



# Zone-Info!

The-Zone! newsletter, for families with additional needs

[www.The-Zone.org.uk](http://www.The-Zone.org.uk)

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## Get in touch

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(please leave a short message and she will get back to you.)

[www.facebook.com/  
TheZoneASD](http://www.facebook.com/TheZoneASD)  
[www.facebook.com/  
groups/TheZone2014](http://www.facebook.com/groups/TheZone2014)::

Twitter: #The-Zone!

Issue 12

April - June 2017

### Spring is Here!

Thanks for picking up The-Zone! Newsletter. We are a charity located in Hampshire to support children & their families with additional needs. Our primary focus is Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The trustees & committee are all parents and carers of children/young people on the spectrum. We have all been in that position of looking for and needing support, of wanting to have fun with our children in a way that is accessible to them and free from judgement.

How we help: we run groups for our children and young people at Samuel Cody Specialist College and we organise exclusive activities out. Parents/Carers remain and supervise their child at all of our events. For parents and Carers, we have a confidential online forum and we have monthly support coffee mornings. We also produce a quarterly newsletter, sharing our knowledge and sign posting useful organisations, events or products. We hope you find this information useful and please feel free to contact us.

### Huge thanks to... Nikki Smith!

On behalf of everyone at The-Zone! We would like to say a massive big THANK-YOU to Nikki Smith for chairing and founding The-Zone! We have really appreciated all her hard work and support. Previously, known as NAS Hart and Rushmoor Branch, Nikki has given 10 years combined service but now its time for Nikki to move on to new adventures and we wish her all the best for the future.

*Thank You!*

### Huge Welcome to our New Chair..... Lisa Frankham!

Lisa has kindly stepped up from the committee to become the chair of The-Zone! You have probably seen her at Zone In, Out and teen events, so she is not a stranger to all things at The-Zone! She is a mother of 3 and has a child on the spectrum. Lisa has previously chaired a charity before and she has worked with children for a number of years. Lisa is looking forward to supporting our The-Zone! Community along with the other trustees and the committee. And one other thing about Lisa is that she is a huge Lady Gaga fan!

### Facebook

The-Zone! Facebook page is for anyone interested in what we do. Go to [www.facebook.com/TheZoneASD](http://www.facebook.com/TheZoneASD) & press the "Like" button. Our closed (and therefore private) Facebook group for parents who have children on the autistic spectrum and similar issues, at [www.facebook.com/groups/TheZone2014](http://www.facebook.com/groups/TheZone2014) and for parents of those 11 years and over, we have an additional closed FB group too: [www.facebook.com/groups/TheZoneTeens/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/TheZoneTeens/)



### www.The-Zone.org.uk

Our website is kept as up to date as possible, so please do check it and the calendar to make sure events are running as planned before you turn up.



# Events!

**Zone-In!** is based within the grounds of Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College,  
Ballantyne Road, Farnborough, GU14 8SS

Parents/carers remain responsible for their children at all of our sessions & events.  
\*\*\* Please encourage your child to tidy away whatever they've

## Hampshire funded activities!

Huge thanks to **Mark Staplehurst** for a £1000.00 County Councillor Grant and to Hampshire Short Breaks funding as without their support we couldn't run these sessions!



## Zone-In! sessions

This is the name for all sessions we hold at The-Zone! We will have all our indoor equipment; games consoles (XboxOne, PS4, PS3, Wii's, Xbox360, handheld games; (PSPs, PSvita, DSIs, 3DSs) laptops, Ipads, Android tablets, arts, crafts and beads, Lego, Duplo, wooden train track and HappyLand sets. We have plenty of tea, coffee and juice available throughout the sessions., which is included in the price.

At all of our Zone-In sessions we have a room setup especially for the Teens (aged 11yrs+) so they can play Teen Zone games away from our younger members.

Samuel Cody are currently updating the playground which unfortunately means we cannot use the outside space as it is unsafe and a construction site. As soon as the works are complete, we can go back outside on the new improved space. We will let you know via our FB page.

## Saturday Zone

Usually one Saturday each month (Unless there is a Funzone in the month), 10.30am - 2.30pm. The cost is £3.50 per child/£10 per family and you are very welcome to bring along a packed lunch and stay for the whole session. We have the outdoor space whenever the weather allows!

## Teen Zone-In and Out

These are sessions specifically for families with those aged 11yrs+ to attend. Teen Zone-In sessions are one Friday night each month , 6 - 8.30pm, costing £2.50 per teen. There's a small tuck shop available too. Teen Zone-Out events are organised on an ad-hoc basis depending on what the teens would like to do! Parents have to stay and supervise their teens at all of the sessions, in and out. Check out the teens FB group for more details: [www.facebook.com/groups/TheZoneTeens/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/TheZoneTeens/)

Please remember you are responsible for your children at all of our activities and you must supervise them at all times!



