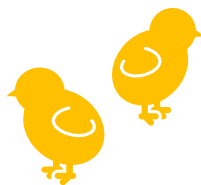


# NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the March issue of the newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading the updates and have a great Easter break.

## Wellbeing Hub March talk

On the 7<sup>th</sup> March, we were delighted to welcome Sarah-Jane Critchley who delivered a talk entitled Autistic Joy: from Why to Wow!



This talk was not recorded but the slides are available via the link:

<https://differentjoy.kartra.com/page/AutisticJoyHowToWow>



Launch Event

**'Sensory-inclusive supermarkets: A practical guide to make supermarkets more inclusive for autistic people'**

This will be a **hybrid event** on **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April** to launch a new guide to help supermarkets become more inclusive for autistic people. Co-produced with members of the autism community and based on research conducted at the University of Reading and Oxford, it contains information and simple tips to support autistic shoppers and employees and is designed for anyone who works in supermarkets.

Click link for more [information and to register](#)

**Centre for Autism** University of Reading  
Wellbeing Hub Monthly Talks  
*Free online public event*

April 2024: No talk is scheduled

**Date:** Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 7.00 – 8.30 p.m.

**Speaker:** Nic King– Young autistic people and the importance of self-understanding

**Register:** <https://tinyurl.com/CfA-Wellbeing-Hub-May-talk>

Nic King is the director of PANDAS Online and the creator of NeuroBears, a course for autistic young people which is sold and licensed internationally. Nic (She / They) is autistic and otherwise neurodivergent. They have two children and a husband who are all neurodivergent.

**Future talk dates @ 7.00 – 8.30 p.m.**

**13<sup>th</sup> June 2024:** Elaine McGreevy - Autistic experiences of spoken and non-spoken communication.

Registration details will be available soon

Centre for Autism Wellbeing Hub  
**Jo Billington**  
Autism Researcher

My interest in autism began about a decade ago with the discovery that my two sons are autistic. This interest led me to complete a PhD in Psychology which explored the everyday experiences of autistic children in mainstream primary schools. My research uses creative methods such as photography and autobiographical writing to amplify the voices of autistic children in the academic research literature.

As one of the project leads for the Wellbeing Hub, my work centres around understanding what thriving means to autistic people and their families and increasing public understanding of neurodiversity-affirming approaches to supporting autistic children and young people, particularly in schools.

Outside the university, I volunteer for a local charity called Parenting Special Children. I also enjoy going to the theatre with my family and taking long walks with our spirited cockapoo Bayley.

**Centre for Autism** University of Reading  
Special Interest Group  
*Free in person event for professionals*

**Date:** Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June, 4.00 – 6.00 p.m. Tea and coffee provided.

**Speaker:** Dr Jiedi Lei, Clinical Psychologist and Senior Research Fellow, University of Oxford

**Title:** Exploring strength-based approaches in autism

**Venue:** School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences, Earley Gate, University of Reading. Satnav Postcode RG6 7BE

<http://tinyurl.com/SIG-6th-June-2024>

An opportunity for professionals who work with autistic children and young people to come together **in-person to network** with other local practitioners and hear topical talks from a range of experts.

If you are a **professional** interested in attending this session, please email [cfaevents@reading.ac.uk](mailto:cfaevents@reading.ac.uk)

**RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED**

The following studies have been granted ethical approval by the University of Reading's Research Ethics Committee

**Development of a support programme for parents and carers of recently diagnosed autistic children**

We are looking for parents/carers of recently diagnosed school-aged autistic children to help us create a new neurodiversity-affirming parent support programme. The programme aims to develop greater understanding and acceptance of autism while offering a supported space to explore what your child's diagnosis means to you and your wider family. Eventually, we plan to make the programme available to all who might be interested, but for the purposes of the pilot, we are looking for parents/carers who are just starting out on their journey of understanding more about autism.

**We are looking for:** Parents and carers of children who meet the following criteria to be part of our study:

- Of school age (i.e. between the ages and 5 and 16)
- Clinical diagnosis of autism received within the last 12 months

**What the study involves:** The 6-week programme consists of one 2-hour session per week which will take place either in person on the University of Reading Whiteknights campus or online via Microsoft Teams. Participants will be asked to evaluate the programme by providing feedback before, during and after the delivery of the programme materials.

**If you are interested or have any questions, please contact the lead researcher, Jo Billington,** [jo.billington@reading.ac.uk](mailto:jo.billington@reading.ac.uk) to register your interest in this study and receive more information.

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**How do autistic and non-autistic children process visual information? Help us find out!**

**We are looking for:** Children (6-14 years) with:

- an autism spectrum diagnosis, OR
- no diagnosed developmental conditions

**What the study involves:** Children will play computer games and simple language/reasoning tasks. Parents/guardians will complete questionnaires. Families will receive a voucher as thanks.

**If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Hodo Yusuf,** [h.yusuf@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.yusuf@reading.ac.uk)

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**How autistic adults communicate**

Researchers at the University of Reading are inviting participants to take part in a research study investigating how autistic adults communicate. This is important because most of what we know is from the perspective of non-autistic people. Healthcare professionals need to understand how to communicate in a way that is helpful, which may mean adjusting assumptions about communication being a deficit for autistic people but instead a difference that needs to be understood.

**We are looking for:** Autistic adults, with fluent English who have a formal autism diagnosis and who are not currently accessing psychological therapy.

**What the study involves:** An interview, lasting no longer than 90 minutes either online or in person.

**If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Ann Wilson,** [a.wilson@pgr.reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.wilson@pgr.reading.ac.uk)

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If you have any feedback for the newsletter including anything you would like to hear about then please get in touch [autism@reading.ac.uk](mailto:autism@reading.ac.uk)

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