

FAMILY ISSUE AUTUMN 2019

Spectrum

A mother and son's autism story

We go behind the scenes of our latest film

AFTER THE DIAGNOSIS

Wirral dad Carl Rice on how his son's diagnosis affected his family

INTERVIEW

Nicole Barber-Lane

The former Hollyoaks star and her son talk about TV celebrity and living with autism

PLUS NEWS EVENTS SERVICES CHAMPIONS



Beep beep! All aboard the exciting new Autism Together Stagecoach bus

RECENTLY we worked with travel firm Stagecoach to launch a family-friendly bus, to help raise money for our Future 50 Appeal.

Stagecoach Merseyside, Cheshire and South Lancashire donated the bus for us to decorate and raise awareness of the appeal. The vehicle, which carries an eye-catching, bespoke design, will be out and about on Wirral's bus routes for up to three years.

The quirky and colourful bus was decorated by local artist Sophie Green. The torsos and legs of fun characters – such as a dinosaur, a surfer and even a unicorn riding a bicycle – are painted onto the side of the bus, with the heads and shoulders of the seated bus passengers appearing to create the top halves.

The bus has been in circulation for a few months now and has been getting a lot of attention from the public.

Rob Jones, Stagecoach Merseyside and South Lancashire managing director said: "We're so pleased to have partnered with Autism Together on this brilliant project. Our bus has received a lovely makeover with this creative wrap, which will put a smile on people's faces and bring a splash of colour to Wirral's roads."

Julie Murton, from Birkenhead, said: "My son Stewart has autism and absolutely loves the Autism Together bus. He calls it the 'ooh lalalaa bus'! He has seen it around lots and was very happy to have a ride on the 'ooh lalalaa bus' with his dad a couple of weeks ago."

AUTISM TOGETHER ADVISES ON NEW NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

We've been working behind the scenes with the Department of Health and Social Care, alongside other charities, to help formulate plans for a national awareness-raising campaign on behalf of the UK's autism community.

The campaign's objective will be to give the public more of an insight into autism as a condition. Despite high levels of autism awareness (recorded as 90% in a report we published last year), public understanding of the condition remains much lower (at only 60%).

The campaign will be launched towards the end of 2019, coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the Autism Act. Autism remains the only disability with its own Act of Parliament.

We delivered our findings to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism,

feeding back the top five priorities for change as voted on by members of the autism community.

Chaired by MP and autism campaigner Rt Hon Dame Cheryl Gillan, this group is now looking to review the national autism strategy.

The top five priorities are:

Priority One (chosen by 76% of survey respondents): Mandatory autism awareness training for public-facing staff across the public and private sectors: schools, medical staff, leisure centres, shops, restaurants, Job Centres, public transport, social care staff.

Priority Two (57%): Increased investment in special needs education to provide improved educational outcomes and better life chances.

Priority Three (55%): Sufficient local



authority funding of care packages to ensure people on the spectrum live full and meaningful lives rather than a bare minimum of funding just to keep them 'safe'.

Priority Four (53%): Support for children and adults on the spectrum to help them understand how to make friends and how to understand the difference between a good and a bad friend (ie: a friend who may bully or manipulate).

Priority Five (45%): More support for the families and carers of those on the spectrum including properly funded respite care.



New heritage centre opens at Port Sunlight River Park

In April we proudly opened a new heritage centre at Port Sunlight River Park.

Wirral Civic Mayor, Geoffrey Watt, cut the ribbon in front of 100 guests and visitors on April 2nd, World Autism Awareness Day, to officially open the centre which includes a café and educational area for the community to enjoy.

Autism Together manages the 70-acre River Park, on behalf of the Land Trust, with the help of our River Park Rangers, small teams made up of people we support and their support workers.

Transformed and opened in 2014, the former landfill area is

now a green public open space with stunning views across the Mersey and a host of wildlife for visitors to enjoy.

Building work on the heritage centre began in September 2018 and was carried out by Building Projects Group Ltd.

The new centre forms part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported project, 'Discovering Bromborough 3'.

