

AUTISM GM



NEWSLETTER



www.autismgm.co.uk

Autumn 2021 Edition



Welcome to our autumn edition of the AutismGM Newsletter. Looking back on this year, I have realised that we have only managed to get one other edition of AutismGM out earlier in the year, instead of the two we usually would have sent out. Apologies for this. My only excuse is that we all just seem to be getting busier and busier these days but will try better next year! We have however managed to also get a new publication called Autism Editions out in June of this year. These newsletters will feature themed articles and our first Autism Editions was dedicated to autistic women. The next one we want to do will be about autistic people within diverse communities in GM and we would love to hear from anyone who wishes to contribute.

The days are getting shorter and colder but we hope that you are doing ok. Don't forget we are here at GMAC if you need a listening ear. (Mari Saeki, GMAC Project Lead)

AUTISMGM Newsletter
is produced quarterly by the
Greater Manchester Autism Consortium Project

<https://twitter.com/GMAutismC>

<https://www.facebook.com/GMAutismConsortium>

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

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Top five things you need to know about the **Autism Strategy**

There's a new autism strategy for England – but what do you really need to know about it? Every five years or so, the Government brings out a new strategy saying how they're going to support autistic people. They started doing this back in 2009, when the [Autism Act was passed](#). The autism strategy has the potential to impact the lives of hundreds of thousands of autistic people and their families. Read on to find out why it's important for autistic people and their families:

1. The strategy outlines the Government's plans to improve your services and support

This covers mental health, diagnosis, employment, education, public understanding and the justice system. The big things they have committed to include:

- Investing £10.5 million into finding new ways to reduce diagnosis waiting times for children and young people
- Investing £2.5 million into improving the quality of adult diagnostic and post-diagnostic pathways and diagnosis waiting times
- Increasing public understanding of autism with a long-term, nationwide initiative
- Providing £18.5 million to prevent autistic people from falling into mental health crisis and £21 million to local authorities to help people in mental health hospitals back into the community
- Improving understanding by training education professionals, job centre staff and frontline staff in the justice system.

[You can find all the commitments here.](#)

2. This strategy has more money than any of the other previous strategies, but it really needs social care to be fixed too.

One of the biggest flaws in previous versions of the autism strategy was the lack of money to make change happen. This time, the Government has committed almost £75 million to the first year of this strategy – this will be put towards developing a public understanding campaign, reducing diagnosis waiting times and increasing crisis support in the community, among other things.

However, we know that the biggest struggle that many autistic people have is getting support from social care. In 2019, we found that over 2 in 3 autistic adults don't get the support they need to carry out everyday things, like going out and about, making meals and paying bills. The strategy doesn't set out specifically what services will be provided to help these people, so it will be really important that every council talks to autistic people in their area to ask them what they need, and then invest in those services.



Top five things you need to know about the **Autism Strategy**

(Continued from page 2)

Social care across the whole of England desperately needs reform and long-term, sustainable funding. On his first day in office, the Prime Minister promised to fix social care. We will continue to campaign until he has delivered on that promise.

3. It's the first autism strategy to include children

Previous strategies have focused only on autistic adults. The National Autistic Society successfully campaigned for this strategy to include children and young people. There are many new commitments as a result, including more training for teachers, a new anti-bullying programme in schools and making sure autistic young people can find supported internships and apprenticeships.

4. The commitments are only until 2022

Although the strategy is supposed to cover five years, the commitments in this new strategy only take us up to 2022. This is because there is a Spending Review scheduled for autumn. The Spending Review sets out how much money the Government plans to spend on public services, usually over a 3- or 4-year period so that government departments can make long-term plans. The Department of Health and Social Care needs to know how much they can spend on the rest of the strategy before they can make any commitments. We will campaign to make sure that the strategy receives appropriate funding for years 2-5. We need your help to do this, so [sign up for updates on our campaigns here](#).

