

Did you
know?



An information booklet for parents and carers compiled by
NAS Lambeth (Lambeth Autism Group), a branch of the National Autistic Society



Autism Helpline 0808 800 4104

www.autism.org.uk

Lambeth Autism Group Spring 2016

lambeth@nas.org.uk

<http://www.nasbranch.org.uk/lambeth>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LambethAutismGroup>

Introduction

Dear Members and Supporters

Since our 2014 edition of Did You Know? the Children and Families Act has resulted in radical reforms to the law concerning special educational needs (SEN). The new SEN legal system came into force in September 2014.

The NAS has been very active in campaigning to try and ensure the Act meets the needs of parents/carers and children and young people with autistic spectrum condition (ASC).

This spring, the NAS have launched their most ambitious and long term campaign to date, responding to the experiences of families and autistic adults. “Too Much Information” aims to help the public understand autism and to improve the everyday lives of autistic adults and families with autistic children.

So far over 50 million people have seen the TMI launch film featuring Alex Marshall www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/film.aspx and you can help by signing up and encouraging others to sign up to the NAS map:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/map.aspx>

During my first year as Chair of NAS Lambeth we’ve continued to campaign and I’ve joined committee member Jacqui on the Adult Autism Strategy Group. We run and fund many local groups: a weekly adult social group, monthly reading group, parent support group and summer play scheme. Over the last year we have added an art group for teenage girls, additional workshops for parents and launched a branch website and Facebook page. All these activities are organized and run by volunteers and all the funds we need are raised by the branch.

We want to thank all those generous individuals, charities and businesses who make this possible, by contributing their time and money. My personal thanks to current Lambeth Autism Group committee members Jacqui, Jo, Rachel, Sally, Pili and Anna and to those who stepped down over the year.

This guide was originally compiled for parents of primary-age children at Lark Hall Centre for Pupils with Autism in Lambeth, and so the information was mostly aimed at that age group. A lot of it is useful for all age groups.

Over the years we have added more information about services for families with Under-5's and teenagers / adults with autism and Asperger's syndrome. A separate guide for adults has also been written by LAG member Caroline. You can get an email copy by emailing us lambeth@nas.org.uk We need your help to gather more information. Please let us know if you find information is out of date or if you would like to suggest something to add to the guide. You can email your comments to lambeth@nas.org.uk

Our thanks to Lois Terry and her colleagues at Lark Hall Centre for Pupils with Autism and Lambeth Autism Group committee members Sally Crow, Rachel Wingard, Anna Roads, and Jo Saul for contributions to the guide, and to Amanda Lillywhite for previously restyling the edition.

Venessa Bobb

Contents

Section	Page number
1 Help with Mobility and Travel	5
2 Disability Benefits	7
3 Advice about claiming Benefits	10
4 Parent / Carer Support Groups	13
5 Children's Social Care, Family Support, Respite Care and Registers for Children and Adults with disabilities	14
6 Services for Families with Children under 5	16
7 Disability Play and Leisure services	17
8 Mainstream Play and Leisure Services	20
9 Services for Teenagers and Adults	21
10 Favourite Places to Go and things to do	25
11 Resources	
Internet: Websites and Groups	32
Books	33
Apps	34
12 Advice about Special Educational Needs	39
13 Education & choosing a school	41
14 Specialist Health Services – Mary Sheridan Centre	46
15 Housing and Adaptations	48
16 Complaining	49
Appendix	50

The material and information contained in this booklet has been contributed and researched by a small group of parents, volunteering for the NAS. Whilst we have tried to ensure that the information is up to date, and accurate, at the time of publication, it is for general information purposes only. Lambeth Autism Group, as a branch of the NAS, does not recommend any therapies, approaches, services or endorse any products. You should not rely upon the material or information given as a basis for making any decisions, but should seek specialist advice.

Section 1 – Help with Mobility and Travel

People often think these services are only for people with physical disabilities – wrong! You will usually have to provide proof that your child gets Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or for those aged 16 to 64 the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP). PIP is replacing DLA for this age group by 2018. For some services you will have to explain why your child's autism makes it more difficult for them to walk, use public transport etc. than a non-autistic child (e.g. sensory sensitivity, difficult behaviour, communication). You can apply yourself or ask for help, e.g. from a social worker. Your GP will be contacted by Lambeth Accessible Transport so it's important your GP understands your child's difficulties and your difficulties as a parent.

Accessible Transport Unit

Olive Morris House, 18 Brixton Hill SW2 1RD ☎ 020 7926 7777

✉ accessibletransport@lambeth.gov.uk

► Freedom Pass (off-peak travel card)

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/parking-transport-and-streets/help-with-travel/apply-for-a-disabled-persons-freedom-pass>

► Taxi cards (reduced fares)

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/parking-transport-and-streets/help-with-travel/apply-for-a-taxicard>

► Blue badge (disabled parking badge)

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/parking-transport-and-streets/help-with-travel/apply-for-a-disabled-parking-permit-blue-badge>

A badge is issued for a child not a car. So you can still get one if you don't have a car but someone else transports your child. This allows you to park on single yellow lines and to use disabled parking spaces when the disabled child is a passenger. Lambeth's policy is that the child needs to be getting the higher rate of Mobility in their Disability Living Allowance or the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component under PIP. They can make exceptions to this with medical evidence.

► Disabled parking bay outside your home

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/parking-transport-and-streets/parking/apply-for-a-disabled-parking-bay>

Dial-a-Ride

Mini-bus transport within south London boroughs. If your child receives DLA you can use the service with them.

<https://www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/dial-a-ride/membership>

Bookings ☎ 0845 999 1999 or 0207 309 8900

Congestion Charge Exemption

You need a blue badge to get this.

Transport for London ☎ 0343 222 1234

<https://www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge/discounts-and-exemptions>

Motability Scheme

Car leasing scheme available to those on higher rate mobility Disability Living Allowance/PIP

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

Section 2 – Disability Benefits

Guides and advice

Contact a Family

Helpline ☎ 0808 808 3555

www.cafamily.org.uk/know-your-rights/benefits-and-tax-credits/

National Autistic Society

Helpline ☎ 0808 800 4104

www.autism.org.uk/About/Benefits-care

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

DLA is paid to disabled adults and to the carers of disabled children. It is non-taxable and not means tested. PIP started to replace DLA for people aged 16 to 64 from 8 April 2013. Use the PIP checker to find out if and when PIP affects your DLA.

www.gov.uk/pip-checker

Rates per week (as at February 2016):

Care Component		Mobility component	
Lowest	£21.80	Lower	21.80
Middle	£55.10	Higher	57.45
Highest	£82.30		

A child with autism will often get middle or upper rate for personal care, and either lower or higher rate of mobility. If you think your child should get a higher rate you can ask to have your claim reviewed. You can appeal against a decision including a refusal. It is well worth trying as apparently the DWP spend very little time considering the forms we spend hours filling in before making their decisions.

To claim or ask for a review you have to complete an enormous set of forms. It is very important to take time to give full details of all your child's difficulties in all areas of life. It is recommended that you request a claim pack as soon as you can, you will then have 6 weeks to send it back and any resulting benefits can be backdated to the

time of your original call. Get help with the forms if you aren't confident in doing it yourself. You can also claim on-line.

To claim or ask for a review of DLA contact the Disability Benefits Centre 0345 712 3456 and for PIP 0345 850 3322

Carer's Allowance (CA)

CA is payable to the carer of the disabled child or adult.

Rate as at February 2016 £62.10per week

Carers Allowance can affect the [other benefits that you and the person you care for get](#). You have to pay tax on it if your income is over the [Personal Allowance](#). It provides Class 1 National Insurance credits, which will improve your state retirement pension. This is important if you have given up or reduced paid work to care for your child. There are eligibility restrictions on hours and earnings if you are in paid work.

To claim CA contact Carers Allowance Unit ☎ 03456 084321 or claim online www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview

Income Support: Carer and Disabled Child Premiums

Claim on-line or ☎ 0800 055 6688
www.gov.uk/disability-premiums-income-support

Working Parents' Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit

Tax Credit Helpline ☎ 0345 300 3900
www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits

Universal Credit

Universal Credit (UC) is a new benefit for people aged between 18 and pension credit age including people who are carers, parents, people in work, people looking for work and people who cannot work due to their condition or disability. UC is a means tested benefit for people who have a low income or no income and whose savings are below £16,000.

The introduction of Universal Credit, and the abolition of the six benefits that it replaces, are enormous changes to the benefits system and will have an impact on most benefit and tax credit claimants who are under pension credit age.

