



AUTISTIC INCLUSIVE MEETS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020





ABOUT US

Autistic Inclusive Meets is a not-for-profit organisation created by autistic people to enable families with autistic children and autistic individuals to get out into the community and socialise in an accepting, inclusive environment with like minded peers.

We provide support and advice to families and individuals, promote acceptance of autism through education of the general public and protect autistic people's rights by campaigning against mistreatment.

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WELCOME BY CEO EMMA DALMAYNE



Greetings friends! Here we are in 2020, and what an eventful year it has been!

We continue here at Autistic Inclusive Meets to promote acceptance of autistic people, whilst educating parents and professionals on the correct ways to work with us. Approaches and strategies tailored to us as individuals must enable and support us, it is imperative to our autonomy and well being in general.

On a daily basis we witness a presumption of incompetence of autistics from the general public sector.

This misinformation and ableist view comes from charities and organisations claiming to work in the interest of, as they call us, 'people with autism'.

Their continued use of harmful person first language and symbols which suggest we are a puzzle to be solved creates confusion. Their promotion of Applied Behavioural Analysis and Positive Behaviour Support which are compliance based training programmes instills the idea that we need to be made to 'fit in' in order to be accepted.

This compounds the misconceptions and causes the ostracisation we face from the minute we wake to the moment we sleep.

We need so many more autistic voices to be given a platform and we continue to elevate activists and campaigners, as should all who have the means to do so.

Our groups provide a vital social network for families and individuals. We are sure to provide sensory aids and quiet spaces. We adore watching a new family or individual come into the group's and seeing the tension leave them as they realise that nothing is demanded of them.

There are no pressures. If they wish to sit alone or play alongside and take their time, we don't see that as being unsociable or rude, we see it as an individual's right to regulate and ground.

We have provided outings for our attendees this year and got them out into the community while providing full support.

Sadly our group's and events have been cancelled for now due to Covid, we continue to campaign online and will open up again once it is safe to do so.

We miss our attendees and keep in contact with them online providing support as much as possible.

Enjoy the report which has been written by all us and put together so cleverly by Priya Mangwana.

Thank you to our brilliant board of directors, Alex Forshaw, Sara Challenger, Amy Bresnahan, Jenny Payne, Alexander Hobbins and William Vanderpuije for all your hard work this year, it has been invaluable.

A massive thanks to our volunteers Emma Stewart, Bonny Hazelwood, Kelly McGuinness and Isa Sulaiman for your generously donated time.



OPEN MINDS CONFERENCE PROTEST



A 5am start on the 8th November 2019 saw Emma Dalmayne and Jenny Payne boarding an early morning flight to Cork in Ireland followed by a coach to Waterford, to join others protesting the Open minds conference at Dooleys hotel.

Clive de carle was to be attending who had previously been exposed by the media and CEO Emma Dalmayne for offering MMS - Chlorine Dioxide bleach, falsely sold as a cure for Autism.

With 20 minutes until arrival Emma Dalmayne was contacted by phone by a Gardai Detective Mick Rourke, and told they would be meeting them off the coach as threats had been made towards the hotel.

They were met by Deirdre O'Mahoney and Mick Canavan of the Waterford Guards. Emma and Jenny assured them that no threats or any other calls had been made by them and they were there for a peaceful protest.

The conference included speakers who were anti vaxx and also other treatments some of which were questionable.

Clive de Carle who was meant to be speaking had pulled out and was heard to be speaking outside the hotel later that day.

While we could only be there for a few hours due to a two hour coach trip back to Cork for an evening flight back to London we were subjected to both the highs and lows of protesting with a warm welcome by fellow protesters and some members of the public who stopped to chat and listen.

The other side was ableist comments and insults thrown from attendees of the conference coming outside for breaks, this also included harassment and the making of foul comments and grabbing of Emma from a conference attendee while photos were being taken.

They finally arrived home close to midnight both exhausted from a full day of travel, but feeling they had helped to highlight the promotion of dangerous cures for autism.

They felt they had given autistic people and their families a voice, which will hopefully make Dooleys and other hotels in Ireland rethink on the people they host in the future.



CHRISTMAS FAIR

The AIM Christmas Autistic Craft Fair took place on December 1st, in one of our favourite historical locations in SE London, Charlton House.

It is the perfect venue, beautiful grounds for visitors to have a walk, a festive Christmas tree to enjoy and a cafe to serve them hot chocolate. Then up the stairs to browse the twelve autistic stall holders goods.

