding of their difficulties This can lead to individuals developing additional (or co-morbid) conditions such as depression, severe anger, anxiety, or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Although individuals with Asperger syndrome vary enormously in the way their condition affects them and in their ability to hide or overcome their problems, there are some common features.

Common Features of Asperger's Syndrome:

- Stilted speech, repetitive use of phrases and topics of conversation limited to own interests.
- Inability to pick up on verbal clues and hints and to understand and use facial expression, body language or eye contact appropriately.
- Little insight into the unwritten rules of human relationships. May lack empathy with other people and appear rude selfish or tactless. Seem to lack understanding of how people affect and influence each other. May have an unusual sense of humour.
- Social situations can often cause extreme anxiety, linked to an awareness of being different and not fitting in, fear of failure, being misunderstood or not being able to understand what others expect.
- Change, especially unplanned change, can be experienced as very stressful and unpredictable, repetitive activities can provide reassurance.
- High motivation and knowledge in own field of special interest, sometimes to the point of obsession.
- Good attention to detail but great difficulty in seeing 'the bigger picture' because this requires flexible and abstract thinking, which they find difficult.
- Difficulty in predicting consequences of their actions or putting things into context
- Difficulties with planning and time management, anxiety when working under pressure and a perfectionist streak.
- Poor spatial awareness, motor skills and co-ordination may also be affected.
- Unusual, repetitive movements, tics
- Anxiety, depression and motivation problems

What can help?

Lack of understanding of the condition by the person and others may increase many of the difficulties associated with Asperger's syndrome. Once the condition and its effects are understood, the individual should be supported to work on the negative aspects, making the most of the positive. Qualities like honesty, reliability, determination and dedication are associated with the condition, and many people show talents in maths, music, the visual arts, drama, computing, science and technology.

Support

Early support can help as once problems occur, anxiety can overtake; issues can become exaggerated and become much harder to deal with. Maximum support at the outset can be reduced as the individual gains confidence and experience.

Structure

Written or visual information will help the individual to cope with possible change, and a structured environment may help to make events more understandable and predictable.

Consistency

A consistency of approach will help to prevent anxiety. People with Asperger's syndrome find it difficult to engage with other people; they may not have many strategies to deal with difficult situations. With the right support and an understanding environment, people with Asperger's syndrome can develop their skills and be helped to find their own ways of adapting to society's demands, making the most of their different way of viewing the world.
Adapted from 'A Guide to Asperger Syndrome' by autism.westmidlands

1. ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ASPERGER'S SYNDROME AND HIGH ABILITY AUTISM

Organisation: NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY – SOCIAL GROUP

Contact: Eric Heath

Telephone: 07974067833

E-Mail: eric.heath@nas.org.uk

Service provided: Adult Social Group. Eric and volunteer Beth, run a social group supported by the NAS in Telford for people from Shropshire and Telford over the age of 18, who have a diagnosis of autism or Asperger's syndrome or are waiting to obtain one. The group meet on a Thursday once a month and the members choose what they will do for each session and this can include going to the cinema, ten pin bowling and meals out.

Eric should be contacted directly for more information or to make an official referral. There may be a waiting list prior to a member joining the group.

Organisation: AUTONOMY SOCIAL GROUPS in Shrewsbury and Telford
AUTONOMY FOR WOMEN
AUTONOMY BOARD GAMES CLUB

Contact: Sara Heath and Eric Heath

Telephone: 01743 821363/ 07895142801

E-Mail: autonomyschropshire@yahoo.co.uk

Website: <http://www.shropshireautonomy.co.uk/>

Service provided: Autonomy is an independent, nationally recognised and award winning, Shropshire based self-help and social group. We provide activities and support for adults and young people over 16 years who have high functioning autism and Asperger's syndrome with or without a medical diagnosis. Membership of Autonomy is free, and a free bi-monthly newsletter is available by email and mail.

Autonomy is an informal group; individuals can join in at any time providing contact has been made initially with Sara or Eric. Members enjoy regular meetings usually at a local pub in Shrewsbury or Telford but also have other social activities and occasional outings which are listed in the Autonomy newsletter, on our website and our Facebook page.

The main social groups are held in pubs in Shrewsbury and Telford. Members from Telford are welcome to attend the Shrewsbury socials and Shrewsbury members are welcome at the Telford socials.

Autonomy for Women is held once a month in Shrewsbury for women or those who identify themselves as women only. Autonomy Board Games Club is a monthly group held in central Telford for those who enjoy a more structured social event. Please bring a game to play.

Sara and Eric provide friendship, support and advice to those who do not wish to attend the social events and can be contacted by e-mail or phone.