The following benefits will gradually be abolished and replaced by UC. If you or your partner are claiming any of these benefits you will be affected by Universal Credit:

- Child Tax Credit: A benefit for people with children who are on a low or middle income.
- Working Tax Credit: A benefit for people who work and are on a low income.
- Housing Benefit: A benefit for people who pay rent and are on a low income
- Income Support: A benefit for carers or lone parents who are on a low income and either do not work or only do a small amount of work.
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA): A benefit for people who are not able to work due to their condition or disability.
- Income Related Jobseekers Allowance (JSA): A benefit for people who are out of work and are looking for work.

Universal Credit (UC) is only replacing these six benefits; other benefits such as Carers Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Child Disability Living Allowance and Child Benefit are not affected.

UC is being introduced gradually and there have already been several delays. The government have said that they do not expect to complete the introduction of UC for all claimants until 2021. They expect UC will be introduced for all new claimants by June 2018ⁱⁱ. At the time of writing, (February 2016) UC has not yet been introduced to all parts of the UK. It is being introduced in stages to different 'jobcentre areas' on different dates, you can use this search to check which jobcentre covers your address <http://los.direct.gov.uk/default.aspx?type=1&lang=en>.

This is a complex area and not possible for us to cover comprehensively. It is therefore even more important to seek advice on your benefit entitlements. You can also keep up to date on changes through charities such as the NAS and Contact A Family (CAF)

www.autism.org.uk/about/benefits-care/benefits/universal-credit.aspx or
www.cafamily.org.uk/know-your-rights/benefits-and-tax-credits/ongoing-benefit-changes/

Section 3 – Advice about claiming Benefits

Every Pound Counts

Can help with filling in benefit forms, help with an appeal, to discuss your benefits because your circumstances are about to change. Details of who qualifies for advice and the referral process can be found online.

☎ 020 7926 5555 ✉ EveryPoundCounts@lambeth.gov.uk

www.lambeth.gov.uk/benefits-and-council-tax/housing-benefit/

Disability Advice Service Lambeth

'We are 336' 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA

General Enquiries ☎ 0207 738 5656

Direct Payments Support Service ☎ 0207 501 8960 (ILCP)

www.disabilitylambeth.org.uk

DASL no longer has a funded information advice service but you can leave a message on their general number.

Independent Living & Carers Partnership

From April 2015 DASL has become part of the Independent Living & Carers Partnership. The ILCP is a consortium of : Age UK Lambeth, Disability Advice Service Lambeth, Crossroads Care South Thames-renamed Help for Carers (Lambeth Carers Hub) and Lambeth Mencap.

http://www.disabilitylambeth.org.uk/uploads/ILCP_Leaflet_Colour_final_version.pdf

They provide a comprehensive information service, professional advocacy service, direct payments support, advice and support on welfare benefits and through the Carer's Hub a range of services to support carers.

Enquiry Line ☎ 020 7346 6800

'We are 336' 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA.

Lambeth Carers Hub

Now a member of the ILCP. From 1st April 2015 under the Care Act 2014, carers of adults have the same rights as those they care for – the right to an assessment, a care and support plan if they have eligible needs , and a personal budget.

<http://www.carersuk.org/>

☎ 020 7642 0038

<http://carershub.org.uk>

National Autistic Society

Autism helpline ☎ 0808 800 4104 (free to call from landlines and most mobiles)

The NAS has a specialist welfare rights service. You can call the helpline who will arrange a telephone appointment. You can also email direct for an appointment or to ask for advice.

www.autism.org.uk/welfarerights

One Lambeth Advice

The main advice service for the general public is now 'One Lambeth Advice', a consortium of a number of advice agencies including the Citizens Advice Bureau, providing one point of contact

0800 254 0298

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

Disability Law Service

Information and advice about disability rights – employment, education, benefits, community care. No longer funded to provide Welfare Benefits Advice other than fact sheets on its web site. Useful short guide to benefits system for GPs on its website.

☎ 020 7791 9800

www.dls.org.uk

The Early Years Alliance

Inclusion Outreach Workers may be able to help families with under 5s to claim benefits.

☎Karen Nugent email: knugent@lambeth.gov.uk or phone 020 7926 5152

Other Financial help

Charities

There are a large number of charities that can help children with disabilities. We have listed a few. Charities may require a referral from a social worker or other professional.

The Family Fund

Makes one-off payments for autism-related costs, e.g. wear and tear, washing machine, holidays. You can contact them direct. For eligibility criteria see

www.familyfund.org.uk/FAQs/are-we-eligible-to-apply. The Fund prioritises those on low incomes.

☎ 01904 658085 ✉ info@familyfund.org.uk

www.familyfund.org.uk

The Walcot Foundation

Local trust that makes grants for education-related things like computer equipment for Lambeth families on low income with children with disabilities. Child may need to be referred by social worker, health or education professional.

☎ 020 7735 1925

www.walcotfoundation.org.uk

Caudwell Children

Give grants for specific interventions for autistic children.

☎ 0345 300 1348

www.caudwellchildren.com

Cerebra

Give grants to families (with monthly income below specified amount see application form), and also have loads of great information and run interesting seminars.

☎ 0800 328 1159

www.cerebra.org.uk

Turn2Us

A charity that helps people in financial need to access welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help.

www.turn2us.org.uk

Section 4 – Parent / Carer Support Groups

Lambeth Autism Group – NAS Lambeth Branch

For Lambeth residents. Holds information and support meetings, runs adult social club, provides information via email, campaigning around local services and policies. Parent coffee morning meeting every second Tuesday each month from 10am to 11.30am at Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common.

✉ lambeth@nas.org.uk

National Autistic Society (national organization)

General Helpline ☎ 0808 800 4104, Parent to Parent helpline ☎ 0808 800 4106, and Education Rights Service ☎ 0808 800 4102 (all free to call from landlines and most mobiles). The NAS also provides Welfare Rights, Community Care and School Exclusions Services.

www.autism.org.uk

www.autism.org.uk/helpline

Lambeth Carers Hub

Support and advice for carers.

☎ 020 7642 0038

<http://carershub.org.uk>

Lambeth Contact-a-Family

Offers information and advice to parents/carers of disabled children from 6 to 19 years old and to professionals who work with them.

☎ 0207 326 5270

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/offices/lambeth>

Lifelong Family Links

Help and support for children with disabilities, their parents and carers. Activities and groups for parents / carers and for children.

☎ 020 8671 8939

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

Young Carers Project

Advice and support for young people aged 5-18 caring for a family member with a disability. . Now provided through the Independent Living & Carers Partnership

Section 5 – Children’s Social Care, Family Support and Respite Care, Registers for Children and Adults with Disabilities

Families with children with disabilities can receive support from several sources in Lambeth, but you may have to work quite hard to access any support.

The Lambeth Local Offer sets out the process for accessing support

<http://www.younglambeth.org/local-offer/landing-pages/social-care-and-community-services.html>

The system is that all referrals are dealt with by the generic (non-specialist) referral and assessment service. From there you and your child could be referred on to the Multi-Agency team (MAT) for support. Or you could get a referral to the Children with Disabilities Team (not everyone is offered this).

The first step is to contact the Referral and Assessment Team to request an assessment. You can do this by phone 020 7926 5555 but it may be better to put your request in writing. See Appendix 1 at the end of this guide for a sample letter.

What sort of support is available?

Whether you receive support from the MAT (Multi-Agency Team) or from the Children with Disabilities Team, there is a range of respite care and family support available. Families receive different levels of support - most families receive nothing. Some receive direct payments to pay support workers to provide care for their child. What you are offered will depend on your circumstances – your child’s needs, siblings, extended family support etc. - but it is not related to your income. Support offered will also depend on what you ask for – don’t expect to be offered anything!

You have a right to ask Lambeth for an assessment or re-assessment of your disabled child under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and of yourself as a carer under the Carers and Disabled Children’s Act 2000. There is often a long wait for an appointment so it’s important to say how urgent your situation is. See the NAS appendix at the end of this guide for a sample letter and further advice, or go to NAS website

<http://www.autism.org.uk/13516>

Privately arranged childcare

Some parents arrange and pay for support, either finding carers privately or using an agency.

SNAP

Specialise in special needs childcare. ☎ 020 7729 2200

www.snapchildcare.co.uk

Special People

A private agency which provides childcarers for children with special needs. They do the recruiting and vetting including criminal records checks, but the service is expensive. ☎ 0207 686 0253

www.specialpeople.org.uk

Registration of children and adults with “permanent and substantial” disabilities

Lambeth Council has a duty to maintain these registers. The information is used by health, education and social care to help plan future services based on known numbers of disabled children and adults. Registration is voluntary. The Register also issues a ‘membership card’ with a list of places which will accept the card as proof of disability for discounts / concessions.

Having your child’s name on the register can help when applying for other services, e.g. blue badge etc. because it confirms that your child has a permanent and substantial disability.