## Hampshire Gateway Cards

If your child lives in Hampshire or attends a Hampshire school and you haven't got a Hampshire Gateway Card please complete a form at:

[www.hants.gov.uk/gatewaycard](http://www.hants.gov.uk/gatewaycard) or ask us for a form at The-Zone!

To view activities available across Hampshire to Gateway card holders, go to

[www.hampshiregateway.info](http://www.hampshiregateway.info)

Once you have your card, please let us know your Gateway card number - we can add it to our database and we won't nag you for it again!



April 2017

**Friday 7th**  
6 - 8.30pm  
Teen Zone-In!

**Wednesday 12th**  
10.30-2.30pm  
Fun Zone-In! & 3 year birth-  
day of The-Zone!

**Wednesday 19th**  
10.30-2.30pm  
Fun Zone-In!

**Thursday 27th**  
9.30am - 12  
Coffee/breakfast  
The Coffee Pot, Farnborough

May 2017

**Monday 1st Bank Holiday**  
Zone-Out! 10.30-2.30pm  
TVAP! Taplow, Maidenhead

**Friday 5th**  
6-8.30pm  
Teen Zone-In

**Saturday 13th**  
10.30-2.30  
Saturday Zone-In!

**Monday 22nd**  
9.30am - 12  
Coffee/breakfast at  
The Tilly Shilling, Farnborough

June 2017

**Friday 2nd**  
6-8.30pm  
Teen Zone-In!

**Saturday 10th,**  
10.30am - 2.30  
Saturday Zone-In!

**Wednesday 28th**  
9.30am—12  
Coffee/breakfast  
Starbucks, The Village Hotel  
Farnborough

**Booking places at events**

You can book & pay for your event places via our website, [www.The-Zone.org.uk/booking](http://www.The-Zone.org.uk/booking)  
Just get in touch with us and we will help with alternative payment methods.

**Fun Zone-In!**

Wednesday during half term, 10.30am - 2.30pm. This is based at Samuel Cody and follows the same as Saturday Zone-In sessions. The cost is £3.50 per child/£10 per family and you are very welcome to bring along a packed lunch and stay for the whole session. There is no food to purchase on site.

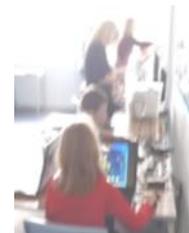
**TVAP—Thames Valley Adventure Playground, near Taplow** Bank holiday Monday, 10.30-2.30. This has been hired out exclusively for our use. This is a purpose built playground for special needs. It is a 2.5acre enclosed site. There is a water play area, lots of bikes & trikes, playground equipment, zip wire, castle fort, sensory and music rooms and art & craft area. This is £5 per person upto £15 per family.

**Coffee Mornings** - 9.30am drop in, at various locations and days. A chance to chat to and meet other parents/carers. Welcome to bring other children, ask questions or just socialise!

More details on events will be posted on our FB pages and website.

## What we did last term!

In January, we started off the new year with a Saturday Zone! And Teen Zone-In! sessions. It was good to see you all from the Christmas break and get back to the so-called normality. The weather wasn't very good so no outdoor equipment was available but we still had fun playing on all the computer equipment, toys and craft.



Mums and carers met for coffee and breakfast, at different locations and it was nice to put a name to faces! We talked about the different issues we face and socialised.



In February Fun Zone-In, the children made a big card to YEM to say thank you for their amazing donation to The-Zone!

The teens went Zone-Out! to Jakes Tri-Lakes partaking in Laser games in the soft play centre. Lots of fun was had by all.

## What Else is Going On?

### Special Children's Day at London Zoo

This year the London Zoo weekend dates are 6th & 7th May. Special Children's Day is a unique annual event at ZSL London Zoo, welcoming children with special needs and their families and friends. Once you've purchased your tickets (adults are £13.25 and children are £9, one carer free per disabled child and under 3's free) all activities are free and all zoo visitors are welcome to join in the fun! (this event is not exclusively for special needs families). Go to [www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/whats-on/special-childrens-day](http://www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/whats-on/special-childrens-day)