You can refer yourself to Autonomy or have help to so do and Sara or Eric are happy to provide more information. As it is a drop in based group there is no waiting list.

For more information on Autonomy events see list on page 22.

Organisation: ASPERGER'S SUPPORT GROUP (ASG)

Contact: Dan Woodvine (dtw@shropshireaspergerssupport.org.uk)

Telephone: 01743 595314

E-Mail: info@shropshireaspergerssupport.org.uk

Website: www.shropsg.org.uk

Service provided: The ASG is a user led and facilitated discussion and support group for people in Shropshire which have been diagnosed with high functioning autism/Asperger's syndrome and offers advice, support, and friendship plus encouraging people to understand their difficulties. The group is facilitated by Alison Hinks with support from Mike Tupling, and meets at The Roy Fletcher Centre, 12-17 Cross Hill, Shrewsbury SY1 1JE one evening a month from 7-9pm.

Dan should be contacted directly for more information or to make an official referral. There may be a waiting list prior to a member joining the group

Organisation: ASPERGER'S MENTORNG SERVICE

Contact: Eric Heath

Telephone: 077959551610

Email: soundsunusual@yahoo.co.uk

Service provided: Pre and post diagnostic help and support and 1-1 mentoring and coaching for people with Asperger's syndrome or high ability autism from Eric who has lived experience of the condition. Eric offers this service privately at an hourly rate but will also accept work via personal budgets.

Organisation: AUTONOMY PLUS

Contact: Sara Heath

Telephone: 01743 821363/ 07895142801

Email: aspergersautonomy@gmail.com

Service provided: Sara runs a private independent consultancy and can offer pre diagnostic assessments, post diagnostic advice and support, independent autism specific social care assessments and reports, help with benefits including ESA, DLA and PIP forms, appeals and tribunals and autism/Asperger's specialist support letters. Sara also offers mentoring and relationship support sessions to individuals and couples.

Organisation: TELFORD ASPERGER'S DROP-IN (ADI)

Contact: Tina Jones or Malcolm Foster

Address: Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford Town Centre, TF3 4HS

Telephone: Main number: 01952 916109

Email: admin@listennotlabel.org.uk; tina.jones@listennotlabel.co.uk

Website: www.listen-not-label.org.uk

Service provided: This is for Telford and Wrekin residents only, supported by Autonomy, STACS, A4U and Listen not Label and run in our own downstairs room.

There are weekly "Activity" sessions run by staff and volunteers each Thursday from 10:00-12:00 and weekly "Social and Discussion" sessions from 10:30am – 2:30pm (10:30-14:30) each Friday run with Sara Heath and volunteers. Benefits advice is available from Majella O'Dwyer and Jenny Allman from A4U, by appointment, and general support from staff on request also on a Friday. Carer's support (Small Steps) with Louise is also on a Friday.

2. SUPPORT FOR PARENTS/PARTNERS AND CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH ASPERGERS SYNDROME AND HIGH ABILITY AUTISM

Organisation: CARER'S CONTACT CENTRE
Contact: Louise Griffiths
Address: The Glebe Centre, Glebe Street, Wellington, Telford, TF1 1JP
Telephone: 01952 262064
E-Mail: louise.griffiths@carerscontact.org.uk
Website: www.carerscontact.org.uk

Service provided: The Carers' Contact Centre (CCC) offers Carer's Assessments for parents/carers of adults with mental health conditions, autism and Asperger's syndrome and administers Carers Short Break grants on behalf of Telford Council. CCC provides up to date information and quarterly newsletter which shares carers' comments, experiences and views along with local and national information for carers. It provides support when most needed, links carers to organisations that can provide specialist help and creates opportunities for carers to have a voice in planning and developing services. A carer's information booklet is available on request to carers, professionals and voluntary groups who provide support for carers.

Organisation: S.T.A.C.S (SHROPSHIRE AND TELFORD ASPERGER'S CARER'S SUPPORT)
Contact: Peter Hopkins
Telephone: 01952 461139
E-mail: peter.hopkins1@btinternet.com

Service provided: STACS is a free to join, independent constituted group of and for parents and carers of adults over the age of 16 years, who have Asperger's syndrome, or who are seeking a diagnosis. STACS meets on the first Wednesday of the month in Telford in January, March, May, July, September and November in the Community Room at Asda Donnington Wood Superstore, St Georges Road, Telford, TF2 7RX, and Inn on the Green at Bank Farm Rd, Radbrook, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 6DU [in February, April, June, August, October and December. There is an evening meeting on a Tuesday once every two months at the Inn on the Green. Refreshments are provided for a small fee.