For information on how to register a child or adult:

www.i-count.org/how-to-register

or email icountregisters@sutton.gov.uk or ☎ 020 8770 4835

Section 6 – Services for Families with Children under 5

The Early Years Alliance Team provides support for children under 5 with special educational needs and disabilities. This includes an Under 5's Autism Outreach Service and a Home Support Service. Inclusion outreach officers support staff in early years settings to manage children's needs, and may also help you to find a suitable nursery for your child. To contact the Early Years Alliance email Karen Nugent knugent@lambeth.gov.uk or phone 020 7926 5152

Most families of under 5 will get support through a DTAC (disability team around the child) assessment when their child is identified via health services as having some additional needs. If this hasn't happened for you, you can ask for information from the Family Information Service (FIS) ☎ To 020 7926 5152 or ✉ fis@lambeth.gov.uk.

Children's Centres

Lambeth has children's centres all around the borough providing services for families with under 5's. Some also have extended schools provision for school-age children. For details of local children's centres <http://www.younglambeth.org> or phone Lambeth Families Information Service (FIS) 020 7926 5152

All sorts of groups run in children's centres for families with children under 5 including play and early learning activities for parents and their children together and some groups specifically for families with children under 5 with additional needs. Jessop and Clapham Manor have sensory rooms and particularly welcome children with additional needs. Contact your local children's centre for up to date information or for specialist advice:

► Catherine Pearson, Children's Centre Autism Outreach Worker
cpearson@lambeth.gov.uk

☎ 020 7622 7265 or 07968 666068 ✉

Catherine offers advice and support to parents with under 5's with autism in Lambeth. She says that there are a number of ASD-specific playgroups across the borough at any given time and parents can contact her to find out what's going on term by term in their local area.

► Anna Day, Children's Centre Outreach Worker (under 5's with disabilities)
☎ 020 7582 9711

Anna is based at Ethelred Children's Centre and is available to offer advice and support to parents with under 5's with disabilities from North Lambeth area.

Section 7 – Disability Play and Leisure Services

Charlie Chaplin Adventure Playground (Kennington)

After-school, Saturdays and holiday play provision for school-aged children with disabilities. Not open-access, you will need to apply.

☎ 0207 735 1819

✉ info@chaplinadventureplayground.org

www.charliechaplinadventureplayground.org

Kidsactive Lady Allen Playground (Wandsworth Common)

Chivalry Road, Wandsworth Common SW11 1HT

After-school, Saturdays and holiday play provision for children with disabilities aged 5-14 and their siblings. Runs after school clubs, holiday play schemes and weekend sessions.(Including Sunday afternoon 13 + youth club)

☎ 020 7228 0278 or ✉ ian.logan@kids.org.uk

<http://www.kids.org.uk/Event/lady-allen-adventure-playground-1>

Oasis Play (Stockwell)

Adventure play, nature garden and go-karting projects in Stockwell. Has an inclusion project and children with disabilities are positively welcomed.

☎ 020 7627 3793

✉ adventure@oasisplay.org.uk

<http://oasisplay.org.uk/inclusion>

Dramatherapy

Lambeth-funded after-school sessions for children and young people with autism and other needs held at 4 sites across the borough. Children can be referred through school SENCO, social worker, Health or CAMHS. Free if referred by professional - parents can refer direct but there is a charge.

Lambeth Dramatherapy Service Co-ordinator, Emily Rothon

☎ 020 7627 9916

✉ erothon@claphammanor.lambeth.sch.uk

Lambeth Short Breaks Scheme – sports activities

Activities like multi-sports and swimming for children and young people with disabilities are now delivered by Moving Matters. It's difficult to find out exactly what is on offer but there is definitely football at Brixton Recreation Centre on Saturdays from 5 – 7pm. Call them for information.

<http://www.moving-matters.org> 020 3691 4576

Lifelong Family Links

Voluntary organization family support, children's groups and holiday play schemes, toy and leisure library

☎ 020 8671 8939

www.lfl.org.uk

Brixton Inclusive (formerly Brixton Shed)

An inclusive drama project for children with and without disabilities.

☎ 0207 274 7133 ✉ info@brixtoninclusive.org

www.brixtoninclusive.org

Clapham Pottery

Rectory Grove, near Clapham Common

Runs pottery sessions for children and young people with autism and their parents / carers.

☎ 020 7622 0681 ✉ administrator@claphampottery.co.uk

www.claphampottery.co.uk

Wheels for Wellbeing

A charity which supports disabled people to cycle. Weekly sessions at Croydon Arena.

☎ 020 7346 8482

<http://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk>

Werewolves of London Ice Hockey Club

Special needs club where children and young people with disabilities learn ice skating and ice hockey skills. Practices are on Saturdays 4.30-6.30pm at Streatham Ice & Leisure Centre

<http://werewolvesoflondon.org.uk>

South West Swimming School

Offer 1:1 swimming lessons in Clapham / Battersea area for children with special needs, although expensive

☎ 020 8767 2723

www.swschool.co.uk

Dolphin Swimming Club

☎ 0208 672 1761

Held at Latchmere Leisure Centre Burns Road, Battersea, London SW11 5AD

For children/young people with learning disabilities from 5-19 years old.

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/directory_record/143/dolphins_swim_club

Section 8 – Mainstream Play and Leisure services

Young Lambeth

Information about childcare, after-school and holiday provision.

www.younglambeth.org.uk

Cycle Training Lambeth Council has an arrangement with cycleconfidant.com to provide Lambeth residents with free cycle training.

Suzy Harrison ☎ 020 7926 0686 or Eric Duval ☎ 020 7926 0677

cycling@lambeth.gov.uk

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/parking-transport-and-streets/cycling/sign-up-for-free-cycle-training>

Lambeth REAL Plus Card

Reductions available for people on low income using Lambeth leisure facilities.

Apply at swimming pool or sports centre.

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-libraries/sports-and-leisure/apply-for-a-real-plus-leisure-card>

Section 9 – Services for Teenagers and Adults

Social Clubs and Activities in Lambeth

Many of these services are aimed generally at people with learning disabilities rather than specifically for people with autism.

Lambeth Autism Group Adult Social Club

Weekly club for anyone 18 years plus on the autistic spectrum. We meet on Mondays from 7 to 9pm to enjoy activities and make new friends. Some evenings are spent in the Stockwell Centre playing sports and games, doing craft activities or chilling to music, we also go out bowling, to the cinema, on walks and to restaurants. Other activities take place as decided by the members. If you would like to come to the Club ✉ lambeth@nas.org.uk or yjones@lambethmencap.org.uk or ☎ 0208 655 7706

Heart n Soul

Arts organisation with learning disability culture at its heart.

www.heartnsoul.co.uk

The Squidz Club is a Heart n Soul initiative:

‘The Squidz Club is for young people with learning disabilities (aged 10-25 years), their families and friends. It features young DJs, VJs and artists in a fun and friendly atmosphere’.

http://heartnsoul.co.uk/category/taking_part/details/squidz_club

For adults with learning difficulties over 25 see Heart n Soul’s Allsorts creative arts initiative. http://www.heartnsoul.co.uk/category/taking_part/details/allsorts

Streatham Youth and Community Trust

Wednesday youth Group for young people (13-30) with disabilities. For information and registration details ☎ 020 8769 5884 or ✉ info.syct@btinternet.com
www.syct.org.uk/special-needs-group.html

The Key Club

A monthly arts-based group at Paddington Arts for young adults 16 - 30 years with Asperger's or high-functioning autism.

For more information ☎ 020 8964 5060 or ✉ admin@turtlekeyarts.org.uk
www.turtlekeyarts.org.uk

Wheels for Wellbeing

A charity which supports disabled people to cycle.

☎ 020 7346 8482

<http://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk>

Mencap

Voluntary organisation, services for people with learning disabilities and their parents and carers. Includes some adult social activities and outings. Also supported living and adult placements.

43 Knight's Hill, SE27 0HS

☎ 020 8655 7711

www.lambethmencap.org.uk

The Rathbone Centre

Rathbone provides individual support and group activities (including under 25 youth club) for young people and adults with learning disabilities in and around Lambeth.

8 Chatsworth Way, London SE27 9HR

☎ 020 8670 4039 or ✉ enquiries@rathbonesociety.org.uk

www.rathbonesociety.org.uk

Some of our members have used clubs and activities based in Wandsworth for their teenagers. These are worth bearing in mind, although as many are primarily funded by the London borough of Wandsworth, there are likely to be restrictions on Lambeth children/young people attending and even when they can, conditions may be attached e.g. you may have to stay with your children/young person.