**Please note:** we are not planning a Zone outing to the zoo this year.

### Funfest 2017

On Sunday 25th June 11.30am to 4pm, at Yateley Manor School, 51 Reading Road, Yateley, GU46 7UQ. This annual event is a fun packed day for people with disabilities, their families and helpers. The emphasis is always on music and fun, for people of all ages and abilities: with bouncy castles, roundabouts, steam trains and the usual sideshows. Access for wheelchairs is available both on the field and in the covered venue area. There will be plenty of Lions & Lions Partners available to help in any required capacity. Food on the day will be a BBQ, selling beef, vegi-burgers and hot-dogs - these cost £1 each. Filled rolls will also be available at 50p each. For more information or to download the registration form, go to [www.lions-funfest.org.uk](http://www.lions-funfest.org.uk)

### Mental Health Awareness week

This year's mental health awareness week is 8th—14th May. To find out more information or to find out what events are taking place locally, go to [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week)

### Hampshire yellow cards

A yellow card is sent to you when you register your child as disabled with Hampshire County Council. It gives a very brief description of your child's additional needs and some places accept it as proof of disability/entitlement to get a carers pass at events or attractions. To obtain a free card for your child, call Hampshire Council on 0845 603 5620.



### Autism Show

This year's event is on 16th - 17th June 2017 at the ExCel Centre in London. So put the date in your diary and watch out for when tickets become available. [www.autismshow.co.uk](http://www.autismshow.co.uk)



### Sleep issues

If sleep, or the lack of it, is an issue for your child then try looking at the sites below, which gives lots of ideas on the cause of the sleep issues and different things to try and improve the situation. Failing all of these, talk to your paediatrician.

#### The NAS website:

[www.autism.org.uk/about/health/child-sleep.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/health/child-sleep.aspx) or call the Autism Helpline on 0808 800 4104.

#### Cerebra Sleep Service:

If you just have a question/query, then contact the Cerebra sleep assistant on 01267 244210 or e-mail [sleep@cerebra.org.uk](mailto:sleep@cerebra.org.uk) and they will get back to you. For more information on their sleep service, go to [www.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/sleep-service](http://www.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/sleep-service)

#### The Children's Sleep Charity:

[www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk](http://www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk) or call 01302 751 416.

### Young Carers

Young carers are children who help look after a member of the family who is sick, disabled or has mental health problems, or is misusing drugs or alcohol. The Hart & Rushmoor project is contactable via Hart Voluntary Action on 01252 815652.

For more info, take a look at [www.hyca.org.uk](http://www.hyca.org.uk) - you can also find young carers projects with in other areas of Hampshire on the above website too.

### National Autistic Society

For useful information and helplines ([www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)) on all aspects of autism in the UK.

## Sensory Issues

Does your child seek out the sensory stimulation or do they prefer to avoid it as much as they possibly can? Here are some ideas of things that just might help them with their daily life...

At the Zone-In! sessions we have a sensory suitcase where you can try out some sensory equipment and see if it is suitable for your child.

### Fidget toys

These are a great tactile way to keep fingers busy and help reduce stress. They can be really useful on long car journeys or in school assemblies when a child is required to sit still for longer than usual. If throwing things is an issue, attach a spiral or retractable keyring to the toy and to an item of your child's clothing.

### Lap pads and weighted blankets

Weighted blankets and lap pads apply an even weight and deep pressure that some of our children need and positively enjoy. The weight and pressure can help them to slow down and "chill out" which in turn can lead to better concentration, better sleeping habits and less stress and fewer tantrums. Blankets come in a range of weights and the weight chosen should depend on the body weight of the child or adult who will be using the blanket. (The general method of choosing a weight is to take 10% of the user's bodyweight and add a further pound in weight.)

### Other weighted items

These include weighted shoulder pads/scarves which are great to put on your child's shoulders to calm them. A weighted back pack on a child's back may help centre them, alternatively giving a child a few heavy books to carry from A to B as part of a task may also work. Weighted vests can be bought or try using a "fishing vest" or gillet with pockets that you can add weights to. A weighted belt is another idea that might help your child stay centred.

Most weighted items are available from the same sites as the weighted blankets, but if you go to an online search engine and type in the item you are looking for, you will find several links. Prices always vary depending on sizes and weights.

### Cushions:

**Air filled** - an inflatable cushion that mimics movement and shape - very similar to sitting on a giant ball. These can be used for balance training in standing, kneeling or seated positions - especially to give improved sensory feedback when used as a seat cushion for children struggling with concentration or fidgeting.

**Wedges** - if your child does not keep still when writing, then a wedge cushion might help. It may also help if your child tips the chair onto the front legs.

### Ear defenders

If noise is an issue for your child then try a set of ear defenders. Although they won't block out all of the noise, they will reduce it and hopefully that will enable your child to cope with noisy situations. You can also look into noise reduction headphones and whilst a good set aren't cheap, we have heard wonderful reviews about them really helping and being worth the money!

