

Zone-Info!

The-Zone! newsletter, for families with additional needs www.The-Zone.org.uk

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Issue 7

January - March 2016

Happy New Year everyone!

Hopefully you've all had a good start to the new year. We're hoping that 2016 will be a brilliant year for The-Zone, with plenty of opportunities for families to meet-up and to gain access to the help and support they need!



Our next committee meeting is being held on Thursday 21st

January, 7pm in Farnborough; if anyone is interested in becoming more actively involved with The-Zone please get in touch with us (we really don't bite and we understand that everyone is also juggling living with autism.)

Huge thanks to...

... Asda in Farnborough and their Green Token Scheme, last year Thank we were awarded £50! It is always great publicity too which means more families find us!



...Everyone who helped to sell Zone raffle tickets, especially Jenny Thomas for co-ordinating the whole thing. We are also incredibly grateful to those who donated prizes too. A total of £343 was raised and we will make sure we put it to good use towards events for families.

The prizes went to the following lucky winners:

1st: Kindle Fire - Michelle Carter

2nd: Paintballing vouchers - Leslie

3rd: GHD's - Carolyne Stone

4th: Farnborough Fins swim course voucher - Mr Marsh

5th: Massage voucher - Nikki Smith

6th: Donutting voucher - Liam Ayling

7th: Thatched Cottage meal voucher - Carlos Stowe

8th: Farnborough Leisure Centre swim voucher - Stew Ward

9th: Bottle of Champagne - Nikki Smith

All prizes have now been collected. We really do appreciate your support.

Facebook

The-Zone! Facebook page is for anyone interested in what we do. Go to 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 and for parents of those 11 years and over, we have an additional closed FB group too: www.facebook.com/groups/TheZoneTeens/

www.The-Zone.org.uk

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



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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 played with or return it to the room it came from. ***

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. 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.



Saturday Zone

Usually one Saturday each month (23rd January, 20th February and 19th March), 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 (29th January, 26th February but not in March due to Easter holidays), 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/



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 or ask us for a form at The-Zone! To view activities available across Hampshire to Gateway card holders, go to 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!



Hampshire funded activities!

Hampshire Huge thanks to Hampshire Short Breaks funding as County Council without their support we couldn't run these sessions!

January 2016

Saturday 9th

5 - 6.30pm Zone-Out! Soft play at Farnborough Leisure Centre

Wednesday 13th

9.30am - Coffee/breakfast Tilly Shilling, Farnborough

Saturday 23rd

10.30am - 2.30pm Saturday Zone-In! - with Cuddly Cavies.

Friday 29th

6 - 8.30pm Teen Zone-In!

Saturday 23rd April,

we're going to Miller's Ark Animals at Manor Farm in Hook. Get in touch for more info!

February 2016

Wednesday 10th

9.30am - Coffee/breakfast The Queen Hotel (Wetherspoons, Aldershot)

Saturday 13th Feb

6.30 - 8.30pm Teen Zone-Out! @ Jake's at Tri-Lakes

Tuesday 16th

11am

Zone-Out Ceramic painting in Fleet @ Just Ceramics

Thursday 18th, 12pm Zone-Out Bowling @ Farnborough Bowl

Saturday 20th

10.30am - 2.30pm Saturday Zone-In!

Friday 26th

6 - 8.30pm Teen Zone-In!

March / April 2016

Saturday 5th, 5 - 7pm Zone-Out! @ Run-About

Monday 7th, 9.30am Coffee/breakfast Venue to be confirmed

Saturday 19th, 10.30am - 2.30 Saturday Zone-In!

Monday 28th, 10am, Zone-Out Donutting / X-bobs

Wednesday 30th, 11.30am Teen Zone-Out! at Creams in Camberley

April:

Monday 4th, 10,30am - 3.30pm TVAP in Maidenhead (possibly with transport)

Wednesday 6th, 10.30am - 2.30 Fun Zone-In!

Booking places at events

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

Zone-Out Soft play session at Farnborough Leisure Centre - exclusive use of the play area. Places are limited. Upper age limit is 10 years. The café will remain open until 6.30pm too. The price is £3.50 per child and £1 for under 2's.

Zone-Out Bowling - join us for a game of bowling fun at Farnborough Bowl. Price per child is £3.