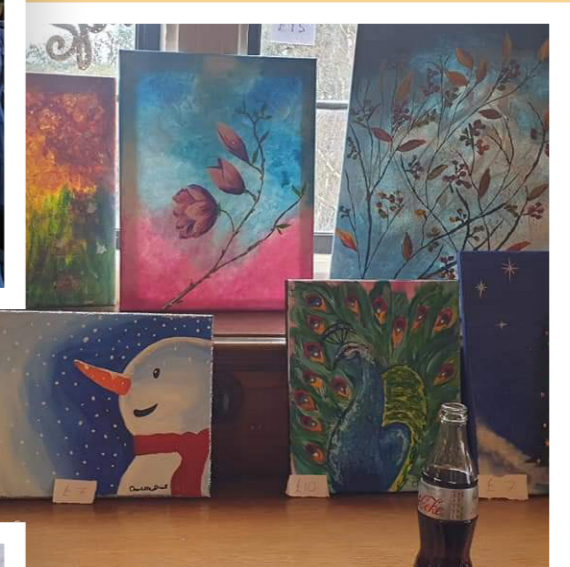
A fabulous array of art, books, dvds, sensory goods and jewellery awaited them.

Next year our Autistic Pride will be coupled with our Autistic Craft Fair! It is on July 25th 2020 in the grounds of Charlton House, we are so excited!

Thank you to:

- Elizabeth Chandler Jewellery
- Autism League
- Charlotte Nugent
- Hygge Me
- Emily Back
- Paint Hearted
- Emily Bowers
- Emma Darcy
- Alain English
- ADHD Greenwich
- BinkiBunni

For being part of our event.



MEETING SNAKES AND LIZARDS



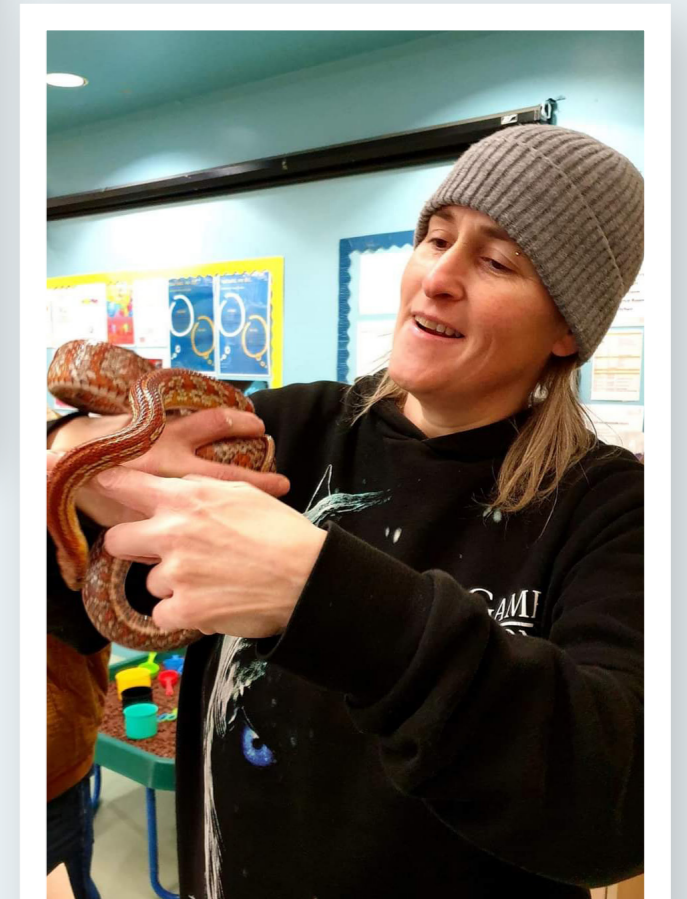
We were lucky enough to have two visits from Clare Elsey and her slithery Corn Snake Gavin!

Clare popped along to the AIM Brookhill session in November, and then braced the cold to come and see us at the AIM Thursday group in January.

The attendees loved interacting with Gavin, she's an inquisitive friendly girl and a sensory delight to hold. For some attendees it was the first interaction they had ever had with a reptile and the wonder on their faces was a joy to behold.

Following Clare's visit was Emma D'Arcy, who kindly came along in January with Buddy the Bearded Dragon. Buddy is a laid back fellow and was happy to chill and be petted, again it was some attendees first time meeting a lizard.

Thank you to both Clare and Emma, do come back soon with Gavin and Buddy!



WOOLWICH BARRACKS VISIT



In February our patron Dave Courtney was able to arrange a trip to Woolwich Barracks to visit their stables. We had an amazing tour led by Captain James Billingham. We saw all round the stables - which did not smell at all (a big concern of the children). The horses were beautiful.....and big! Some of us fed carrots to the horses after being shown the correct way to do so, and we enjoyed stroking them too.

We were shown the blacksmiths area where the horses are shod. Sadly the forges weren't in operation that day so we weren't able to see any horses being shod but we were all given a horseshoe each to take home for luck, much to everyone's delight.

