

Calderdale NAS

Branch Officer's Report 2015

- **Peer support and social events**

Regular coffee mornings have been held with the Autism Team and Calderdale Parents and Carers.

The support groups for adults with Aspergers in Halifax and Hebden Bridge continue to be facilitated by Dawn Collins from Calderdale MBC.

Our closed Facebook group now has 116 members, and we continue to provide a branch enquiry line and news updates by email.

In addition to our annual activity day at the Boiler House, we have provided roller skating sessions, and are now looking to work with Bricks4Kidz to provide Lego workshops.

- **Training for family members**

We have continued to work in partnership with the Autism Team to deliver NAS family seminars on Understanding Autism, Managing Anger and Sensory Needs, and have provided all the course materials.

We hope to deliver seminars on Understanding Behaviour, Common Toileting Difficulties and Supporting Siblings in the near future.

- **Influencing**

We have had representation on Calderdale's Autism Strategy group, to implement improvements in services for adults with autism.

We are continuing to press the Clinical Commissioning Group for improvements on waiting times for assessments for autism, and for progress to be made on the review of services for children with autism that began last year.

We have also had ongoing discussions with the local authority on gaps in provision for children on the autism spectrum with regard to assessments of need and Short Breaks provision, and responded on behalf of members to the current consultation on this issue.

- **Fund raising**

A big thank you to Simon Gaukroger for his continued support in organising our stalls at Halifax and Brighouse Galas, and our Bric-a-Brac stall in Halifax town centre. These events raised £1,333. Thanks Simon!!

I must also say thank you to my mother-in-law for donating £450 from her charity garden party. In addition, we have recently received a donation of £754 from Woodhouse Primary School in Brighouse from a cake sale. So a big thank you to them.

- **Thank you**

I am stepping down as Branch Officer after 3 years in the role. I am not disappearing, as I have taken on a new role as a regional Policy and Participation Officer with the NAS, so will continue to work with the branch to help improve local services, and raise awareness of national NAS campaigns.

Thanks to all our committee members and volunteers for their support over the past 3 years, and to Colette Hampson (our Branch Support Officer) for being a much valued source of advice.

And a final and very big thank you to Sarah Allard for agreeing to stand as Branch Chair for the coming year, and ensuring the branch continues to provide support for families.

Thank you

Janine Wigmore