

INFORMATION

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Autism packs to be made available throughout area

SCHOOLS, nurseries and partner agencies throughout South Lanarkshire will soon take delivery of information packs on autism and Asperger syndrome.

The South Lanarkshire National Autistic Society (SLNAS) has provided over 300 of the packs which are separately tailored for nursery, primary and secondary school children.

Each pack provides general information on autism and Asperger syndrome, which may affect 600 children and 2100 adults in South Lanarkshire.

The nursery pack focuses on early years support, with information on play, toileting, communication and tantrums. The pack for primaries provides a booklet covering the transition from primary school to secondary school, while the secondary pack deals with exam time and the difficulties experienced by young adults with Asperger syndrome.

Senior Depute Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Education Resources Committee, Councillor Pat Morgan, said: "I am sure that the packs will be very well received by our schools, nurseries and partner agencies who will soon be receiving their own copies.

"The challenges the children face in their day-to-day lives can sometimes be difficult for people who do not fully understand the condition to comprehend.

"But the packs explain everything in a concise, user-friendly manner, and provide essential information such as helpline numbers and addresses."

SLNAS Branch Officer, Ross Macfadyen, said: "The information packs also give strategies for break times and lunch times.

“These parts of the school day are particularly stressful for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Generally these times are unstructured and very social.

“Both are issues that our children have great difficulties dealing with. We’d like to thank Julie Bruce for supporting this project and ASD in general.”

Carol Ainslie, NAS National Director, Scotland and Northern Ireland said: “This pack is an excellent resource both as a way of raising awareness of the needs of people with autism and as a very practical guide for educational professionals.

“NAS Scotland fully supports the work of the South Lanarkshire branch and South Lanarkshire Council in helping with this project.”

The packs were funded through local fundraising and by donations to SLNAS and are being distributed to schools and nurseries by South Lanarkshire Council.

Julie Bruce, Specialist Services Manager within Education Resources at South Lanarkshire Council, said: “We would like to thank SLNAS for providing us with such a comprehensive resource pack.

“The packs are currently on their way to schools and nurseries throughout the area and I am certain they will soon become an essential tool.

“Autism and Asperger syndrome is often a very difficult condition for people to understand, and the packs certainly go a long way to improving people’s knowledge.”

The NAS is the UK’s leading charity for people with autism. It exists to champion the rights and interests of all people with autism and to ensure that they and their families receive quality services appropriate to their needs. The South Lanarkshire pack will help raise awareness of some of the many issues that face the estimated 50,000 people with autism in Scotland.

SLNAS supports members in Blantyre, Cambuslang, Halfway, Hamilton, East Kilbride and Rutherglen. Their meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month in the County Court Suite, Civic Centre, East Kilbride. Parents, grandparents and carers of a child or an adult with an autistic spectrum disorder are all welcome at meetings, as are professionals who work with people with autism.

Further information can be accessed on their website www.slnas.org.uk or by calling Ross Macfadyen on 07941 252485. The NAS provides an Autism Helpline on 0845 070 4004. To find out more about autism and the work of the NAS visit www.autism.org.uk

For further information about the NAS Scotland, please contact John Newlands in the NAS Press Office on 0141 285 7111 or email: john.newlands@nas.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- Autism (including Asperger syndrome) is a lifelong developmental disability. It is a spectrum condition occurring in varying degrees of severity and affects an estimated 535,000 people in the UK. It is characterised by a triad of impairments: difficulties forming social relationships, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication and the development of strong narrow obsessional interests.
- The National Autistic Society Scotland (NAS Scotland), Central Chambers, 109 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 6LL. Tel: 0141 285 7112. The NAS Scotland has a membership of almost 1,000 individuals and a network of 9 parent-led branches across the country. The NAS Scotland provides a wide range of services to help people with autistic spectrum disorders live their lives with as much independence as possible, including Befriending, Parent to Parent, help!, a specialist school for young people in Ayrshire, social groups, out of school care and supported employment.

The National Autistic Society is the UK's leading charity for people with autistic spectrum disorders and their families. Founded in 1962, it continues to spearhead national and international initiatives and provide a strong voice for all people with autism. The NAS 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 relies on the support of its members and donors to continue its vital work for people with autism. To become a member, make a donation or to find out more about the work of the NAS, visit the NAS website www.autism.org.uk or call the NAS donation line 08702 33 40 40, (national rates apply).

In March 2004 Vodafone UK entered into a three-year "cause partnership" with The National Autistic Society. The mobile phone company hopes to raise up to £6 million for the charity during this period. Vodafone's support will enable the NAS to expand the reach of existing programmes, which raise awareness of autism and support people with autism and their carers.

For more information about autism and for help in your area, call the NAS Autism Helpline on: 0845 070 4004 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday, (local rates apply).

