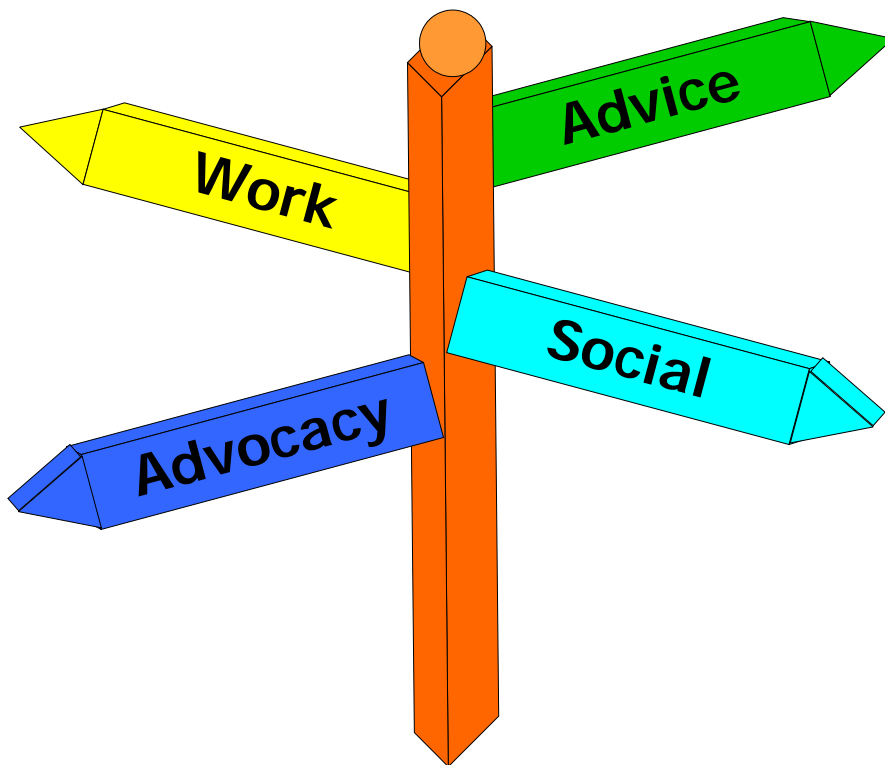
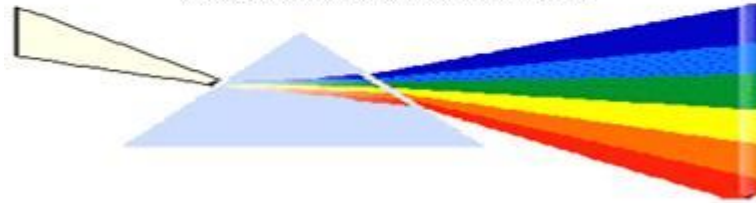


DASH
Discovering Autistic Spectrum Happiness
Registered Charity: 1116852



**Directory of Services
for
Adults with Aspergers
living in Swindon
October 2008**

DASH is a local registered charity that began life in August 2006. It is DASH's mission to improve the quality of life of adults of working age with Aspergers Syndrome and high-functioning Autistic Spectrum Disorders living in Swindon.

Our primary aims are to:

Raise awareness of Aspergers Syndrome;

Promote and enhance access to assessment and diagnosis, treatment, welfare and care, housing, education and employment;

Research, promote and help to deliver a local model of support and services.

In this way we will help people with Aspergers Syndrome to enjoy safer, healthier, more sociable, more productive and happier lives!

We hope that this Local Information Directory will assist adults with Aspergers syndrome to access the support they might need.

A further source of excellent information and support is the
National Autistic Society
393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG
Tel: 020 7833 2299
Email: nas@nas.org.uk
www.autism.org.uk
Autism helpline: 0845 070 4004

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1. Assessment & Diagnosis

Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP)

Psychology Department

Rowan House

Sandalwood Court

Highworth Road

Swindon

SN3 4WF

Description of Service:

Clare McNally is a Chartered Clinical Psychologist working for Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Mental Health Trust, with a special interest in Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Aspergers Syndrome. She provides an assessment and diagnostic service, along with Keith Lawley, CPN, for individuals who have been referred to secondary mental health services. They were both trained in "DISCO" – the Diagnostic Interview for Social and Communication Disorders, devised by Lorna Wing and Judith Gould, but also use other diagnostic tools.

Clare also contributes to DASH support group workshops providing some communication skills training. Clare is a founder member of DASH.

Access to Service:

Secondary mental health services e.g. community mental health team, outreach and recovery team.

Cambridge Lifespan Asperger Syndrome Service (CLASS)

Douglas House

18b Trumpington Road

Cambridge

CB2 2AH

Tel: 01223 746048

Email: psn22@cam.ac.uk

Description of Service:

CLASS is the national diagnostic centre for adults with Aspergers Syndrome. It offers a diagnostic assessment for adults (18 years or older) who may have Asperger Syndrome or High Functioning Autism. It is a not for profit organisation – fees are used to run the clinic and related research at the Autism Research Centre.

Access to Service:

Self referral.

Patients outside the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region will need to fund themselves.

Patients must have an informant who knew them well as a child i.e. parent or sibling (at least 5 years older). The patient should be free of any general learning disability.

2. Advocacy

DASH

284 Marlborough Road,

Swindon

SN3 1NR

Tel: 01793 692596 (anytime) or 07516408473 (Wed & Thurs)

Email: anne.billingham2@btinternet.com or deniseo1@sky.com

Description of Service:

DASH is able to offer individual short-term, issues-based and/or crisis-support advocacy for people who may need help around benefits, housing, health and social care services, education, employment or the criminal justice system.

For example

- someone may find dealing with the Council too much to cope with without support;
- perhaps they have become socially isolated and are unsure where to turn; or
- they could be experiencing difficulties in the workplace; or
- they may come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Advocacy would include helping people to access the services they need as well as support in engaging with other services or professionals and even some formal representation if appropriate.

DASH is hoping to introduce an "Autism alert" card in 2009/10 modelled on a successful scheme launched by Hampshire Autistic Society in partnership with Hampshire police to raise awareness and understanding and ensure adults with Aspergers Syndrome have access to appropriate support and advocacy when they come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Access to Service:

To get information and/or the help of a DASH advocate please

ring 01793 692596 or

email: anne.billingham2@btinternet.com

Service user Network Swindon (SUNS)

161 Victoria Road

Swindon

SN1 3BU

Tel: 01793 436174 (plus answering service in out of p/t office hours)

Email: suns161@lineone.net

Description of Service:

SUNS is a local registered charity and independent voluntary organisation managed by mental health service users for service users. It is a founder member of DASH.

SUNS aim is to support, train and encourage mental health service users to speak out about their experiences of the local mental health services.

SUNS increasingly has a role in the performance monitoring of local services and sends representatives to strategic planning groups and service improvement / development forums.

SUNS is also involved in the recruitment of staff into mental health services, staff induction and other training.

Members of SUNS are encouraged to take part in the work of the organisation and are supported to do this.

SUNS also offers:

- individual advocacy and sign-posting to other services;
 - a range of social and leisure activities for service users.
-

Access to Service:

Membership of SUNS is free and accessible to people who are currently using mental health services or have done so in the past.

Associate membership is available to individuals or organisations with a genuine interest in supporting the work of SUNS.

SUNS has experience of supporting individuals with a diagnosis of Aspergers, co-morbid with mental health issues and welcomes enquires about SUNS work and activities.

3. Benefits/Legal Advice

The Advice Point

George Hall Court

Cavendish Square

Park South

Swindon

SN3 2LZ

Tel: 01793 487934

Email: advice.point@virgin.net

Fax: 01793 619877

Description of Service:

The Advice Point offers free, confidential and non-judgemental help and advice on a whole variety of issues:

- debt
- employment
- housing
- welfare benefits.

The staff will help to complete forms and write letters on your behalf, and represent you at Tribunals, County Courts, etc.

Access to Service:

Call in to make an appointment : Monday – Friday 9.30am – 3.30pm

Or

Telephone 487934 for an appointment between 9am – 3.30pm Monday – Friday.

Swindon & District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Faringdon House

1 Faringdon Road

Swindon

SN1 5AR

Public advice line: 0845 0505 155

Fax no: 01793 613270

Email: bureau.swindoncab@cabnet.org.uk

Advice guide website: www.adviceguide.org.uk

CAB Extension service at North Swindon Advice Point is based at:

22 Linden Avenue

Pinehurst

Swindon

SN2 1JT

Tel: 01793 529150

Description of Service:

CAB offers free, confidential, independent and impartial advice on virtually any matter including: debt, welfare benefits, housing, employment, family and personal matters, immigration & nationality; consumer, taxes, health, education, legal issues / procedures.

We provide advice and practical assistance in addressing your problems, are able to negotiate on behalf of clients by letter or telephone and are able to assist you with the completion of forms and applications. We are able to assist you with preparing a case and may be able to represent you at a Court or Tribunal hearing.

Access to Service:

The Bureau in Faringdon Road

Open Door Advice (drop in): Mon – Fri 10am – 1pm.

You may have to wait if it is busy.

Telephone Advice Line: 0845 0505155:

Mon, Tues and Wed 10am – 1pm - when staffing permits.

The Bureau is also able to respond to enquiries by letter, fax and email and aim to respond to written enquiries within 7 – 14 days.

Appointments may be made following initial contact by telephone, interview or letter, if appropriate and when issues require casework:

Mon – Fri from 1pm – 4pm.

North Swindon Advice Point

Open Door Advice (Drop in):

Mon 10am – 4pm

Wed, Thurs & Fri: 10am – 1pm

To book an appointment (on Tuesday) call branch direct on 01793 529150

Wiltshire Law Centre

Temple House

115 – 118 Commercial Road

Swindon

SN1 5PL

Tel: 01793 486926

Fax: 01793 432193

Minicom: 01793 611326

Email: info@wiltslawcentre.co.uk

Description of Service:

The Wiltshire Law Centre is a registered charity established in 1981 to provide free advice in social welfare law to people in and around Swindon. 27 years on, the Law Centre continues to offer free legal advice in:

- welfare benefits
- housing
- debt

The Centre will assist with benefit appeals and offer representation at tribunals and court hearings.

Housing advice is available to both council and private tenants and advice covers a wide range of housing issues – quality of accommodation, mortgage arrears, and repossession.

All aspects of debt such as council tax arrears, loans, bankruptcy and dealing with bailiffs.

Access to Service:

Opening hours are Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm.

Appointments can be made by telephoning 486926.

4. Carers

Support for Carers of Adults with Aspergers in Swindon (SCAAS)

c/o Swindon Carers Centre

1 Wood Street

Swindon

SN1

Tel: 01793 531133

Or contact Sally Grubb: 01797 770079

Email: Salgrubb@aol.com

Description of Service:

SCASS is essentially a self-help support group and was formed to help those who are involved in the care of adults who have Asperger Syndrome (AS) residing within the Borough of Swindon. (Although members do include those residing in the nearby villages who come under the 'North Wilts.' umbrella). The definition of AS includes 'High-Functioning Autism' or HFA.

SCAAS believes that each person with AS is an individual in their own right with their own strengths, difficulties, ambitions and dreams. We also believe that as a consequence of their condition they share common 'areas of difference'.

Access to Service:

For further information about the group please visit our website at:

www.communigate.co.uk/wilts/scaas/index.phtml

or contact Sally (details given above).

5. Education

New College – Aspie Group

New College,
Queens Drive
Swindon
SN3 1AH

Tel: 01793 611470
www.newcollege.ac.uk

Description of Service:

The Aspie Group operates for a small group of students who have similar thoughts and feelings about life, college, friendships and hobbies. We meet for an hour each week and explore the interests, similarities, differences and communications skills of students with Asperger Syndrome. We also aim to have fun!

Aspie Group activities that will help you at college and at university:

- Coping with crowds and people
 - How to make friends and keep them
 - Starting a conversation
 - How New College works for you
 - Enjoy discussions
 - Explore relationships
-

Access to Service:

Contact Details:

Additional Support Co-ordinator - 01793 732857

Jill Hodge on 01793 611470. Email: jill.hodge@newcollege.ac.uk

New College – Transition Project

New College,
Queens Drive
Swindon
SN3 1AH

Tel: 01793 611470
www.newcollege.ac.uk

Description of Service:

The aim of the Transition Project is to help prospective students experience a smooth transition from their school or current placement onto a full-time course at New College. Students with a diagnosis within the Autistic Spectrum of disorders i.e. Aspergers Syndrome and aged up to 25 years, may benefit.

Project mentors area available to meet prospective students and provide information, advice and guidance throughout their transition.

The prospective student has the opportunity to visit New College on several occasions to enable them to familiarise themselves with the buildings and facilities available.

Access to Service:

Contact Connexions Personal Advisers:

lorraine.kardasz@newcollege.ac.uk or cathi.carter@newcollege.ac.uk

New College – Additional Support

New College,
Queens Drive
Swindon
SN3 1AH

Tel: 01793 611470
www.newcollege.ac.uk

Description of Service:

Additional Support is available to ALL full-time and part time students. All prospective students are given the opportunity to discuss their additional support needs with a member of the Additional Support team or the Disability officer, prior to their course starting.

Students can access Additional support at any time during their course.

Our team of professional staff can support students with Autistic Spectrum disorders.

We can provide support with:

1:1 teaching from qualified teachers and specialist teachers;

1:1 in-class support from Learning Support Assistants;

Assistive technology;

Specialist equipment;

Access to examination arrangements.

We also have access to The Independent Psychological Service and actively encourage multi-agency meetings when appropriate.

Access to Service:

Contact details:

Additional Support Co-ordinator – 01793 7325857;
sarah.howes@newcollege.ac.uk

Disability Officer – 01793 732857
trudy.murphy@newcollege.ac.uk

Swindon Connexions Centre

4 Temple Chambers

Temple Street

Swindon

SN1 1SQ

Tel: 01793 549200

Email: swindon@connexionsws.org.uk

Website: www.connexions4u-ws.org.uk

Description of Service:

Connexions is a national service providing information, advice and guidance to all young people aged 13 to 19 years. Where a young person has a disability Connexions continues to offer a service until 25 years.

The main focus of the service is to deliver impartial information, advice and guidance on a wide range of themes such as; careers guidance, work, learning, housing, relationships and money. Personal advisers work with young people, their parents and carers to help them prepare for the transition into adult life and ensure they are aware of their future options.

Where a young person has a statement the personal adviser will attend the transition review in Year 9 and the final review. Contributing to the transition plan and subsequent reviews, a large part of the personal adviser role is to ensure that the right support is in place when a young person moves onto FE or training. In cases when a young person has a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome their Connexions personal adviser will be able to advise on a range of options including local and specialist residential colleges.

In Swindon young people have access to Connexions personal advisers in schools, colleges as well as the Connexions Centre in Temple Street which offers a vacancy service for those who are looking for work.

Access to Service:

Contact the Connexions Centre as above for information and advice.

6. Support Services

Community Care Assessment

Social Services

Swindon Borough Council

The Civic offices

Swindon

SN1 2JH

Tel: Free phone 0800 085 66 66

Customer services: www.swindon.gov.uk/socialcare

Description of Service:

Many adults with Asperger syndrome live at home with their parents who may provide regular and substantial amounts of care and support. If independent living or for example, attending college is an aspiration for the future then a starting point could be a community care assessment. Any diagnosis on the autistic spectrum offers entitlement to an assessment. ***(Note: Under the Mental Health Act, Autistic Spectrum Disorders are identified as a mental disorder, but not a mental illness, and qualifies as a 'disability' for assessment purposes.)**

When you request an assessment ask the person who answers the phone if they have a member of staff that understands Aspergers Syndrome to explain the process of assessment to you and/or send you the information first, before the assessment. It would be best if the same member of staff then conducts the assessment. This should be within 28 days of asking for it unless they explain otherwise.

You - and anyone that knows you well / cares for you – should be fully involved in the assessment and you should get the chance to say what you feel that you need. You may be asked questions about the tasks you can and can't do and the tasks you find difficult some of the time. The purpose of the assessment is to find out what your needs or problems are, help you find solutions to these and arrange community care support if this is needed.

The person who assesses you should keep notes of what is said, the things they have found you need; and whether there is anything you and they disagree about.

You should normally get a written record of the assessment. You usually have a right to see any other personal information that social services hold about you. You can ask them to change anything you think is wrong.

If you are eligible for help, then a care plan will be drawn up for you recording what your needs are and what services you will get.

If you are not going to receive help, you should get a statement saying why. (Even if the assessment is correct, the provision of care is 'rationed' to those most in need – and each local authority is able to decide what levels of need

they will fund). Even if you are not eligible for help, you should still be given information and advice about alternative sources of help.

If the council refuses to assess you or you are not happy with how the assessment was done or you are not happy with the result of your assessment you can complain. DASH advocacy service can help you through the complaints process.

If you are already receiving the support of mental health services then your needs will have been assessed by them. If you want to explore independent living or support to undertake certain activities, ask to have a review of your care with your mental health Care Co-ordinator and ask them about Direct Payments. Again you may wish to have someone you know well to be part of this discussion.

Access to Service:

Access is via Care Line – 0800 085 66 66. You may need to explain when requesting a community care assessment that Aspergers syndrome or high functioning autistic spectrum disorder is a mental disorder/disability, but not a mental illness because they may try to signpost you to mental health services via your GP.

They should put you in contact with the Social Services Contact and Assessment Team by giving you another telephone number to ring or by asking for your telephone number so that they can ring you back.

* Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are a form of mental disorder as defined in the Mental Health Act 1983. In the Code of Practice it states that these disorders are developmental in nature and are not mental illnesses in themselves.

Included in the legal definition of disability is "people suffering from a mental disorder as defined under the Mental Health Act" and as such people diagnosed with an ASD (including Asperger syndrome) are legally entitled to a community care assessment.

It is further indicated that people carrying out an assessment should have experience and training in working with people with these disorders. In addition, someone who knows the person with an ASD should be present.

DASH – Discussion and Support Group

284 Marlborough Road

Swindon

SN3 1NR

Tel: 01793 692596 or mobile: 07516408473 (Wed & Thur)

Email: deniseo1@sk.com or anne.billingham2@btinternet.com

Description of Service:

DASH holds a weekly informal discussion and support group facilitated by DASH Co-ordinator. The meeting runs from 1pm – 2pm on a Wednesday afternoon and is open to DASH members diagnosed with AS. The meeting is held in DASH portacabin on TWIGS site.

On the second Wednesday of each month a more formal meeting of the support group is held as a monthly topic-led workshop. At the workshops guest professionals help DASH clients to develop their communication skills.

Access to Service:

Please speak to DASH Co-ordinator in the first instance on 07516408473.

Samaritans

Swindon & District Samaritans

6 Curtis Street

Swindon

SN1 5JU

Office tel: 01793 512490

Helpline: 01793 537373

Description of Service:

Samaritans say that they are there to offer you confidential support when things are too much and you feel desperate and alone. They will listen to how you feel, no matter what the reason is. They say that they won't tell you what to do and won't tell anyone about you or about your call unless that is what you want. You don't even have to give them your name. They will call you back if you prefer.

Access to Service:

24 hours a day every day of the year.

National helpline: 08457 90 91 92

Email: jo@samaritans.org

www.samaritans.org

Local telephone helpline: 01793 537373; or

Drop into your local branch at 6 Curtis Street to meet with a Samaritans volunteer face to face.

Primary Care Psychology Service

Kingshill House

Kingshill Road

Swindon

SN1 4LG

Tel: 01793 401324

Email: swindon.psychology@awp.nhs.uk

www.awp.nhs.uk

Description of Service:

The Primary Care Psychology Service offers support to people with emotional and common mental health difficulties (such as depression and anxiety). This may include advice about self-help resources, brief one to one consultations with a primary care worker; access to a wide range of life skills courses aimed at developing peoples abilities to cope.

Courses include: Stress and mood management, relaxation & mindfulness, coping with low mood, anger management, bereavement support, building confidence, developing assertiveness skills, effective communication, overcoming your fears & phobias, moving on from separation & divorce, weight management.

Computerised cognitive behavioural therapy: Beating the Blues.

This is an easy to use self-help computer programme to help people cope with anxiety and depression. An introductory video to the full 8 session programme can be viewed on www.beatingtheblues.co.uk – click on watch therapy video.

If you have access to a computer, Beating the Blues is available on-line with an activation code; or it is available in community based venues throughout Swindon.

Access to Service:

General information and booking forms for courses can be found on the website: www.awp.nhs.uk under 'our services' ... 'primary care psychology'.

Or you can telephone 01793 401324.

Alternatively you can access this service through your GP.

By requesting a referral for a one to one session you will be able to consider what options might offer you the best support – e.g. guided self-help, attending a course, one to one therapy or a source of support offered by another service.

Mental Health Crisis Service

Sandalwood Court

Highworth Road

Swindon

SN3 4WF

Telephone: 01793 836807

Description of Service:

The Crisis Service is for people experiencing acute mental distress for the first time and existing mental health service users.

The service can be contacted for:

- advice over the telephone about what to do;
 - access to an assessment of a person's mental health needs; and
 - follow up treatment at home;
 - access to Oak Lodge (Crisis respite house); and if necessary
 - admission to Sandalwood Court Psychiatric hospital as a place of safety.
-

Access to Service:

Telephone: 01793 836807

Preservation Around Self-Harm (PASH)

14 Milton Road

Swindon

SN1 5JE

Tel: 01793 695405

Description of service:

Free confidential one to one support help to overcome self injury.

Access:

Referral and self-referral. Appointment needed.

Contact the Co-ordinator - Maria Burchell on 695405.

Swindon & Wiltshire Alcohol & Drug Service (SWADS)

Bradford House

13-14 Milton Road

SN1 5JE

Tel: 01793 695405

Description of service:

Offers a wide range of information, advice and support for problems relating to alcohol in a safe and comfortable environment.

Access:

Tel: 695405 or open access drop in to SWADS (no appointment needed).

Mon – Fri 1pm – 2:45pm to start accessing help and support around alcohol issues.

Swindon Eating Disorders Recovery Group

The Health Hydro

Milton Road

Swindon

SN1 5JA

Tel: 01793 511064

Email: enquiries@wwcswindon.fsnet.co.uk

Description of service:

The Eating Disorder Recover Group supports men and women wishing to recover from an eating disorder. We also welcome family, friends and carers of people with an eating disorder. The group is for adults over 18 or young people 16-18 accompanied by a responsible adult each time they attend.

Access:

Tel: enquiries 01793 511064

Email: enquiries as above.

Drug & Homelessness Initiative (DHI)

The Old School House

Maxwell Street

Swindon

SN1 5DR

Tel: 01793 617177

Email: info@dhiswindon.org.uk

Website: www.drugsandhomeless.org.uk

Description of service:

DHI is a registered charity whose main purpose is to help people deal with problematic drug use. This includes tackling issues associated with substance misuse – such as poor housing and/or lack of life skills. DHI offers a range of practical and emotional support services.

Access:

Tel: 617177 or drop in at St. Luke's Church, Broad Street, Swindon SN1 2DP
9:00 – 11:00 Mon, Tues, Wed and Friday.

Gamblers Anonymous

c/o Gorsehill Community Centre

Chapel Street

Gorsehill

Swindon

SN2 8DA

Tel: 020 7384 3040 or 0121 233 1335

Website: www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Description of service:

This is a service for anyone who has a desire to stop gambling. The 12 step programme offers a simple guide to living life without gambling which can be used or interpreted in any way the member chooses.

Access:

Meetings are open access and there are no fees. Meetings take place in Swindon at Gorsehill Community Centre at the following times:

Tuesdays 7pm – 9pm;

Wednesdays 7pm – 9pm;

Sundays 2pm – 4pm every 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month.

Alternatively you can call a Gamblers Anonymous helpline 24 hours per day and your call will be answered by someone who has been a compulsive gambler:

London 020 7384 3040

Birmingham 0121 233 1335

National Bullying Helpline

Helpline: 0845 22 55 787

Open:

Monday – Friday: 10am - 4pm.

Saturday: 10am - 2pm.

www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

Description of service:

A free and confidential telephone helpline dealing with bullying in any context.

Set up by a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development in response to the incidence of bullying in the workplace.

Access:

Telephone helpline: 0845 2255 787

Tranquillity Zone

The Health Hydro

Milton Road

Swindon

Tel: 01793 465715 or 01793 537454.