During the opening event, families enjoyed nature trails and seed planting, while a display of historic artefacts found during the excavations was shown by project partner Big Heritage.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE CARE QUALITY COMMISSION'S RESTRAINT REVIEW

The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) review of restraint, prolonged seclusion and segregation for people with a mental health problem, a learning disability or autism, was published recently as an interim report.

As an organisation which has been caring for people with severe autism for over 50 years it is hard to express how shocked and upset we were by this report. An information request from the report authors to 89 registered service providers identified 62 people held in segregation. The report authors visited 39 of them and 31 of these had autism.

Investigators found that many segregation operations were unsuitable and many staff lacked necessary skills. Many of the people in segregation were expressing distress through challenging behaviour. In 26 cases, staff had stopped even attempting to integrate people back onto main wards.

The longest time an adult had been segregated was 9½ years. The longest time for a child or young person was 2½ years.

We know that, given the right care, people displaying even the most challenging behaviour can be helped towards a calm, happy life.

It's nothing short of barbaric that staff don't have access to specialist autism training, that people are kept alone for extended periods and that basic human dignities are not observed.

We are grateful to the report authors for their diligence and will be reminding the secretary of state for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, of his official response to the report:

"I will not let these people down – they deserve better."



Wirral brewers raise a glass to new social enterprise

Brimstage Brewery, famous for its locally-produced beer, has partnered with Autism Together to encourage people we support to enhance their woodwork skills.

Our group has been crafting bespoke wooden beer caddies for the brewery to sell

at markets and food fairs.

The beer caddies, created from scrap or pallet wood, are made by our Woodland Team and sell well for £8 each. The scheme runs as a social enterprise, with any profits returned to our projects.

“HE REALLY WANTED ROUTINE AND WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH”

Former *Hollyoaks* star Nicole Barber-Lane and her son Ben Fox talk to Paul Baker about how autism and the small screen have affected their family

Actress Nicole Barber-Lane has been a soap opera stalwart for some 13 years, making her name playing feisty matriarch Myra McQueen in Channel 4's award-winning *Hollyoaks*.

She left the show earlier this year to, amongst other things, spend more time with her children. Nicole has a 19-year-old son with autism, Ben Fox, and she has long been a supporter of Autism Together.

While Myra's an 'in your face', larger-than-life character, Nicole is a much more private person, but she agreed to talk to us about the many challenges and joys of being a parent to a child with autism.

We caught up with both Nicole and Ben in the peaceful setting of Grappenhall Heys Walled Gardens, near their home in Warrington, to discuss acting, autism, motherhood and more.

I start by asking if there are any similarities between Myra and Nicole...

“Not really,” Ben answers quickly, while Nicole laughs with that big, hearty laugh fans of *Hollyoaks* know and love.

“I think playing the character made me a more lenient parent,” explains Nicole. “But I also think my leniency came from having to understand Ben's needs and issues.

“She is protective of her children, as am I. She is very open-minded... I think I am. But the writers of the show make people into what they want, in order to show the story in the best way, whether that's being narrow or open-minded.”

Nicole admits that she found juggling work responsibilities and being a parent, tough.

“I think there's a lot of guilt for me, that if I was at home more I would've spotted things earlier and maybe got more help and done more things for Ben.

“His father is an actor too and we don't know where we're at from one minute to the next and that's not good. From when he was growing up he really wanted to know what was happening, when it was happening.

“He really wanted routine and we didn't understand how much he needed that routine.”

Nicole started to have concerns about Ben's development on a family holiday to America when he was aged 10.

“I'd noticed, as I have a daughter too, that his development was different, I thought 'that's not just a gap in development, that's him thinking differently'.

“You find you're always saying: 'What are you doing?'; 'Why are you behaving like that?'; 'Stop doing that behaviour!'; 'Why are you saying that?'; 'Why are you getting upset about this? 'Stop doing this!' Everything

becomes a reprimand.