5. Every local council in England needs to implement the autism strategy

The autism strategy is underpinned by legally binding guidance to councils. Each council and NHS body needs to look at the strategy to see how it can improve its local services. Nearly every council has an Autism Lead or an Autism Partnership Board who oversees the carrying out of the strategy. You can make sure the strategy works for autistic people in your area by getting involved with your local Autism Partnership Board through your council. We'll keep working with our campaigners and branch members to make sure that the autism strategy is implemented in local areas

This has been a small snapshot of what the autism strategy includes. If you would like more detail, you can read our [news story](#) or the [full strategy here](#).

Update on the new GM Autism Strategy



You may recall that the current GM Autism Strategy "Making Greater Manchester Autism Friendly", finishes in March 2022 so we are currently writing a new strategy to start in April 2022. I invited people to Stakeholder events in July and September and we also had a survey asking people to tell us what they thought the priorities are. These exercises led to the following being identified as priorities for the next strategy;

Timely diagnosis and post diagnosis, Mental Health, Increasing Social opportunities for autistic people, better understanding of autism amongst professionals and the public and more consistent and joined up services.

The new strategy will be an all-age one like the new national autism strategy, so in addition to all the things identified above we need to think about what we can do for autistic children and young people. Obviously supporting education and increasing understanding of autism amongst teachers and staff in schools will be a high priority as well as supporting children and young people to have more of a voice in influencing all the changes we need to make.

Strategies need to be living documents and not just words so we need all of you to help us keep in track and get involved in the work as we literally can't do it without you! If you are interested in the strategy and want to get involved please email me on mari.saeki@nas.org.uk

If you would like to take a look at the Current strategy in place you can do so here:

<https://www.gmhsc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/GMHSCP-Autism-Doc-FINAL.pdf>

The Carers of Autistic Children: Chinese Health Information Centre support

The Carers of Autistic Children

Helen Chow

My name is Helen Chow. I was a Bilingual Support Worker for the Bury Council from 1999 to 2018. In 2013, I came across a child in Bury who was diagnosed to have autism. His mother was devastated. Since both parents did not understand English, I started to learn more about autism in order to support the family. In the meantime, I met a four-year-old boy with autism at a Chinese church. His mother spoke good English, yet she felt isolated and helpless. Deeply moved by the two struggling young mothers, I wrote to The National Autistic Society in Manchester and approached the Chinese Health and Information Centre for their support.

With Mari Saeki's invaluable advice, The Carers of Autistic Children was established in September 2014 as an additional community service of the Chinese Health and Information Centre. The objective of the group is to support isolated Chinese-speaking families with children affected by autism and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to come together and develop into a vibrant, self-help community group.



The group attends meetings or workshops once a month, enabling parents to use their first language to communicate, share experiences, access information, and seek professional guidance on all aspects of autism and ASD. The parents are also connected via social media group, through which they can share information and experiences on a day-to-day basis.



In addition to the regular meetings and workshops, the families also participate in organised activities with their children during school holidays. Together we have visited Eureka! The National Children's Museum, Old Trafford, Manchester Art Gallery, Simply Cycling, Inflata Nation and Drayton Manor Theme Park. These activities have provided practical support in helping parents with issues such as social isolation and emotional wellbeing.

During the pandemic, we have been fortunate to be able to run online workshops in a bilingual setting with parent facilitators, Samera and Hazel, on Managing Anger and Sensory Needs, new resources produced by the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium.

The Carers of Autistic Children: Chinese Health Information Centre support (continued)

Throughout the years, The Carers of Autistic Children has gone from strength to strength. A number of members have become knowledgeable and confident enough to nurture their own autistic children and at the same time to encourage other parents.

It brings us great joy to see that through the group, families have been able to resolve some of the problems they have encountered, and to witness a subsequent improvement to their quality of life.

As many of the autistic children in the group are growing into adolescence, we can see the need to empower parents to overcome the difficulties associated with this transition period. Working closely with funded professional organisations, running appropriate parenting courses and workshops, and providing counselling support will be our goals in the coming year.

