

# Autism Scotland

The Bi-annual Newsletter of NAS Scotland  
Spring/Summer 2008



The National  
Autistic Society  
Scotland

## Inside...



New Chief Executive



Angels for Autism



Photo exhibition



Transitions

## I Exist launches in Scotland



Launch of I Exist campaign at the Scottish Parliament

*I Exist*, the second phase of our *think differently about autism* campaign, launched in February at an event in the Scottish Parliament. The campaign seeks to provide an insight into adults' experiences of living with autism on a daily basis and ensure that all adults with autism in Scotland can access the support they need to help them reach their full potential.

We have published a new report, based on the largest ever survey in Scotland of adults with autism and their families. The report reveals the miserable daily reality for many adults with autism who feel isolated and ignored, are unable to access the required support, and are often completely dependent on their families.

Carol Evans, NAS Director for Scotland and Northern Ireland, said:

*"I Exist* is the message from adults with autism in Scotland who want their needs understood and the barriers to support removed. The right help at the right time can have a profound effect. We are calling on the Scottish Government to think, act and transform lives."

The report makes a number of recommendations at both a national and local level aimed at ensuring that all adults with autism in Scotland receive the support they need to live their lives as fully as possible.

There are several ways you can get involved in the campaign and take action to improve services for adults with autism in Scotland. For more information, see page 5.

Your autism charity

## Here to help

### Autism Helpline

Information, advice and support for people with autism, families, carers and professionals (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)

0845 070 4004

### Advocacy for Education

Advice and advocacy for parents and carers of children with autism on education issues

0845 070 4002

### Parent to Parent Support Line

Confidential support service to parents of an adult or child with autism provided by other volunteer parents

0800 9520 520

### Autism Services Directory

UK-wide, online directory of autism resources

[www.autismdirectory.org.uk](http://www.autismdirectory.org.uk)

### Signpost

Personalised information about autism to fit the individual's circumstances

[www.autism.org.uk/signpost](http://www.autism.org.uk/signpost)

### NAS Training and Consultancy

Deliver tailored, in-house training in autism spectrum disorders to organisations throughout the UK

[www.autism.org.uk/training](http://www.autism.org.uk/training)

For further information on any item in this newsletter, please contact us at:

NAS Scotland,  
Central Chambers, 109 Hope St,  
Glasgow G2 6LL.

Tel: 0141 221 8090

Fax: 0141 221 8118

email: [scotland@nas.org.uk](mailto:scotland@nas.org.uk)

[www.autism.org.uk/scotland](http://www.autism.org.uk/scotland)

The National Autistic Society  
Registered Charity No 269425

### Terminology

Throughout Autism Scotland the term 'autism' is used to include all those on the Autism Spectrum, including people with Asperger syndrome.

## Introducing our new Chief Executive

Mark Lever has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the National Autistic Society (NAS). He took up the post in February 2008, and replaces outgoing Chief Executive Vernon Beauchamp, who retired from the NAS in March after over 7 years service.

Mark, who was previously Chief Executive of charity WRVS, said he was looking forward to the new challenge:

“Autism is a fascinating and much misunderstood condition and the pressures on families are immense, but there are also great opportunities right now for the NAS to move things



Mark Lever, Chief Executive

forward. I'm very much looking forward to helping the organisation make a difference to the lives of people with autism.”

Prior to WRVS, Mark was a partner at Kidsons (now Baker Tilly) Chartered Accountants. He holds qualifications in Business Management, Accountancy, HR and Marketing.

## NAS Training and Consultancy

NAS Training & Consultancy has 10 years experience delivering training in autism to organisations, practitioners and professionals throughout the UK. Last year we trained over 5000 people!

To help organisations obtain a greater understanding of autism, our dedicated team will work with your organisation to determine the learning needs of the staff group, tailor the training day, deliver the training in-house and evaluate its effectiveness.

We offer a comprehensive range of modules that deal with issues affecting people with autism, their families, their communities and their culture. We also work in partnership with Higher Education bodies offering validated courses – please see page 8 for dates of forthcoming events.

*Quality assured material delivered by quality assured trainers.*

For contact details please see Here to help (see left).

## What is autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. Children and adults with autism have difficulty with social interaction. There is a lot that can be done to help, but there is no known cure at present.

## Around Scotland



### Robert Moffat

Regional Officer  
Central &  
South Scotland

We are delighted to announce that our Outreach Team (Glasgow) collected an NAS Impact Award for setting up and running an outreach service, delivering 400 hours of outreach per week. The core team works together with bank staff to support over 40 people and the service is still growing.

The success of our support programmes (help!, Adult Social Groups and Befriending) continues and we are very much hoping to expand these services in the future.

NAS Scotland currently supports 12 parent groups throughout Scotland.