KIDS Lady Allen Adventure Playground

Chivalry Road, Wandsworth Common SW11 1HT

☎ 0207 228 0278 or ✉ ian.logan@kids.org.uk

For children 5-14 and their siblings. Runs after school clubs, holiday play schemes and weekend sessions. (Including Sunday afternoon 13 + youth club)

<http://wandsworth.childrensservicedirectory.org.uk/kb5/wandsworth/fsd/service.page?id=InrvljCxmLo>

The George Shearing Centre

Este Road, Clapham Junction, London SW11 2TF

☎ 0207 228 2230

Runs after school clubs & holiday schemes for 13-25 year olds with severe learning difficulties and a monthly disco on a Friday evening. (You would need to be registered)

Generate Youth Club

Runs services including youth clubs 4 nights a week for different age groups (11-25)

with mild to moderate learning disabilities. Most held at the George Shearing Centre.
See their web site for details:

<http://www.generate-uk.org> or ☎ 0208 879 6333

Act Too

Act too is the home of the Baked Bean Theatre Company. A professional performance group made up of adult actors with learning disabilities.
The organisation provides many other services and activities.

For more information ✉ ican@acttoo.com or ☎ 0208 944 0024
<http://www.acttoo.com/bbtc.html>

Dolphin Swimming Club

☎ 0208 672 1761

Held at Latchmere Leisure Centre Burns Road, Battersea, London SW11 5AD
For children/young people with learning disabilities from 5-19 years old.
http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/directory_record/143/dolphins_swim_club

Adult Learning Disability Team

☎ 020 7926 5555

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/social-care-and-support/contact-the-social-care-and-support-teams>

To ask for a needs assessment (community care assessment) ☎ 020 7926 5555. Our understanding is that eligibility is restricted to adults with learning disabilities with an IQ of less than 70 – but worth checking this.

ALAG (Autism London Asperger's group)

Monthly group for adults meeting in Islington with members from all over London.

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

info@alag.org.uk

Disability Law Service

Information and advice about disability rights – employment, education, benefits, community care
www.dls.org.uk

Lambeth College

Further education – provision for students 16+ with learning support needs. This includes courses specifically for students with learning difficulties and also additional

learning support to help people with autistic spectrum conditions access mainstream courses. Support can be provided to help potential students with transition from school or other provision into the College.

www.lambethcollege.ac.uk/courses/category/learning-support

Adults with Autism and ADHD – health services

National Adult Autism and ADHD Service, BDU - Whitley 1, Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, BR3 3BX

You need to be referred by a Consultant (CAMHS) to the above for assessment. The process takes 6 months. An assessment takes place by the Adult ASD service.

For ongoing intervention and support with behaviour difficulties, anxiety or depression you need an assessment via the local Community Mental Health Team. Funding has to be sought from the local PCT (as this service is a regional service), and then another referral back to the Adult Autism Team. Worth waiting for, they are very good and do home visits or clinic based service at the Maudsley.

Section 10 – Favourite places/things to do

Children and adults with autism often find it difficult to enjoy mainstream leisure activities. It might be that there's too much language and interaction involved or it might be too crowded, too noisy, or sometimes the child's or adult's behaviour is too disruptive.

These are some places families enjoy at weekends and holidays. Particularly for a first visit, it's always best to go early or late in the day when places are less busy. If you go to a pool or leisure centre phone before you go to check they are open to avoid potential disappointment meltdown.

RADAR disabled toilet key

If you go out you may need to use public toilets. As kids get older it becomes less appropriate to take boys into women's toilets or girls into men's toilets. It's easy to apply for a RADAR key (small charge) online which gives access to disabled toilets. <https://crm.disabilityrightsuk.org/radar-nks-key>

Indoor Soft Play

Brixton Recreation Centre

27 Brixton Station Road, London SW9 8QQ ☎ 020 7095 5100
www.better.org.uk/leisure/brixton-recreation-centre/facilities

Playzone

Tooting & Mitcham Community Sports Club, Imperial Fields, Bishopsford Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6BF ☎ 020 8685 6193

Eddie Catz

Centres in Putney and Wimbledon ☎ 0845 201 1268
www.eddiecatz.com

Gambado

7 Station Court, Townmead Road, Chelsea SW6 2PY ☎ 0207 384 1635
www.gambado.com/clubs/chelsea

Peckham Pulse Healthy Living Centre

10 Melon Road Peckham, London, SE15 5QN ☎ 0844 893 3888
www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/Peckham_Pulse_Healthy_Living_Centre/facility/Soft_play

Swimming Pools

Brixton Recreation Centre

27 Brixton Station Road, London SW9 8QQ ☎ 020 7095 5100
www.better.org.uk/leisure/brixton-recreation-centre

Clapham Leisure Centre

141 Clapham Manor Street, SW4 6DB ☎ 020 7627 7900
www.better.org.uk/areas/lambeth/centres/claphamleisurecentre

Latchmere (slide, wave machine)

Burns Road, Battersea, SW11 5AD ☎ 020 7207 8004
www.dcleisurecentres.co.uk/centres/latchmere-leisure-centre

Swimming for child with disability and a carer is free – you need to take proof of disability, e.g. DLA letter, register card.

Peckham Pulse

10 Melon Road, SE15 5QN ☎ 0844 893 3888
www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/Peckham_Pulse_Healthy_Living_Centre

Bromley Pavilion (slides, wave machine)

Kentish Way, Bromley, Kent BR1 3EF ☎ 020 8313 9911
www.mytimeactive.co.uk/leisure/leisure-centres/pavilion-leisure-centre/default.aspx

“Joyriding”

Buses, underground, Docklands Light Railway, trains, trams, open top bus rides.

Museums

Lots of museums are free so it doesn't matter if you only stay 10 minutes. Best to go early or late when they are less busy.

National Maritime Museum

Lots to do, including a Kids Zone.
Romney Rd, Greenwich SE10 9NF
www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum

Natural History Museum (dinosaurs)

Cromwell Road, South Kensington SW7 5BD ☎ 020 7942 5000
www.nhm.ac.uk

Science Museum

Exhibition Road, South Kensington SW7 2DD ☎ 0870 870 4868 or 020 7942 4000
www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

London Transport Museum

Parent / carer gets free entry accompanying child with disability
Covent Garden Piazza WC2E 7BB ☎ 020 7565 7298
www.ltmuseum.co.uk

Horniman Museum

Aquarium, stuffed animals, lots more
100 London Road, Forest Hill SE23 3PQ ☎ 020 8699 1872
www.horniman.ac.uk

Imperial War Museum Lambeth Road SE1 6HZ ☎ 020 7416 5000

<http://london.iwm.org.uk>

HMS Belfast

Was a Second World War warship now a museum moored on the Thames.
www.iwm.org.uk/visits/hms-belfast ☎ 020 7940 6300

Parks

Battersea Park

Adventure playground, children's zoo and bike hire
www.batterseapark.org

Dulwich Park

Playground, pedal boat hire and Bike hire from London Recumbents ☎ 0208 299 6636
<http://londonrecumbents.com>

Brockwell Park

Paddling pool, playground, lido
<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/places/brockwell-park>

Crystal Palace Park

Dinosaurs, playground
http://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/200073/parks_and_open_spaces/780/about_crystal_palace_park

Ruskin Park

Paddling pool and playground beside train track

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/places/ruskin-park>

Richmond Park

Deer, open space, bike hire

<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/richmond-park>

Princess Diana Playground

Kensington Gardens - amazing playground

<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/kensington-gardens/things-to-see-and-do/sports-and-leisure/diana-memorial-playground>

City Farms

Vauxhall City Farm

Tyers Street, SE11 ☎ 020 7582 4204

Farm animals and horse riding.

<http://www.vauxhallcityfarm.org/>

Surrey Docks City Farm

Rotherhithe Street, SE16 ☎ 020 7231 1010

Farm animals. Beside the Thames, a good place for watching boats.

www.surreydocksfarm.org

Cinemas

Cinema Card for People with Disabilities

The Card Network ☎ 0845 123 1292

www.ceacard.co.uk

If a child or adult gets Disability Living Allowance then he or she can get a cinema card. It entitles the holder to one free ticket for someone accompanying them to the cinema. So you pay for the child / adult with disability and then you as parent / carer get in free. It costs £5.50 to get a card and it then lasts for 1 year. You can use the card at Odeons, Vue and lots of other cinemas. Phone for an application form or download one from the website. There are monthly autism-friendly screenings at selected Vue and Odeon cinemas – this includes Streatham and Wimbledon Odeon.

For more information and to sign up to an e-newsletter

www.dimensions-uk.org/what-we-do/autism/autism-friendly-films/autism-friendly-films-faqs

Brixton Ritzy, Clapham Picture House and Streatham Odeon have cheap Saturday morning kids' films. The general noise level of young children at kids' shows makes them accessible for children with autism who make a bit of noise – i.e. you won't feel like you are disturbing other people. Picturehouse Cinemas including Ritzy and Clapham have autism-friendly screenings in school holidays. You can get regular email alerts through their website.