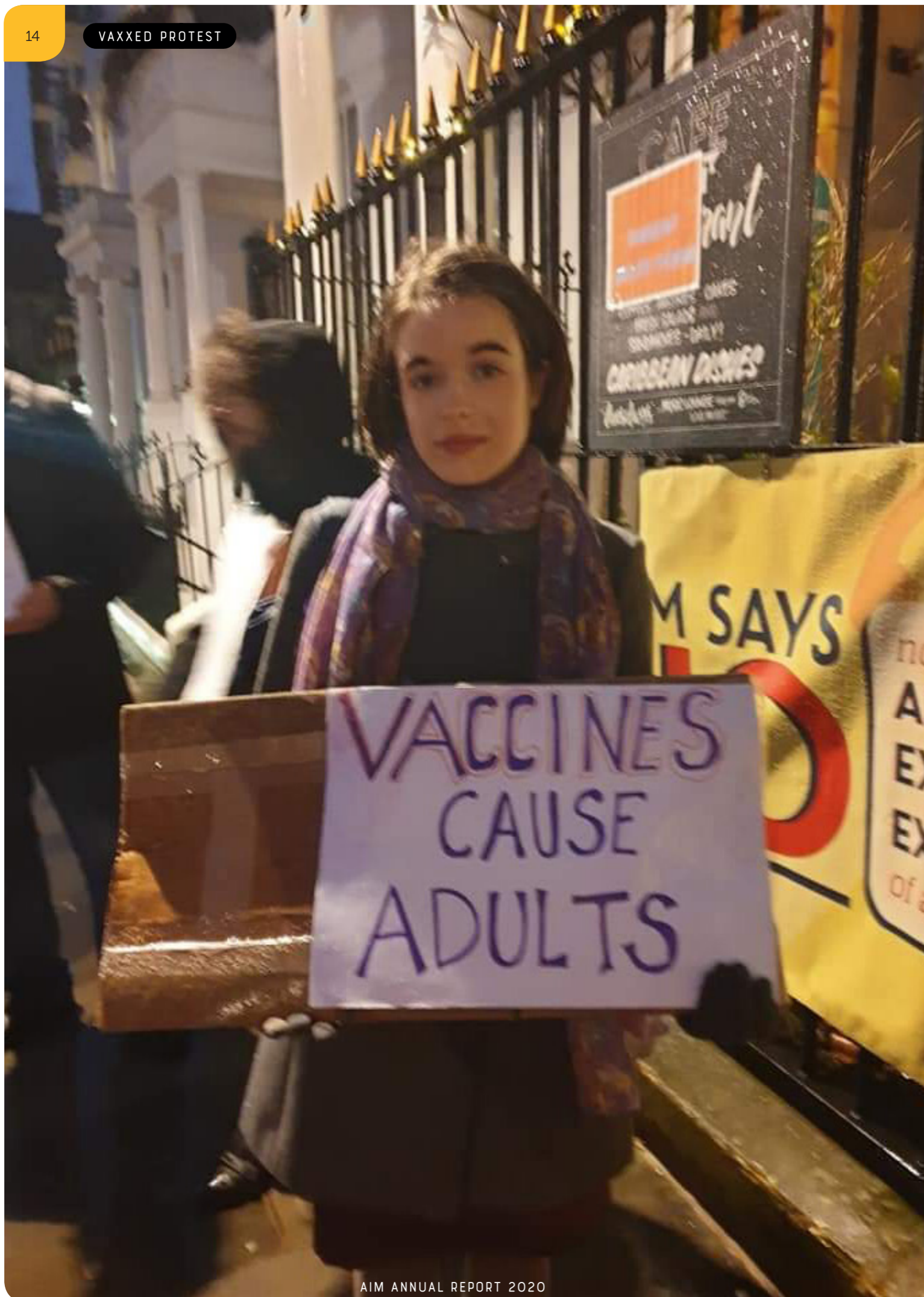
The tack room was also in our tour and we were able to see how the tack, saddles and bridles etc is hung up so it doesn't tangle. The whole room had a lovely warm smell of leather which everyone enjoyed.



We saw a huge room that housed the gun carriages and for some reason the carriage for state funerals was the most fascinating! All the carriages were beautiful though and there were a number of plaques with information about them that we enjoyed reading.

Last was a visit to the Tailors shop where the uniforms are made and repaired. There we were able to try on some of the uniforms while the tailors explained how in times gone by, the buttons on the uniform jackets could actually be used as shot in their rifles, and the gold used in the braiding was actually an early form of armour as it could help to deflect a sword strike. Amazing!

Sadly after this it was time to leave. We really enjoyed our visit and give our thanks to Dave, Captain Billingham and The Kings Troop, Royal Horse Artillery for allowing us to visit.



