

Newsletter

MAY

2024



South West Autism, 6 Sandpiper Court, Harrington Lane, Pinhoe, Exeter, EX4 8NS
Email: infoswautism@gmail.com Website: southwestautismsupport.com

Hello to all our families,

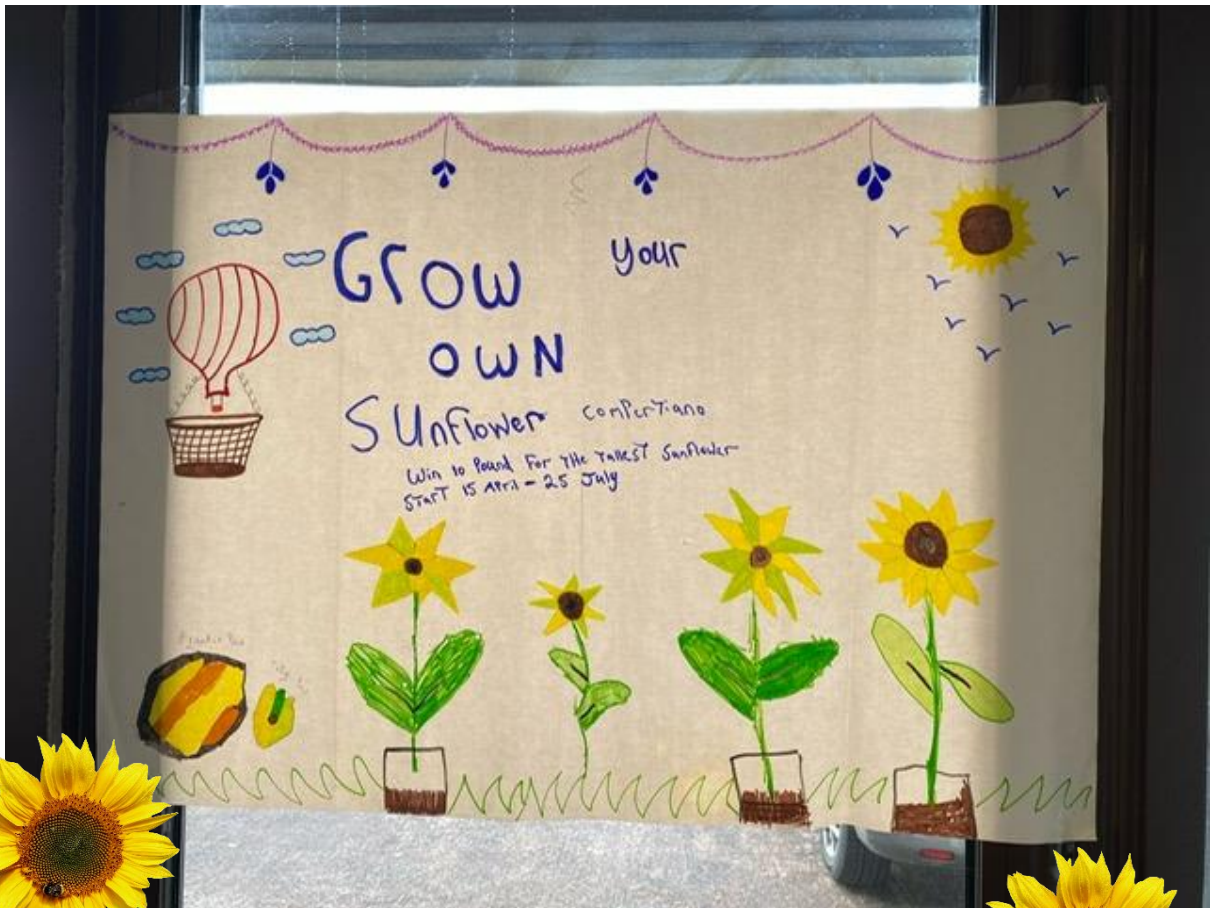
We're so excited to begin the Summer Term! There is much to look forward to and hopefully some brighter weather too! We've begun this term by inviting the children and young people who access our services to take part in a sunflower growing competition – we're very much looking forward to seeing the results. You can find our more when you're next visiting our centre.

Don't forget to keep voting for us with your Tesco blue tokens – we are featured in most Exeter stores. Funds raised will enable us to purchase additional resources through our Community Interest Company so that all our children and young people can benefit.

If you have family members, friends or neighbours that would like to receive our newsletter each month ask them to email us using the 'Contact us' page on our website and we'll add them to the monthly distribution.