Teen Zone-Out at Jake's @ Tri-Lakes - just for the teens (aged 11yrs +) to play in. They'll be a couple of games of Laser-tag & time to just be big kids! Price is £10 per teen including a hot meal.

Zone-Out Ceramic painting at Just Ceramics in Fleet - we have the upstairs studio for our budding artists. The cost is £10 per item painted.

Zone-Out Bowling - join us for a game of bowling fun at Farnborough Bowl. Price per child is £3.

Zone-Out at Run-About - exclusive use of the soft play centre for Zone families with children under 11 years. Price is £5 per child and includes a hot meal.

Zone-Out donnuting and x-bobs tobogganing in Aldershot - we have exclusive use of the donutting slope and the x-bobs slope for Zone families. For donnuting children need to be 4yrs+ and for x-bobs they need to be 8yrs+. The price will be £7 per person taking part.

Teen Zone-Out @ Creams in Camberley - you don't need to pay in advance for this, simply pay when you place your order on the day, but we do need to know numbers to book a big enough table!

Zone-Out TVAP (Thames Valley Adventure Playground) - we have the whole playground to ourselves again! Bring something for group lunch and clothes to get wet in! Cost is £5 per child/£15 per family + £2.50 per coach seat if needed.

Just some of the pictures from our events at the end of last year!

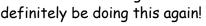
The end of last year wasn't a very busy time for Zone events; in October half-term we went bowling at Farnborough Bowl and had a great time and a couple of days later we had our Fun Zone session - amazingly enough the weather was still dry and we were able to have the huge frog bouncy castle outside for lots of bouncing to try and use up some excess energy!

In November we had our usual Zone-In sessions but the weather was not so nice and sadly there are no lovely outdoor pictures.

In December we had our Christmas party at Run-About for our members with children under 11 years, where families had a really good time whilst the raffle was drawn and prizes were given out. Then a couple of weeks

> later it was time for the Teen Christmas event - at the new TeamSport karting venue in Farnborough! They all did really well; they got suited up, watched the briefing DVD, found helmets that fitted and went on the track in their two teams! It was fantastic fun

and if we can arrange the funding, we will













Information-Zone!

We are planning to start running a monthly drop-in session at The-Zone! The dates are set for Wednesday's on 4th May, 1st June and 13th July, from 9am to 11am.

The plan is to give parents/carers the chance to come to The-Zone without their children, whether it's to meet us for the first time, to bring along your DLA form for us to read through/help with, browse through our library books or discover our collection of sensory toys. Carol and Nikki will be there, with plenty of tea, coffee and biscuits, so come along and meet us, pick our brains or simply take a look around The-Zone.

We will have access to the entire resource library - all of the books we have acquired over the years, which you are welcome to borrow. Please tell us if you know of a good title that we should add to the collection. We also have a few weighted items (blankets and lap pads) in the library too, so come and see if you think they would benefit for child before purchasing one.

We would like to be able to use these sessions to help you - so if there is something you'd like us to try and organise for these sessions, please talk to us!

Merlin's Magic Wand charity

This charity believe in putting the magic back into the childhood of seriously ill, disabled and disadvantaged children by providing free tickets to Merlin attractions (Legoland, Thorpe Park, London Eye etc.) The eligibility criteria is that your child, aged between 2 and 18 years, with a disability or serious illness must either have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or be in receipt of a letter stating their condition in order for you to apply for tickets. Paperwork



must be on headed paper which includes the organisations logo from an official source and have the child's full name, the child's date of birth, the child's medical condition or diagnosis or proof of foster care.

For more information, go to www.merlinsmagicwand.org.uk - if you're not online and would like help applying then contact us. You can call MMW on 01202 440060 to ask questions but they only accept applications via their website.

** If you have received MMW tickets before they would rather you didn't reapply. **

MMW have clarified that their "disadvantaged" criteria includes those in foster care/recently adopted, registered young carers, child of a terminally ill parent, child victim of abuse including domestic violence.