STACS provides support, advice and a chance to meet other parents and aims to improve services and support for adults with autism in Telford and Shropshire. New members welcome.

Organisation: TELFORD ASPERGER'S "Small Steps" CARER'S DROP-IN
Contact: Louise Griffiths
Address: Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford Town Centre, TF3 4HS
Telephone: Malcolm: 07814 633067 Main number: 01952 211421
Email: admin@listennotlabel.org.uk; louise.griffiths@carerscontact.org.uk

Service provided: Carer's Drop-in sessions are available from 10:30am – 2:30pm on a Friday run by Louise and supported by Carer's Contact Centre. Benefits advice is available from Majella O'Dwyer from A4U. General support is available from staff members and Asperger's specific support from independent practitioner, Sara Heath from Autonomy.

Carers Support contd.

Organisation: WYLDWOODS

Contact: Steph Brett

Address: Dean Corner Farm, Broseley, Shropshire TF12 5JH

Telephone: 01952 884224 Mobile: 07816113539

Email: steph.brett@wyldwoods.co.uk

Service provided: Creative arts sessions and “Me time” sessions for carers are run on a regular basis throughout the year and supported by Telford Council, Contact Steph directly for more information.

3. PUBLICATIONS/RESOURCES

Organisation: TELFORD AND WREKIN LIBRARY SERVICE

Contact: Wellington Library

Address: Wellington Civic and Leisure Centre, Larkin Way, Off Tan Bank,
Wellington, Telford, TF1 1LX

Telephone: 01952 382990

Service provided:

Wellington Library holds the STACS collection of over sixty books on autism and Asperger’s syndrome and the Afasic Collection of books and games to aid communication.

Organisation: NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY

Contact: NAS Publications

Telephone: 020 7903 3595

E-mail: publications@nas.org.uk

Website: <http://www.autism.org.uk/pubs>

<http://www.autism.org.uk/en-gb/shop.aspx>

Services provided: The National Autistic Society has a website full of leaflets, books and resources on autism and Asperger’s syndrome. They sell their books through Central Books 0845 458 9911. Lines are open 10:00 to 17:30, Monday to Friday.

NAS ASPERGER UNITED

Contact: NAS Publications

Telephone: 020 7903 3595

E-mail: asp.utd@nas.org.uk

Website: www.autism.org.uk/aspergerunited

Services provided: Asperger United is a quarterly newsletter written by people with autism and Asperger’s syndrome for people with ASCs and discusses what people with an ASC feel about certain issues and provides an opportunity for people with an ASC to submit articles. There is also a penpal service. Asperger United is mailed free to individuals with a diagnosis of Asperger’s syndrome or autism, although donations are gratefully received. A copy of the latest Asperger United is on the website.

NAS - INFORMATION AND ONLINE RESOURCES

Telephone: 0207 833 2299 Monday – Friday: 10am – 4pm
Website: www.autism.org.uk/infocentre
Email: info@nas.org.uk

Service provided: The NAS information centre provides a specialist information service for professionals working with people with autism and their families, and students and researchers studying autism. This includes:

- A reference library, free enquiry service, specialist literature searches, and searches for services
- Information sheets on specific subjects and information packs for particular professions
- Subscription based information update services on the latest publications, training and events in the field of autism

Organisation: JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS

Telephone: 020 7833 2307
E-mail: post@jkp.com
Website: <http://www.jkp.com/catalogue/aspergerautism>

Services provided: Jessica Kingsley Publishers are the foremost publishers of books on autism and Asperger's syndrome, for parents, professional and people with the conditions. Many of their books are written by people with autism and Asperger's syndrome.

4. OTHER AUTISM SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Organisation: AUTISM WEST MIDLANDS
Address: Regent Court, George Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 1NU
Telephone: 0303 03 00 111 (helpline)
E-mail: info@autismwestmidlands.org.uk
Website: www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk

Services provided: Helpline

Autism West Midlands (AWM) runs a helpline (0303 03 00 111) which can give advice, support and signposting to other services.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.30am - 4pm	9.30am - 4pm	9.30am - 2.30pm	9.30am - 4pm	9.30am - 2.30pm

Awareness Training

AWM offer a variety of courses on Awareness of Autism/Asperger's Syndrome and other relevant topics.

Family Support

AWM provide a service to children and adults with autism and Asperger's syndrome, their parents and carers. They offer workshops for families on a variety of topics e.g. communication, behaviour management, dealing with adolescence, building self esteem, physical interventions, access to rights and services and anger management. These workshops are delivered regularly across the region and aim to empower parents and give the skills and knowledge necessary to deal with what can be very challenging situations.