VAXXED PROTEST



When we here at AIM, heard the misinformation filled anti vaccine film 'Vaxxed', by discredited Andrew Wakefield and Polly Tommey had a sequel premiering in London, we had to go and protest it.

The first film was a compilation of testimonials by parents claiming their children were made autistic by the MMR vaccine.

They had no medical or scientific proof.

The parents were given sharpie pens and encouraged to write their autistic children's names on a large black bus with 'VAXXED' down the sides of it in red.

Each parent, and in some cases children, were given a 'vaccine injury number'. Many went on to have these numbers put onto t shirts which the children would be made to wear.



Vaxxed has falsely labelled Autism an epidemic and wrongly calls autistic people 'vaccine injured'.

The film 'Vaxxed 2: The People's Truth' was shown at the Tabernacle in West London on January the 26th, a converted church building owned by the local council.

Autistic people made their way from all over the country to hold up placards proclaiming 'Autistic Not Injured', 'Vaccines Cause Adults' and the following quotes given to us from David Robert Grimes PhD, Peter Hotez MD and Eve Switzer MD:

"After clean water, nothing saves more lives than vaccination. Unfortunately, disinformation wracks havoc on public confidence, driving a dark renaissance of once-conquered disease. There is no justification for perpetuating falsehoods about vaccination - we measure the cost of such mendacity in human lives."

David Robert Grimes PhD

"Our vaccines are safe and will save your child's life. Autism is not vaccine injury. The science is clear: Vaccines do not cause autism." - Peter Hotez MD PhD



"Vaccine misinformation, in print and on film, is harmful to children and directly responsible for outbreaks of diseases we shouldn't have to see anymore." - Eve Switzer MD FAAP

We are grateful for the support from these brilliant doctors and scientists, thank you to you all.

AIM's Jenny Payne and Emma Dalmayne took the AIM banner and stood outside the Tabernacle with many other autistic adults.

They were subjected to shouting, called Big Pharma Shills, were filmed by two women wearing Vaxxed lanyards and later in the evening Polly Tommey the Vaxxed Producer, was held back by Tabernacle security after attempting to rush at Emma.

We are proud to have educated the public that walked past on why we were there, many were in agreement with us and one even joined us for the last two hours to hold a placard!

A protest well done.

BESPOKEN THEATRE

Bespoken Theatre paid AIM's Thursday group visit in February, much to the delight of the attendees young and old!

They sent a social story that was a massive help with preparing the attendees.

Cherie and Abi brought a box of tactile and visual delights along with a large colourful parachute.

They wove the magic of imagination through these wonderful items and shared tales with the attendees through a free flow of sensory experience.

The parents had a great time joining in, remember, we are never to old to play!

A wonderful enriching experience for all involved!



Dear all at AIM

My name is Cherie.

I really like playing drama games with groups of young people across London.



I work with lots of young people in schools, youth groups, hospitals, education centres and libraries.

I work with my friend Abi and we also have a Theatre Company, called Bespoken.

Sometimes we put on plays, and people come to watch our plays.



We would really like to visit everyone at AIM one Thursday afternoon.

We would like to come and play some drama games with everyone.

We often sit in a small circle and play some fun games together.



We hope everyone will want to join in, but it is ok if someone wants to just watch and see what we do.



We look forward to meeting you all.

Cherie and Abi.



YOGA

"I really enjoy our yoga lessons at Aim. Kelly is our teacher. She brings lots of mats in a giant bag for us to use. Sometimes she brings a speaker to play music for us. My favourite yoga pose Kelly has taught me is Warrior Pose. I like yoga because it calms me down. It is relaxing. I especially like that if I don't feel like joining in, Kelly doesn't mind. Sometimes I will join in half way through or leave half way through but it's ok with Kelly. She just wants us to enjoy our classes which I do."

- Tabatha Challenger, aged 13
AIM Attendee



"I have been teaching at Aim for a year. Aim classes are my favourite. Aim is like joining a family. I have seen the children's self confidence and yoga skills develop so much over this time. The children teach me something new or provide me with a different perspective at every class. I am honoured to share my passion for yoga with Aim. Thank you for having me."