Family Fund Grants

The Family Fund provides grants to families with disabled children. The Fund will consider any request on its merits but does have specific criteria about claiming. Several people have successfully applied for help with the costs of holidays (usually for Haven, Thompson or CenterParcs), a new washing machine or tumble dryer, an Ipad for the child to access apps or something else that your child will really benefit from. For more information, go to www.familyfund.org.uk or call Family Fund 0845 130 4542. You are able to apply online if you have applied in previous years and have a reference number



Schools Autism Awareness week

The National Autistic Society are organising this from the 14th to 18th March 2016, to try and make more children and staff aware of the autistic spectrum. You are able to download your pack of free materials to use during the week to help you learn about autism in fun, imaginative lessons, activities and assemblies that are level-specific, help spread the word about why it's so important to understand and accept autism and ideally they'd like you to raise some funds for them too! www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/world-autism-awareness-week/schools-autism-awareness-week.aspx

Autism Show

This year's event is on 17th - 18th June 2016 at the ExCel Centre in Hesley Group 5 London. So put the date



in your diary and watch out for when tickets become available. www.autismshow.co.uk

World Autism Awareness Week

This year, World Awareness Week is from 2nd until 8th April 2016. Hopefully we'll manage to celebrate it in style at our Fun Zone session on Wednesday 6th April.



Science Museum in London

Early Bird sessions run on occasional Saturdays throughout the year, from 8.30 - 11.15am, just for families with ASD children. They are also running Night Owl sessions for 16 - 25 year olds on the spectrum, on occasional Saturday nights, 6.45 - 9.30pm. Places must be booked. For more info, go to: www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visitmuseum/Plan your visit/events/other/early birds event.aspx

Other sources of support...

We know that life can be incredibly difficult at times, which is why we do our best to get parents together so that they can meet others who understand. Knowing that you are not alone can be very helpful but you may also find out other useful information by talking to others who have been there too. All of our events need parents to stay and be responsible for their children, but this also provides you with the chance to meet others in similar situations.

ParentVoice

Parent Voice is an free information and advice service for parents and carers of disabled children aged 0-25 in Hampshire. www.parentvoice.info 0300 303 8603 parentvoice@roseroad.org.uk





ADHD/ASD/SEN Time Out Support Group

Run by two parents, this group meet on the first Tuesday evening of each month, 8pm at The Ship Inn, Ship Lane, Farnborough, GU14 8BE.

adhdtimeout@outlook.com www.facebook.com/groups/1473330899637011

Mustard Seed Autism Trust

This is a small local charity, based in Rushmoor and Hart, that offers an holistic approach in dealing with the complex needs of families living with autism. Their service is free and aimed at families with children on the autistic spectrum aged between 3 and 11 years but they do currently have a waiting list. Parents are able to self refer, simply take a look at their website for more info or contact them. www.mustardseedautism.co.uk or call 07980 636413.



Supporting families living with autism

NAS Alton & Bordon Branch

This branch run regular coffee mornings at local children's centre and some events in the school holidays in the Alton and Bordon areas.

07824 372 034

alton@nas.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/201085191747

NAS South Hampshire Branch

The NAS South Hampshire Branch organises various events including a family youth group, a social group for older teenagers/adults, parent/carer support meetings, Lego club and other activities too.

www.shantsnas.org.uk

Early Years Support services/programmes

If you have a child under 5 with additional needs and you meet the criteria for the service, you will be able to gain help and advice from a support worker. Check your council's website for more info and contact details. Hampshire: www.hants.gov.uk

Surrey: www.surreycc.gov.uk

NAS North Hampshire Branch

Based in Basingstoke & Andover, this branch's aim is to be there for everybody impacted by Autism, as well as other disabilities.

www.nasbb.org.uk www.facebook.com/nasbb.page

NAS Surrey Branch

The Surrey Branch run a variety of meetings, talks and activities for families with children and adults with autistic spectrum disorders. Their informative newsletter is sent out every 2 months.

www.nassurreybranch.org info@nassurreybranch.org

A Sweet Disposition

The group meet in Camberley, on Wednesday's during the school holidays from 10am - 12. It's aimed at children with a developmental age range of between 2 - 6yrs who have ASD or similar communication disorder.

www.asweetdisposition.org

Challengers

With play & youth schemes in various locations across Hampshire and Surrey, it's



worth checking out the Challengers website for more info. They also run family fun Sundays at the Farnham playcentre, for families to just turn -up, it costs £4 per child & siblings are welcome. (There's also a Challengers fun swim session at Guildford Spectrum one Saturday every month). www.disability-challengers.org / 01483 579390.