### Lesley Smith

Supported Employment  
& Social Development  
Practitioner  
North East Scotland

We have recently been working in partnership with local authorities and other local agencies. These partnerships will aid the positive transition of children and young people with autism during and post education, linking into our newly developed Prospects services.

The NAS Central Aberdeenshire Branch has now been established in Westhill and families from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire are meeting together on a regular basis to provide support, discuss and share information and enjoy fun days for all the family.



### Lisa Sturgess

Regional Officer  
North West Scotland

I am very much looking forward to my new role. I have worked in the field of autism for the past 13 years in the U.K, the U.S.A and New Zealand. Most recently, I have been involved in training professionals in autism around Scotland.

Plans include awareness raising and training for both parents and professionals on a range of topics. There will be a focus on developing a number of parent-led NAS branches across the region. I will also be supporting good practice and service development through the regional Partners in Autism group.

## Branch Focus

**This edition, Autism Scotland highlights one of our newest branches, Central Aberdeenshire branch. Branch Officer, Susan Kay, explains how it all began.**

### What prompted you to set up an NAS branch in Aberdeenshire?

Our son Aidan was diagnosed with autism over two years ago. We were lucky to get a place on the NAS EarlyBird programme where I found speaking to other parents a real comfort. It helped to know we weren't the only ones and to get hints and advice from parents who had found ways of coping with difficult behaviour.

When the EarlyBird programme finished I wanted to find a support group in Aberdeen that would provide me with the same contact with parents as the course had. I couldn't find one so after getting some advice from different professionals I decided to start one of my own.

### What support does the branch provide?

The 'Autism Support Drop-in' has been running for a year and a half and around forty families are involved. The Westdyke Leisure Centre, Westhill, kindly let us use their facilities to hold parent evenings, held monthly on a Wednesday evening from 7pm-9pm. We also hold family fun days every month. Parents can bring

their autistic children and siblings to have fun playing in the hall with toys and equipment while the parents can have a coffee and a chat with each other or have a look through the resource folders and information that we have.

### What are the branch's plans for the future?

This year we hope to continue providing our parent group meetings and fun days but we would also like to provide something for older children. We intend to buy some sensory equipment to use at the fun days.

If you are interested in finding out more about NAS branches please contact the Glasgow office.

## Dust off your running shoes!! - Run, walk or even crawl in aid of NAS Scotland

This year NAS Scotland has places in Scotland's most popular running and walking events. We have an event to suit everyone – regardless of age or location!

Why not walk your way around Edinburgh, sprint through the Great Scottish Run or go the full 26 miles in the Loch Ness Marathon.

### Take your pick from one of these fantastic Scottish running events...

BUPA Great Edinburgh Run – 4th May 2008

Resolution Asset Management  
Glasgow Women's 10K – 18th May 2008

Edinburgh Marathon – 25th May 2008

Great Scottish Walk (Glasgow)  
– 25th May 2008

Great Scottish Walk (Edinburgh)  
– 22nd June 2008

Glasgow 10K for Men  
– 15th June 2008

Fresh N Lo Great Scottish Run (Glasgow)  
– 7th September 2008

Loch Ness Marathon – 5th October 2008

## You can do it – join the NAS Scotland Running Team!

Every year our Running Team grows and we are looking to build on last year's success and have an even bigger team in 2008 - helping even more people affected by autism.

We will provide you with all the support you need – training guides, fundraising support, promotional materials and information and most importantly, lots of encouragement and advice along the way.

2008 also sees the launch of Angels for Autism!



We provide the wings and halo...  
You do something amazing!

If you'd like to take part in the Resolution Asset Management Glasgow Women's 10k why not sign up as an Autism Angel? You're guaranteed a heavenly day out!

### Sign up today

To find out more about any of our events and register for your place, call 0141 285 7113, visit [www.getmilesmore.org.uk](http://www.getmilesmore.org.uk), or email the Fundraising Team at [fundraisingscotland@nas.org.uk](mailto:fundraisingscotland@nas.org.uk).



Autism Angels having a heavenly day out

# I Exist

Autism is a lifelong disability but, for too long, adults with autism have found themselves isolated and ignored. They struggle to access support and are often dependent on their families. Together, we want to change this.

*I Exist* signals the second phase of *think differently about autism*, and seeks to improve services for adults with autism.

To inform the *I Exist* campaign, we carried out research among adults with autism and their families and carers, as well as local authorities and Community Health Partnerships. Our findings show that many adults with autism are 'invisible' to local services and are unable to access the support they need.

In particular, the *I Exist* report shows that:

- 54% of adults with autism don't have enough support to meet their needs;
- over half of adults have experienced depression or anxiety because of a lack of support;
- 82% of parents and carers are worried about their son or daughter's future when they are no longer able to look after them.

