

A Message from Natalie ChAPS...

I am delighted to be writing this message to you from The Ark; the flood damage has all been repaired, new furniture delivered and the office staff have now moved back in. It has been wonderful to be back working under the same roof; sharing ideas about activities is so much easier face to face than via email or Zoom! With this in mind, our lovely Operations Manager, **Emily**, has been busy booking in activities now that restrictions are easing - more information about these are further down this newsletter.

On behalf of everyone at **ChAPS**, I would like to thank **Claire ChAPS** for the amazing work that she put in to British Science Week. Children and adults were treated to some amazing cookery sessions, made all the more impressive as they were delivered on Zoom. **Claire** had clearly put a lot of effort and work into delivering some really creative sessions which were all very well received – fantastic, a big thank you from all of us!

Shortly after the office staff came back to work at The Ark, we were also very excited to welcome back our wonderful Learning4Life crew. The Ark really comes to life on a Thursday when the adults spend the day with us. They have enjoyed lots of gardening with **Jo** since returning – the outdoor area is beginning to recover from the damage caused by the flood; **Carey ChAPS** has even seen living beings in the pond – perhaps a pond dipping activity will happen in the future...watch this space!

We are really looking forward to welcoming you back to activities in the coming months – in the meantime, please remember that staff are here to listen and support if needed.

Stay safe and take care everyone x



ChAPS Adults

- ◆ **Mondays** 1.00pm -2-00pm Mental Health Awareness with **Emma**
- ◆ **Wednesdays** 6.00pm -7.00pm Special Interest Chat with **Emma**

Special Interest Chat - If any of our adults would like to host or cohost a special interest session on Zoom they're very welcome. It's turned into a type of a presentation night now where we have seen Shari host a PowerPoint about Viruses and Vaccines this week, Lukas did a presentation about his card game Magic the Gathering, and we've also had Dr Who, Pets, Star Wars - everything and anything!

Other Services...

Contact's Listening Ear Service

Are you a parent carer and struggling at the moment? Could you do with some emotional support, practical advice or strategies to help you cope? Maybe you just need someone to listen to you?

Contact are there for you.

Whatever you want to talk about - big or small, practical or emotional - their Listening Ear service is there for you.

Appointments are free, confidential and over the phone with one of their family support advisers.

For more information and to book a slot:

Website: <https://newleafcheshire.co.uk/>

Booking: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/contact-for-families-with-disabled-children-30452924652>

Tel: 0808 808 3555

CWaC Parent Carer Forum - Virtual Meetings

CWaC Parent Carer Forum will be hosting meetings on the following dates:

- **7th April** - 10:30-11:30 am (Zoom) – Meet the Professionals
- **4th May** - Time TBC (Zoom) – Benefits Session (PM) / Commissioning Strategy Update with Sarah Banks (social care) and Angela Lewis (commissioning)
- **2nd June** - 10:30-11:30am (Zoom) – Transition to Primary/Secondary/Adulthood with Paul Arista (16+) and (Special Educational Needs)
- **6th July** - 10:30-11:30am – Zoom AGM

To Book and for more information:

E: secretary.pcf.cwac@gmail.com

Lifeways - Supported Living

Lifeways support individuals who have one or a combination of disabilities. These may include learning disabilities, physical disabilities, autism, mental health needs, ABI and complex behavioural needs. Their specialist team tailor a package of support around an individual's identified requirements. Lifeways offer support on a 24-hour basis across their schemes which includes liaison with social workers, family or others involved in the individuals' care or circle of support, help with planning shared support and activities, helping individuals to make appointments and give reminders about appointments and so much more.

For more information:

Email: referrals@lifeways.co.uk

Tel: 0333 321 4881

Website: <https://www.lifeways.co.uk/>

ChAPS Bespoke Services

ChAPS Adult Daytime Provision

Learning4Life is our **Bespoke** daytime provision for adults to learn social skills, as well as other life skills and develop friendships and build trust with others.

We are providing support with day to day activities, in a facilitated environment, for 6 hours a week for our members at the rate of £75 per day, in line with social care Direct Payments. We are also expanding this provision into Warrington and Halton after lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Spaces are currently available at our Northwich group, details are;

L4L Northwich: Thursdays 10am-4pm at ChAPS Autism Ark, Yarwoods Arm, Northwich CW8 1BE.

For more information please email **Carey** on families@cheshireautism.org.uk

ChAPS Mental Health Intervention

Our new Mental Health Intervention is a 1:1 therapeutic service that we have specifically developed for adults with autism.

We see first-hand a lot of our cohort of autistic adults struggling with their mental health and recognise that due to the worldwide pandemic Covid-19; their increased social isolation, anxiety and poor coping skills is having a detrimental effect.