GMAC Dad's online drop in sessions: Run by Dad's requested by Dad's

Jabbran Bhatti—Parent Facilitator

My name is Jabbran and I am a father of three boys aged 11, 8 and 5. My 8 year old son, Haashim, was diagnosed autistic at 2 years old and my youngest, Raif, is currently undergoing assessments for a diagnosis. Whilst undergoing assessments with Haashim I was very hands on, attending every appointment and every therapy session together with my wife Abigail.

It became very apparent very early into the process that this was predominantly female oriented.

I found professionals would mainly address Abigail and not myself, which was very disheartening to say the least.

When I looked around for support groups again I found them to be directed at mums as opposed to parents in general.

At this point I took to Facebook to speak up about the lack of support for fathers available. All of a sudden, I started to receive messages from fathers who all stated the same thing "there is nothing for us" "where do I go for support".

From my experience males tend to bottle up their emotions. There is a perception of weakness if you say I need help, I'm struggling.

This is why I am proud to be part of the GMAC Dad's group as a parent facilitator together with Rob. The group provides a space for Dad's to speak in an informal, non-judgemental manner.

The group is open to all Dad's whether their child is diagnosed or not. We speak about our experiences, struggles and future expectations as well sharing strategies.

We have dad's with young children and dad's with grown up Adult children all advising and supporting each other.

I hope to see the group grow more and more and would love to see more dads from all backgrounds joining.

Sometimes a simple conversation with like-minded people is all that's needed to help you get through. Together we can be that support for each other.

GMAC Dad's online drop in sessions: Run by Dad's requested by Dad's

Rob Bishop – Parent Facilitator.

It's been a real honour to work with GMAC over the past six months to put the GMAC dad's drop-in sessions together. These sessions are long overdue and we know what it's like if you're a hands-on dad and you want to be involved.

I remember taking my eldest to a reading session at the library every Monday morning, we went for a year and every session started with "good morning babies, good morning mum's." It became a bit of an internal joke with regular mums there.

When we're on this journey with a child on the autistic spectrum, having two parents involved is so important but we often find that, mum fills in the DLA form, mum goes to appointments and mum deals with situations at school. That's why these sessions are so important. We come with no agenda, it's completely led by the dad's and it's an opportunity to ask those awkward questions, offer advice and let off steam.

I come at this from a slightly different angle from Jab who I facilitate the sessions with. My step son is on the autistic spectrum, so I guess I came into this late, but I've been willing to learn and work with mum to discuss the boundaries and get to understand my step child.

We love these sessions so much and each one goes off in a different direction. Please give dad's a nudge and get in contact with GMAC, we'd love to see you online.

You can catch our next Dads drop in on Monday 6th December
7—8.30 pm.

Please see the next page for flyer and details



GMAC invite you to our DAD'S drop-in session via Zoom

Monday 6th December

7 pm – 8.30 pm

(requested and run for dad's by dad's)



The drop in will be a safe space for you to share your experience of raising an autistic child, with like-minded dads.

We also have resources you may wish to read/watch on our website on understanding autism, sensory needs and managing anger:

<https://www.autismqgm.org.uk/autism-seminars-for-families>

GMAC Drop in Session Via Zoom

we can provide all the technical information on how to join us online via Zoom.

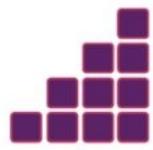
Please book your place before the 2nd December 2021 and places are reserved for parents/ carers only.

Booking is essential

To book a place on the workshop please use the following Eventbrite link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gmac-dads-drop-in-session-tickets-185772670057>

For information please contact: Email: abigail.gibson@nas.org.uk



Greater Manchester Autism Consortium

Free resources for parents of autistic children and young people



The Greater Manchester Autism Consortium (GMAC) offer resources on understanding autism, sensory needs and managing anger which you can access at:

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

If you would like GMAC to come to your organised meetings, we offer online Zoom webinars and face to face sessions from 2022.