Clapham Picture House

☎ 0871 902 5727

www.picturehouses.co.uk/cinema/Clapham_Picturehouse

Ritzy, Brixton

☎ 0871 902 5739

www.picturehouses.co.uk/cinema/Ritzy_Picturehouse

Streatham Odeon

☎ 0871 22 44 007

<http://www.odeon.co.uk/cinemas/streatham/130/>

Theatres

Polka Theatre

www.polkatheatre.com

Unicorn Theatre

www.unicorntheatre.com

Polka in Wimbledon and Unicorn at London Bridge are children's theatres. Both put on some "relaxed performances" suitable for children with autism. If you contact them you could go on their mailing lists so you know what's on.

Bowling

Bowling seems to appeal to lots of children with autism – it's an individual game and it has a predictable pattern. The nearest ones are:

Valley Park

Valley Park Leisure Complex, Hesterman Way, Croydon CR0 4YA

☎ 0871 222 3675

www.tenpin.co.uk/bowling-croydon.html

Hollywood Bowl

The Mast Leisure Park 3a Teredo Street Surrey Quays SE16 7LW

© 0844 826 1470

www.hollywoodbowl.co.uk/our_centres/surrey_quays

London Palace Superbowl

First Floor, Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre, London, SE1 6TE

020 7277 0001

london@palacesuperbowl.com

<http://www.palacesuperbowl.com/london.php>

Music and Art

creative:space

Music events for children with disabilities and their families.

www.createarts.org.uk

Big Days Out

Most big theme parks are disability-friendly and offer discounts and 'jump the queue' facilities. We recommend taking your child with autism out of school for a day to get the most out of a trip to a theme park. Many children with autism find queuing and crowded places very difficult, so make it easy for you and them. (Enlightened schools will quietly agree that this will be a great learning experience for your child!)

Ask about concessions for children with disabilities. Some parents feel awkward asking for concessions for children with disabilities, or maybe don't want their child to be labelled as having a disability in public. For many of us though, our children make their 'differentness' obvious anyway through their behaviour. Our feeling is, life as a parent of a child with autism is hard enough, so take advantage of what help is available – you deserve it. You will also be raising people's awareness about autism!

Lots of places offer reduced or carer goes free admission. Examples include - London Aquarium and London Eye offer free ticket for carer. It's always worth asking if there are any concessions. Remember to take along some disability identification like blue badge, registration card or DLA letter.

Legoland in Windsor

A great first introduction to the experience of a theme park as it has lots suitable for very young children. They provide free entry for parent / carer accompanying paying child with disability (call in advance to check and take DLA letter or blue badge). You can then get a stamp on your hand which gets you to the front of all the queues for

rides.

☎ 0871 222 2001

www.legoland.co.uk

The Hop Farm Family Park

Lots of space, bouncy castles, animal petting, rides, enough for a whole day out.

Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6PY ☎ 01622 872068

www.thehopfarm.co.uk

Bluebell Railway

Steam train fans can take a trip in East Sussex. Check the website for details.

☎ 01825 720800

www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Section 11 – Resources

Internet: Websites and Groups

National Autistic Society

The leading UK charity for people with autism and Asperger syndrome and their families. Provides information, support and services and campaigns for a better world for people with autism.

www.autism.org.uk

Ambitious about Autism

National charity for children and young people with autism, grown out of Treehouse school.

www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

Talk About Autism

An internet forum for parents and professionals supported by Ambitious about Autism

www.talkaboutautism.org.uk

Autism-UK

An internet group for people with autism, parents, professionals.

www.facebook.com/groups/autism.uk.members

AuKids Magazine

General advice.

www.aukids.co.uk

Autism File

Lots of information on diet/supplements.

www.autismfile.com

Challenging Behaviour Foundation

Have loads of free information sheets for carers, on things like self-injury and pica and they organise a lot of free training.

www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk

Disability Law Service

Information and advice about disability rights – employment, education, benefits, community care

www.dls.org.uk

PEACH

Provides information about Applied Behavioural Analysis and support to families setting up and running ABA programmes.

☎ 01344 882248

www.peach.org.uk

Treating Autism

A parent led UK bio-med charity. Their website has lots of general info on diet and supplements and they are friendly and proactive to deal with.

www.treatingautism.co.uk

UK Young Autism Project

A research-based centre specialising in teaching young children with autism, other pervasive developmental disorders and related developmental disorders, using the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).

www.ukyap.org

Education Otherwise

Organization supporting parents home-educating their children

www.educationotherwise.net

There are a huge number of other internet sites and groups about autism-related subjects which you can find using links from these sites or an internet search engine like Google.

Books

Personal accounts

- *Let Me Hear Your Voice* by Catherine Maurice
- *Thinking in Pictures* by Temple Grandin (also a good film)
- Nobody Nowhere – the remarkable autobiography of an autistic girl
by Donna Williams
- *George and Sam* by Charlotte Moore
- *Carly's Voice* by Arthur Fleischmann
- *The Reason I Jump* by Naoki Higashida

Behavioural/communication

- *Verbal Behaviour* by Mary Barbera
- *Playing, Laughing and Learning with Children on the Autism Spectrum*
by Julia Moor

- *My Social Stories Book* by Carol Gray
- *A Picture's Worth* by Andrew Bondy
- *More Than Words* by Fern Sussman

Diet/biomed

- *Gut And Psychology Syndrome* by Natasha Campbell-McBride
- *Breaking the Vicious Cycle* by Elaine Gottschall
- *Children With Starving Brains* by Jacquelyn McCandless
- *Autism: Effective Biomedical Treatments* by Jon Pangborn and Sidney MacDonald Baker
- *The Autism Revolution* by Martha Herbert

Sensory

- *The Out of Sync Child* by Carol Stock Kranowitz
- *Sensational Kids* by Lucy Jane Miller

General

- *10 Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew* by Ellen Notbohm
- *Neurotribes* by Steve Silberman
- *Choosing Autism Interventions* by Bernard Fleming.

Further reading

For more books and other resources visit the National Autism Society website
<http://www.autism.org.uk/shop/books.aspx>

Ipad Apps

There is no need to spend a lot of money on apps. Many of them have a free version that you can download to see if it appeals to your child, and if it is worth buying the 'full' version.

You can also search for apps that your child will enjoy by typing in the name of their favourite characters, toys or TV shows into your 'App Store' website (e.g. Dora, Thomas, Dr Seuss, Lego, Toy Story).

Here are some of the iPad apps we have used. For a wide-ranging list of apps please try Autism iHelp.

Autism iHelp is a vocabulary teaching aid developed by parents of a child with Autism and a speech-language pathologist. Autism iHelp was inspired by the need for specific language intervention tools for children with Autism focusing on their unique strengths and difficulty with expressive vocabulary.

Sensory

- *Drums!* – mini drum kit
- *Virtuoso* – mini piano keyboard
- *Soundrop* – you divert balls to change the sounds they make
- *Dropophone* – make your own sound loops
- *Singing Fingers* – record sounds onto pictures, retracing the pictures plays the sounds back to you
- *Balloonimals* – blow up balloons with your fingers and then shake the ipad to turn them into animals. Touch the animals to hear their sound effects and watch them move. Then blow them up and pop them.
- Various apps where you create interesting moving visual displays by moving your finger across the screen, e.g. *Art of Glow*, *Balls*, *Forge of Neon*, *FingerFlock*, *Heatpad Lite*, *Somantics*, *Spawnglow*, *SpinArt Free*, *Tiltoria*.
- *TumbleVision* – like an old fashioned kaleidoscope.
- *Pocket Pond* – like looking at a pond and by touching it you create ripples etc.
- *Percy and the Perpetual Ooze*
- *Particle Pad*
- *Fluidity*
- *Fireworks 123*
- *Neon Mania*
- *Fish Pond Fun*
- *Splatter!*
- *Colour Ripple for Toddlers*

Communication

- *SoundTouch* – pictures of animals/objects and by touching them you see a photo example of it and hear the noise it makes. Good for games where you play “moo” and ask “who says moo?” etc. or the other way round
- *AlphaBaby* – you press a blank screen and a letter, number or shape appears, and you hear the name of it. You can make it bigger/smaller and flick it with your finger. Each time you hear the name. It is quite customisable so you can use photos

instead, and record your own voice saying the word. Good for teaching vocab, plus fine motor.

