



# Telford Children's Autism Hub

# Christmas Newsletter 2024



*Merry Christmas*

**From all of the team at  
Telford Children's Autism Hub**

**Telford Shopping Centre Christmas Wrap**



If you would like help wrapping your presents, don't forget that the Telford & Wrekin CVS Christmas Wrap will be taking place from Wednesday 11th December until Tuesday 17th December at Telford Shopping Centre opposite Claire's Accessories

**Christmas Opening Hours**

We are open as usual except for the Bank Holidays

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<https://www.telfordautismhub.org.uk/childrens-autism-hub>**

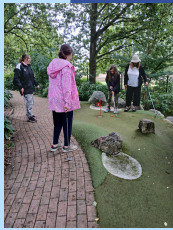


# Time To Reflect On 2024



## Summer and October Half Term

The past summer was truly unforgettable. We engaged in a variety of exciting activities, such as playing Crazy Golf, creating a tile at the Tile Museum, visiting Home Farm, and spending a delightful day with the Alpacas. One of our incredible parents also hosted a fantastic Music Bugs session for our Early Years Families, adding a special touch to our summer experiences. Building on the success of our summer adventures, our families enjoyed two additional trips during the October half-term, both with a spooky theme. We returned to Home Farm, where we not only delighted in seeing the animals again but also participated in some festive activities. Families had the chance to carve pumpkins, create trick-or-treat containers, and savour delicious cakes. Another highlight was our coach trip to Lower Drayton Farm. We shared this journey with Young Carers, creating a wonderful opportunity for connection and community spirit.



## Elevate Youth

In the Autumn term, Secondary Schools all across Telford were in for a treat! Special sensory boxes were distributed to schools, thanks to the thoughtful initiative by the Elevate Youth group. This project is a wonderful step towards creating a warm and nurturing environment for students. By providing these sensory boxes, Elevate Youth aims to make a lasting and positive impact on the mental health and overall wellbeing of students.



## RISE

In response to the feedback we received, we revamped our "Coffee and Chat" sessions into the new format known as **RISE** this year. RISE provides parents and carers with a variety of opportunities for connection and growth through peer support sessions, wellness activities, social events, and informative workshops.



So far, our sessions have included delightful experiences such as:  
Breakfast at Weston Park  
Bingo games  
Ceramic painting

These activities are designed to foster a supportive community while promoting well-being and engagement.





## Chess

Responding to numerous requests, this year saw the launch of our All Ages Quiet Chess Club.



One of the pivotal steps in this journey was identifying a young leader from within our community to help steer the initiative. This autistic young person, brimming with passion for chess, has taken on a guiding role and we are pleased to announce that he will be continuing his role next year.

A special thank you to The Shropshire Chess Society who generously offered their expertise, support and some chess sets, ensuring that our club had the best possible start. Their collaboration has been invaluable in bringing this vision to life.



## Girls Social Group

This year marked the exciting launch of our Girls Social Group. Established in response to valuable feedback from our families, this group is more than just a social club. It is a nurturing community where participants have the opportunity to connect, grow, and understand one another, all while forming lasting friendships. Our aim is to create an empowering environment that fosters a sense of belonging and encourages these young girls to actively shape their experiences within the group. Recently, we expanded the age range of the group, allowing even more families to participate and benefit from this supportive community. Our Girls Social Group has also been out in the community and so far we have been bowling and to the Exotic Zoo.



## Online Workshops

We recognise that it can be challenging for parents to attend our workshops during the day. To address this, last month we piloted our very first online evening workshop on PDA, and we were thrilled with the positive response we received. We are looking forward to continuing this as an addition in 2025.