The number of sessions can be tailored to the individual considering recommendations from the referring professional, but we would expect commissioners to recognise that a minimum of 10 sessions will be needed to effect real change. This can be self-funded (at a discounted rate for **ChAPS** members) or funded through the NHS if you have a consultant able to procure the funding for you.

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to get in touch with **Emma** on therapies@cheshireautism.org.uk

The Club

A Specialist Socialisation group for children 7-11yrs in Northwich on Tuesday evenings and Chester on Mondays, after school for 1.5hours. The Club runs every week including school holidays and costs £7.50 a week per child.

Over Lockdown, we have moved to Online Sessions for The Club children to engage in STEM experiments, cooking sessions, games and other activities. Face2face sessions will resume as soon as we are able. Many thanks to Claire and Di who have continued to rise to the challenge of delivering the 'Virtual' Club!

Email **Carey** on families@cheshireautism.org.uk to be added to the waiting list. Children on the waitlist will be offered a place when one becomes available. Those children will then be offered a trial for half an hour with parents to assess whether your child will benefit from this provision.

For Parents...

Parents & Carers Mindfulness Courses

The Best Gift Is YOU!

A 6-week course, 2 hours per week for parents – it is a unique programme which helps parent carers to explore ways to reduce stress and anxiety while finding calmer, confidence and balance. The course combines CBT, NLP, Mindfulness and Self-help strategies.

We have secured an **online Zoom course** that will begin on **Wednesday 7th April** and run weekly until **19th May** (missing out the 12th May). **6-8pm**.

If you are interested in attending this course, please contact **Carey** on families@cheshireautism.org.uk

Mindfulness Based Living Course with The Mindful Smile Company

We are very lucky to have The Mindful Smile Company on board to deliver a **Mindfulness Based Living Course to our members - virtually!**

Elanor is an experience teacher registered with BAMBA (British Association of Mindfulness Based Approaches) and trained with the Mindfulness Association. She follows the UK Good Practice Guidelines for Mindfulness Teachers.

The course is run in a small group (10-16 people) online via zoom, and includes 8 x 2-hour sessions and a follow up session about a month after the course ends. You will also receive an electronic course manual and a free app with recordings of all the core practices.

A taster session for this course will take place on Tuesday 20th April 2021, 8-9pm.

If you are interested in attending, please contact **Emily** on operations@cheshireautism.org.uk

For Children...

Mindfulness

Our Youth Mindfulness programme has been very popular, it helps to give children new skills to help with anxiety and coping strategies, as well as helping them build resilience. It is an 8-week course which runs on one evening a week and we have delivered in Chester, Northwich, Ellesmere Port and Runcorn.

It is necessary to register interest for your child or young person aged 5-15yrs on this [link](#). Children will be grouped according to age. Grateful thanks to our Youth Mindfulness practitioners, Gill and Di.

Ongoing sessions for children that have completed any of our mindfulness courses are now available on Zoom.

Lego-Based Therapy

A six-week course for 1 hour on a weekday evening, in small groups of 6 children. The course follows the principles of LEGO®-Based Therapy to encourage children to increase their social skills by building LEGO® models in groups. The approach was developed by Dr. Dan LeGoff, a Clinical

Neuropsychologist from Philadelphia, USA. The aim of the therapy is to help children to develop social interaction skills in a friendly, fun setting. We have delivered this learning in Runcorn, Northwich and Ellesmere Port. Sessions have also been integrated into The Club, Youth Clubs and ChAPS Holiday Club. To register your interest please click [here](#).

ChAPS Training

Autism Awareness Week - Supporting Autistic Adults Seminar

Emma works as our Specialist Teacher and Mental Health Practitioner. In 2021 Emma was announced the overall winner of the “Outstanding Therapist” award for her work supporting the mental health of our autistic adults.

Emma has co-written this seminar with the adults she works with, to ensure a unique opportunity to learn what works- from the voices of autistic adults.

The one-hour seminar will cover;

- Signs of autism in adults
- The positives of employing autistic people and adjustments that can be made to improve their experience at work
- How to ensure your environment and communication is autism friendly
- How to support an autistic person that has become overwhelmed and how to spot the signs that they are struggling.

This seminar is usually £20 but for Autism Awareness Week we are offering it for just £5. The course will be delivered over Zoom and slides will be emailed out afterwards.

The seminar will take place on Thursday 1st April at 10.30am. You can now book on using this link- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/145672180413>

We are also offering a bespoke session for individual businesses where **Emma** will help problem solve specifically for your business. **This usually costs £250 but will be just £100 during Autism Awareness Week.**

Bespoke Training

As we come out of lockdown we have high hopes that we will be able to resume our bespoke and professional training. We are delighted that we are an accredited provider through the Open Awards Excellence scheme – this enables us to ensure that the training that we deliver is truly first rate.

We are proud to have 3 trainers, all of whom “live” autism on a daily basis; this lived experience together with their academic knowledge, puts them in an excellent position to deliver our training programmes.

Tom Makin-Bell delivers our accredited “Introduction to Autism” course. As the name suggests, this 3-hour interactive workshop will both improve your awareness of autism and improve your problem-solving abilities when working with people that are autistic.

Emma Eager delivers our accredited “Introduction to PDA” (Pathological Demand Avoidance) course. This programme will help professionals who work with children that have extreme reactions to every day demands; completing the course will arm you with useful strategies and a greater understanding of PDA.

Claire Schmidlin delivers our POP (Masking) course. This course will enable you to unravel the complexities of so-called masking and the effect it has on everyday lives, giving you mechanisms to understand why masking happens and how to deal with it.

If your organisation would like to book one of our training sessions, please contact our Business Manager, **Natalie Catterall** on business@cheshireautism.org.uk for further information.

Bespoke Training

If you feel that your company, organisation or school would like more specific training, please contact Natalie on the email address above. She will be more than happy to discuss your requirements work with you.

School Assembly Training

We have really missed visiting schools to deliver our Autism assemblies. Prior to the lockdown, these were incredibly well received by both staff and children and we are really looking forward to being able to rekindle our excellent relationship with schools across Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East. If your school would like to book in an assembly, please contact our Business Manager, **Natalie Catterall** on business@cheshireautism.org.uk.

Activities Update

As we steadily come out of the third lockdown we're very excited to be gradually reintroducing some of our face to face activities. The sessions listed in **purple and bold** in the diary of events are sessions that are planned to go ahead face to face and will be bookable from **1st April at 6am** - all members will receive a booking links email beforehand.

Some sessions will continue to be delivered via Zoom for the time being and the information for those will be included in the booking links email. If you do not receive this or need any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact **Emily** on operations@cheshireautism.org.uk

We are hopeful that all sessions will go ahead but we are continuing to work alongside Government guidelines and if these do change last minute and affect our ability to provide sessions, last minute cancellations may occur. **Please keep this in mind when booking activities.**

Hopefully the upcoming months bring us many more face to face activities and we start to see some normality creeping into our Diary of Events.

Diary of Events

Purple Bold are the activities that are BOOKED to go ahead in APRIL

*** Bold are the sessions that will be delivered via ZOOM ***

1 Apr	NORTHWICH	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE.	10am-4pm
1 Apr	ZOOM!	Ellesmere Port Kidz Club with Diane & Sam.	5pm
1 Apr	ZOOM!	Parents Meeting with Diane - Virtual Massage with Leona!	8pm
2 Apr	ZOOM!	Children's Chat with Di MinDees.	6.30pm
2 Apr	ZOOM!	Teen Chat - 12yrs+ with Di MinDees.	7.30pm
5 Apr	ZOOM!	Children's Mindfulness with Di MinDees.	6.30pm
5 Apr	ZOOM!	Spectrum Connect with Jennie & Bobbie.	8.30pm
7 Apr	ZOOM!	Parents Craft & Chat with Claire.	10am
7 Apr	ZOOM!	Adults Special Interest / Social with Emma.	6pm
8 Apr	NORTHWICH	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE.	10am-4pm
8 Apr	ZOOM!	Ellesmere Port Youth Club with Diane & Jacqui.	6pm
9 Apr	ZOOM!	Parents of Adults Meeting with Carey.	11am
9 Apr	ZOOM!	Children's Chat with Di MinDees.	6.30pm
9 Apr	ZOOM!	Teen Chat - 12yrs+ with Di MinDees.	7.30pm
12 Apr	ZOOM!	Adults Mental Health Support Group with Emma	1pm
12 Apr	ZOOM!	Teen Mindfulness - 12yrs+ with Di MinDees.	7.30pm
13 Apr	BLAKEMERE	Falconry Display at Cheshire Falconry CW8 2EB with Jennie & Cathy.	2-4.30pm
14 Apr	CHESTER	Sports Session at Huxley School CH3 9BH with Simon Fox & Jennie.	10am-1.40pm
14 Apr	ZOOM!	Spectrum Connect with Claire.	10am
14 Apr	ZOOM!	Adults Special Interest / Social with Emma.	6pm
15 Apr	NORTHWICH	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE.	10am-4pm
15 Apr	ZOOM!	Ellesmere Port Kidz Club with Diane & Sam.	5pm
16 Apr	RUNCORN	 tubing at Runcorn Ski Centre WA7 6PT with Rach.	10am-12.40pm
16 Apr	ZOOM!	Parents of Adults Meeting with Carey.	11am