Autism Westmidlands contd.

Criminal Justice

People with ASC are often vulnerable and can be brought to attention of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) for various reasons associated with their conditions and a possible lack of understanding or poor interpretation of their behaviours. There are some useful Criminal Justice downloads on the site including a useful booklet called Autism and the Criminal Justice System, Advice and guidance for professionals.

http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/content/674763/help_advice/downloads/#CJSHelpsheets

AWM also encourages the usage of the ASC "ATTENTION Card" which is for only people with a medical diagnosis of an ASC. <http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/content/675163>

The ATTENTION card is free and can be ordered on line at:

http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/content/710343/attention_card_form/

or by contacting Autism West Midlands and asking them to send you an application form which must be completed and sent back to them.

AWM Downloadable resources

Autism West Midlands provide webpage of useful online resources in the form of downloadable PDFs that can be printed, saved or read online. They contain practical advice and strategies for families, carers, teachers and other professionals.

Information sheets for families including education, diagnosis, sensory issues etc

Benefits and Welfare Reform sheets

Help sheets for Criminal Justice professionals with a useful document for Accident and Emergency staff: A&E Staff and Fire Fighters and Autism

Autism and the MMR, and Autism and DSMV

NATIONAL SUPPORT

Organisation: THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY
Address: 393, City Road, London, EC1V 1NG
Telephone: 0207 833 2299 or the helpline number 0808 800 4104
Website: www.autism.org.uk

Service provided: Information, advice and support

NAS AUTISM HELPLINE: 0808 800 4104 Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm (not bank holidays)

Email: autismhelpline@nas.org.uk

Service provided: The confidential helpline will provide details of local support in your area, will send out information packs, and will provide information sheets on a variety of issues to do with autism spectrum conditions (also known as disorders) including autism and Asperger's syndrome.

NAS PARENT TO PARENT:

Telephone: 0808 800 4106

Website: www.autism.org.uk/p2p

Service provided: Parent to Parent is a confidential telephone support service provided by trained parent volunteers. Parents of children or adults with autism can call for free at any time and leave a message and contact number. A volunteer will phone back as soon as possible.

5. ONLINE RESOURCES

NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY: www.autism.org.uk

Service Provided: The NAS website contains information about ASCs, the National Autistic Society and its nationwide activities and services.

NAS AUTISM SERVICES DIRECTORY: www.autism.org.uk/directory

Service Provided: This is an online services directory of autism services, support groups and training courses throughout the UK.

NAS SIGNPOST:

Website: www.autism.org.uk/signpost

Service Provided: Signpost provides personalised information for parents/carers and people with autism spectrum disorders relevant to age, diagnosis and location. It includes information on benefits, key services and training.

NAS AUTISM DATA:

Website: www.autism.org.uk/autismdata

Service Provided: Autism Data is a searchable database providing information on published research, articles, books and multimedia on autism.

In addition the following websites may be of use.

www.autismlondon.org.uk (Autism London)

www.autismresearchcentre.com (ARC/Autism research centre)

www.aspergernauts.co.uk

www.shyness.meetup.com (social anxiety)

www.maxineaston.co.uk (Maxine Aston)

www.wrongplanet.net

www.aspievillage.org.uk

www.awares.org (Autism Cymru)

www.aspieaffection.com (dating)

WEBSITES MAINTAINED BY PEOPLE WITH AN ASC:

autismforum.net looks at autism culture and music and other online community resources
Wrong Planet and Aspies for Freedom have discussion boards.

There is also the Autistic Rights Movement (ARM) which encourages autistic people, their carers and society to adopt a position of neurodiversity, accepting autism as a variation in functioning rather than a mental disorder to be cured. ARM advocates greater tolerance of autistic behaviour and teaching autistic individuals skills that allow them to better cope with non-autistic world rather than forcing them to behave like their neurotypical peers

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES / WEBSITES

THE CINEMA EXHIBITORS ASSOCIATION CARD:

The CEA card allows for a person, in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments, who purchases his own ticket to take his carer into the cinema for free. The CEA card costs £5.50 and lasts for one year. An application form can be downloaded from the website and you need to provide a passport photograph with your application.

Website: www.ceacard.co.uk.

THE DISABLED PERSON'S RAILCARD:

A Disabled Person's Railcard can be purchased by people who have Disability Living Allowance at the middle rate or above, for £18.00 a year or £54.00 for three years. This card entitles the user and an adult companion to 1/3 off most train tickets in Britain.