- Kelly McGuinness
Yoga Instructor at AIM



NIGHTINGALE SCHOOL VISIT

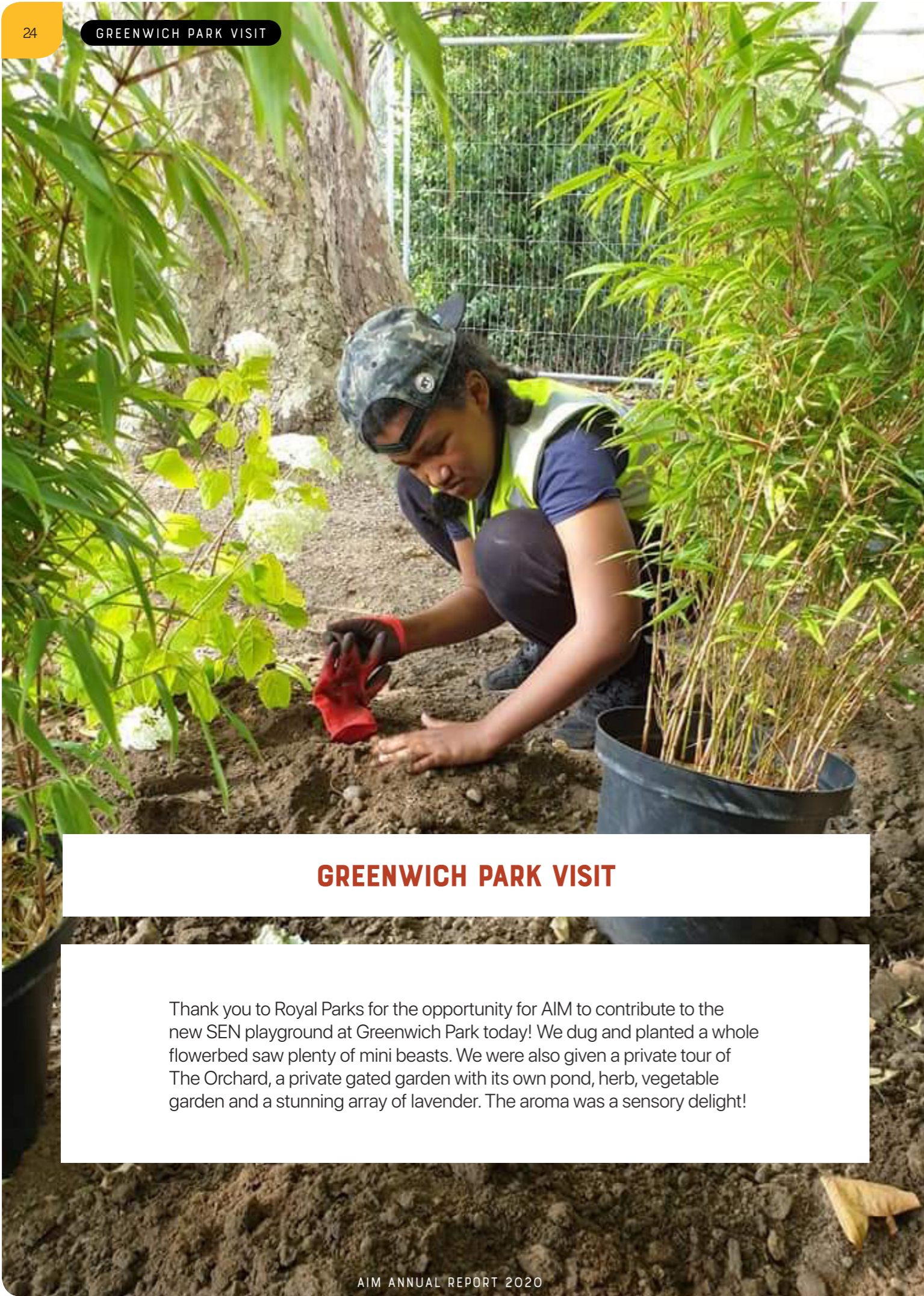
July saw the start of our last Sunday of the month drop in group at Nightingale Primary School, Plumstead.

Nightingale is a wonderful little local school with a fair sized hall and a football pitch, which we gratefully make use of.

Having the session on a Sunday gives families that would not otherwise be able to access us due to work commitments, a chance to meet each other over a cup of coffee.

The children enjoy the sensory play trays and even got to meet the school's rabbit and giant African land snails!