- Lots of ABA-based flash card type apps from kindergarten.com, e.g. *Which Go Together*.
- *Verbs With Milo* – created by a SALT, this is a series of animations of a mouse ‘doing’ different verbs. A good way of teaching verbs.
- *Magical Concepts* is a paid for app but presents concepts in a user-friendly way and has received high parent ratings.
- Various vocab building apps such as the *iKidz* range or *PCS bingo* by Mayer-Johnson
- *Following Instructions Fundeck* – Super Duper Publications and Fun with directions – by Hamaguchiapps
- *SeeTouchLearn* – asks questions like ‘find the thing you wear’ or ‘which one is round’ etc., good for language comprehension
- *Speechjournal*– enables users to record commentary and attach it to photos, great for creating a ‘diary’ and working on comprehension
- *Talking Tom Cat 2*
- *Grid player*
- *Choiceboard creator*

Fine motor

- *Dexterio* – a brilliant app designed by OTs which works on hand control.
- Various colouring apps, including *ColorBook*, *Glow Draw*, *ColorPad SD*, *Splatter HD*
- *Brainshake* – bean bag kids (requires following instructions and quite difficult fine motor actions, a bit like the toy ‘bop-it’.
- *Falldown!* – a hand eye coordination game.
- *Circled 2.0* – if you are looking for a way of practicing tracing a circle, it gives you a score for each attempt, so you can track progress.
- *FingerMingle* – hand eye coordination, you have to manoeuvre objects around obstacles, using several fingers at once – quite tricky
- *LetterSchool lite* – a great app for tracing letters, the visuals and sounds make it extremely rewarding to get the letter right
- *Fingeric* – another app where fingers have to work together, this time following instructions and it is much harder than other apps, for an advanced learner.

Social

- *What are they thinking?*

- *Model Me- Going Places 2*
- *Find Me (autism)*
- *Social Skills Play*
- *The Social Express*

Literacy/Reading/writing/Phonics

- *Hairy Letters* by Nessy
- *First Words* by Learning Touch
- *Pocket Phonics* by Apps In My Pocket Ltd
- *Blackboard Sight Words games HD* - by Hien Ton
- *Thingsthatgotogether* - Innovative Investments
- *Special Words* - Special IApps
- *FirstWords Sampler* - Learning Touch
- *Somantics* - Cariad Interactive
- *ABC Colouring Book* - visual statement
- *Genius Books* - TCR Caceffo
- *MeeGenius Worldwide* - meegenius
- *Autism Apps* - Touch Autism
- *Shape puzzle* - Joy Preschool Game
- *Alphabet Tracing* - Oncilla Technologies

Memory, Numeracy, problem solving and sequencing

- *PreschoolIMM* is a good 'concentration' type game.
- *Pipelines* by Bitmango
- There are lots of sequencing apps where common scenarios are broken down and you must put the pictures in order. Some of them let you upload your own photos to personalize the sequences. Examples are: *iSequences Lite*, *Speech with Milo – sequencing* and *Edninja Sequences*.
- *Learn 123's* - Game Maker Photo Video
- *Learn shapes* - Peekaboo Studios

Creative

- *Cookiedoodle* by shoe the goose
- *Various* by Toca Boca (e.g. *hair xmas*) – the hair one is great, you get to give Santa a makeover, cutting his hair, blow drying it, colouring it etc.
- *Faces iMake* by iImagine machine – essentially you make a face picture out of everyday items. There are hundreds of small components to choose from e.g. fruit, toys, tools etc.

- *SculptMaster 3D* by Volutopia.
- *Doodle Buddy*
- *Puppet Pals HD*
- *Draw Free*
- *Colour Studio*
- *DrawCast*
- *ColorBook*

Misc

- *My PlayHome* – a great app that can be used in many ways. It is a home divided up into rooms with a family members who can be moved around (like a dolls house but in 2D). Lots of parts of the house are moveable and have visual and sound effects, e.g. if you press the tap water comes out and it sounds like water. You can pour drinks and give them to ‘people’ to drink. All the appliances work, you can switch CDs on the hifi etc. Comes in a free version or the full version with more rooms and people.
- *iEarnedThat* – a customizable puzzle that represents a treat that is earned by the child. Each time they do something good, they get to reveal a piece of the puzzle until it is ‘earned’
- *Talking Tom* – you speak to the ipad and it repeats what you said in a silly voice. Good cause/effect game or just a fun reward.
- *Speakbot* – you write words and the robot says them – a free app that is a fun way to look at the link between written and spoken words

Section 12 – Advice about Special Educational Needs

All the procedures and your rights concerning the identification and assessment of your child's special educational needs, and how provision should be made are contained in 'Special Educational Needs Code of Practice', produced by the Department for Education. You can get a FREE copy by phoning or through their website: www.education.gov.uk

To order a publication ☎ 0845 60 222 60

The Children and Families Act brought significant changes to the law concerning special educational needs. Some of the changes are outlined in the introduction to this guide. They include: new Education, Health & Care Plans replacing Statements of Special Educational Needs, a new Code of Practice, post 19 support up to 25 years, personal budgets and Local Authorities duty to publish a local offer.

Finding your way through the education system can be difficult, especially at a time of change. You may find it helpful to get specialist independent advice to help you to understand the process and to decide what you want for your child. These are some possible sources of advice and help. Telephone helplines are often very busy so you may have to keep trying before you get through.

National Autistic Society

Education Advocacy Helpline and Tribunal Support Advice Line ☎ 0808 800 4102
<http://www.autism.org.uk/advocacy>

IPSEA (Independent Panel of Special Education Advisors)

Voluntary organization giving free advice about SEN system, tribunal etc.
Advice line ☎ 0800 0184016
www.ipsea.org.uk

SOSSEN

Charity offering advice and information, workshops about SEN. Walk-in advice surgeries, usually monthly, in Waterloo.
Advice line ☎ 020 8538 3731
www.sossen.org.uk

Disability Law Service

Information and advice about disability rights – employment, education, benefits,

community care.

www.dls.org.uk

Contact a Family

Information and advice for families of children with disabilities, also includes a dedicated education help line.

www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/

0808 808 3555

Lambeth Independent Advice and Support Service (LIASS)

(Previously known as Parent Partnership) Provide free confidential support and advice to parents and carers with concerns about their child's special educational needs. Includes getting support in mainstream school, getting an EHC plan, dealing with school exclusions.

Anita Bey 020 7926 1831 Chris White ☎ 020 7926 9805

lambethiass@lambeth.gov.uk

Parents for Inclusion

Support for parents seeking inclusive education for their children.

Helpline ☎ 0800 652 3145

www.parentsforinclusion.org

Section 13 – Education & choosing a school

Members who've been through the education system already advise: start your search early; (start seeing secondary schools at the beginning of year 5 or even earlier), talk to other parents; visit as many schools as you can (in and out of the borough), arm yourself with questions and information, and be prepared to seek legal help. (Sources of free advice are set out in Section 12)

Don't be discouraged; many parents have been successful in getting the right provision for their children, and we hope that the changes planned will make it easier.

1. Lambeth Council's Local Offer

Following the 2014 Children and Families, all local authorities must publish in one place a 'Local Offer' - information about the provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and support for their families.

The Local Offer includes provision from birth to 25 years across education, health and social care for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

For information about educational provision either google Lambeth Local Offer or use the following link: <http://www.younglambeth.org/local-offer/landing-pages/local-offer.html>. From the home page you can find what's on offer by age: preschool, 5-16 and post 16.

In the 2014 edition of Did You Know? we covered the changes to provision envisaged following the major review commissioned by Lambeth Council in April 2011. A major focus was to improve the provision within mainstream and special schools in Lambeth, increasing capacity especially for children and young people with autism. And, as a result, reducing "the need for out of borough placements".

In November 2012 the Council adopted a set of broad principles and objectives set out in a "**Vision for Inclusion in Lambeth**". (Appendix 2 Cabinet Meeting SEN Nov 2012 Review Report) for example: halving the number of out of borough placements by end 2015, having training programmes for all staff in school/early years staff by 2015. The current Lambeth pledges can be found here: <http://www.younglambeth.org/local-offer/landing-pages/lambeth-pledges.html>. The Council's 5 year plan for SEN was set out in a report at the July 2013 Cabinet Meeting.

Lambeth Council produces an updated report on SEN strategy yearly.

The March 2015 report can be obtained through this link:

https://modern.gov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s72151/06_SEN_Cabinet_report_submitted_26th_February_2015.pdf2

New Provision:

Many of the changes were planned to be in place for 2014 and 2015. But these are the current timelines, as we understand them. These should be checked against the up to date information in the Lambeth Council Local Offer.

i) NAS (National Autistic Society) Vanguard Free Secondary School

The Vanguard School is a free school managed by the NAS Academies Trust. It will be opening its doors to young people with autism in Lambeth and neighbouring authorities in **2017**. The Vanguard School will cater for 78 young people with autism and associated learning difficulties aged 11 to 19. It will be based at Lollard Street, Kennington. (formerly the Ethelred Youth Centre site)

For further information:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/development/vanguard/about.aspx>

ii) Resource bases

These are specialist provision in mainstream schools for children who have special needs (often autism) with EHCs or statements. Lambeth plans to have 8 resource bases in primary schools and 2 in secondary schools. This is one of the sections that will be completed when the Lambeth Local Offer information is updated.