“When I realised this, I started asking questions: 'Why do you think that's okay?' and just explaining things. We didn't really get that much help from government because his report is that he is just on the cusp and people on the cusp tend to fall through the cracks.”

Nicole's advice for anyone going through the same thing is to find a support network, but as she and her then husband had moved for work, the friends and family they might ordinarily have counted on were not nearby.

It's clear the stresses of balancing parenthood and the small screen were tough for Nicole to take, and she admits she left *Hollyoaks* for a period, before her latest screen break, to be there for her children. So what did Ben make of growing up with a mum on the television?

“It was a good thing for the first few years,” he admits, “But then, having it through high school, it got a little bit annoying.

“I used to get bullied and then I just got fed up with it. I used to be really sensitive when I got bullied. I used to come home and be really shaken up and everything.”

Nicole remembers: “What made me sad was I had a happy young boy, 11 years old, outgoing, chatty, talkative, did drama at primary school, and he won the 'Most Polite Citizen' shield for being the most polite at school. So he got to bring that home for the summer and he was so pleased, and I was so proud.

“And then he went to secondary school where, in the first year, the kids started talking to him about adult-rated stuff and then the bullying. And he turned from that happy, lovely person to starting to go very quiet, didn't want to speak, very angry, very upset, and I'm working at the time and it was very difficult to get through.”

Nicole reveals it's taken Ben many years and three school moves to get to a point where he feels comfortable and willing to do drama again, something he was forced to stop after mickey taking in class.

“He tried to eliminate anything where he'd be attacked,” says Nicole. “So his world became very, very small. I think that is a problem in school when there are people who have a different way of thinking, that have Asperger's or autism or anything deemed as a little bit weak.

“Where it's not visual, but emotional or the way somebody thinks then there's a target, and that's what schools need to really address. Things like 'Buddy Up' schemes don't work unless it involves the right kind of people mentoring. But it's difficult at that age and I don't know what the solution is.”

Ben is now studying drama at college, recently performing in a stage version of *The Addams Family*, much to mum's delight: “I went to see his show the other day,” she says, smiling. “He needs a speaking part, but what he did do was brilliant, I was really pleased. He was dancing, one of the ghouls, it was really







good, he acted all the way through it.”

The conversation turns to how autism is discussed on TV. Hollyoaks has done a lot of good by having a young actress with autism, Talia Grant, playing the role of Brooke Hathaway, a character who is also on the spectrum. But both Ben and Nicole agree much more could be done to better portray autism on screen.

“I think the thing is people talk about it as a ‘condition,’” begins Nicole.

“It’s not really,” Ben continues, “It’s a different way of thinking. But they have to simplify it down to people who can’t understand it, so they dumb it down for them.”

Nicole picks up the thread: “And there’s also other things like sensitivities. Ben used to have very sensitive hearing, he still does have very sensitive hearing, but it doesn’t affect him as it did. It’s all about explaining this. There is a fabulous play: ‘The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night’ which was fabulous for people who don’t understand how somebody [with autism] thinks.

“Now Ben does not have that level of Asperger’s or autism at all, but it helps you understand there is a different way of thinking, and that is it. People talk about the ‘condition’ but what we need is acceptance and people being non-judgemental... I think that’s what needs to be taught on television.”

And so, before Ben and Nicole are whisked off into the blooming gardens for our cover photoshoot, there’s just time to ask Nicole where we’ll see her next...

“I’ve had a couple of auditions for a West End show – either to play in London or go on tour. And although I wanted it, I wasn’t sure how much, because all I could think about was ‘What’s Ben going to do? Where’s Ben going to go? Where’s he going to live?’ I don’t half worry about how he’ll be doing.

“So I don’t know what I’m doing next, but I hope it pays well and I don’t have to work a lot!”

And with her final line Nicole lets out that familiar rolling laugh once more... Quick, someone cue those credits!

Being a dad to a child with autism

BY CARL RICE

My six-year-old son, Oliver, is a man of very few words, although he is now starting to use them to communicate. We will certainly never forget his first words...

