

# Children's Service

## What will the project provide?

**Pre & Post Diagnosis Support for children aged 0-18 years in East Lancashire & Blackburn with Darwen. The project provides information, support and advice for families before and after diagnosis of their child.**

**Family Support:** We offer low level family support, advice & signposting working with families to provide early intervention including advice, information and positive strategies. Support sessions will be offered at the ARC (Autism Resource Centre) and in Blackburn with Darwen. The current waiting time to access family support is six weeks from referral.

**Blackburn with Darwen Family Support Worker:** Families will be offered up to six support sessions, this can be pre or post diagnosis however this may be increased on an individual basis. The family support worker will work with families to provide early intervention including advice, information and positive strategies. Support sessions will be offered at the CVS Boulevard Centre in BwD but in exceptional circumstances home visits will be a possibility for families struggling to access the office.

**Autism Information Sessions:** Would you like some specific advice about autism and your child? Free one to one advice and guidance for parents/carers of individuals on the autism spectrum. We hold information sessions on a Thursday afternoon at venues across East Lancashire. Please book a 30 minute appointment in advance by contacting the children's service.

**Signposting & Information:** We have good relationships with local schools, colleges and universities and will provide support to gain access to local organisations across East Lancashire & Blackburn with Darwen. We have a library at the ARC that young people and their families can access which includes books, leaflets & information. We have resources such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Systems), visual timetables, sensory toys and weighted blankets.

**Cygnets Parent Carer Support Programme:** The children's service offers cygnets training for parents and carers on a range of topics such as autism & diagnosis, communication, sensory needs, understanding and managing behaviour. The course runs for six weeks and each session lasts two and a half hours.

**Supporting Siblings Training:** This additional cygnets session aims to acknowledge the concerns that parents may have in relation to children with a brother or sister on the autistic spectrum.

**Puberty, Sexual Awareness & Relationships Training:** These courses are for parents to develop their understanding and confidence relating to puberty, sexual wellbeing and relationships and how they may impact on children on the autistic spectrum. To offer parents the opportunity to participate in activities that they could use to explore puberty, sexual wellbeing and relationships with their children at home. This course is for parents who accessed the cygnets, NAS Early Bird or Early Bird Plus programmes.

**Healthy Minds Training:** This course is for parents/carers of children of children in KS1 or KS2 and professionals working with the family and looks at how to provide support to prevent mental health issues developing in young people with a diagnosis of ASC. The course runs for six weeks and lasts two and a half hours. This course is for parents and carers who have previously accessed our cygnets course.

**Children's Social Groups:** Our children's social activities are run by a team of children's play workers at the Autism Resource Centre (ARC) for children & young people with ASC's. These sessions provide social opportunities to help children practice and learn social skills, make friends to help reduce their social isolation, help to increase confidence and self-esteem and help to reduce mental health problems such as stress and anxiety.

Our Senior Groups run on Wednesday evenings 6pm – 8pm and Saturday afternoons 1pm – 3.30pm for children aged 11-18 years and our Junior Groups run on Saturday mornings 10am – 12.30pm for Children aged 4-11 years.

**Holiday Clubs:** We hold various activities during school holidays, Junior Holiday clubs for children aged 4-11 years and also senior holiday clubs for children aged 11-18 years. The clubs run from 10am-4pm.

**Family Sessions:** Action for ASD hold Family Sessions on alternate Sunday afternoons from 1.30 – 3.30pm. This is a parent led session but families will have the opportunity to speak to a member of the family support team if needed. The children will get the chance to play in a safe ASC friendly environment whilst their parents can relax and meet other parents and they can share advice and support each other.

**Sibling Support:** Once a month Action for ASD will hold a workshop for the siblings of children & young people who have a diagnosis of ASC and provide fun activities on a Friday night. These sessions will provide an opportunity for siblings to get together and access support & information about Autism.

**Parent Support Group:** We hold a monthly parent support group for parents and carers of children & young people aged 0-19 years. This group is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month at the ARC (Autism Resource Centre). Please feel free to come along to this group, we have guest speakers and a family support worker to speak to if needed. Tea & biscuits will be available.

**Coffee Morning:** Our coffee morning is run by parents and carers who have previously attended our cygnet training courses. They felt they'd like to stay in touch with the friends they had made on the courses. It is also a good opportunity to talk to our family support workers. This group is open to parents & carers of children aged 0-19 years who have received a diagnosis of ASC or are currently seeking diagnosis. Come along for a brew & chat.

**Under 5's Stay & Play Group:** Action for ASD's Children Service Stay & Play Group offers a good opportunity to meet other parents/carers whilst your children play in a safe and understanding environment. This group is open to parents/carers of children under 5 who have received a diagnosis of ASC or are currently seeking diagnosis. Come along for a brew & chat.

**Transition Group:** This is a group for young people with Asperger Syndrome aged 16 –25 years. This group is a social communication group for young people going through the transition into adulthood and provides an opportunity to make friends, develop relationships, and increase self-esteem and confidence. The group bridges the gap between children's or adults services for young adults. Sessions run every Thursday at the ARC, Burnley between 6pm - 8pm.

**Socialeyes Training:** Our Socialeyes training is a weekly course for autistic adolescents & young adults who have difficulties meeting and maintaining friendships and relationships and who may have social difficulties that cause recurrent depression and anxiety.

**Volunteering:** We offer volunteering placements for young people aged 16 years and over who are diagnosed with an ASC. Our volunteer coordinator will provide support & guidance for anyone wanting to gain new social & life skills through volunteering. This is an opportunity to be a positive role model to younger children who have been diagnosed or are seeking diagnosis or ASC.

**How to access support from our children's service team?** Please contact the children's team on 01282 415455 option 1 or email [children@actionasd.org.uk](mailto:children@actionasd.org.uk) who will arrange to send out the membership pack and explain more about the services. After the pack has been received you will then be invited to come and meet with one of our children's service team. **Please Note: you must become a member of Action for ASD before you attend any events or social activities.**