Gordon Brown Activity Centre

Although not specifically for those with additional needs, some Zone families have tried their activity days with great success. They are happy to discuss individual children's needs and arrange 1:1 staffing if needed (their website says special needs includes any child receiving 1:1 support at school, attending an SEN school or unit within a school or having a medical condition). Call them on 01256 762824 for more info. www.thegordonbrowncentre.org.uk

Parent Action Group for Special Play

or call them on 01252 837112.

PAG is a local charity for families with special needs. They run regular events (MADD club; music, art, dance and drama), so take a look at their website for more info, www.paqforspecialplay.co.uk

Parkside

Based in Aldershot, Parkside run schemes, including <u>Saturday Scene</u>, fortnightly 10am - 12.30 for those



aged 6 - 12yrs. <u>Summer playscheme</u> runs for 5 weeks in the holidays, for those aged 6 - 19yrs. After School Club on Mondays from 3.30 - 7pm Our Zone on alternate Saturdays, 9.30am - 12.30, for 12 - 18 year olds. All participants require a HCC Gateway Card.

There's also the Fab Café in Farnborough Library, open Monday to Friday 10am - 4. www.parksidealdershot.co.uk / 01252 313 103.

Great Opportunities! Club

The GO! Clubs are for children with additional needs and their siblings. The sessions are to



provide parents/carers with some respite time. <u>Fleet</u> club for those aged 8 - 18 years and the Fleet Mini's is for 3 - 8 years. Both clubs are held upstairs (there's a lift!) at Hart Leisure Centre, 2.30-4.30pm, every other Saturday during term-time.

Aldershot club for those aged 5 - 18 yrs, at Connaught Leisure Centre on Thursday's 4-6pm. Basingstoke club is for those aged 8 - 18 years and the Basingstoke Mini's is for 3 - 7 years. Both are held at Everest Community Academy on alternate Saturday's, 2-4pm.

For more info, call 01256 636288 or go to www.greatopportunities.org.uk

KIDS Rushmoor

This playscheme is based at Henry Tyndale School, where children and young people, aged 8 - 19 years, can choose from a variety of fun and exciting activities and workshops. On-site days are £15 and trips out are £20. You can book directly but you need to have a Gateway card (see page 2 for details.)



Places are allocated as fairly as possible and cancellation/waiting lists are in use.

www.kids.org.uk/Event/rushmoor-playscheme Contact Carmen Davis on 07827 989316 or

carmen.davis@kids.org.uk **Please be aware if your child has not accessed KIDS before they will

need to complete the relevant paperwork prior to their attendance.**

Local Offer

All local authorities are required to have a Local Offer website available for families to access information about services relating to special educational needs, disabilities, education and more for those aged 0 - 25 years.

Hampshire's is at www.hantslocaloffer.info or email parentvoice@roseroad.org.uk / 0300 303 8603. Surrey's is at: www.surreysendlo.co.uk or localoffer@surreycc.gov.uk

If there is something specific that you are looking for but cannot find, contact them and ask!

Disability Living Allowance

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is paid at different rates depending on how the disability affects your child/young person.

Rate	Care component	Mobility component
Higher rate	£81.30 a week	£56.75 a week
Middle rate	£54.45 a week	N/A
Lower rate	£21.55 a week	£21.55 a week

DLA has 2 parts called "components":

- care component: if your child need more supervision or help to look after

themselves than their peers.

- mobility component: if your child can't walk or finds it very hard to walk, or get from

A to B safely, in a reasonable time.

You could get a combination of both, or just one of the components.

Getting started:

The first step is to call and request a DLA claim pack 0845 712 3456. The form will be dated and give you six weeks to return it to them - if your claim is successful, they will then pay you from the date you requested the pack. You can also download the form at www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children but please make sure you save it and complete it on your computer.

Make notes:

Sometimes it can help to keep a diary over a few days, detailing everything you do for your child - this can be quite an opener sometimes! As well as any incidents or meltdowns and what you had to do to calm the situation. Use a rough copy (we have blank ones at The-Zone) or blank sheets of paper to work out what you want to write for each page.

If you need help with completing the form:

It's always good to go through the forms and complete the basics; your child's details, your details, bank information etc. Then work on the sections that you can; diagnoses from hospital letters, medication details, information from reports. Next tackle the questions, one at a time - you can come back to a page and add more later. Once you have done your best, ask for help; get in touch with us, or whoever else you have found, to read through your completed form and see if there's anything else crucial to add it!