Lisa, Greg and the Team





Our Grow Your Own Sunflower Competition has begun. If your child or young person currently accesses our services they can enter when they're next at the centre. The competition will end on the 25th July – we'll post progress photos next month!

Our Alternative Education Provision

The combination of social differences, sensory processing difficulties and increased anxieties have seen an increase in many young people being unable to access education. According to research (Ambitious about Autism 2024) the figures have increased by 166% in the last 4 years.

Nationally it is claimed that 25% of the 200,000 ASD children in the UK are persistently absent and a similar number experience mental health difficulties (Guardian 5/3/24)

For some young people the combination of their difficulties, has resulted in autistic burnout. Burnout occurs as a state of physical and mental exhaustion, heightened stress, diminished capacity to manage life skills, sensory input, and/or social interactions. It occurs when the young person has attempted to “manage” without receiving adequate and planned support.

For others, their feelings of being overwhelmed have resulted in Emotionally Based School Avoidance (ESBA). Many young people cannot access school/college due to crippling levels of anxiety. Anxieties include social, anticipatory, and sensory. Here at SWA we understand young people often can't, not won't, attend school.

Our small calm Exeter centre provides an environment for supporting and mentoring young people. We are a registered alternative education provider with a range of professionals who can help your child. Our resources include sensory room, music room, gaming area, social area, Lego therapy, kitchen area and art/craft room.

We have teachers, mentors, support assistants, speech and language therapist and assistance dogs all of whom are experienced in supporting the mental health and well-being of young people with extreme anxiety. We can offer up to 15 hours a week or as little as 1 hour. We always work at the young person's pace. We are currently commissioned by the local authority (inclusion and 0-25 teams) as well as schools and colleges.

If you have a young person who is unable to attend school feel free to contact us regarding our current availability by emailing us at infoswautism@gmail.com

MEET THE TEAM

Greg McCullagh **Senior Support**

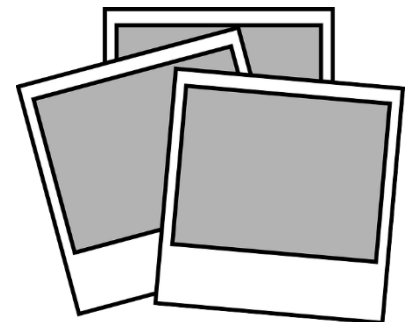
Practitioner and Teacher – I have supported young people on the autistic spectrum for over twenty years. I enjoy helping them achieve their goals and giving them the opportunity to try new activities and learn new skills. When tutoring, I specialise in building confidence in Maths and English. In my spare time I enjoy walking my dogs on Dartmoor and the coast, gardening and occasionally surfing and paddleboarding.



We're collecting blue Tesco Tokens at our centre for our young people to post into the voting boxes at Exeter branches of Tesco. Got some that you forgot to vote with? Send them in with your young person. You can vote for us until the end of June 2024.

Stronger Starts  **TESCO**
Every little helps

We regularly update the photo gallery on our website – access it for insight into the activities that take place at our centre and in the community. This is a useful tool for parents to start conversations with their children and young people about time spent at our centre. For first-time visitors, particularly anxious young people, our photo gallery will provide them with lots of information to prepare them for their visit. Our 'meet the team' page features photographs of team members together with some additional information about each person. You can visit our website at www.southwestautismsupport.com.



Courses/sessions



coming soon! Places still available – dates tbc

Group Sessions for Siblings – Helping brothers and sisters of primary and secondary age to understand their sibling’s behaviours associated with autism and share experiences in a supportive environment.

Discovering Rainbows – A six session parent workshop to understand the Autistic Spectrum.

Need to Know – A social/sexual understanding for adolescent males.

To register your interest in any of the above, please email infoswautism@gmail.com and we will add you to our ‘list of interest’. Each group requires a minimum of 5-6 participants. We will contact you with specific dates and times once places have been filled. Registering your interest does not commit you to attending.



Dates	Events
Tuesday 16 th April	Adult Social Group – 7pm-9pm (email to ask for information about joining)
Wednesday 17 th April	Teenage Life Skills Group – 6pm-8pm (email to ask for information about joining) TWO PLACES REMAINING
Wednesday 24 th April	Axe Throwing Activity for those that have booked from Adult Social Group
Tuesday 30 th April	Adult Social Group – 7pm-9pm
Wednesday 1 st May	Teenage Life Skills Group – 6pm-8pm
30 th June 2024	Tesco Blue Token Voting Ends
25 th July 2024	Grow your own sunflower competition results!