



# ASD Family Help

Registered Charity No. 1135718

## Christmas is Coming!

**For many of us, Christmas can be a time of bringing friends and family together, putting up decorations, eating food & having fun. For our autistic young people or those with additional needs, Christmas can be tense and overwhelming. Included in this newsletter are some ideas and tips on how to make Christmas less stressful and more enjoyable.**

You can click on the areas you are interested in below if you prefer:

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## Wokingham Activities & Events

### Christmas Party!

We are BACK with our face to face Christmas Party!! Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Come and join us for fun and games at our Christmas Disco.  
We will be in The Loft at the FBC Centre, Finchampstead from 6.30pm to 8.15pm.



To book click here: <https://WokinghamXMAS.eventbrite.co.uk>

### Parent Carer Support Sessions

#### **Weekly Mondays 10am to 11.30am**

We will be meeting as follows: (Please note these can sometimes be subject to change).

- 14<sup>th</sup> Nov at FBC Café, Finchampstead
- 21<sup>st</sup> Nov at The Café, Cantley Park Wokingham
- 28<sup>th</sup> Nov at The Café, Henry Street Garden Centre
- 5<sup>th</sup> Dec at The Café, Dinton Pastures Hurst
- 12<sup>th</sup> Dec at FBC Café Finchampstead
- 19<sup>th</sup> Dec at The Café, Henry Street Garden centre

### Teen Life Skills

This will be run as a set of 3 sessions in January and February.

The sessions will start with an Introduction Session for everybody to get to know each other, followed by sessions to include **Health & Wellbeing** (covering sex, contraception, consent, hygiene); and a day out to cover **travel** practice (bus); **shopping & team work** (team buying challenge) and **buying their own lunch** (visit to McDonalds for example).

Places will be £15 for each child – to cover all sessions. Young people will need to bring their own money for bus fare & money for lunch on the day out. Refreshments and snacks will be provided for the 2 evening sessions.

Expected dates will be:

- Introduction Session: 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023 from 5-7pm (Wokingham Baptist Church)
- Health & Wellbeing: 01<sup>st</sup> Feb 2023 from 5-7pm (Wokingham Baptist Church)
- Day Out in Reading: 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023 from 10.30 – 3.30pm (Drop off/pick up from Winnersh Showcase)

If you would like to book a space for your young person, please book here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/sBZ1rRg2pS>

For further information, please email [Rachael@asdfamilyhelp.org](mailto:Rachael@asdfamilyhelp.org)

### Adult Social Group

Held at The Three Frogs Pub in Wokingham from 7-9pm

Next dates is:

24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

If you would be interested in more details and to sign up, please email [Jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org](mailto:Jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org)

## **Workshops & Training**

### **Sleep Matters Workshop**



Are you a parent/carer or professional with an interest in sleep difficulties in children and young people (particularly those with additional needs)? Would you like to find out how to try to improve their sleep? This course covers:

- **The importance of sleep, peer support and shared experiences/ideas with others.**
- **The impact lack of sleep can have on the child/young person, relationships and family life.**
- **Different stages of sleep.**
- **Sleep issues, triggers and sleep associations.**
- **Sleep strategies, tips and ideas to best support children/young people or family members.**
- **Sleep diary's and why they can be a useful tool**
- **What a good sleep routine may look like to best support an individual child/young person**

The next 2 workshops will take place on the following dates:

1. 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023 9.45am to 2.30pm (Wokingham – Bradbury Centre)  
Bookings here: [www.tinyurl.com/ASDFHSleep](http://www.tinyurl.com/ASDFHSleep)
2. 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023 5.30pm to 7.30pm (Wokingham – Floreat Montague School)  
2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 5.30pm to 7.30pm  
Provisional bookings here: <https://asdfhsleepeve.eventbrite.co.uk/>

### **Being a Carer Matters Jan/Feb (3 dates per workshop):**



Are you a carer? Do you support families that have a family member acting as a carer? Come and join us for our new workshop to find out how important this role is and what rights and support carers are entitled to. The course covers:

- **The role of being a carer.**
- **Recognition of carers & seeking support.**
- **Financial Support and Benefits**
- **Carers Rights**
- **Improving health & wellbeing**

This workshop is delivered over the following 3 dates:

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2023 9.45am to 2.30pm  | (Woodley – venue TBA) |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2023 9.45am to 2.30pm  | (Woodley – venue TBA) |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 9.45am to 11.45am | (ONLINE)              |

### **Family Matters Course**

This is a free course running for 5 weeks from Weds 26th April 2023 from 9.45am – 11.45am with a focus on poverty, finance & benefits.