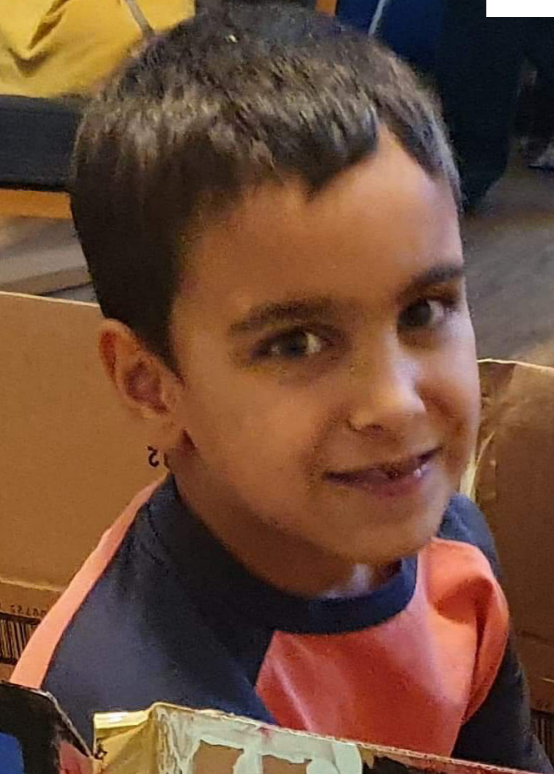


GREENWICH PARK VISIT

Thank you to Royal Parks for the opportunity for AIM to contribute to the new SEN playground at Greenwich Park today! We dug and planted a whole flowerbed saw plenty of mini beasts. We were also given a private tour of The Orchard, a private gated garden with its own pond, herb, vegetable garden and a stunning array of lavender. The aroma was a sensory delight!



MESSAGE FROM OLLIE



Our little attendee Oliver aged 7, asked for these photo's to be sent in too us while we are on lockdown.

His mum Dominica Nur said, "When he was going on Monday to the AIM group he was fascinated by the DLR model they have in the Brookhill centre. So he created his own one! And he said, "Please send to Emma, I love dlr on her group, and I'm missing that!"

We miss you too Oliver!

CHARLTON FOOTBALL CLUB

Football with Charlton Athletic continues to be very popular whether on the AstroTurf or in the dome during the winter months. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 it is yet another of our activities that has had to temporarily stop. The children love the coaches and learning new skills with each other. They cannot wait to return in due course for more fun.



COOKING TOGETHER



Our attendees had some wonderful cooking and art lessons with Emma Stewart and thoroughly enjoyed learning how to bake cupcakes with delicious colourful icing, cookies and pizza as well as learning how to do origami, card making and painting amongst others. The children thoroughly enjoyed these sessions and sharing their delightful creations with their parents afterwards.



McDONALD'S VISIT

Our AIM McDonald's meal for forty AIM attendees went brilliantly on the 2nd of December.

We have always found McDonald's to be generous and fully inclusive.

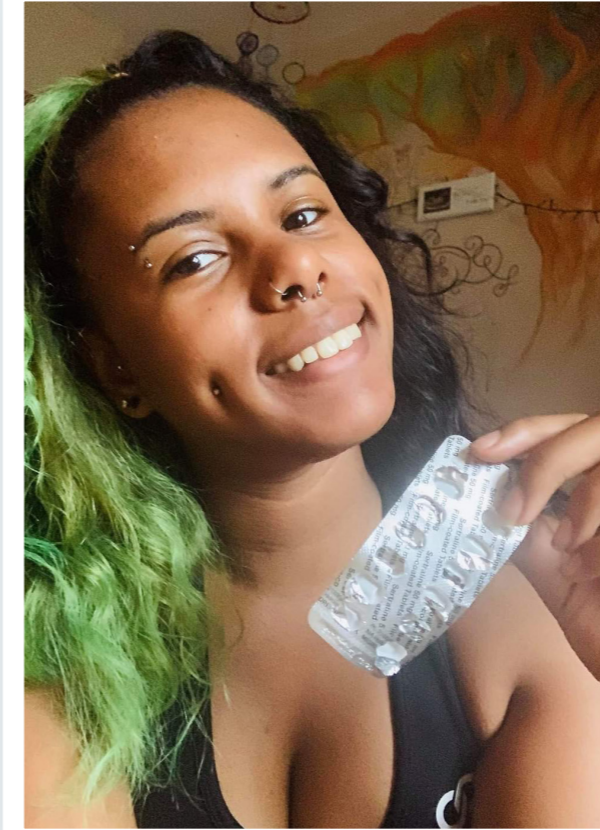
The party gave families who are normally unable to access a meal out a chance to socialise with others who fully understood where the other was coming from.

McDonalds kindly allows us exclusive use of the top floor in their Woolwich branch, it's lovely to be able to relax and watch everyone get on so well.

Thank you to McDonalds, see you again soon!



