

# Newsletter

April 2004



The National  
Autistic Society  
South Lanarkshire

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



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

## ENABLE Speaker at our Next Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April

The next monthly meeting of South Lanarkshire NAS is on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April in the District Court Rooms, Civic Centre, Andrew Street, East Kilbride. Our guest speaker will be Karen Wood, who is a lawyer with ENABLE. Karen works within the ENABLE Trustee Service, and will be talking about wills and for both people with learning disabilities and family carers, and discretionary trusts.

ENABLE is the largest membership organisation in Scotland for people with learning disabilities and family carers. It was formed in 1954 by a small group of parents because many families with a child with learning disabilities felt alone and isolated. They wanted better services for their sons and daughters and better support for parents. ENABLE has over 60 local branches or groups across Scotland. Many of their members are people with learning disabilities.

## Autism Awareness Week 17<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May

We will be having a coffee morning and jumble sale at Claremont Parish Church, St Leonards, East Kilbride on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May to raise funds and awareness of autism.

Lesley Burns has been working with The Body Shop in Regent Centre, Hamilton who will be having a raffle in Awareness Week to win a basket of goodies from the store.

We are hoping to have a stall at either Centre West in East Kilbride or Regents Centre in Hamilton on the Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May. Volunteers to help man the stall would be gratefully appreciated. Please call one of us if you can help.



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



## Great Smokies Hair Sample Kits

A reminder for those who took a kit at the March meeting please let Colin when you have completed the kit. We will arrange for the kits to be sent back to the lab together. You are, of course, free to send it back yourself. However, the branch has received a donation that has been set aside to fund the kits, so we are happy to pay for the test if you return the kit to us!

## Books to Look Out For.....

For those who haven't already read Mark Haddon's *Curious Incident...* it is an extremely good book written from the point of view of a boy with Asperger syndrome and is well worth a read. *The Stinking Steps* by Will Rogers is similar book that we have yet to read. For us adults, I'd like to recommend Steve Martin's *The Pleasure of My Company* or Elizabeth Moon's *Speed of Dark*, both which feature characters "on the spectrum" and both very good stories.

## **Additional Support For Learning Bill Cannot Work Says Cross Party Committee For Autism**

*The following was written by Dave Cunningham who is a Parent Member of the Cross Party Committee For Autism. Please note that none of us is happy with the term 'Autist'!*

It is time for the Scottish Parliament to recognise that the Bill presently going through the Parliament will systematically undermine the Needs of Autistic people. This message from the influential Cross Party Committee for Autism will ask MSP's to significantly amend the bill based on an array of issues, some of which are stated below.

All MSP's, parents and professionals at today's (25th March) Cross Party Committee meeting are appalled that the bill has reached such a stage when it can do so much damage to people with Autism.

MSP's Donald Gorrie and Mary Scanlan have agreed to take a statement back to the Scottish Parliament and those steering the Bill from the Committee. Shabrum Mustapha has agreed to coordinate receipt of the comments with the aim of drafting the statement that Donald and Mary will take forward.

As a parent of a severely Autistic Child it is time all MSP's woke up to just how big a disaster this bill will be for people with Autism. Please, for the sake of Scotland's Autists, reject the Bill, at least until the following weaknesses are mitigated:

1. The Bill is specific in that it caps support to Autistic people based on Cost. Therefore the bill caps services and resources.
2. Report after report initiated by the Scottish Parliament, NHS, Public Health Committees, Local Education Authorities, Social Services, National and Scottish Autistic Societies and tens of other Parent Autistic Groups have already highlighted the chronic shortage of funds, resources and services for Autists in Scotland.
3. No one in Scotland knows how many Autists there are in Scotland. Partly because of this no one in Scotland knows how much Autism is costing the tax payers of Scotland (One estimate based on a real life statistics puts the cost at £200 Billion for the life time of Autists).
4. Because there is no strategy for reducing the incidence of Autism in Scotland then as the size of the Autistic population grows then the bill ensures that the amount and quality of services per Autist will systematically fall even further below the present unacceptable levels.
5. THE BILL HAS ONE FINAL NAIL IN THE COFFIN FOR SCOTLANDS AUTIST'S. There is no fast track procedure, unlike the Record of Needs Process, within the Bill. Therefore those Councils (talking to parents of Autism that includes most of them) have the option of stringing out for the Autist Educational life the Appeals and Tribunal process. Where they know full well that their get of Jail Card is "ok, we've lost the appeal but cap your child's support/service, AS DESIGNED BY THE BILL, on cost.

There were many other points made by other parents and professionals. The clear message is that this is a disastrous day for Scotland's Autists. PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW THIS BILL TO PROCEED.

### **Contact Us:**

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Future Meetings: April 14, May 12, June 9. There is no meeting in July, but we meet again on August the 11<sup>th</sup> in the District Court Suite, Civic Centre, East Kilbride.

Sorry to harp on, but....thanks to all who added their email addresses to our mailing list. If you have an email address, please let us know as it is much cheaper and less time consuming to email the newsletter than to envelope stuff it! Send an email to [mail@slnas.org.uk](mailto:mail@slnas.org.uk) and I'll add you to the list.

### **Some waffle I added to the Email Newsletter.....**

The web site continues to be developed. I've added a link to the NAS training courses (but intend to edit this to courses in Scotland only at some point). A parent has donated a "Diary of Diagnosis" which includes their family experiences pre- and post- diagnosis. We are on the look out for similar pieces so if you'd like to contribute (anonymous if you prefer) please contact us. We are also looking for suggestions for books to add to our library. Please let us know if you have read anything (autism related) you feel we should have.

We are hoping that next week's meeting will be featured in all the local South Lanarkshire papers (EK News & EK Mail, Hamilton Advertiser and the Rutherglen Reformer). Hopefully this will lead to some new members, particularly from the Rutherglen area, as this will be the first time we appear in the Reformer.