Website: <http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/>

5. SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY

AUTISM SAFETY – THE ATTENTION CARD

Organisation: AUTISM WESTMIDLANDS

Telephone: 0303 03 00 111 (helpline)

E-mail: info@autismwestmidlands.org.uk

Website: www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk

Service provided: Attention Cards can help if a person with Aspergers syndrome needs the help of emergency services and can be shown to the Police, Ambulance and Fire Services in times of distress, with an emergency contact number on the back. Attention Cards are free, but are only available for people with a full diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome or autism.

AUTISM SAFETY – THE AUTISM ALERT CARD

Organisation: THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY

Address: 393, City Road, London, EC1V 1NG

Telephone: 0808 800 4104 10am-4pm Monday to Friday

Website and online shop: www.autism.org.uk/card

Service provided: The Autism Alert card, (cost £2.50) can be carried by a person with autism whether diagnosed or not and used in problem situations, where they may find communication difficult. The Autism Alert card, can be produced in a range of languages, is designed to tell people about the condition, and asks them to show respect and tolerance. The card comprises a wallet which contains a leaflet of key facts about autism, and a credit-card style insert where people can write emergency contact details.

THE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY (“ICE”) - AUTISM CARDS

In Case of Emergency (ICE) cards can help in the event of a crisis or medical emergency. They provide basic information of autism, ADHD and a range of medical conditions in an easy-to-access form. The autism card states “In Case of Emergency: This card carrier is autistic”, and it has a coloured jigsaw autism motif. The cards cost £2.99 postage-free via the website. You can also purchase an additional key ring fob card for £1.20.

There are no contact numbers – this product is available only via the internet.

Website:

<http://www.icecard.co.uk/purchase.html?gclid=COGXzcfSirsCFU ItAodiUcAnA#!~/product/id=27787838>

6. MENTAL HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES – NHS AUTISM OR ASPERGER’S SYNDROME DIAGNOSIS

Organisation: SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE AND SHROPSHIRE
HEALTHCARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Contact: Dr John Langton or Dr Pravin Thevathesan
Address: Developmental Neurosciences and Learning Disabilities Directorate,
Mytton Oak
Royal Shrewsbury Hospital North
Mytton Oak Road
Cophorne
Shrewsbury
SY3 8XQ

Telephone: 01743 261181

Service provided: Dr Langton and Dr Pravin are Consultant Psychiatrists within the NHS for people with learning disabilities and autism. They provide a diagnostic only service in Telford and Shrewsbury for autism spectrum conditions including Asperger’s syndrome using the DISCO or ADI diagnostic assessments. Referrals can be made via a GP or health professional.

NB There is a long waiting list for this service.

7. EDUCATION

Organisation: TCAT (TELFORD COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY)

Julie Finch - Head of School for Essential and Vocational Skills
Mary Gilbert – Adult Education
Chris Shouli – Director of Student Services
Paula Costin – Teacher/trainer in ASC

Address: Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford, TF1 2NP
Telephone: 01952 642237 (Student Services)
01952 642406 (Foundation Services)
Website: www.tcat.ac.uk

Service provided: TCAT offers a range of courses suitable for students with differing degrees of ASC and academic ability levels. Individual levels of support needed will be ascertained at interview. TCAT have a team of skilled tutors and learning support staff who are experienced in working with students with ASCs. As part of their specialist facilities they have a “sanctuary” room where students are able to withdraw from lessons should they need some quiet and supported time out.

Organisation: NEW COLLEGE, TELFORD

Address: King Street, Wellington, Telford TF1 1NY
Telephone: 01952 641 892 (Student Services)
E-mail: info@nct.ac.uk
Website: www.newcollegetelford.ac.uk

Service provided: New College is a sixth form college which offers a range of GCSE, AS level, A level and BTEC courses for school leavers. They also offer opportunities for mature students including Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Information Technology, Learn Direct, and Higher National Diplomas.

Organisation: SKILL (NATIONAL BUREAU FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES)

Telephone: 020 7450 0620
Help line 0800 3285050 (1.30 – 4.30 p.m. Tues and Thurs)
E-mail: info@skill.org.uk
Website: www.skill.org.uk

Service provided: SKILL is a national voluntary organisation that aims to develop opportunities for people with disabilities and learning difficulties in post 16 education, training, employment and volunteering.

NAS ADVOCACY FOR EDUCATION SERVICE:

Website: www.autism.org.uk/advocacy

Email: advocacy@nas.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 800 4102 (Leave a message on the answering service and they will call you back (free from landlines and most mobiles).