Each session is about 2 hours long and will be run ONLINE.

For more details and booking information please contact [jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org](mailto:jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org)

**Further Sleep Matters and Being a Carer Matters workshops will be run throughout 2023 and will include evening & daytime session dates for both.**

For more information about any of our workshops/training please email [Jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org](mailto:Jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org)

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## West Berks Activities & Events

### Christmas Party!

We are BACK with our face to face Christmas Party!! Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022

Come and join us for fun and games at our Christmas Disco.  
We will be at Moorside Community Centre from 5pm to 7.15pm.



To book click here: <https://WestBerksXMAS.eventbrite.co.uk>

### NEW Teen Club!

Our Teen Club is still running at Moorside Community Centre in Thatcham. The club is for children/young people with additional needs who are aged 12 to 18 years.

We meet twice a month from 4.30pm to 6.30pm.

Parents are welcome to stay at all sessions if that is more accessible for your young person.

The cost of the sessions are FREE, but please book in advance so that we know correct numbers.

Email [karen@asdfamilyhelp.org](mailto:karen@asdfamilyhelp.org) to book or for more information!

The next sessions are:

30<sup>th</sup> November  
7<sup>th</sup> December  
21<sup>st</sup> December (Xmas party)  
4<sup>th</sup> January  
18<sup>th</sup> January  
8<sup>th</sup> February  
22<sup>nd</sup> February



### Adult Social Group

Held at The Crucible in Newbury from 6pm to 8pm

Next dates are:

14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

5<sup>th</sup> December 2022

If you would be interested in more details and to sign up, please email

[Jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org](mailto:Jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org)



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## Pembrokeshire Activities & Events

### Pembrokeshire News and Events

Cronfa Gymunedol Comic Relief yng Nghymru



Comic Relief Community Fund in Wales

FUNDED BY  
ARIENNIR GAN



With thanks to Comic Relief Funding we are running our **Sleep Matters workshops and Peer Support Groups** dates for these events are:

**Sleep Matters workshops** 3 parts – 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 23 6.30pm to 8.45pm Online

To book on please click on Eventbrite Link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/458551709507>

**Peer Support Group** – Focusing on Sleep support 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 6.30pm to 8.30pm Online to book on please click on Eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/458651568187>

**Sleep Matters workshops** 3 parts – 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> March 23 9.45am to 12 noon – Pembroke Dock To book on please click on Eventbrite Link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/458599211587>

**Peer Support Group** – Focusing on Sleep support 30<sup>th</sup> March 10 to 12 noon Pembroke Dock – Drop In

**The National Lottery Community Fund Wales awarded Pembrokeshire £348,900 over 5 years.**



With this grant we will be looking to employ new staff, continue to run workshops and peer support groups and now also set up family activities including Youth clubs for 5 – 11 yr olds and 12 to 18 yr olds.



### Dates for Spring Terms Workshops and Peer Support Groups

**Understanding Autism and Supporting Young People pre and post diagnosis** – This workshop aims to enable parent/carers to learn about autism and give them new skills and strategies in supporting their young person. **11<sup>th</sup> Jan 6.45pm to 9pm Online.** To book please click on this Eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/238331996417>

**Understanding Autism and Anxiety pre and post diagnosis** – This workshop focuses on anxiety and how it can affect our autistic children. The workshop is aimed at parents / carers to enable them to share and by the end of the session have some strategies and resources on how to support their children with managing anxiety and their wellbeing.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb Tuesday 9.45am to 12 noon** To book please click on this Eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/458611789207>

**Supporting Autism and Behaviour pre and post diagnosis** – This workshop is for parents/carers with children who are on the Autistic Spectrum or ALN and are having difficulties managing certain behaviours / concerns at home. You will have a chance to share concerns and learn how best to support our young people with a therapeutic approach.

**21<sup>st</sup> March 9.45am to 12 noon Haverfordwest** – To book please click on Eventbrite link:  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/458618328767>



### **Peer Support Groups**

18<sup>th</sup> Jan 10am to 12 noon – **Milford Haven Bowl** – Drop in.

15<sup>th</sup> Feb 10am to 12 noon – **Milford Haven Bowl** – Drop in.

15<sup>th</sup> March 10am to 12 noon – **Milford Haven Bowl** – Drop in.



**Helpline** – We have a telephone or video appointment helpline service, resources and strategies are sent to parents via email post appointment. We are also able to support with benefit applications.