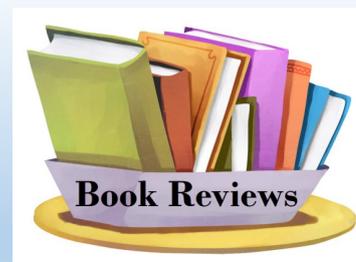
GMAC offer one and a half hour interactive webinars over Zoom for parents to discuss the video resources. If you think that this would be useful for a group you know or if the group would like members of GMAC's parent facilitator team to run a drop in where people can ask general questions about autism, then please contact:

samera.haynes@nas.org.uk

We especially want to reach diverse communities within Greater Manchester, including communities who experience racial inequality.

Book review: "The Autism-Friendly Guide To Self-Employment", by Robyn Steward (Jessica Kingsley Publishers)

This book has been kindly reviewed by Nick Rosenthal

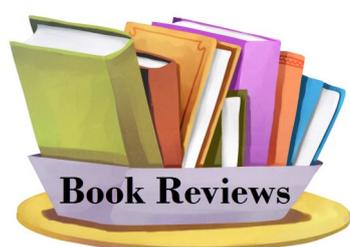
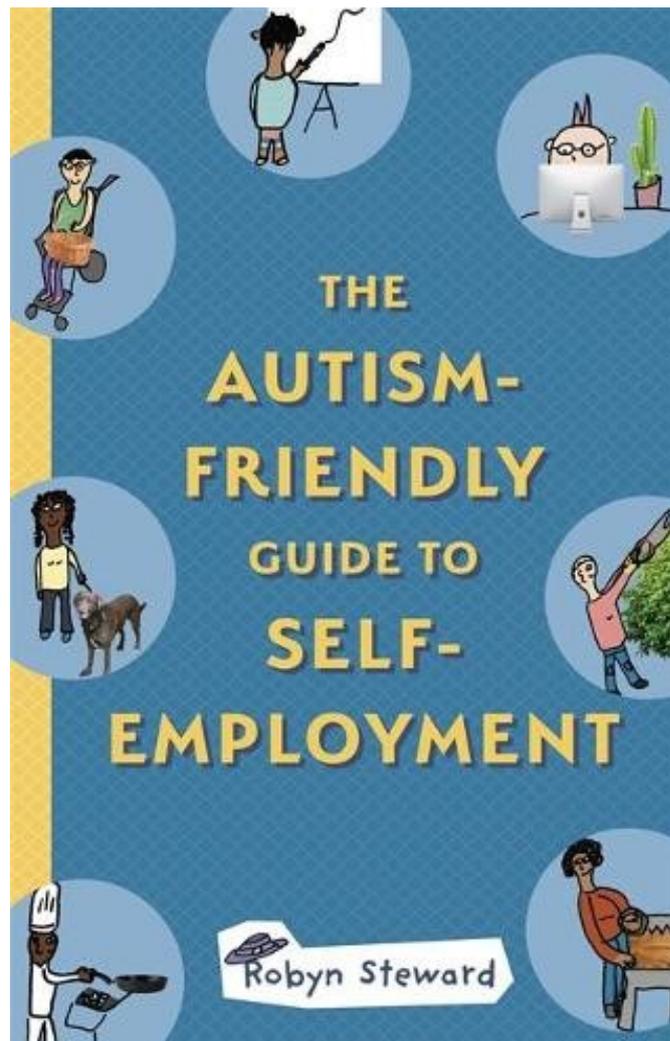


Employment patterns have changed a lot over the past 20 years, and self-employment is much more common now than it used to be. For autistic people, running your own business can offer a flexible means of employment that allows us to work to our strengths. Autistic people run a huge range of businesses, from gardening rounds to professional services through to high-tech start-ups.

This book gives a sound introduction to many of the issues that anyone wanting to start their own business will need to think about. It covers all the functions of running a business, such as marketing, sales, bookkeeping, and legal implications. In that respect, it is certainly a useful guide for any autistic person thinking of working for them self.

But I would like to have seen more about some of the specific challenges that autistic people face in running a business. There is a chapter on "Networking", for example - but little mention of how challenging the network and customer relationship side of the business can be for many autistic people. I did find the chapter about "maintaining your health and well-being" interesting, though, and there are a handful of case studies at the end of the book that describe the experiences of autistic people running their own businesses.