One night, Hannah and I were watching TV and Oliver had sneaked downstairs without us being aware. He repeated the very first words he heard on the TV. We happened to be watching ‘Shaun of the Dead’, so Oliver’s first words were: “Just calm the f*** down!” First we felt jubilation that he’d spoken. Then, immediately, we were terrified that he’d repeat this phrase at nursery the next day.

Oliver was just under four when he was officially diagnosed. We have had to fight for everything for him, which is scandalous as he is severely disabled. Luckily our annoying tenacity got us the school placement appropriate for Oliver. We applied for DLA (Disability Living Allowance) and were turned down at every stage. My wife and I represented Oliver ourselves at a tribunal and won.

Now, I am not just a dad to a child with autism. Chloe, Oliver, Charlie, my wife Hannah and myself all face challenges daily. Luckily we have an amazing support network as a family of five. We are a team, and we need to be a team.

Currently Oliver is non-verbal – we hope this will change but it might not. He is completely socially unaware. He will run off if unsupervised, unaware of any dangers. Oliver’s autism places restrictions on what we can do as a family unit. It takes a ridiculous amount of planning and preparation to do anything together. A camping trip means heads raised like meerkats, a hyper state of alert, and dynamic risk assessing.

Living with autism has taught



everyone in our household what is important and puts everything into context. Our other children – Charlie, 8, and Chloe, 4 – both take huge pride in Oliver and his achievements. They help and nurture him and have empathy and acceptance way beyond their years.

Oliver’s autism has introduced us to a secret community that we otherwise would not know existed. We have met so many inspirational people through some amazing local charities, including other parents and carers of those with autism and other disabilities. I love that our children have interacted with people of all manner of abilities at such a young age. It can only be a good thing that this understanding, appreciation and acceptance is developed and I know that they will champion the rights of Oliver and people like him forever.

By far the best thing about Oliver is the purest love he has for his family. He is such a smiler. He adores cuddles and really close physical play and contact. He has utter joy on his face. He is just delightful. Anyone who has been lucky enough to form a meaningful relationship with him, which is really easy to do, will find a happy, loving and content boy who will really show you when he likes you.

I could talk to anyone and everyone about my boy Oliver for hours on end. He is just amazing. A boy of very few words, who makes up for it in 101 different ways.

Need advice?

Autism Together provides an advisory service for people with autism, parents, friends and businesses.

CALL 0151 482 3128

EMAIL ATAS.Dept@autismtogether.co.uk

autismtogether.co.uk

OUR WORK IN PRACTICE

PBS IN PRACTICE

We take a closer look at the implementation of our three-year plan to embed Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) across Autism Together and introduce Stuart Lyons who is leading the roll-out

In our last issue of Spectrum, we looked at how we have introduced Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) to Autism Together, using these techniques alongside our own methodology, 'The Together Approach', to help improve the quality of life for the people we support.

Since then, Autism Together has brought in senior behaviour specialist Stuart Lyons to oversee the training in and use of PBS throughout the organisation. Stuart has already increased the number of PBS Coaches within Autism Together to 19 individuals, with a further 10 coaches qualifying soon.

Autism Together already uses a number of approaches to support people's complex needs including visual structures; active support; Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children (TEACCH); Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS); environmental adaptations and sensory processing strategies.

PBS is a framework that helps to bring these different approaches together, using evidence-based practice and support.

In practice, Stuart's team will get a referral about an individual with a potential behavioural issue. They will initially rate each case based on impact, severity, frequency and risk; before using observation, analysis, and, in some cases, an external professional, to create a PBS plan – a strategy for reducing these problem behaviours.