Service provided The Education Rights Service provides impartial, confidential information, advice and support on education rights and entitlements for parents and carers of pre-school and school-age children with autism to help them get the educational support their child needs.

8. EMPLOYMENT, WORK EXPERIENCE AND VOLUNTEERING

Organisation: **JOBCENTRE PLUS**

Contact: Disability Employment Advisers at your local Job Centre

Service provided:

- Practical job search assistance and support
- Work based assessment of your skills and abilities
- Support with the Work Choice programme
- Work preparation through short work experience placements
- Job introduction scheme – Employer's subsidy £75 per week for up to 6 weeks
- Information about Access to Work – a flexible package of financial assistance for disabled people starting work or in work
- Developing good practice with employers in recruitment of people with disabilities and the retention of employees who become disabled or whose condition worsens.

Organisation: **FUTUREFOCUS**

Telephone: 01952 380000.

Service provided:

FutureFocus (formally known as Connexions) is a free support service for 13-19 year olds (up to 25 years for those with autism and Asperger's syndrome which are called additional needs). They provide impartial information, advice and guidance on education, employment or training, careers and future planning. They also help with some problem solving.

Young people are also offered the support of a Careers Adviser who offers impartial, confidential advice and can help with learning and career plans.

They can also help with the following:

- Choosing the right courses,
- Finding the right careers information,
- Overcoming reasons not to carry on with learning,
- Increasing confidence and building up communication skills,
- Personal problems or issues (e.g. bullying).
- Getting extra help with key skills,
- Involving family in learning plans, if needed.
- Advice on new legislation regarding Raising the Participation Age (RPA).

Futurefocus opening hours are:

Madeley Centre (12-14 Court Street, Madeley, Telford, TF7 5EB.

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9.30am-12.30pm and 1.15pm-4.30pm

Closed Wednesdays and Fridays

Wellington Library

Monday to Friday 1-4.30pm

Oakengates (The Place Theatre)

Wednesday 1-4.30pm

Organisation: TURNAROUND – TELDFORD AND WREKIN COUNCIL

Contact: Mark Purcell

Email: turnaround@telford.gov.uk

Telephone: 01952 388830

Service Provided

- For young people aged 16-18? (or up to 25 and a Learner with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities eg autism, Asperger's syndrome or other special needs).
- Who are currently out of work, education and training
- And unsure what to do next in terms of careers and training

Turnaround courses are usually 2 days per week for a 16 week course. They start all year round and are based at a variety of venues across the area. Turnaround is open to all candidates who want to take that first step back into work, training or education or those who are unsure what they want to do.

The course covers a wide range of activities (from cooking right through to outdoor pursuits) and teaches the kinds of skills that will help with finding the right job or training opportunity. Turnaround is an informal, safe place to learn where young people can improve skills, try new things and gain confidence before moving onto the next step on the career ladder. Bursaries (funding) may be available for 16-19 year olds.

Organisation: LANDAU

Contact: Carole Moreton (information and advice)

Rachel Cole (Project Manager for Education)

Address: 5, Landau Court, Tan Bank, Wellington, Telford, TF1 1HE

Telephone: 01952 245015

E-mail: carole.moreton@landau.co.uk;

rachel.cole@landau.co.uk

Website: www.landau.co.uk

Service provided: Landau provide quality supported employment opportunities to people with a disability including autism by providing work based training, one-to-one mentoring and the resources necessary for individuals to achieve their potential. They have recently received funding to run the Turnaround programme mentioned in the article above. Referrals should be made by a Future Focus, JobCentrePlus and individuals can self refer.

Organisation: **EEAST - EMPLOYMENT and EDUCATION ADVISORY TEAM
TELFORD AND WREKIN COUNCIL**

Address: Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF4 3JA
Telephone: 01952 381503

Service provided: The EEAST service offers employment support (advice, guidance, education and training) for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, autism, Aspergers, mental health conditions or complex needs for Telford & Wrekin clients who are 18 years old or over. Specialist Advisors can offer help with writing a CV, job applications, finding work experience or work based training, work trails, support at interview, travel training, job coaching, talking to employers and guidance on universal job match and benefits.

9. WELFARE BENEFITS

People with ASCs and their parents/ partners or carers may be eligible for a range of disability welfare benefits according to their particular needs and circumstances.

DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS: www.dwp.gov.net

TELFORD JOBCENTRE PLUS: Telford House, Southwater Way, Telford, Shropshire,
TF3 4PD
Telephone: 01952 652800

WELLINGTON JOBCENTRE PLUS: 67, New Street, Telford, TF1 1NW
Telephone: 01952 652700

THE DISABILITY LIVING, PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT AND ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE ENQUIRY LINE

Telephone: 0800 917 2222
Textphone: 0800 917 7777
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT eligibility checker
<https://www.gov.uk/pip-checker>

EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE:

Telephone: National number 0800 055 6688 **Shropshire local number:** 0345 608
6545 / 0845 602 0206:
Website: <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/how-to-claim>

CARER'S ALLOWANCE ENQUIRY LINE:

Telephone: 0845 608 4321
Website: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance-unit>

JOB SEEKER'S ALLOWANCE:

Telephone: 0800 055 6688
Website: <https://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance/overview>

HOUSING BENEFIT:

Organisation: Telford & Wrekin Council
Telephone: 01952 383838
Address: First Point, Addenbrooke House, Ironmaster's Way, Telford, TF3 4NT
Email: housing.benefit@telford.gov.uk

Webpage: http://www.telford.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.aspx?categoryID=69&documentID=24

Service provided: Those who live on Welfare Benefits may be entitled to Housing Benefit. Applications, assessments and eligibility can be dealt with "while you wait" but applicants can apply on line or can phone and book an appointment with the Benefit Officer. This office also deals with the Underoccupancy Rules or the Spare Room Deduction (also known as the Bedroom Tax) and can help individuals access the Discretionary Housing Payment fund if they have an extra bedroom and meet the criteria for disability related or caring needs.

COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT:

Organisation: Telford & Wrekin Council
Telephone: 01952 383838
Webpage: http://www.telford.gov.uk/homepage/110/council_tax
Email: council.tax@telford.gov.uk

Service provided: Those who live on a pension or Welfare Benefits may be entitled to help with paying some of their Council Tax, although everyone now must pay a contribution even on low income. Applications, assessments and eligibility can be dealt with online or "while you wait" or by booking an appointment with the Benefit Officer.

10. SUPPORT WITH BENEFITS AND APPEALS

Organisation: **TELFORD CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU (CAB)**
Address: 40 Tan Bank, Wellington Telford, Shropshire TF1 1HW
Telephone: 0845 1554 (Advice Line)

Service provided: The Citizen's Advice Bureau provide advice and support with benefits, debt management, employment support and legal advice to people who need it. They also support people with autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Organisation: **A4U**
Address: Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford Town Centre TF3 4HS.

Telephone Helpline: 01743 256218 Mon, Tue, Wed 9.30am to 12.30pm

Service provided: A4U offers free advice and support and help for disabled people who wish to claim benefits, challenge benefit decisions, and support Social Care appeals. They also offer support and advice to people with autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Organisation: **AUTONOMY PLUS**
Telephone: **01743 821363**
Website: www.shropshireautonomy.co.uk/autonomy-plus

Service provided: Autonomy offers charged for advice and support for people with autism and Asperger's syndrome for Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payment applications and the PIP and ESA medical information forms. They will also support you to attend ESA Work Capability Assessments, PIP face to face assessments and with mandatory reconsiderations, appeals and tribunals.

Organisation: FIRST POINT (TELFORD AND WREKIN COUNCIL)

Address: Addenbrooke House, Ironmaster's Way, Telford, TF3 4NT
Telephone: 01952 380000
Email: contact@telford.gov.uk

Service provided: First Point have trained staff who can give help, advice and information about a wide range of Council and partner services for residents of Telford and Wrekin including those with autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Address: Wellington Library and Civic Centre, Larkin Way, off Tan Bank, Wellington, TF1 1LX
Telephone: 01952 380000
Email: contact@telford.gov.uk

11. AWARENESS TRAINING (AUTISM and ASPERGER'S SYNDROME)

Organisation: SHROPSHIRE JOINT TRAINING

Contact: Joint Training Co-ordinator
Telephone: 01743 254733
Email: joint.training@shropshire.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/schtraining.nsf/open/DBDF577A74AAE0EF8025710E00387A7E>

Service provided: Joint Training run a range of one day courses on a range of subjects including mental health, autism and Asperger's syndrome. These are accessible by for professionals, voluntary organisations, service users and carers. The main courses are: Introduction to Autism, Learning about Asperger's Syndrome, Voices of Women with Asperger's Syndrome discusses about issues specific to women with the condition. All courses include talks by "lived experience" speakers. A new session Asperger's Syndrome and Mental Health is now available.