**Like our Facebook Page**  
**ASD Family Help – Pembrokeshire**  
**to be kept up to date with all of our**  
**events and see our regular Top Tips that we post.**

Please contact Melissa if you have any questions [melissa@asdfamilyhelp.org](mailto:melissa@asdfamilyhelp.org) or text/phone:  
**07384 733658**



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## [Staff & Volunteers!](#)

We are currently recruiting for staff in Wokingham, West Berkshire and Pembrokeshire!

Job adverts are attached to this Newsletter email separately if you would like to see more information.

Closing date is 5<sup>th</sup> December for all job applications.

You can also view a copy of the job adverts online by clicking the links below:

[Wokingham & West Berks Job Advert](#)

[Pembrokeshire Job Advert](#)

**We are always looking for new volunteers, so if you would like to join our team, please contact [jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org](mailto:jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org) for an application form and an informal chat.**

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## **Christmas Top Ten Tips!**

**Below are 10 ideas and tips to make Christmas less stressful and more enjoyable.**

- 1. Make a schedule** - Buy or make a timetable which highlights how many days to Christmas. Show when you plan to go shopping, put the tree up/decorations, family visiting, school holiday etc. Keeping a schedule can also help reassure children who become obsessive about Christmas.
- 2. Maintaining Structure and Routine** – Try and keep your daily routine the same as much as possible, such as bedtimes & getting up in the morning. Let them know on their Christmas Timetable when things will be happening.
- 3. Allow them the choice of opting out of social gatherings** - Christmas is often a time for family gatherings, meals out and other social events. These can be a source of stress and anxiety for our young people. Stress levels can often be helped by providing a safe place for them to retreat when needed. Let them know they have your support to leave the room if they need to. A favourite object can be a life saver and fiddle toys and gadgets can help with distraction and relaxation.
- 4. Awareness and Acceptance** – Try and keep family members informed about Autism and how they can support your young person. It helps to preventing misunderstandings. Share photos of who is visiting & when, especially if they haven't seen them for a while.



**5. Sensory Stimulators** - If your autistic young person has sensory difficulties then try to keep flashing lights, sparkly items, Christmas crackers and music to a minimum in areas that are used by everyone. There may also be unfamiliar smells such as scented candles, cooking or even 'smelly' presents like soaps, perfumes etc. Try and warn your child in advance so that they are aware or keep these to a minimum. You could keep one room free with no decorations or keep it to just one room.



**6. Surprises** - Whilst some individuals with autism love surprises, others find them difficult to cope with and prefer to know exactly what they are getting for Christmas. Consider involving them in buying the present and wrapping it – this reassures them that they will receive the gift they are expecting. If your child prefers to know what's inside a present, use plain wrapping paper and stick a picture of the present on the outside, or use a see-through material such as cellophane. Consider if you need to wrap it at all.

**7. Presents** - Make sure gifts are ready to play with to avoid frustration, e.g. build gifts prior to giving them, put the batteries in beforehand. Introduce presents one by one, or a few at a time, instead of all at once. The person may prefer to open presents gradually over the course of a few days. Your child may not want to open presents in front of others,. Some young people may also find it difficult to say thank you. Prepare and warn family members and support your young person in how to respond in receiving a gift.



**8. Father Christmas** – He can cause anxiety. Prepare your child by showing them pictures, or perhaps Father Christmas could drop off presents at another family or friends house instead

**9. Christmas Dinner** – You may like to stick with what you know is popular with your young person - it's ok not to have turkey but instead give your child what they enjoy eating. Sitting around a table with a larger number of people than usual can be difficult. Be aware of things that may cause sensory overload (raised noise levels, Christmas crackers/party poppers and smells from food). If you dress the table, it may help if you keep things the same as usual for the person you are supporting, e.g. they may prefer to sit in their usual place with their usual placemat, plate and cutlery.

**10. Have fun** – It is ok to do Christmas the way it works for you, your family and young person.



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## **Other News!**



Hello. I'm Sophie Kendall, I've recently joined Wokingham Borough Council as the Commissioning Manager – Autism Lead.

My job is to work with all the different organisations and people involved to try and improve support and opportunities for autistic adults in the borough.

I'm meeting lots of people, catching up on work done so far and will be sharing updates. If you want to share your thoughts, get in touch by email – [Sophie.kendall@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.kendall@wokingham.gov.uk) or leave me a voicemail 077 87724 953.

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