Referrals are completed by managers throughout the organisation and reviewed by Stuart every Monday. These

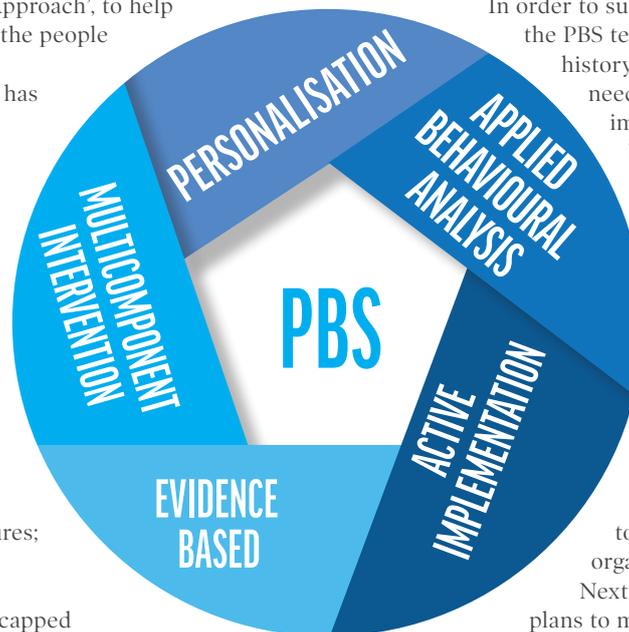
could be based on anything from individuals having difficulties with time management through to displaying regular negative behaviours such as aggression, self-harm or isolation.

In order to successfully reduce these behaviours, the PBS team will look at a service user's life history, physical health and emotional needs, along with environmental impacts and potential skills deficits, before coming up with a plan to avoid distressing events and manage unsafe situations.

Once the plan has been actioned and there is evidence of the required outcome, such as an increase in quality of life for the individual or a decrease in behaviours of concern, then the referral will be closed.

So far, the process of referring cases to the PBS team has worked smoothly and the three-year plan to embed PBS across the entire organisation is progressing well.

Next, Stuart and his team have ambitious plans to make Autism Together an affiliated Centre for the Advancement of PBS, awarded by BILD, the British Institute of Learning Disabilities. This can only be positive news for the charity and all the individuals within it whose lives PBS can drastically improve.



ABOUT STUART LYONS

Stuart is a leader in Positive Behavioural Support (PBS). He is a registered learning disability nurse and has worked to provide specialist services in supporting people with learning disabilities for the past 24 years.

“All the participants have been extremely passionate and person-centred and their CEO and PBS practitioner attended the last Coaches Course. I have never spent time with an organisation who are so committed and set up to practice good PBS. Very refreshing!” BILD

AUSTIN AND LOUISE'S AUTISM STORY

We take you behind the scenes of our advert, bringing to the big screen the true story of one family's struggle to find the autism care they needed

Every family's autism story is unique and they all deserve to be heard. Many are positive and life affirming. But earlier this year we worked with one family, the Lathams, to tell a story which we found harrowing but hopeful.

We turned the Latham's story into a short cinema commercial. You may have seen it playing in movie theatres across our region earlier in the year.

We wanted our advert to convey the desperation that some parents with children on the autism spectrum can feel, while drawing attention to the lack of specialist care available in this country.

Our one-minute film tells the true story of Austin, a young man with autism, and his mum Louise. It shows Austin's struggle when life becomes increasingly difficult, as he grows from a young boy into an adolescent without receiving the professional care he needs.

After many years of growing anxiety and troubling behaviours, Austin came to live in one of Autism Together's supported residences in Wirral and has been living there calmly and happily since. There have been no critical incidents and our staff are on hand to help him, every day, to manage his anxiety.

Austin's mother, Louise Latham, is a former officer with the Metropolitan Police living in Merseyside. She said: "I want other parents with children on the spectrum to see this film and know they are not alone and that campaigners are fighting this fight. More than anything, I need to know that what Austin and I went through is not in vain."

Autism Together is campaigning for a new generation of autism care, making sure that out-dated, long-term hospital care is replaced by smaller, autism-friendly centres where people in crisis are helped by specialists and prepared for life in warm and welcoming homes in the community.

GETTING STARTED

We meet Emma, John and Ben from Contra Agency, who are producing the advert for us, and discuss the plan of action for the day. Everyone is really excited about the prospects of what's to come! John and Ben have an excellent vision of what the end product will look like.

