



Press Release SL07/04/04

For Immediate Release

1st April 2004

**GUEST SPEAKER 'ENABLES' NEXT
SOUTH LANARKSHIRE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY
MEETING**

The next monthly meeting of South Lanarkshire NAS is on Wednesday 14th April in the District Court Rooms, Civic Centre, Andrew Street, East Kilbride at 7:30pm. 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 - 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. More information about ENABLE is available from their website: www.enable.org.uk.

Anyone with a general interest or who is a parent or carer of any child or adult with an autistic spectrum disorder or learning disability is welcome to come along. Further information can be accessed on our website www.slnas.org.uk or by calling SLNAS branch Chairperson Linda Johnson on 07866 530955.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About autism & Asperger syndrome

People who have autism or Asperger syndrome are said to have a 'triad' of impairments. Both conditions are commonly referred to as autistic spectrum disorders or ASD. This is because all people with the condition tend to be affected in different ways and to differing degrees of severity. It is a lifelong developmental disability, affecting around 500,000 people in the UK.

People with an ASD find **communication** difficult and often fail to understand the subtleties of language that the rest of us take for granted. Some never acquire speech. Body language and facial expressions are a mystery.

Perhaps because of this, people with ASD do not seek to **interact socially** with others and are often seen as 'loners' and have difficulty in making and keeping friends. Thirdly, people with ASD can have problems with **imagination**. This leads them to seek repetitive activities and predictable routines. This makes them seem very rigid in their everyday lives, as change is very difficult for them to deal with. Challenging behaviour can also be an issue as affected people are frustrated by their lack of understanding and lack of ability to make themselves understood.

Autism is often referred to as an 'invisible' condition. Because there are no physical traits, people with ASD can appear to others to be aloof, arrogant, rude, anti-social and badly or oddly behaved. People with ASD are unaware that their behaviour comes across in this way and often do not understand that others have thoughts and feelings too.

How We Help

South Lanarkshire NAS group aims to help through regular monthly meetings. These are held on the second Wednesday of the month in the District Court Suite, Civic Centre, East Kilbride. Our next meetings are on the 14th of April, the 9th of June and the 11th of August.

We also wish to provide opportunities for social contact for the children and to allow them to share experiences with the whole family. This can be very stressful for parents and siblings, particularly in situations where the general public do not understand why a seemingly normal child is behaving in an inappropriate manner. Therefore we provided a visit to a pantomime before Christmas 2003. The entire audience was made up of our group which meant that parents could relax, knowing that they were in company that understood any behavioural issues, while the children got to enjoy a night out at the theatre.

A fundraising "Mock Auction" held in February raised over £2000. These funds will be used to provide a summer trip for our member's families.

About SLNAS

The South Lanarkshire NAS branch has over 150 members and can be contacted through Ross Macfadyen, Communications Officer, 07941 252 485, email: mail@slnas.org.uk

South Lanarkshire NAS holds monthly meetings on the second Wednesday of the month in the County Court Rooms, Civic Centre, Andrew Street, East Kilbride. We aim to support families and carers of those with Autism and Asperger syndrome through these meetings, telephone and email support, and our web site, www.slnas.org.uk.

The National Autistic Society

The National Autistic Society (NAS) is the UK's leading charity for people with autistic spectrum disorders and their families. Spearheading national and international initiatives and providing a strong voice for autism, the Society provides a wide range of services to help people with autism and Asperger syndrome live their lives with as much independence as possible.

The NAS Autism Helpline is supported by Barclays: 0845 070 4004. Opening Hours 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday.