

Cygnets Group Information for 2020

What is Cygnets?

Cygnets is a locally provided parenting support programme for parents and carers of children/young people aged 5-18 who have a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). The course was developed by Barnardo's and its effectiveness has been supported by a number of studies.

The package of training was developed in the Bradford area by looking at existing parent training groups, examining research findings, a pilot training group and from consultations with parents/carers and professionals. Further information about the Cygnets course can be found at the following website: <https://barnardos-parenting.org.uk/cygnets-programme/>

Based on this previous research, an eight session parent training package has been developed by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) for parents/carers across Swindon whose children have been diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Condition.

Why might I be interested in coming to a Cygnets Group?

Parents have a lot of involvement with professionals up to and around the time of diagnosis, however they can feel that there is little available to them after diagnosis – at a time when they have a lot of questions about their child and what can help them. Children's needs also change over time so information and advice received when a child was younger may need to be updated to be relevant for the child/young person today. If you have therefore attended Early Bird or Early Bird Plus programmes (support programmes for parents/carers of pre-school children) you may still wish to attend Cygnets.

Attending the Cygnets group gives parents and carers an opportunity to better understand Autistic Spectrum Conditions. It offers practical strategies that you can implement at home, gives you a chance to meet with others in a similar position and hear about their experiences.

The training is presented quite informally. The materials are flexible and can be altered to suit the needs of particular groups of parents and carers.

Parents comments from previous courses

- *“Fantastic! Really enjoyable and helpful!”*
- *“Our biggest problems are related to behaviour so understanding our son's behaviour properly is a very big step!”*
- *“This has given me the tools to help with my child's communication.”*
- *“I can now identify my child's sensory issues and have ideas for practical strategies.”*
- *“The support of other group members is really valuable.”*

Overview of Sessions

Session 1:	Session 2:	Session 3:
Autism and diagnosis	Overview of Autism	Sensory Needs
Introduction to the group	Social Interaction	What are the senses?
Background to the group	Imagination, Rigidity & Strong Interests	What do we use them for?
Aims	Communication	Types of sensory issues seen in ASCs
Content	Sensory differences	Strategies to help
Introduction to ASCs	Strengths and differences	
What is it like to be autistic	Parent Journey	
Experience of the diagnosis		

Session 4:	Session 5:	Session 6:
Communication	Understanding Behaviour	Supporting Behaviour
Communication Building – Blocks and challenges	Understanding human behaviour	Star analysis
Understanding Communication	Outstanding behavioural issues linked to autism	Additional support ideas
Using Communication	Behavioral Frameworks	Evaluation
Communication strategies	Understanding the Iceberg Principle	

Session 7 and 8		
Puberty	Sexual Wellbeing	Relationships

Where and When Does the Group Run?

Sessions last approximately 2.5 hours each. If parents accept a place in the group they are expected to attend the majority of the eight sessions.

The dates: To be confirmed **Venue:** to be confirmed **Refreshments:** Tea and coffee will be provided

Do I have to attend all Sessions?

If possible, yes. You will gain a lot more from coming to the group if you come to all the sessions. This is because each session builds on the one before. Please do not accept a place in the group if you are only able to attend one or two sessions – you will not benefit from coming and may take the place of someone else who is able to come to all the sessions.

Attending a Cygnet programme? NB: *childcare is not available*

Under the Employment Act 2002 (parental leave), parents of disabled children are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid leave to care for their children. Parents must have worked for their employer for at least 100 days prior to taking leave and give 21 days notice of leave.

If you would like to attend a programme and are currently in employment, you may wish to talk through this legislation with your employer, to enable you to have time off to attend Cygnet.

For further information please refer to the Working Families website:
www.workingfamilies.org.uk or telephone: 0800 013 0313.

I would like to come, what do I do now?

Either a professional working with you can make a referral with your consent or a referral can be made direct by parents or carers. Your child needs to be aged 5-18 and have a diagnosis of Autism. Just complete a Cygnet Group Enrolment Form and return it to Business Support at the address below.

For further information please contact:

Educational Psychology – Cygnet 4 th Floor Wat Tyler West Swindon SN1 2JG	Email: enquiries@swindon.gov.uk Tel: 01793 466549 / 01793 463075
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