6.30



15.00



8.00

SETTING UP

The team arrive at our first location for filming. We're using a family house for the living room, hallway and bedroom scenes. We talk to Louise about her thoughts and meet our first actor Jacob, who's playing Austin when he is 10 years old. The crew sets up equipment and lighting including an anamorphic lens to allow the film to be shown in widescreen and a haze machine to create a smokey effect.

ACTION

Josh and Justine arrive, who are playing Austin at age 15 and his mum, Louise. They'll both be starring in some of our more troubling scenes, so Ben talks them through the storyboard and gives direction. Space restrictions in the house make filming a challenge, but the end result looks very cinematic and the actors do a great job of recreating the difficult scenes from Austin and Louise's story.



SET CHANGE

We arrive at West Kirby Residential School in Wirral, who have kindly let us use their playground as the backdrop to one of our scenes. We meet Cillian who's playing 6-year-old Austin, who's come along with his mum. It's raining so John, our cameraman, brings out a special tent for him and the camera to go underneath. Cillian is a natural and takes the direction really well, and we're wrapped on this scene in just 45 minutes!

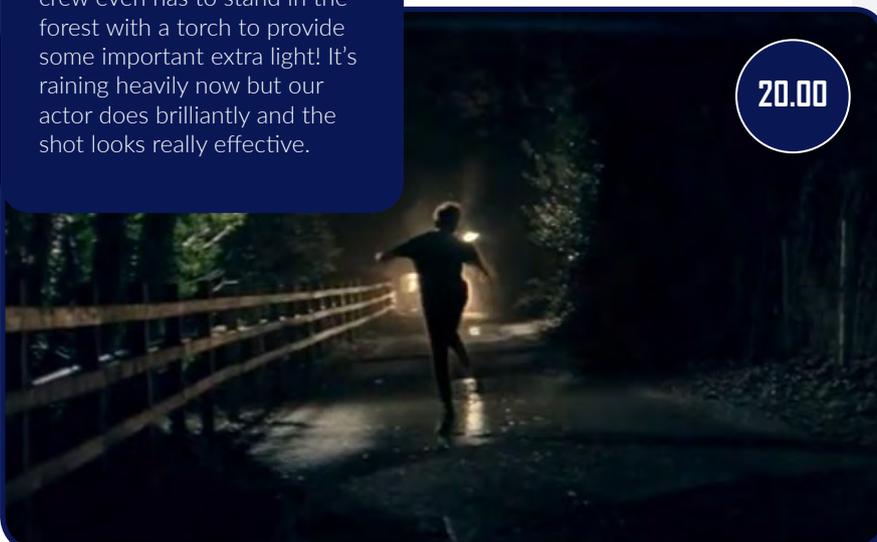


LAST LOCATION

We arrive at our final location of the day, one of Autism Together's residential units, to film our last two scenes. It's dark and raining now, so we head inside for our next scene with Justine and Josh again. We set up the lighting to give the effect of daytime and shoot the scene from a few different camera angles.

IT'S A WRAP

Onto the last scene of the day, and this one takes the longest to set up. We're filming outside and need to recreate car lights, so the production team take an hour to carefully set up lighting down the lane to give the best effect. At 7pm we start to shoot the scene, and one of the crew even has to stand in the forest with a torch to provide some important extra light! It's raining heavily now but our actor does brilliantly and the shot looks really effective.