Action must be taken to break down the barriers to support which adults with autism face on a daily basis. Our report contains a number of recommendations which will transform the lives of many adults with autism and enable them to receive the support they need.

The campaign focuses on three core messages:

## Count me in

Local authorities and health agencies do not know how many adults with autism live in their area. Without this information, local agencies are unable to plan and develop appropriate services for adults with autism.



Launch of *I Exist* at the Scottish Parliament

## Understand my needs

Many health and social care professionals in Scotland fail to understand the complexities of autism, which can lead to adults with autism receiving inadequate support.

## Meet my needs

A lack of appropriate support can have a devastating effect on the lives of adults with autism. Increased preventative support, such as social skills training, may prevent adults' needs from escalating and help them fulfil their potential.

Local authorities and health agencies, supported by national government, must begin to think differently about autism to break down these barriers. They must act now to ensure appropriate provision is available to support adults with autism, so they can realise their potential and live as independently as possible.

## What can I do?

There are several ways you can support the campaign and take action to improve services for adults with autism in Scotland. If you would like more information or would like copies of the campaign materials, call 0141 285 7108, e-mail [campaignscotland@nas.org.uk](mailto:campaignscotland@nas.org.uk), or visit [www.think-differently.org.uk](http://www.think-differently.org.uk).

*I Exist* is the message from adults with autism.  
Most are isolated and ignored.  
Think. Act. Transform lives.

## Minister for Children and Early Years visits Daldorch House School



Adam Ingram, MSP (centre) with staff and pupils from Daldorch House School

Students and staff at Daldorch House School in Catrine, East Ayrshire received a visit recently from Adam Ingram MSP, Minister for Children and Early Years.

During the visit, Mr Ingram was given a tour of the accommodation and school resources. He also had the opportunity to meet with children and young people with autism and school staff to learn more about the disability and the services Daldorch House and NAS Scotland provide.

Adam Ingram MSP said: "The world can be a very confusing place for people with autism. However, the more we learn about autism the better equipped we will be to put the necessary measures, support and services in place for those who are affected by the condition, their families and their carers.

I am grateful for the opportunity to visit the staff of Daldorch House and of course the children and young people who benefit from the valuable services and care they provide."

## Autism photo exhibition visits Glasgow

A photography exhibition showcased by the NAS which gives a unique insight into how people with autism view the world arrived in Glasgow in February for a three week run at the Tron Theatre.

The exhibition *As I See It* features pictures of, and by, ten people with autism from around the country who are all affected to differing degrees by the disability.

Taken by photographer Robin Hammond, the series of portraits provides an insight into the wide range of experiences of those living with the disability.

Alongside Robin's portraits are photographs taken by the subjects themselves, depicting their own unique experience of autism.

Among the photographs appearing at the exhibition were those taken by Noel Bannon, a student with autism who is a resident at Daldorch House School and Continuing Education Centre.

Principal Shona Pinkerton said: "Every day presents new challenges to Noel. Despite these challenges, he thoroughly enjoys taking part in activities at Daldorch and was excited to be involved in the photo project."

The exhibition coincided with the launch of the *I Exist* report. For more information, see page 5.



Portrait of Noel Bannon featured in the *As I See It* photo exhibition

## Autism Resource Centre (ARC) – News

The Autism Resource Centre (ARC) is a partnership between Greater Glasgow Health Board, Glasgow City Council, NAS Scotland, the Scottish Society for Autism and the Strathclyde Autistic Society. Based in Maryhill Glasgow, the Centre offers a range of services to adults, their families, carers and professional service providers within the Greater Glasgow area.

### Autism Alert Card

In September 2007 the ARC launched an Autism Alert Card, endorsed by Strathclyde Police. An application form for the card is available from the ARC for adults and children with autism who are resident within the Strathclyde Police area.

The card, which is free of charge, will allow police officers to engage more effectively with people with autism where there is a risk that their behaviour might become inappropriate or open to misinterpretation. The alert card carries details of an emergency contact for immediate assistance, as well as details for the ARC and the NAS Helpline.

An accompanying police training DVD was created to raise awareness of autism amongst officers. It shows how someone with the condition might behave, particularly under stress, and educates staff about the existence and purpose of the card.

### ASD Working Group - Glasgow

The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Working Group is a Glasgow City Council led body with senior representation from a variety of Council services, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, the voluntary sector, parent representatives and, most recently, it now has representation from adults with autism. This is a very positive development, designed to ensure that issues of importance to individuals with autism are directly taken into account when resolving problems relating to appropriate service provision. The Working Group aims to co-ordinate the development of autism activity across the area, particularly by ensuring that all mainstream services become 'clever' at working with individuals on the spectrum.