Cerebra DLA quide: www.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/quides-for-parents/dla-quide

Contact a Family benefit advisers

CaF have a team of expert benefit advisers to offer detailed, one-to-one advice to families with disabled children via their Freephone helpine on 0808 808 3555 (open Monday to Friday from 9.30am - 5pm). Call them to ensure your family is getting the benefits you are entitled to - more important than ever in the current economic climate.

Cerebra guide on Social Care

This guide is aimed at parents of disabled children in England to inform them about how to get help for their child's social care needs. It focusses on the responsibilities of the local authorities to provide social care for disabled children, as well as support for the parents/carers of those children. w3.cerebra.org.k/help-and-information/guides-for-parents/social-care-in-england-a-quide-for-parents/

Cerebra also have parent guides on various other topics, so it's well worth taking a look.

Education, Health and Care Plans

We wrote about new Education, Health and Care Plans this time last year (in the Jan - Mar 2015 issue) and we've seen several families plodding slowly through the process, so we thought we'd include some information on where to get more details, advice and some useful tips from parents.

Hampshire's EHCP info:

www.hantslocaloffer.info/en/SEN_support_-__Education_Health_Care_(EHC)_Assessments

Surrey's EHCP info:

www.surreysendlo.co.uk/information/3-sendsupport

Copy of the new Code of Practice:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

SpecialNeedsJungle have some brilliant, easy to read resources: www.specialneedsjungle.com/sen-reforms/send-reforms-resources/

SOS!SEN information sheets on EHCP's (they also run courses on the subject too): www.sossen.org.uk/information_sheets.php Helpline no: 020 8538 3731. Their advice centre is in The Games Shop, Aldershot, on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 10.15am - 12.15pm.

IPSEA letter to request EHCP (their website is full of useful info too): www.ipsea.org.uk/what-you-need-to-know/ehc-needs-assessments/asking-for-an-ehc-needs-assessment Their helpline no is: 0800 018 4016.

Support4SEND

Hampshire's information, advice and support service who will help you through the EHCP process. Call 01962 845870 (Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm) or enquiries.support4send@hants.gov.uk For more info, go to www.hants.gov.uk/support4send

Parent Voice - Independent Support services

Hampshire have awarded the contract to deliver Independent Support to the Parent Voice service. You can contact the Independent Support service on 0300 303 8604 or by emailing independentsupport@roseroad.org.uk

Tips from other parents:

- Read up on it yourself, don't rely upon the local authority for all the info you need.
- Attend any local courses on the subject. You get to ask questions and really help you understand.
- It's great that parents get a greater say in an EHCP but with that comes paperwork to complete! Ask for electronic versions of forms so that you can type what you want to and edit it, when you remember other things to include. This also means that you keep a copy for your own records.
- Take your time with the forms; read them through, make notes and keep coming back to them.
- If there are any professionals working with your child, ask them to send a report to be included. The local authority are supposed to do this but you wouldn't want a crucial one to be missed!
- Outcomes; these should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound). Think of the outcomes as the end goal; describe exactly what it is your child will be able to do and by when, think ahead to when you come to review them in the future you want them to be written in a way that it will be clear whether or not they have been achieved. Aim for a range of short and long term outcomes.
- Provision is always an issue and one that parents stress about; it is an important section of the EHCP; think about each of your child's needs and what support/provision will be required to meet the needs and who will deliver this ensure that it is clear exactly what your child will be getting.
- Timescale: although there is a time frame the authority is supposed to stick to (20 weeks), most are behind as they are on a steep learning curve too. You may need to chase up progress.
- Find support; whether it's an independent supporter, local support group or just other parents you know, having others to talk to who understand the saga you are going through is really helpful.



118 Fernhill Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, **GU14 9DR**

07860 806 179 info@The-Zone.org.uk

We're on the web: 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!

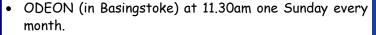
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Useful info...

Autism Friendly Screenings

The sessions are designed to be suitable for those on The lights will stay on low, the volume is lowered, there are no trailers at the beainning of the file. 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.



• 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 or you can talk to staff at your local participating cinema.

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 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

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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