Timeline of Austin's journey to receiving the right support

- Age 9, rather than helping Austin, school bus escorts labelled him a 'naughty child' and later banned him from the bus.
- Age 14, the deputy of a special needs school refused to have him back, although the school was receiving money for his placement.
- With anxiety building, Austin began to self-harm – he'd tear his hair out – and became violent. He beat Louise. Hospital consultants refused to detain him under the mental health act and sent him back home.
- Eventually Austin was admitted to hospital as a 'place of safety' but it was a general ward near other children. He slept on a mattress, surrounded by support workers and security guards.
- Next, he went to (what Louise was led to believe was) a specialist children's home, where he stopped eating, self-harmed and slept on a filthy mattress. Senior staff brushed off signs of oncoming psychosis. One night he ran away. He was found by police 17 miles away, in the pouring rain and wearing only light indoor clothes.
- Later, on an acute adolescent ward, Louise found him crying and screaming. The environment was busy and noisy – entirely unsuitable to someone with Austin's condition.
- Austin then spent nearly two years in an assessment and treatment unit (ATU) for adults. As he was under 18, he was segregated. In an ATU, a 'discharge plan' should be created as an immediate priority. It wasn't, for a whole year.
- When he reached 18, Louise scoured the whole of the UK for placements for Austin – many requests were turned down – until we created a place for him on our Raby site in Wirral.

FUNDRAISING

Putting the 'fun' in fundraising

We have been extremely busy this year hosting and supporting fundraising events across Wirral and beyond...

We are extremely grateful to our team of supporters who regularly turn up, whatever the weather, and help us. While they are too numerous to mention personally, the support we have had from the group of fun-loving, hirsute, gentlemen calling themselves the 'Bearded Villains' has been fantastic, all year.

We have also had great support from a range of organisations, including TSB; Marks & Spencer, Bidston; the two Bromborough branches of Co-op; and Stagecoach who have a bus branded with our logo crossing Wirral.



GUNG-HO! Recently, we took a team of 50 runners to Gung-Ho! in Chester. The event blends a 5k run with inflatable obstacles, ending with a huge slide into a foam pool. We had one of the biggest charity teams there, with many saying they'd run for us next year. We raised just under £4,000 and are hoping to get a bigger team for 2020.

LONDON MARATHON This year we have been granted a charity place to enter a runner into the London Marathon 2020. We've had many applications from people wanting to run on behalf of Autism Together, while The Village Hotel, Wirral has agreed to support the chosen runner with training to ensure they are ready to take on the 26.2 mile run in April next year, during World Autism Awareness month.



Want to know more?

Follow us [@autism_together](#)
[autismtogetheruk](#)
or visit: www.autismtogether.co.uk. If you fancy helping out or becoming a fundraiser then email: fundraising@autismtogether.co.uk

TRAINING

Everton FC become Ambassadors and five organisations become Champions

Recently we recognised more organisations from across Merseyside for being Autism Champions.

Newly welcomed to the scheme are: United Utilities; RSA Motability Group; Wagamama at New Mersey Retail Park; The Hive Youth Zone in Birkenhead and Funtime Mascots. Everton FC, one of our scheme's first Autism Champions, has become one of the region's first official Autism Ambassadors. This means staff at the Premier



League football club received training to deliver autism awareness sessions to their own colleagues.

We now have more than 30 Autism Champions working with us. These are organisations which have received training from our Autism Training and Advisory Service and made a commitment to be welcoming to those on the spectrum and their families.

If you would like to become an Autism Champion call ☎ 0151 334 7510
✉ training@autismtogether.co.uk

OUR CHAMPIONS

Airborn Academy Liverpool

Air Unlimited Speke Liverpool

Argyle Satellite Taxis Wirral

Chester Zoo

Cumbria County Council Carlisle

Everton Football Club

Everton Park Sports Centre

Funtime Mascots Liverpool

Halewood Leisure Centre Liverpool



WIRRAL COASTAL WALK This year we had a team of 60 walkers taking in the scenic route of the Wirral Coastal Walk. Participants completed either 4, 10 or the full 15 miles wearing their Autism Together t-shirts with pride. Our fundraising team had a 'welcome home' pitch at the finish line for the first time. This event has so far raised over £1,300.



SUMMER FUN DAY We chose a brilliant, sunny day to host this year's Summer Fun Day. We were joined by fantastic local artisans selling soaps, fudges, gins, sausages and much more. Our own fundraising stalls saw a revamp, thanks to the introduction of our Human Fruit Machine, manned by our Bearded Villain supporters. Thanks also to our sponsors, Stagecoach Buses, who brought along our Autism Together branded bus. There was plenty of family fun and the event raised just over £1,700.