Description of service:

Described as "an oasis of calm and well-being for the body, mind and spirit."

The Tranquillity Zone is an initiative of the Baha'is of Swindon that is open to everyone. Sessions last for 40 minutes and are FREE of charge. Tea and coffee are served.

The Tranquillity Zone aims to provide a few, unhurried moments of reflection. Inspiring words and music are chosen to uplift the heart and refresh the spirit.

Access:

Sessions run every Wednesday starting at 1pm; and fortnightly on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm.

For confirmation of dates and times please telephone 01793 465715 or 01793 537454

Swindon Primary Care Assessment and Diagnosis Service for Adults

Description of service:

This service does not exist in Swindon.

This means that the estimated 550 adults on the autistic spectrum that live in Swindon remain largely 'invisible' and frequently isolated and excluded from community life.

Access:

None.

Individuals, families, primary care health professionals, social services personnel and GPs currently have no where to refer to in order to explore whether or not an adult is on the autistic spectrum.

Yet assessment and diagnosis is an intervention in itself that can help people make sense of their experiences and start to feel more at ease with themselves.

Only those adults that are in receipt of secondary mental health services or can afford to pay for a private assessment (and travel out of area) can currently access assessment and diagnosis – a health inequality that DASH is challenging.

7. Employment Support

Richmond Fellowship (RF) Wiltshire Employment Services

2 Little London Court

Albert Street

Old Town

Swindon

SN1 3HY

Tel: 01793 433571 or 0845 4582956

Email: wiltshire.gest@richmondfellowship.org.uk

Website: www.richmondfellowship.org.uk

Description of Service:

RF Wiltshire Employment Services is part of a national charity providing a one to one service for people with disabilities, including Asperger syndrome, to enter education, training, voluntary work and paid employment.

Its' core service can be described as "Adult Advice & Guidance" and comprising the following elements:

- an initial occupational assessment;
- advice & guidance with the outcome of an occupational action plan;
- identification of training and/or learning needs;
- opportunities for volunteering, work tasters and/or supported permitted work;
- CV and application preparation;
- job search & job club;
- interview practice;
- mentoring in the workplace.

Each individual client of the service has their own personal employment adviser who will offer appropriate help and support in an individually tailored way. This means that the client will progress at the pace and to the level that they feel is right for them in order to fulfil their aspirations.

Additional services offered as small group training include computer skills training.

Access to Service:

Self-referral or GP or other health/social care practitioner e.g. CPN, social worker, occupational therapist, project worker.

For self-referral, use telephone numbers above for advice.

Working for Opportunities Trust

Shaftesbury Centre

Percy Street

Swindon

SN2 2AZ

Tel: 01793 514055 ext 4758

Email: admin.wfo@scamp.org.uk

Minicom: 01793 554725

Fax: 01793 423112

Website: www.wfostrust.org.uk

Description of Service:

Working for Opportunities is an independent charitable trust whose activities are aimed at enabling disabled people* into real employment locally by taking a practical approach.

We hope to achieve this by:

- operating a Register of disabled people who want to work and matching them with vacancies notified to us by employers;
- providing disability equality training to disabled people themselves as well as statutory bodies, local community groups, charities and commercial organisations;
- providing one to one career advice and guidance and group training programmes.

* WFO has adopted the definition of disability as "disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community, on an equal level with others, due to physical and social barriers".

Access to Service:

Working for Opportunities is OPEN: 8.30am – 4.30pm Mon – Fri.

Telephone John Green or Janet Seidal on 514055 ext 4758.

DASH

284 Marlborough Road

Swindon

SN3 1NR

Tel: 01793 692596 or mobile: 07516408473 (Wed & Thur)

Email: deniseo1@sk.com or anne.billingham2@btinternet.com

Description of Service:

DASH works with individuals to help them engage in Asperger – specific services offered by DASH and also explore their personal and occupational goals and aspirations. DASH employment support worker will help individuals to access volunteering, learning and work opportunities of their choice both within DASH and in the wider community in liaison with other local agencies i.e. Colleges, WEA, Wiltshire Employment Services etc.

DASH is able to provide a realistic workplace experience in the Wildflower Nursery for a period of weeks or months and in this way help people to assess their strengths and abilities and help identify any difficulties that need to be addressed in order to help them to achieve their potential.

Access to Service:

DASH can be accessed by self referral or referral via other agencies or health professionals.

Information packs are available for workers and for people with AS interested in finding out what services DASH can offer.

Eligibility criteria and referral forms are available within the information packs or on request by telephoning DASH Co-ordinator on 07516408473.

An informal visit to speak to DASH Co-ordinator can be arranged as the starting point for a referral; and thereafter, a 'taster' session might be a useful next step.

Swindon Connexions Centre

4 Temple Chambers

Temple Street

Swindon

SN1 1SQ

Tel: 01793 549200

Email: swindon@connexionsws.org.uk

Website: www.connexions4u-ws.org.uk

Description of Service:

Connexions is a national service providing information, advice and guidance to all young people aged 13 to 19 years. Where a young person has a disability Connexions continues to offer a service until 25 years.