<http://www.younglambeth.org/local-offer/useful-links/resource-base-provision.html>

Until then the progress on establishing resource bases in primary and secondary schools and a general update on Lambeth's SEN strategy is contained in the March 2015 Cabinet report referred to above.

Crown Lane Primary School – Primary Resource Base

Crown Lane SW16 3HX Tel: 020 8670 4713

Building work in progress and due for completion, we understand in Summer 2016.

City Heights Secondary Resource Base – Now available.

3. Existing Provision

Details of Lambeth's current primary and secondary provision and admissions policies and a separate list of special schools are on-line:

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/schools-and-education>

You can also get the OFSTED report for each school either through the Lambeth site or direct from OFSTED:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/for-parents-and-carers/find-school-inspection-report>

There are also booklets covering Lambeth Primary & Secondary Schools in more detail with short sections for children with EHCPs or statements of SEN. Available also on line:

And all mainstream schools should provide a SEND Information report on their website.

Lambeth have also recently developed a **set of profiles** to describe the educational needs of children and young people with SEND. You can find the profile for autism on this link: <http://www.younglambeth.org/local-offer/useful-links/send-profiles.html>

The designations of the 5 special schools in Lambeth (Turney, Landsdowne, Michael Tippett, Livity and Elm Court) were amended following consultations and a report presented to Lambeth Cabinet - see September 2013 Lambeth Cabinet Report: <http://modern.gov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s59745/02a%20Cabinet%20Report%20-%20The%20Re-Designation%20of%20Special%20Schools%20in%20Lambeth.pdf>

Both **Turney** and **Landsdowne** schools, for example, specialise in "learning linked to ASD" and are designated as learning difficulties with associated ASD schools.

Primary Provision:

Information is provided in Lambeth's Local Offer and you can also access the latest primary school admissions booklet by following this link:

<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sce-primary-school-admission-booklet-2016-17.pdf> Special schools and mainstream resource bases are listed on page 23. Primary specialist provision includes: The Livity School, Turney School and the new Aurora House, Centre for Children with Autism, as well as the Lark Hall Centre.

Information is provided in Lambeth's Local Offer and you can also access the latest secondary school admissions booklet by following this link :

<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sce-lambeth-secondary-schools-brochure-2016-17.pdf>. Special schools and mainstream resource bases are listed on page 74. Secondary specialist provision includes: Elm Court, Turney Michael Tippett and Landsdowne with mainstream provision at City Heights School and Dunraven.

As noted the NAS/Vanguard plan to set up a ASD special secondary Free school in 2017.

Admissions criteria

Admission to a special school or access to Special Resource Base Provision in a mainstream school requires a child to have a statement of SEN or an Education Health Care plan. For advice please contact: The Special Educational Needs and

Disabilities Team, 10th Floor, International House, Canterbury Crescent, London SW9 7QE Telephone: 020 7926 9460

4. Lambeth IASS (lambethiass@lambeth.gov.uk) can provide parents with a list of Local Authority Maintained Special Schools which includes provision in neighbouring boroughs e.g. Southwark, Wandsworth etc.

0207 926 1831/9805

5. Other options outside Lambeth

As Lambeth develops more autism-specific provision of places locally it may be increasingly difficult to get agreement for school places outside Lambeth (out-of-borough). This is because of the high cost of out-of-borough school places (particularly independent schools) and the cost of transport.

You may want to look at schools outside Lambeth if you think your child's needs can't be met in any Lambeth schools. This may also be appropriate if there are no places available in suitable Lambeth schools and you are being offered an unsuitable school instead. Boarding school may also be an option for a small number of children for whom no suitable schools are available locally.

Information about out-of-borough local authority and independent schools can be found in the Good Schools Guide 2008 Special Needs. This costs over £20. You can search for information on their website: <http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/sen> or through the NAS Services Directory: www.autism.org.uk/directory.aspx

A list of ABA/VB schools can be accessed through this link. These are schools belonging to the ABA forum administered by Treehouse/Ambitious about Autism <https://m.facebook.com/notes/aba4all/aba-schools-in-uk/601456216598862/>

Focus is a new local Saturday school for autistic children using ABA : <http://www.focusabalondon.co.uk/contact-us-i/>

Schools in the London area that Lambeth children with autism have attended include; Rainbow in Wandsworth, Blossom House in Wimbledon, Eagle House in Mitcham and Sutton, Parayhouse in Fulham, The Chelsea Group in Earlsfield, The Link in Beddington, Sybil Elgar in Southall, Hillingdon Manor in Uxbridge. This is not a complete list and we are not recommending these schools, they are just some examples if you want to do some research.

6. The National Autistic Society

Provides advice on schools (choosing a school, what to look for etc.) and also

through its Autism Directory the ability to search for educational provision within a specific geographic area: <http://www.autism.org.uk/directory.aspx>

Some families find that school (whether mainstream or specialist) does not suit their child's particular way of learning. Home education may offer an alternative to families that have become unhappy with the education which is provided in school.

Though education is compulsory in the UK for children between the ages of five and sixteen, school is not. If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs you can still home educate. Where a child is a registered pupil at a special school under arrangements made by the Local Authority, its 'consent' is required to delete the child's name from the register of the school.

More information about home education and SEN can be found at:
www.educationotherwise.net

Section 14 – Specialist Health Services

Mary Sheridan Centre ☎ 0203 049 4005

Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Psychology, Social Communication Outreach Service and other specialist services for children with autism and other disabilities are provided through the Mary Sheridan Centre in Kennington. They also have a parents' information room with internet access, and run groups for parents.

Some of these services are delivered through school or nursery.

Therapies can be specified in your child's Education Health and Care Plan but this is often difficult to get (see Advice about Special Educational Needs Section).

You can ask your GP to refer your child for services if you feel they need assessment or treatment. There are often long waiting lists for a service. If you are frustrated by waiting lists or poor quality services – COMPLAIN!

Continence Service for Children with Autism in Lambeth

Continence problems for children with autism are managed by and large in the same manner as for all children. If a child has continence problems talk to a primary care practitioner i.e. GP, Health Visitor or School Nurse. They would support you as appropriate and refer to an appropriate service which may be the Lambeth Children's Bladder and Bowel service ☎ 0203 049 4040.

<http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/our-services/community/our-community-services.aspx?letter=c>

If you would like to discuss continence products – nappies, alarms, talk to your Health Visitor or the School Nurse.

The NAS also has a good section on this

www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/understanding-behaviour/toilet-training.aspx

Seminars on toileting are sometimes run by Lambeth Autism Group and by Lambeth Contact a Family.

Sleep

Children with ASD often experience sleep problems. The NAS helpline can be contacted or their website has a good section about sleep: <http://www.autism.org.uk>.

Contact A Family has produced a booklet called “Helping Your Child Sleep” which can be downloaded from their website:

http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media/389272/helping_your_child_sleep.pdf

There are specialists available to help parents and children with ASD who have sleep disorders (not many, but some!). There is a sleep clinic at Evelina’s Children’s Hospital, SE1 9RT. You can contact your GP for help, advice and a referral.

Other useful contacts: 2Sleep (independent sleep practitioners)

<http://www.2sleep.org>

☎ 07914 308227 ✉ enquiries@2sleep.org

Section 15 – Housing and adaptations

For information about how to apply for social housing and for all housing advice:

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/housing>

Lambeth Housing Advice

☎ 020 7926 4200

Olive Morris House
18 Brixton Hill
London SW2 1RD

Social housing tenants, private tenants and owner-occupiers may be able to get help with adaptations to their home to make it safe and accessible for a family member with a disability through a Disabled Facilities Grant. Occupational therapists are responsible for assessing need and making provision. For more information;
<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/benefits-care/other-support.aspx>

To request an Occupational Therapy assessment ☎ 020 7926 5555

Section 16 – Complaining

If you are refused a service to which you think you or your child are entitled, or if you feel you or your child have been treated unfairly you should consider making a complaint. This includes what may seem to you unreasonably long waiting lists to access services. A first step should be to ask to speak to a Manager. If you are still unhappy you can make a formal complaint.

Lambeth Council, Evelina London / Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust have complaints procedures. We should use them if we feel we are being unfairly treated. Complaints often result in decisions being changed. Managers should hear if people are dissatisfied with services, and complaining makes this happen.

Lambeth Council Complaints procedure

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/elections-and-council/contact-us/make-a-complaint-guide>

There are separate arrangements for complaints about Social Care as follows;
Complaints about Social Care for children (including Children with Disabilities Team)

Email : dbakpa@lambeth.gov.uk or telephone: 020 7926 9777.