SHOW US YOUR MEDS CAMPAIGN



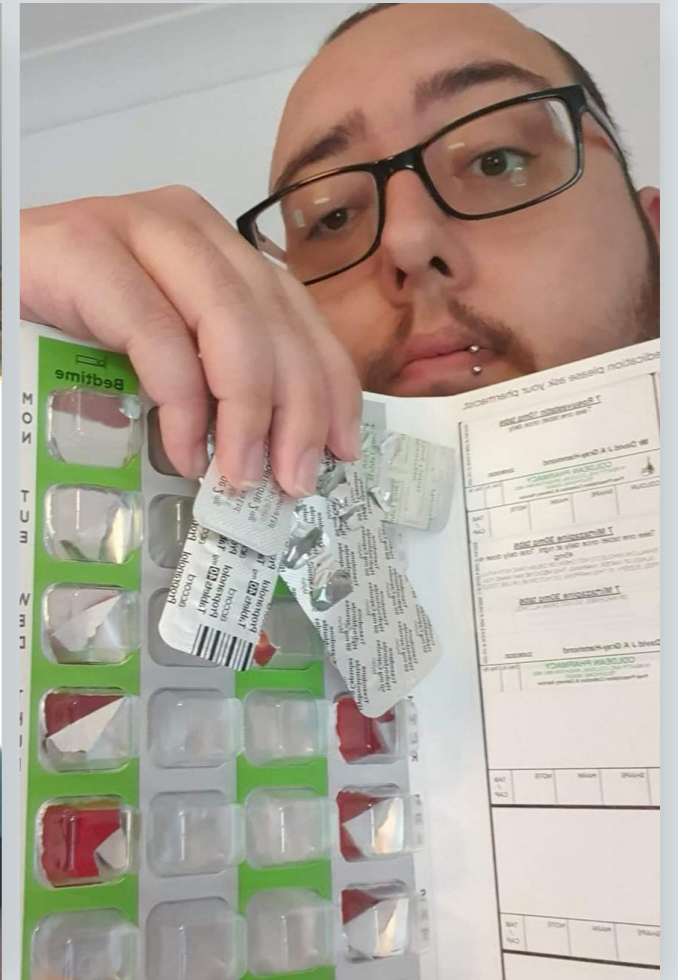
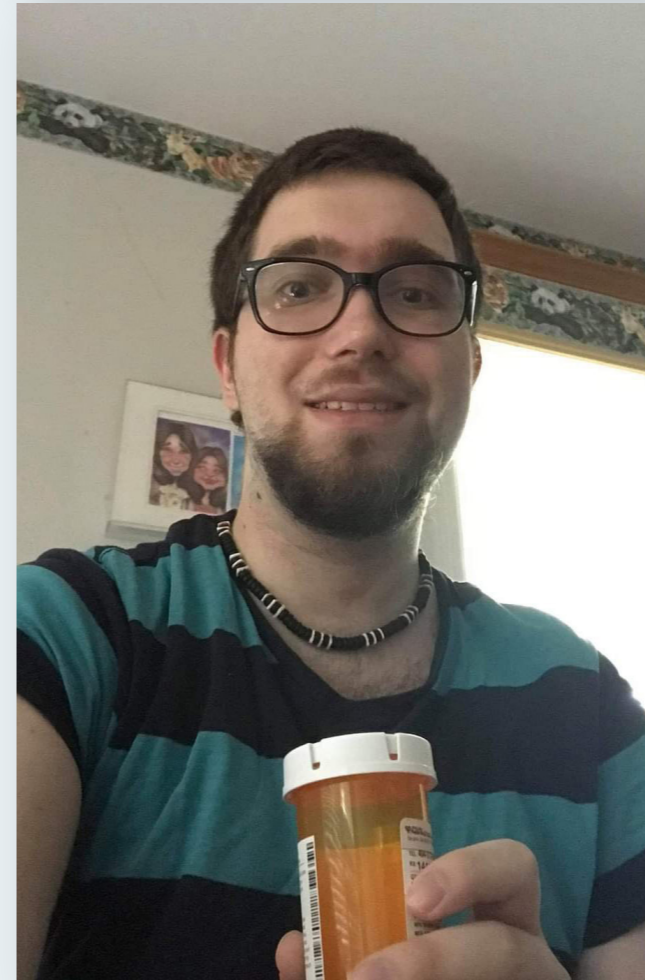
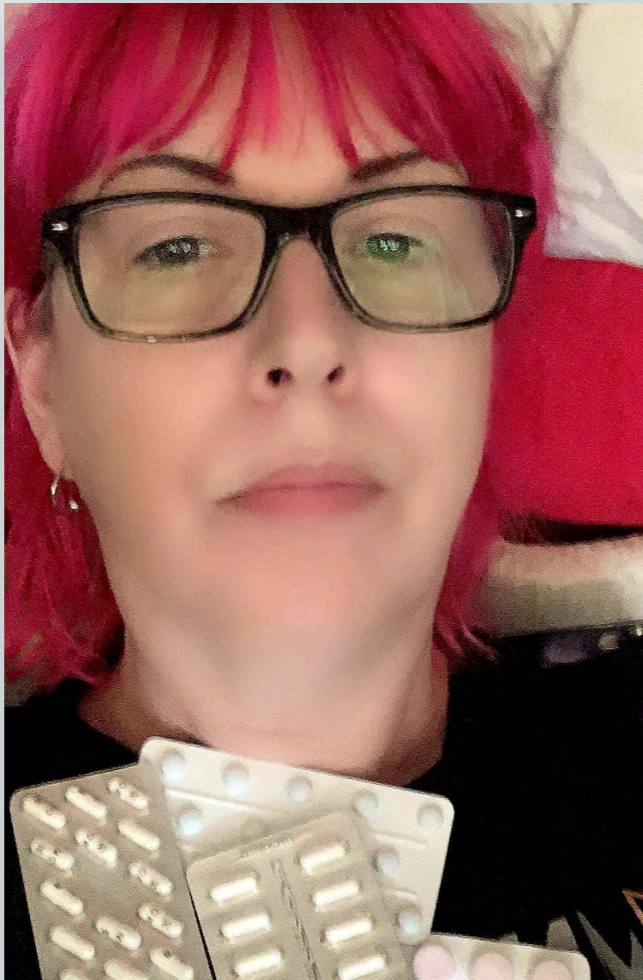
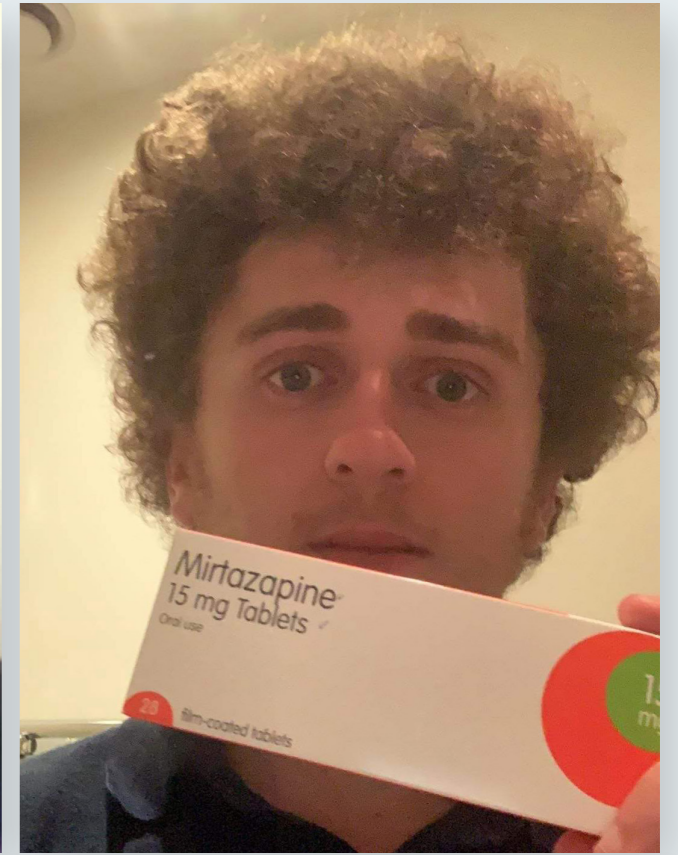
In July 2021 we launched a campaign to normalise medication, we called it #ShowUsYourMeds