The same publisher has just released a book called "Autism Working: A Seven-Stage Plan to Thriving at Work", and I would be interested to see if that offers more in the way of autism-specific guidance.



If anyone has read any book as of late with an Autism theme then please do feel free to forward the details onto the GMAC team contact as we would love to have an insight into what individuals with Autism and parents/ carers are finding helpful or simply enjoying.

Email: abigail.gibson@nas.org.uk



Parent/ Carer Forums in Greater Manchester

Parent carer forums are groups of parents and carers of disabled children who work with local authorities, education, health and other providers to make sure the services they plan and deliver, meet the needs of disabled children aged between 0-25 years and their families.

BOLTON

Bolton Parent Carers

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

Telephone: 07715 201798

Email: info@boltonparents.org.uk

BURY

BURY2GETHER

<https://www.bury2gether.co.uk/>

Email: bury2gether@gmail.com

MANCHESTER

Manchester Parent Carer Forum

<http://manchesterparentcarerforum.org.uk/>

Email: info@manchesterparentcarerforum.org.uk

OLDHAM

Parent Carer Forum: Point

<https://www.point-send.co.uk/>

Telephone: 0161 503 1547

Email: admin@point-send.co.uk

ROCHDALE

Parent Carer Voice

<https://rochdaleparentcarersvoice.co.uk/>

Email: RochdalePCV@outlook.com

Telephone: 01706 358 326

SALFORD

Salford Parent Forum

Email: info@salfordpcf.com

STOCKPORT

Parents and Carers together (PACT)

<https://pactstockport.co.uk/>

Email: info@pactstockport.co.uk

TAMESIDE

Our Kids Eyes (OKE)

<https://www.ourkidseyes.org/>

Telephone: 0161 342 5550

TRAFFORD

<https://traffordparentsforum.org/>

Email: hello@traffordparentsforum.org

WIGAN

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

Email: admin@wiganpcf.org.uk

Telephone: 07719 330602

ASD Parent Support groups and services

BOLTON

Breaking Barriers

Tel: 07717434840

Email: breakbarriers3@gmail.com

Bolton Adult Autism Support (BAAS)

Tel: 07772547158

Email: enquiries@BoltonAdultAutismSupport.org.uk

Kidz2gether

Tel: 01204 669821

Email: info@kidz2gether.org.uk

BURY

Bury Autism Parent Society (BAPS)

Tel: 0161 761 0132

Email: bapsonline@yahoo.co.uk

www.baps-online.com

MANCHESTER

Chinese Carers of Autistic Children Group

Contact: Helen Chow Tel: 0161 228 0138

Grange School Parents Group

Tel: 0161 231 2590

Email: s.evans01@grange@manchester.sch.uk

MANCHESTER SOUTH

Carers Manchester South

Supports carers of autistic adults

Via online Zoom meetings:

cmsouth@manchestercarersforum.org.uk

OLDHAM

OSCA

Tel: 07365 772 711

Email: ocsaoldham@gmail.com

ROCHDALE

Rochdale Homestart Parent Support Group & Sam's SIBS Sibling Group

Tel: 01706 629 651 and 01706 436 143

Email: sam.hsrb@gmail.com

www.homestartrochdale.org.uk

The Recovery Republic Well-Being Centre/ Autism and Asperger's Parents Group

Contact: Carina Jackson Tel: 01706 622 722
OR 07771523775

Email: carina.jackson@icloud.com in-
fo@recoveryrepublic.co.uk

www.recoveryrepublic.co.uk

SALFORD

Salford Autism

Tel: 0771 390 3224

Email: support@salfordautism.org.uk

<http://www.salfordautism.org.uk/>

Salford Action for Autism

Email: kayjones000@googlemail.com or
lou26@live.co.uk

[http://salfordactionforautism.simpl.com/
index.html](http://salfordactionforautism.simpl.com/index.html)