Organisation: AUTONOMY PLUS TRAINING

Contact: Sara or Eric Heath
Telephone: 01743 821363
E-mail: autonomyshropshire@yahoo.co.uk
Website: www.shropshireautonomy.co.uk/autonomy-plus

Service provided: AutonomyPlus offers tailor made comprehensive training sessions for Shropshire Council including: Awareness of Asperger's Syndrome, Voices of Women with Asperger's Syndrome, and a Mental Health and Asperger's Syndrome session which help to fund the group. Lived experienced trainers give personal insights into living with the condition. Autonomy also provides advice, and pre-diagnostic assessments, post diagnostic support, benefits help and advice, including form filling, and consultancy services.

AutonomyPlus also runs bespoke sessions for other organisations including carers support, housing associations, young people's services, charities, residential homes, criminal justice and employment services. Prices are negotiable dependant on length of session and number of speakers required.

Organisation: TCAT (TELFORD COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY)

Contact: Paula Costin
Telephone: 01952 642365
E-mail: paula.costin@tcat.ac.uk

Service provided: Paula or Dawn offer an Open College Network 10 week accredited course in Understanding ASCs a new session on Understanding Children's Special Educational Needs. (One session a week)

Organisation: AUTISM WEST MIDLANDS – TRAINING

Contact: Autism West Midlands
Address: Regent's Court, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 3NU
Telephone: 0303 03 00 111 (helpline)
E-mail: info@autismwestmidlands.org
Websites: <http://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/content/675383>

Service provided:

Autism West Midlands are committed to providing high quality training to meet the needs of staff working with individuals on the autism spectrum of all ages and abilities. They offer short Awareness of Autism and Asperger's syndrome session and a prospectus of a range of more in-depth training courses for staff working with people with ASD. Bespoke training and post training advice is also available.

Organisation: NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY – TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Telephone: 0115 911 336321
Website: www.autism.org.uk/training

Service provided: The National Autistic Society provide a range of bespoke training programmes on autism and Asperger's syndrome. They also offer consultancy services.

More information on local social and discussion groups

Autonomy self-help group

Membership of Autonomy is free. A bi-monthly Newsletter is sent out by mail and email in January, March, May, July, September and November and had details of all the social events and also summer and Christmas activities. Autonomy is facilitated by Sara Heath.

Autonomy Shrewsbury socials run on the following programme each year:

2nd Tuesday of Jan/Mar/May/July/Sept/Nov - 1 game of ten pin bowling at AMF, Brixton Way, Shrewsbury SY1 3AZ from 7:30pm then some of us go to the Harry Hotspur Pub, Harlescott Lane, Shrewsbury SY1 3AT from around 9:30-10:30pm for a quiet social afterwards. Many of us also have a meal as The Harry Hotspur does good food.

4th Tuesday of Jan/Mar/May/July/Sept/Nov - social event at The Admiral Benbow, 24 Swan Hill, Shrewsbury Town Centre, SY1 1NF, from 7:30pm – about 10:30pm. Please bring money for drinks and bar snacks

2nd Tuesday of Feb/April/June/August/Oct – Social event. Please check website or Facebook page for details. Please bring money for drinks and a meal if you want to buy one.

3rd Tuesday of Feb/April/June/August/Oct – social event at the Red Barn, Longden Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 7HS from 7:30pm – about 10:30pm. Please bring money for drinks and snacks. Chips are normally provided free.

NB. Events change in December due to Christmas Dinner. One is held in Telford and one in Shrewsbury, and must be booked in advance.

Autonomy for Women

Social event on the 3rd Wednesday of every month between 3rd January and November at the Peach Tree Restaurant at 21 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 6A from 7:30 – about 10:00pm. Please bring money for drinks and snacks.

Autonomy Telford Socials :

Social event on the 1st Monday of every month from 7:30 till about 10:30pm (even on a Bank Holiday) at the Severn Gorge, Southwater Way, Telford TF3 4NL. Please bring money for meals and drinks. Carvery and vegetarian meal prices are quite reasonable at £3.99 so many of us have a meal at the social but these become more expensive on a bank holiday

Autonomy Board Games Club

We meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at rooms in Meeting Point House Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford Town Centre, TF3 4HS, 01952 292268, from 7:30-9:30pm. 50p to include soft drinks and crisps. Parking available at Brown Elm carpark for 50p for the evening.

National Autistic Society Social Group

This is a small group that chooses where to meet for a meal or a social in the Telford area normally from 6:30-8:30pm on a Thursday once a month - dates may vary. Please bring money for meals and drinks.

Shropshire Asperger's Support Group

This is a small closed, facilitated but user led group for people with a diagnosis only. They normally meet once a month on a Thursday evening at The Roy Fletcher Centre, 12-17 Cross Hill, Shrewsbury SY1 1JE from 7-9pm – dates may vary. Please bring money for refreshments.