### What is PDA?



- Pathological Demand Avoidance
- PDA profile describes one way in which autism may present in an individual
- Some people prefer Pervasive Drive for Autonomy
- Anxiety driven need for control
- Not yet widely recognised by professionals as not in the diagnostic handbook

# Kind Donations



In July, we had the pleasure of being warmly welcomed into Charlton School, where we were presented with an incredible cheque for £460.10. Unbeknownst to us, as a part of World Autism Acceptance Week, the school had organised a variety of activities to raise funds, which they generously donated to our hub. Julie had the opportunity to meet two of the Inclusion Leaders from the school who played a pivotal role in deciding the donation's recipient.

This is what Charlton school had to say about their fundraising:

#Teambblue worked together to raise awareness of Autism within the Charlton Community through several fund-raising activities. Inclusion in schools is key to the success of all individuals who are neurodiverse within education.

Part of this is about the wider school community being aware, accepting and supportive of those individuals who are autistic. By looking through the eyes of a neurodiverse individual, you open up to a whole new interpretation of the world



# January 2025 Events and Activities

## **RISE**

**For our parents/carers**

**13th January  
9.30am - 11.00am  
Breakfast at Novello**

**30th January  
5.00pm - 6.30pm  
Meal at Novello**

**DUGOUT (new times)  
For 11 - 18 year olds and  
their families**

**9th January  
5.00pm - 6.30pm**

**Primary Family Fun for  
our primary aged families**

**21st January  
4.00pm - 5.00pm**

**Girls Social Group  
For girls aged 5 - 18 and  
a parent/carer (new times)**

**28th January  
5.30pm - 6.30pm  
Putt Putt Noodle**

**All Ages Quiet  
Chess Club (new times)**

**4.00pm - 5.00pm &  
5.15pm - 6.30pm**

**6th January  
20th January**

## **Elevate Youth**

**Elevate Youth is all about  
empowering individuals aged 14-24 to  
share thoughts and ideas for  
improving SEND/autism services,  
amplifying young voices, enhance  
confidence, acquire new skills, share  
experiences, and foster connections  
with like-minded peers in an enjoyable  
environment.**

**Dates and Times coming soon**

## **Drop In Information Sessions**

**15th January**

**9.30am - 11.00am  
Southwater library provided  
by Strengthening Families  
and Dandelions peer parent  
support**

**10.00am - 1.00pm  
Madeley Community library at the  
Anstice**



# Autism and Christmas

**There. I said it. The 'C' word has been spoken. The world seems to go (even more crazy) and panic buying ensues! Do we have enough pigs in blankets? Get those halls decked! We are constantly told that Christmas is the best time of year and excitement reaches a fever pitch!**

**But what if we are Autistic?**

**Let's be honest, Christmas is tough. From a sensory perspective it is at best annoying and at worst disruptive and invasive. Lights everywhere, smells that infiltrate everything (more cinnamon anyone?) and the people? Oh my gosh the people!**

**From a structure perspective...what structure? We must be everywhere for everyone and can very quickly find ourselves overwhelmed and overanxious in a time when we are expected to be merry.**

**So how can we enjoy the festive season AND prioritise our own needs?**

**First and foremost, I want you to be kind to yourself this Christmas. Self-advocacy is the number one thing you can do for you.**

- **Don't feel pressured into doing things just because it is what other people do (or what others expect you to do)**
- **If possible, plan your Christmas in advance with friends, family and support services and share those plans so you know what you will be doing and when. (visual timetables/calendars/now and then boards) – include the whole festive period, not just Christmas day.**
- **Plan for sensory difficulties that could cause discomfort or distress consider ear defenders or Loops (other ear buds are available) consider sunglasses to ease visual discomfort (embrace your inner rock star!)**
- **Have a quiet space planned – a Christmas free space that you can escape should you need it.**
- **Introduce Christmas gradually. For example, put a few decorations up at a time and add to them over a period. Decorate the tree one day but turn the lights on the next day.**
- **Make a list of present ideas and share this with friends and family. If you find surprises difficult, tell people this. Let people know if you want your presents wrapped or not.**

**For more information and advice, please go to:**

**Preparing for Christmas: autism resources**



**Wishing you all a restful and peaceful festive period.**