**For the chewers...**

If you have a "chewer", be it their sleeves, fingers, random bits of tissue, paper or anything else they take a liking to, then it may be worth trying to find an alternative...

**Chewigem** - make all sorts of items from pendants, toggle tags, bangles; all designed to be chewed! Take a look at [www.chewigem.co.uk](http://www.chewigem.co.uk)

**ChewyTubes** - tubes and P's & Q's designed to cope with lots of chewing: [www.chewytubes.com](http://www.chewytubes.com)

**Chew'lery** - a necklace and bracelet that's made to be chomped upon, available from various websites, including [www.specialdirect.com](http://www.specialdirect.com)

**Auto retract keyrings** - these are a great way of keeping fidget toys or chew toys easily accessible but out of the way when they're not needed. These are available on Ebay for a reasonable cost.

**Pens** - give a young child a huge variety of pens and pencils, all sorts of shapes, sizes, textures etc. and let them discover which they find the easiest to handle. It's also useful to practice writing with their finger on a tray in different substances; sand, shaving foam etc.

**Pencils** - again, try a variety of types but we really like the triangular ones with grips by Faber-Castell, which can be found online and in Ryman's too.

**Pen/pencil grips** - These are placed on a pen or pencil to position the hand in the correct position. Again, there is a wide variety of types available, so it's just a question of finding the one that helps your child the most.

**Sloped writing board** - A simple writing slope enables children to work and write at a better angle - stopping the child having to lean forward. Alternatively try using an A4 lever arch file as that won't stand out as being "different".

**Suppliers** (not all exclusively for special needs children)

[www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk) auction site, full of all sorts of items, new and used.

[www.hawkin.com](http://www.hawkin.com) Hawkin's Bazaar is full of useful bits and pieces, take a look.

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) great for all sorts of items

[www.rompa.com](http://www.rompa.com) special needs toys and equipment.

[www.sensetoys.co.uk](http://www.sensetoys.co.uk) educational toys and games for special needs children.

[www.specialdirect.com](http://www.specialdirect.com) brilliant products for children with special needs.

[www.weight2goblankets.co.uk](http://www.weight2goblankets.co.uk) weighted blankets and lap pads.

**Sensory Occupational Therapists**

For advice specific to your child's needs, please seek professional advice from a sensory OT. Accessing an NHS sensory OT is usually a challenge but if you're looking for an independent OT who specialises in sensory issues. COTSS-IP stands for *College of Occupational Therapy Specialist Section for Independent Practice*. For more info go to [www.cotss-ip.org.uk](http://www.cotss-ip.org.uk) or call 0845 129 7699.

Alternatively, ask for recommendations in our closed FB page.



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We're on the web:

[www.The-Zone.org.uk](http://www.The-Zone.org.uk)

Make sure you let us know if you move or change your e-mail address.

If you don't, we can't get this newsletter to you!

## Useful info...

### Autism Friendly Screenings

The sessions are designed to be suitable for those on the autistic spectrum and with other additional needs. The lights will stay on low, the volume is lowered, there are no trailers at the beginning of the film (unless they are unavoidable), you can take your own food & drinks, choose where you want to sit and you're able to move around if you need to.

- Cineworld (in Aldershot) at 11am on the 1st Sunday of the month.
- ODEON (in Basingstoke) at 11.30am one Sunday every month.
- Vue (in Farnborough, Camberley and Basingstoke) at 10am on the last Sunday of the month.



There's more information and downloadable social stories available at: [www.dimensions-uk.org](http://www.dimensions-uk.org) or you can talk to staff at your local participating cinema. Please check website for screenings in case of changes.

### Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card

This national card for the child/person (aged 8 years or older) with a disability, that entitles them to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. To be able to apply, the cardholder must have proof of one of the following criteria:

- Be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance
- Be in receipt of Personal Independence Payment
- Be a registered blind person



You will need to complete a form (this can be done online at the CEA website or you can print a copy out and post it to them), you will also need a passport sized photo and a proof of entitlement document. The card costs £6 and is valid for 1 year. For more info or to apply for a card, go to [www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk) or call 023 9224 8545.

### Radar Keys for disabled toilets

These are available free of charge from your local council offices (you may need to complete a form with all your details) if you have a diagnosis letter to show your child is entitled, or you can purchase one from The-Zone! for just £2.50 (this is great if you need a second key for another carer). Just ask us at any of The-Zone! sessions.



For more information about the scheme, go to [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk)

This is the newsletter of The-Zone! a local charity (charity no. 1156806) for special needs families in North East Hampshire. Views expressed in this newsletter are for information only and reference to specific services or approaches to autism does not imply endorsement.

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