SAVE THE DATE

With the winter months approaching, we have a few dates for events that we would love to share. We hope to see you at one of these soon...

POP-UP CHARITY SHOP - IT'S BACK!

NOVEMBER 15-21
We will be re-opening our charity shop in **Wallasey**. We need donations and volunteers to help us out for the week.

CHRISTMAS MARKETS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

We'll be back at **Thornton Hough Village Hall** with local artisans selling seasonal food and gifts, Santa's Grotto and children's crafts.

CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

Join us for an evening of seasonal music at **Inglewood Manor, Ledsham**. With mulled wine and mince pies.

Happy Times Wirral

Hug a Mug Liverpool

Jane Rooney Driving Instructor Wirral

Kidz Place Liverpool

Liverpool Empire

Liverpool John Lennon Airport

Malmaison Manchester

McArthurGlen Outlet Cheshire Oaks

McArthurGlen Outlet York

Merseyside Police Social Club

National Justice Museum Nottingham

Port Sunlight Village Trust Wirral

Progress to Excellence Wirral

RSA Motability Old Hall Street, Liverpool

Shankly Hotel Liverpool

The Charter Walk Burnley

The Grange Primary Bootle, Liverpool

The Hive Youth Zone Birkenhead

The Party Squad Runcorn

The Philharmonic Liverpool

United Utilities Liverpool

United Utilities Whitehaven

Wagamama Speke, Liverpool

Wavertree Aquatics Liverpool

Wigan Council Wigan

About us **autism** together

We started life in 1968 when a group of forward thinking parents wanted to give support to their loved ones. Autism Together is now one of the country's leading providers of services and support to people with autism and their families. We campaign on behalf of all individuals affected by autism, we encourage all our supporters to get involved with fundraising and volunteering with us and offer comprehensive training and job development to our employees. We now have more than 30 organisations, our Autism Champions, working with us. Each has received awareness training from our Autism Training and Advisory Service and made a commitment to be welcoming to those on the spectrum and their families.

How we can help you...

OUR SERVICES

We support people with autism to enjoy a fulfilling life through **Residential Services**

Registered residential care in a range of housing across the North West region.

Community & Vocational Services (CVS)

Meaningful training, work experience and valuable life skills for those with autism.

Home Care & Supported Living

Support to increase independence in a home environment.

✉ admissions@autismtogether.co.uk

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICE

Our Children & Family Service aims to provide a range of family support, including outreach and activity clubs for children on the spectrum.

We can offer one-to-one, autism-specific support for children and families, either within the community or in their own homes.

Learn more by calling us on 0151 666 9960

WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

We host regular autism-related events and training opportunities for families, individuals and employers.

These range from our regular Introduction To Autism and Behaviour workshops, to our monthly coffee mornings where families can get advice and support while socialising with other parents and carers.

Find out more on social media or email us:

✉ enquiries@autismtogether.co.uk

Follow us

 [autism_together](https://twitter.com/autism_together)
 [@autismtogetheruk](https://www.facebook.com/autismtogetheruk)
or visit our website:
www.autismtogether.co.uk

How you can support us...

VOLUNTEER

We have various volunteering opportunities, from supporting us at events, outdoor bucket collections, helping out in our café or at the River Park.

✉ fundraising@autismtogether.co.uk

JOIN OUR TEAM

We are one of the largest employers in Wirral, specialising in providing support to individuals with autism. We offer full training, a competitive salary and benefits package. We want to meet enthusiastic individuals with integrity who will help us provide excellent care to the people we support, at various locations across Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales.

✉ recruitment@autismtogether.co.uk

BECOME A CHAMPION

Make a commitment to become an autism-friendly employer through our Autism Champions scheme. We're encouraging organisations and public facilities to become more autism aware and provide services to enhance the lives of autistic people and their families. Be a champion, email:

✉ training@autismtogether.co.uk

DONATE

Text AUTISM to 70722 to donate £2

Registered Charity
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Get in touch: 0151 334 7510 or visit our site: www.autismtogether.co.uk