17 Apr	RUNCORN	Family Swim at Beechwood Comm. Centre WA7 3HB with Mel.	5.30-6.30pm
18 Apr	B'TRAFFORD	Animal Therapy at Freedom Equine Centre CH2 4JT with Diane.	12.30-4.15pm
19 Apr	ZOOM!	Adults Mental Health Support Group with Emma.	1pm
19 Apr	ZOOM!	Children's Mindfulness with Di MinDees.	6.30pm
19 Apr	ZOOM!	Spectrum Connect with Jennie & Bobbie.	8.30pm
21 Apr	CHESTER	Parents Walk & Talk at Countess Country Park CH2 1UL with Claire.	10am-12pm
21 Apr	ZOOM!	Adults Special Interest / Social with Emma.	6pm
22 Apr	NORTHWICH	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE.	10am-4pm
22 Apr	E'PORT	Youth Club at The Community Hub CH65 9BD with Jacqui, Diane & Jess	6-7.30pm
22 Apr	RUNCORN	Kidz Club at The Acorn Club WA7 5EX with Mel & Rach.	6.15-7.30pm
23 Apr	NORTHWICH	Parents Walk & Talk at Delamere Forest CW8 2JD with Carey.	12-2pm
23 Apr	ZOOM!	Children's Chat with Di MinDees.	6.30pm
23 Apr	ZOOM!	Teen Chat - 12yrs+ with Di MinDees.	7.30pm
24 Apr	E'PORT	Multi Sports at E'Port Sports Village CH65 9LB with Claire, Diane & Jonnie.	3-4pm
24 Apr	E'PORT	Family Swim at E'Port Sports Village CH65 9LB with Claire, Diane & Jonnie	4.15-5.15pm
26 Apr	WIDNES	Spectrum Connect at Victoria Park WA8 7SU with Rach.	10-11.30am
26 Apr	ZOOM!	Adults Mental Health Support Group with Emma & OT Kerry Arnison.	1pm
26 Apr	NORTHWICH	Crafty Club at our Northwich Training Room with Terri.	1-2.30pm
26 Apr	NORTHWICH	Parents Meeting at The Ark CW8 1BE with Jennie & Leona.	7-9pm
26 Apr	ZOOM!	Teen Mindfulness - 12yrs+ with Di MinDees.	7.30pm
27 Apr	NORTHWICH	Yoga for Adults at our Northwich Training Room with Sarah & Carey.	1-2pm
28 Apr	CHESTER	Parents Meeting at St Mary's Handbridge Centre CH4 7HL with Claire.	1-3pm
28 Apr	ZOOM!	Adults Special Interest / Social with Emma.	6pm
29 Apr	NORTHWICH	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE.	10am-4pm
30 Apr	B'TRAFFORD	Home Ed Animal Therapy at Freedom Equine Centre CH2 4JT with Diane	11-11.45am

If you require any ZOOM ID's please contact Emily Chaps.

Need More Help or Information?

Ruth/Lucy, Admin Staff - For Attention Cards, Gift Aid, Child Registration Forms & everything else Admin

E: admin@cheshireautism.org.uk

E: office@cheshireautism.org.uk

T: 0344 850 8607

Rach/Cathy, Support Staff - For Advice, Support & Activities covered throughout the week/weekend

M: 07309 692786

E: support@cheshireautism.org.uk

Emma, Specialist Teacher - For Mental Health Intervention, Learning4Life, Adult Sessions & Training

E: therapies@cheshireautism.org.uk

M: 07462 868322

Emily, Operations Manager - For Activities, Venues, Eventbrite, IT & ChAPS Autism Ark Enquiries/ Bookings

E: operations@cheshireautism.org.uk

M: 07491 001360

Carey, Families Manager - For Intensive Group Sessions, The Club, Counselling, Learning4Life & Support

E: families@cheshireautism.org.uk

M: 07462 887815

Natalie, Business Manager - For Recruitment, Finance, GDPR, Safeguarding, & any fundraising ideas!

E: business@cheshireautism.org.uk

M: 07476 280356

Jo, Managing Director - For anything else!

E: jo@cheshireautism.org.uk

Please note we take every precaution to ensure the information we share is accurate, but the information we signpost is not a recommendation from ChAPS (unless stated) and parents should do their own research about organisations and events signposted in our Newsletter. Professional colleagues who wish to **opt out** from receiving this Newsletter should reply to this email with unsubscribe as the message subject thank you.

www.cheshireautism.org.uk