We put it out on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook:

"When people hear Depression and anxiety, they immediately tell you to do yoga and go out and get exercise and we are ALL for that, but there's also nothing wrong with taking prescribed medication.

**So #ShowUsYourMeds
Remove the stigma"**

The response was amazing and it was covered in The Metro by Journalist James Martin, thanks to them!



FUTURE PLANS

We at Aim have always had a long term vision for our future. Many of you will know that we really would like to have our own premises, which would allow us to provide so much more to everyone who attends our groups. We are quite particular about what we want from the premises we eventually get.

A large kitchen to teach cooking,

A garden large enough to support the playing of ball games as well as bikes, trikes, swings and general play and of course some plant beds for growing flowers and vegetables for cooking with.

A sensory room.....or two if we could! One for calming lights and mirrors etc and one for the more noisy sound machines!

A library of helpful books for parents, carers and autistic members to borrow.

A library of sensory items such as weighted blankets and lap pads, and sensory toys that families can borrow to try before they spend huge amounts of money on something that may not suit them.

An office that can be used for families that need to speak privately, say for chats with a speech therapist or occupational therapist.

A quiet room for children and adults to chill out and relax in away from others.

A general room or even two rooms for noisier activities.

An arts room for those who want to draw or craft.

We would love to have dedicated days several times a year for outreach teams from SALT, OT, Dental etc to visit on a casual basis so people can ask general questions and get general advice. We have them now but would be nice to have them together in a larger space so parents can see how the teams work together to provide support for the families.

It's a lot to ask for we know. But we also know that one day we will have our dream.

Meantime we are very grateful indeed for the support of the venues we currently use and hope to continue our fantastic relationships with Charlton Athletic and Brookhill childrens Centre for a long time to come.





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