The main focus of the service is to deliver impartial information, advice and guidance on a wide range of themes such as; careers guidance, work, learning, housing, relationships and money. Personal advisers work with young people, their parents and carers to help them prepare for the transition into adult life and ensure they are aware of their future options.

Where a young person has a statement the personal adviser will attend the transition review in Year 9 and the final review. Contributing to the transition plan and subsequent reviews, a large part of the personal adviser role is to ensure that the right support is in place when a young person moves onto FE or training. In cases when a young person has a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome their Connexions personal adviser will be able to advise on a range of options including local and specialist residential colleges.

In Swindon young people have access to Connexions personal advisers in schools, colleges as well as the Connexions Centre in Temple Street which offers a vacancy service for those who are looking for work.

Access to Service:

Contact the Connexions Centre as above for information and advice.

8. Housing

Supporting People

Swindon Borough Council

Civic Offices

Euclid Street

Swindon

SN1 2JH

Description of Service:

Supporting People is a national programme launched in 2003 to provide a better quality of life for vulnerable people by helping them to live more independently and to maintain their tenancies. It is led by Swindon Borough Council as a partnership with health, housing associations, support agencies and service users.

Support can be short-term (up to two years) or long-term and is provided as Supported Housing, adult placements (with local families) and visiting home support.

Support can be about accessing the right benefits, development of living skills to maintain a tenancy, emotional support and reassurance, helping access education and work.

Access to Service:

First you need to be registered with Swindon Borough Council and request a housing needs assessment.

Tel 01793.....

People using mental health services can access the supporting people programme through their worker and Stonham Housing (see entry for Stonham Housing).

Stonham Housing

Nelson House

2 Lansdown Road

Swindon

SN1 3NE

Tel: 07739303094

Email: ceri.evans-ford@homegroup.org.uk

Website: www.homegroup.org.uk

Description of Service:

Stonham offers accommodation and support to vulnerable adults in the community and in residential settings. Supporting people with many different needs from mental health, learning difficulties, stress related illnesses, young mums and babies, ex-drug users or ex-offenders.

Stonham is currently funded by a grant from Supporting People and clients pay for rented accommodation with us or with other landlords or could be home owner occupiers. Support enables clients to become as independent as possible, gradually developing the skills to move in to independent accommodation, gain a qualification or go to work.

Stonham Housing is a founding member of DASH. We work with many people who have suffered a breakdown due to coping with Aspergers, helping people rebuild relationships with families, employers and work as well as enabling the client to learn the skills that will help them to cope in the future.

Access to Service:

By referral from your GP or a mental health worker using a common referral form (available from DASH or Stonham Housing)

9. Social Leisure

DASH Social Group

284 Marlborough Road,

Swindon

SN3 1NR

Contact:

Daniel Bond (Session Worker)

Tel: 01793 324974 (after 5pm)

Mob: 0797536841 (after 5pm)

Email: dash.social@live.co.uk

Description of Service:

The DASH social group creates the opportunity for adults with Aspergers Syndrome to meet other people with the condition, with the aim of developing friendships and enhancing social/conversational skills. This is achieved by regular activities/events organised by the members of the group and facilitated by session workers, volunteers and the members themselves. Such activities include badminton, walking, cinema, pub visits, meals out and day trips.

The social group's overall aim is to establish a network of events, activities and cluster groups, in which adults with Aspergers Syndrome can access and benefit from.

Access to Service:

The minimum age requirement to join the group is 16; however there is no maximum age limit.

Membership is open to adults either with Aspergers Syndrome or who are in the process of being diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome.

For further information about the social group and how to become a part of the group, then please contact the Session Worker on the above details or contact DASH on 01793 692596.

10. Volunteering

DASH

284 Marlborough Road,

Swindon

SN3 1NR

Tel: 01793 692596 (anytime) or 07516408473 (Wed & Thurs)

email: anne.billingham2@btinternet.com or deniseo1@sky.com

Description of Service:

We welcome volunteers to help support two of our activities: The Social Group and the Wildflower Nursery.

The Social Group

The Social Group is a weekly evening event that creates the opportunity for local adults with Aspergers Syndrome to meet and converse. An activity is often incorporated into these sessions, which is decided upon by the members of the group; however participation in activities is not compulsory. It also creates the opportunity for larger social events to be organized such as meals out and day trips as well as the opportunity for the members to form friendships with other members. The forming of friendships in turn enables them to organize their own social activities outside of the group.

The Social Group was established in January 2008 by Daniel Bond and became affiliated with DASH in February 2008. Since its establishment it has been growing steadily and now consists of a dozen members and volunteers.

As the group continues to grow, there are plans of expanding the evenings and activities, to be run by the volunteers and members themselves.

It is the aim of the group to not only enable friendships to form, but to also enable self confidence and social skills to develop. The eventual aim of the group is to establish a social community whereby opportunities are created for adults with Aspergers to meet and participate in regular events and activities together.