STOCKPORT

Autisk

<https://www.autisk.co.uk/>

Email: enquiry@autisk.co.uk

Telephone: 07376 341092

TAMESIDE

TASCA

[https://www.facebook.com/
TascaTameside](https://www.facebook.com/TascaTameside)

Telephone: 07754 873480

Tameside autism community group

[https://www.tameside-autism-
community.org.uk/](https://www.tameside-autism-community.org.uk/)

Autism support for Tameside and Glossop

[https://
autismtameside.wordpress.com/](https://autismtameside.wordpress.com/)

Telephone: 0161 366 2050

TRAFFORD

Autism Trafford

<http://www.autismtrafford.co.uk/>

(Online contact page)

WIGAN

Embrace Wigan and Leigh

[https://
www.embracewiganandleigh.org.uk
/](https://www.embracewiganandleigh.org.uk/)

Email: [in-
fo@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk](mailto:info@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk)

Telephone: (01942)233323

Autistic Adult Support Groups and services

The below contacts are a mixture of support groups, support services and advocacy specifically in relation to autistic adults. Please be aware that services differ greatly depending on the GM location.

BOLTON

Autism Spectrum Conditions Support Team

(Those who are diagnosed with Autism/Asperger's are offered a package of short-term support, depending on need.)

Telephone: 01204 483000

<https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/autism-spectrum-conditions-support-team/>

BURY

United Response

<https://www.unitedresponse.org.uk/support-area/greater-manchester-bury/>

MANCHESTER

I AM AUTISM

<https://i-am-autism.org.uk/>

Email: enquiries@i-am-autism.org.uk

Telephone: 0161 866 8483

OLDHAM

Advocacy and support for people with autism and or Learning Disability.

<https://www.actiontogether.org.uk/community-activities/community-activity-directory/107754>

ROCHDALE

I AM AUTISM

<https://i-am-autism.org.uk/>

Email: enquiries@i-am-autism.org.uk

Telephone: 0161 866 8483

SALFORD

Salford Autism

<http://www.salfordautism.org.uk/>

Tel: 0771 390 3224

Email: support@salfordautism.org.uk

STOCKPORT

Stockport Advocacy: Group 48

<http://www.stockportadvocacy.org.uk/group-48/>

Email: info@stockportadvocacy.co.uk

Telephone: 0161 480 8979

TAMESIDE

Autism Tameside ad Glossop social group

<https://autismtameside.wordpress.com/people-with-autism/>

Email: peersupport@togmind.org

Telephone: 0161 330 9223

TRAFFORD

Autism Trafford runs a social group with various activities for autistic adults.

Tel: 0161 357 1210

Email: jane.forrest1@nhs.net

WIGAN

Embrace Wigan and Leigh

<https://www.embracewiganandleigh.org.uk/care-act-advocacy/>

Email: info@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk

Telephone: (01942)233323

Support services that cover the Greater Manchester area (autistic adults, autistic children and parents/ carers)



I AM AUTISM have various support services available. They are a UK registered charity working with and supporting a wide range of people, aged 10 years and upwards, who have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition (which can also be called Asperger Syndrome, High Functioning Autism or Autistic Spectrum Disorder) as well as their families, guardians and carers in Greater Manchester.

Website: <https://i-am-autism.org.uk/>

Email: enquiries@i-am-autism.org.uk

Telephone: 0161 866 8483



Respect For All offer counselling for autistic people, for people with learning disabilities, and for their families, throughout the whole of Greater Manchester.

Website: <https://www.respectforall.org.uk/counselling/>

Contact number: 0161 532 4075



GMAC aims to be a point of contact for anyone in Greater Manchester needing information about autism and related issues. We are managed by the UK's leading charity for autistic people and their families [The National Autistic Society](#). To find out more visit our [About us](#) page.

Since 1993 we have been providing information and advice to autistic people and their families, delivering training and developing resources. In 2019 we launched Greater Manchester's first [Autism Strategy](#) to help create a region that works better for autistic people.

Website: <https://www.autismgm.org.uk/>

With the nature of support groups and services, they change often so please let us know if you are aware of anything that is not listed and we will add these to our contacts.