Complaints about Adult Social Care:

Email : SocialCareComplaints@lambeth.gov.uk or telephone: 020 7926 5555

Guy's & St Thomas' NHS trust Complaints procedure

<http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaints.aspx>

<http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patients/raising-concerns.aspx>

You can also contact your local councillor or MP for support if you feel that you have been unfairly treated by Lambeth Council or NHS services. To find out who your local councillor is and how to contact them:

<http://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/mgFindMember.aspx>

To find out who is your local MP and how to contact them;

<http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>

Appendix 1 From NAS website

Sample letter to Lambeth Council to request a Children Act assessment for a child under 18

The letter below is a template for you to use when applying for help from Children's Social Care. You can download it here;

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/benefits-care/other-support.aspx>

For more advice about how to write the letter see;

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/benefits-care/community-care/children/england.aspx>

The process for requesting an assessment is as follows;

1. Phone Lambeth Children's Social Care Referral & Assessment 020 7926 5555 and ask for a Children Act assessment for a child with Asperger syndrome / ASD /autism (depending on your child's diagnosis). The Children with Disabilities Team do not usually carry out the initial assessment. They should, but that is not the practice in Lambeth. Don't be surprised if the person who answers is not helpful or tries to put you off. If they don't offer you an appointment to see a social worker explain you're writing a letter about your child's disability and about his/her need for an assessment and so you need to confirm a postal address and email address to send it to (this should be as detailed in our sample letter).
2. Post and /or email the letter, remembering to put a date on it and keep a copy of it (whether a paper photocopy or on your computer).
3. Await a response from the team you wrote to, but if you've not heard back within 2 weeks, phone and email to ask for update.
4. If you still haven't had any success start complaining. Contact your local councillor for support.
5. Phone NAS Helpline 0808 800 4104 for further advice if you need it. E.g. if you don't get a reply to your request for assessment, if you are refused an assessment or if you have an assessment but are not happy with the outcome.

Sample letter

(Your name and address)

(Your telephone number)

(your email address)

[Date of letter]

Team Manager - Referral & Assessment
Lambeth Children's Social Care
International House
Canterbury Crescent
London SW9 7QE

Dear Team Manager Referral & Assessment - Children's Social Care,

Re: (Child's name) (date of birth) (address)

I would be grateful if a social worker could contact me at the earliest opportunity in relation to the support needs of my son/daughter, (name), who has an autism spectrum disorder (ASD)/Asperger syndrome. I understand the usual procedure is for the assessment to be completed within 45 working days (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2015*).

Please arrange for my (son / daughter) to be entered on your register of disabled children. If your local authority does not have a register can you provide me with a written explanation, as this is a legal requirement (The Children Act 1989 Schedule 2: paragraph 2).

Please also arrange an assessment of my (son's / daughter's) needs for support, under the Children Act 1989, Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970 and my own needs as carer under Section 97 of the Children & Families Act 2014.

Some of the needs my (son/daughter) has are:

[NOTE TO PARENTS: This list is here as guidance. You may wish to include **some** of the following examples in your letter and add some of your own. It is important you are clear about what your son / daughter actually needs but you don't need to give every bit of information here, just enough to convince them there is a need to make an assessment.]

The need to improve his/her ability to relate to others, his/her social skills, to make friends (otherwise he/she may be at risk of being isolated and depressed).

The need to reduce his/her social isolation, help him/her leave the house/bedroom. Without this support he/she is at serious risk of developing mental health difficulties and regressing in his/her independence. This need may be met by being involved in social groups, out-of-school clubs or befriending schemes and/or having a one-to-one worker.

The need to control his/her anger towards other children. This includes aggressive behaviour towards his brother/sister and parents. The behaviours include: kicking, shouting abusive language, threatening with knives/scissors, punching holes in doors. Unless this aspect of his/her behaviour is addressed it is likely to escalate and could lead to serious injury.

The need to control his/her anger towards him/herself; self-injury.

The need to understand/perform personal care tasks: washing self, showering, getting enough sleep, how to relax/avoid stress.

The need to help him/her with his/her challenging behaviour (e.g. spitting, biting, kicking).

The need to improve his/her diet and sleep difficulties (e.g. only sleeps four hours a night).

The need to have someone to talk to outside the family (e.g. at befriending schemes, clubs) to prevent social isolation and mental health difficulties, as well as develop independence and social understanding.

The need for counselling – for emotional difficulties; counselling relating to bullying; sex education to develop understanding and reduce risk.

The need to learn how to avoid attracting negative attention in public, personal grooming, wearing appropriate clothes, self-presentation.

The need to develop appropriate relationships/sexual behaviour to avoid risk factors.

The need to discuss ASD/Asperger syndrome and how it affects him/her.

The need to be able to explain ASD/Asperger syndrome to others (acquaintances, school pupils, college students).

The need to develop practical life skills – dressing, cooking, laundry, cleaning.

The need to develop financial independence/ability to manage own money.

The need to understand personal safety outside the home, how to recognise and avoid risk situations; reporting risk; stranger danger.

The need to be able to travel independently and use public transport safely.

The need to discuss housing options for the future, so he/she is not reliant on his/her parent/carers.

The need to manage any additional physical difficulties (e.g. epilepsy, ADHD, tics).

The need to be encouraged to use prescribed medication

The need for assistance with mental health and associated difficulties (e.g. depression, obsessions, panic attacks, agoraphobia, generalised anxiety)

The need for me as a parent to have the opportunity for an occasional break from full-time caring for my son/daughter. I am interested in finding out information about short breaks (respite) and similar services, such as out of school clubs, playgroups, befrienders, sitting services, local sport clubs etc.

The need for my other child(ren) to occasionally have some time with me (and my wife/husband/partner) without our son/daughter with ASD /Asperger syndrome being present. I am interested in any services that your department has to meet the needs of siblings of disabled children.

My overall needs as a parent and carer are to have my own living space and for my son/daughter to grow up able to live independently of me in the future. I need to know that he/she will achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development and that his/her health or development will not be significantly impaired. I need to know that he/she will be safe and looked after when I am no longer able to provide the support that I am currently providing. I also need support at the present time to help my child develop appropriately.

I am requesting practical and emotional support services under the *Children Act 1989*, *Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970* or other legislation, to meet the needs identified during the assessment(s).

It is important that any professional who sees my child understands the nature of his/her disability. Can you please ensure that someone with relevant knowledge of ASDs carries out the assessment for services and that I am given a written copy of any assessment?

Can you also provide advice on what help my child/family can access, for example details of voluntary groups, cheaper access to local leisure and transport, or other concessions as well as information on Direct Payments and benefits?

If health or other needs are identified during the assessment please ensure we are correctly referred on to relevant agencies, or given information if we need to refer ourselves.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as practicable. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and contact me to arrange suitable times for an assessment.

Yours sincerely,

(Parent/s signature)

(Printed name/s of parent/s).

Appendix 2 From IPSEA website

How to request an Education, Health and Care Assessment

To download this IPSEA model letter;

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/what-you-need-to-know/model-letters/model-letter-1>

(Your name and address)

(Your telephone number)

(Your email address)

[Date of letter]

Director of Lambeth Children's Services
International House
Canterbury Crescent
London SW9 7QE

[If you know email address of SEN Officer also send by email and add here:

And by email to: [insert email address]

Dear Sir or Madam,

(child/young person's name) (date of birth)

Request for EHC needs assessment

I am writing as the parent of the above child/young person to request an assessment of their Education, Health and Social Care needs under section 36 (1) of the Children and Families Act 2014.

(Child/young person's name) currently attends school/ college/ is out of school/ college. [delete as applicable]

I understand that the test that the LA must apply in considering this request is contained in section 36 (8) of the Children and Families Act 2014 and has two parts. Part one of the test is that the child or young person has or may have special educational needs.

If your child has already been identified as having SEN by their school/ college then - (Child/young person's name)'s has already been identified as having special educational needs by his current school/ college (name of school/ college). They identified them to include:

(list SEN already identified by school/ college)

Or - If your child has not yet been identified as having SEN by a school or college then We feel that (Child/young person's name)'s has or may have special educational because:

(list the reasons why you feel your child has SEN and any evidence you have to support what you are saying i.e. school reports, evidence of exclusions)

Part two of the test is that it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made for the child/young person through the issuing of an EHC plan.

My reasons for believing that the school/ college may not be able to make the provision required to meet my child/young person's needs are:

(list any reasons you have which show why you think that the school or college have not/ cannot make the provision that your child may require i.e. specialist skills, individual support)

I understand that you are required by law to reply to this request within six weeks and that if you refuse I will be able to appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]

If on behalf of a young person:

.....
[Your name] on behalf of [name of young person]