Autism Resource Centre (ARC)

Telephone: 0141 201 6247

email: [SW\\_Infoarc@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:SW_Infoarc@glasgow.gov.uk)

## Transitions



*Catriona on her work experience placement at Asda this year*

NAS Scotland is pleased to have been given the opportunity to work with Govan High Autism Unit to deliver the Transitions Project to the S4 and S5 pupils, their parents/carers and the other professionals and statutory agencies involved in their lives. Transitions is part of the NAS Glasgow Outreach service.

Judy McInnes, Transitions Officer, is working in the unit full-time this year to deliver modules to potential school leavers about the transition to college. Judy

is currently working with 16 pupils over S4 and S5, with all S5 pupils leaving at the end of this year to go to college. Chosen courses are at Metropolitan, Clydebank, Cardonald and Stow colleges. One pupil currently on the programme is Catriona (pictured), who is successfully moving onto Clydebank College next year.

NAS Scotland delivers this service in conjunction with Glasgow City Council to support their commitment to improving the transition from school to adulthood for young people with autism. With support from Glasgow City Council's own research staff, NAS Scotland is devising an evaluation process to measure the impact of the Transitions Project. This ensures that the charity is continually striving to give young people with autism in Glasgow a positive experience of onward transition from school to adult services.

**For more information on the Transitions Project, please contact Judy on 0141 221 8090.**

The National Autistic Society Scotland is part of the UK's leading charity for people affected by autism.

Over 50,000 people in Scotland have autism. Together with their families they make up over 200,000 people whose lives are touched by autism every single day.

Despite this, autism is still relatively unknown and misunderstood. Which means that many of these 200,000 people get nothing like the level of help, support and understanding they need.

Together, we are going to change this.

## Supporter Roadshows Get On The Way



Photographed at our first roadshow event at the Tron Theatre, Joanna Daly, Policy and Parliamentary Officer and Anne Kennedy, PR and Campaigns Officer. For more information of these events across Scotland contact [FundraisingScotland@nas.org.uk](mailto:FundraisingScotland@nas.org.uk).

## Autism Awareness and education

### Conferences

For further information please contact NAS Training and Consultancy 0115 911 3363.

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 17 April 08  | Puberty, Sexuality, Relationships & Emotions - Edinburgh  |
| 27-29 May 08 | 3 Day Introduction to TEACCH - Glasgow  |
| 30 May 08    | Advanced TEACCH Methods - Glasgow   |
| 31 May       | Structured Teaching in the home - Glasgow   |
| June 08      | Mainstreaming Autism - Glasgow  |
| June 08      | Working with the Autism Spectrum (Theory into Practice) – a collaboration with Napier University, Edinburgh                   |
| November 08  | Postgraduate Certificate in Asperger Syndrome – a collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University. Course will run in Glasgow. |



The National  
Autistic Society  
Scotland

# help!

## programme Scotland

The *help!* Programme is run throughout Scotland for parents and carers of children with a recent diagnosis (usually in the last two years or so) of autism. It is designed to support and inform them in order to make the period following diagnosis less stressful. The programme has been developed to meet the different needs of families and is now offered in a variety of formats. The one day programme provides information on a variety of issues that parents and carers face. There are also two-day, three-day and 20-hour programmes which allow time for discussion. All programmes cover broadly the same subject matter – diagnosis, autism, communication, education, legislation and entitlements – the three-day and 20-hour programmes also include more information on behaviour strategies.

For further information and enquiries please contact Lauren Jarvis, *help!* Administration Officer on 0141 285 7114 or email [lauren.jarvis@nas.org.uk](mailto:lauren.jarvis@nas.org.uk)

### One Day Programmes

(For parents of children 3-12yrs with flexibility on upper age limit)

Friday 23 May - Aberdeen

Thursday 25 September - Edinburgh

### Two Day Programmes

(For parents of children 5-12yrs)

Tuesday 29 & Wednesday 30 April - Dunbar

Wednesday 20 & Thursday 21 August - Kirkcaldy

Tuesday 4 & Wednesday 5 November - Dumfries

### Three Day Programmes

(For parents of children 5-12yrs)

Tuesday 13, Wednesday 14, Thursday 22 May - Dundee

Tuesday 11, Wednesday 12, Tuesday 18 November - Lanark

Tuesday 25, Wednesday 26 November

& Tuesday 2 December - West Dumbarton

### Three Day Programme

(For parents of children 13-21yrs)

Wednesday 28, Thursday 29 May

& Wednesday 4 June - Glasgow

### 20 hour Programmes

(For parents of children 5-12yrs)

Thursday 4, Friday 5, Thursday 11, Friday 12,

Tuesday 16, Wednesday 17 September - Stirling

Thursday 2, Friday 3, Thursday 9, Friday 10,

Tuesday 23, Wednesday 24 October - Glasgow

Your autism charity