The Wildflower Nursery

The Wildflower Nursery is a social enterprise set up by DASH for the production and sale of wildflowers. It provides opportunities for volunteering.

The Nursery currently produces about 30 varieties of wildflowers from seed and seedlings provided by our on-site neighbour and partner – FAB (Wildflowers And Butterflies) and we have already provided plants for several areas in Swindon. We share TWIGS Open Days in April, June and September and sell direct to the public.

Volunteers are needed to work 'hands-on' sowing seeds, pricking them out, planting and watering. No horticultural experience is required although patience and care is needed to handle the seeds and small plantlets. There is no 'heavy' gardening but we do sometimes get involved in planting up a site with the wildflowers.

Knowledge of wildflowers isn't necessary but this is probably something that you will learn about as you go along. DIY skills could be useful as there may be some opportunities to help construct wooden boxes and trugs in which to market the wild flowers; and even 'origami' skills – to help make our own seed packets! Marketing skills would be a bonus to help sell the concept of growing wildflowers not just in open spaces but also in our herbaceous borders!!

Access to Service:

The **Social Group** can be contacted by calling:

Daniel Bond: Tel: 01793 324974 (after 5pm) or Mob: 0797536841 (after 5pm); email: dash.social@live.co.uk

The **Wildflower Nursery** is located at TWIGS in the grounds of Manor Garden Centre, Cheney Manor Estate, Swindon SN2 2PQ

For further details contact **DASH** at the details at the start of this section.

Richmond Fellowship (RF) Wiltshire Employment Services

2 Little London Court

Albert Street

Old Town

Swindon

SN1 3HY

Tel: 01793 433571 or 0845 4582956

Email: wiltshire.gest@richmondfellowship.org.uk

Website: www.richmondfellowship.org.uk

Description of Service:

RF Wiltshire Employment Services is part of a national charity providing a one to one service for people with disabilities, including Asperger syndrome, to enter education, training, voluntary work and paid employment.

Its' core service can be described as "Adult Advice & Guidance" and comprising the following elements:

- an initial occupational assessment;
- advice & guidance with the outcome of an occupational action plan;
- identification of training and/or learning needs;
- opportunities for volunteering, work tasters and/or supported permitted work;
- CV and application preparation;
- job search & job club;
- interview practice;
- mentoring in the workplace.

Each individual client of the service has their own personal employment adviser who will offer appropriate help and support in an individually tailored way. This means that the client will progress at the pace and to the level that they feel is right for them in order to fulfil their aspirations.

Additional services offered as small group training include computer skills training.

Access to Service:

Self-referral or GP or other health/social care practitioner e.g. CPN, social worker, occupational therapist, project worker.

For self-referral, use telephone numbers above for advice.

Volunteer Centre Swindon

1 John Street

Swindon

SN1 1RT

Tel: 01793 420557

Email: info@swindonvolunteers.org.uk

Website: www.swindonvolunteers.org.uk

Description of Service:

The Volunteer Centre Swindon is a registered charity that provides free guidance for anyone looking for volunteering opportunities.

They promote volunteering as a great way to:

- learn new skills;
- meet new people;
- boost your confidence;
- make a difference;
- have fun;

Volunteering can also provide you with a reference for work if you are hoping to move into employment.

Their staff will help match your interests, time available and distance to travel to local volunteering vacancies.

Access to Service:

Volunteer Centre Swindon offers a drop-in session between 11am – 3pm Monday to Friday, or you can make an appointment for outside of these times. We can meet with you in our confidential interview room and offer you a selection of volunteering opportunities to suit you.

It is also possible to search the national do-it.org.uk website for a volunteering opportunity in your local area.

“Latest Vacancies” is a bi-monthly leaflet that highlights a selection of local opportunities, available from the Volunteer Centre and the Information Centre.

Therapeutic Work in Gardening in Swindon (TWIGS)

Manor Garden Centre

Cheney Manor Estate

Swindon

SN2 2QJ

Tel: 01793 523294

Email: twigs@richmondfellowship.org.uk

Website: www.richmondfellowship.org.uk

Description of Service:

At TWIGS we are able to offer a wide range of meaningful, creative activities in a busy supportive community based service. Tasks are available in all areas of horticultural practice and conservation as well as thriving arts and crafts which includes woodcrafts.

Each individual is able to explore their creative abilities in the knowledge that their work will be appreciated and have a valid purpose. This can be items for personal use or items / plants for enhancing the community garden site or perhaps for general sale to help raise funds for our service.

Experienced staff are on hand to guide and support individuals to integrate into a small group work setting and help establish appropriate social behaviours.

Tasks can be made to suit concentration spans and can be designed to reinforce the benefits of attention to detail.

We have successfully worked with individuals with AS and have the capacity to do so in the future.

Access to Service:

By referral from a health professional such as GP, counselor, psychologist, community psychiatric nurse or social worker.

The gardens are open to the public on Wednesday & Friday afternoons – 1.30pm - 4pm and provide an informal opportunity to look around prior to formal appointment.