

Newsletter



***Pictured:** Tracy Blackwell (right) is supporting her successor Aurelie Leonard (left) to settle in as the charity's new Parent & Carer Forum Manager*

Our Exceptional Forum Managers

Many of you will recall that our Forum Manager, Tracy Blackwell, recently stood down from the role after almost 20 years.

Many years ago, Tracy helped set up our forum for local parents of children with special needs, Kids First, which today is probably the largest and longest running forum of its kind in London. Then, some 10 years ago, Tracy set up a new forum for carers of adults with learning disabilities and autism, Adults First, which now has over 300 members.

We recently congratulated Tracy for her hard work and commitment over the last 20 years which has been key to the charity's support of local parents and carers.

Tracy told us, "I have really enjoyed my work managing the Forums over the years, particularly working alongside our amazing parents and carers who run the forums and represent our members to make sure their voice is heard in planning local services".

The charity has since appointed Tracy's successor, Aurelie Leonard, who joined us in February as the new Forum Manager. Aurelie is excited about her new role, "I am very much looking forward to building on Tracy's brilliant work over the years and taking the Forums forward with the support of our fantastic parents and carers".

The Kids First steering group is looking forward to the future, "Tracy has done a wonderful job establishing Kids First as *the* forum for parents in Merton. We are so grateful for all her hard work and dedication to Kids First - we'll miss her enormously but we are also thrilled to welcome Aurelie on board as the new Forum manager".

The Adults First steering group feel likewise, "We were so sorry to see Tracy go after years of excellent work but we're really looking forward to working with Aurelie and are confident of continuing to run a great forum".

You will be pleased to know Tracy isn't leaving Merton Mencap altogether – we're delighted that she will be continuing her other role as Deputy Manager of our Community Café in Wimbledon!

Our new Forum Manager, Aurelie, looks forward to meeting parents and carers at our forthcoming Kids First and Adults First events, and can be contacted via the same email addresses and mobile telephone as Tracy had used:

For Kids First: kids.first@mertonmencap.org.uk

For Adults First: adults.first@mertonmencap.org.uk

Mobile: 07518 903 260

When you see this symbol, the information may be useful for parents/family carers of both children & adults



Merton Mencap's services

Information about all Merton Mencap services can be found on our website
<https://bit.ly/2MuL66G>

Kids First is Merton's Forum for Parent Carers of Children and Young People living or educated in Merton, aged 0-25, with a special need or disability (including mild to severe learning disabilities, complex medical needs, physical or sensory impairments, autistic spectrum disorders and others). We receive funding from the Department for Education and the London Borough of Merton. Our money is used to support representative work, help members to have a voice on how services for children and young people with SEND are shaped and delivered locally, and run our very popular events and information exchange meetings. We are members of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums.



The aims of the forum are:

- To make sure the voice of parent carers is heard in the design and delivery of services in Merton which affect children and young people with SEND
- To empower parent carers with information and knowledge
- To provide opportunities for parent carers to meet, share experiences and reduce isolation

The forum does this by providing regular educational workshops and events with experts, local service providers and key decision makers in the borough to give parent carers a voice and influence on local issues. We support parent carers to be representatives at all the important local meetings, committees and Boards in Merton, produce this twice-yearly newsletter, and keep our members up-to-date with the latest news throughout the year including forthcoming events and new local services.

The forum is run by a steering group of volunteer parent carers who decide on the business of the forum and represent our members at meetings and focus groups in Merton. Our steering group members currently represent you at the following meetings:

- **Autism Strategy Partnership Steering Group**
- **CAMHS Partnership Board**
- **Employability Forum**
- **Steering group monthly meetings with Merton's Director of Education & Early**

Help, the Head of SENDIS, health and social care colleagues

- **i-Thrive working group looking at the mental health support for neurodiverse CYP (currently on hold)**
- **Merton's Children's Trust**
- **Merton Health SEND Network**
- **MIASS Advisory Board**
- **Preparation for Adulthood Board**
- **SEND Local Offer Focus Group**
- **SEND Strategic Governance Board**
- **SENDAP Strategy action Plan**
- **Short Breaks review**



New special school/OHCA satellite provision update

by Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Director of Education and Early Help, London Borough of Merton

As you may be aware, the London Borough of Merton will be opening a Specialist Free School in collaboration with Orchard Hill Academy Trust (OHCA). As this is a Free School, the permanent site option is being managed by the Department for Education (DfE), and the site is still confidential for commercial reasons. The London Borough of Merton are working closely with the DfE and the earliest opening for the new school is now 2028.

The Council has needed to find an alternative means to ensure that the essential additional specialist school places could be available from this September 2025. We have worked with the OHCA to provide additional specialist places while the Free School is developed. The Chaucer Centre in Morden is going to be a satellite to one of OHCA's existing schools in Kingston, Bedelsford School.

<https://bedelsfordschool.org/chaucer-centre/>. The satellite site will provide 40 additional places for September 2025, increasing to 80 by September 2027. The project is running to schedule, both in the building and staff planning, with Sadie Cawood



appointed by OHCAT as the incoming Head of School, Bedelsford Chaucer Centre, and open events have been advertised and are being held in February.

Additional Support for Schools who are supporting children and young people awaiting specialist school placements:

In Merton and across London it has been identified that the number of pupils who require a special school to meet their Special Educational Needs (SEN) outnumbers the amount of specialist school provision available. If the LA has agreed that a pupil requires a change of provision from a mainstream setting to a specialist one, pupils are remaining in their mainstream education for a longer period of time whilst we secure a special school place. To support such Merton children and young people and their school settings, Merton has implemented the following support structures:

- Training and guidance to mainstream settings by Special School senior staff
- Support and guidance on adaption to the environment and curriculum to ensure that while the pupils are in a mainstream setting they are being supported as well as they can be.
- Additional funding for schools to access specialist support and staffing

In addition to the Bedelsford satellite site at the Chaucer centre Merton LA is currently working on further expansions to our Special Schools and our Additionally Resourced Provisions to create additional capacity for those pupils who require specialist settings.



Merton Children and Young People's Plan 2024 - 2028

In 2023, the Participation and Engagement team launched a survey to hear from children and young people in Merton on the key themes that were important to them. The survey was aimed at 8–24-year-olds who either live in Merton, study, or spend time socialising in the borough.

The plan is a result of what Merton heard; it will explain what the Council aims to achieve by 2028, and how they will do it.

Find out more about the Merton Children and Young People's Plan 2024 – 2028 by following the links, below:

A digital copy of the plan: [Merton Children and Young People Plan 2024-2028](#)

A visual summary of the plan: [Visual Summary - Merton CYP Plan 2024-28 0.jpg](#) | [Merton Partnership](#)

My Family, My Future, My Merton

Supported internships

National Mencap

Mencap supported internships are open to young people aged 16-24 with an EHCP.



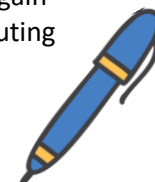
Mencap's supported internships are delivered to small groups and provide access to work experience opportunities with a wide range of employers across many different sectors, helping people to find paid work at the end of the programme.

Most of the programme is work-based, with learners required to complete at least 420 hours of work experience.

Learn more about it here: [Mencap Training Academy](#) | [Mencap](#)

London Borough of Merton

LBM Supported Internships are aimed at young people between 19–24 with learning disabilities and Autism with EHCP. Through structured support and mentorship, interns gain confidence and independence while contributing meaningfully to their host business.



Some key details about the internships:

- Located at Merton Civic Centre
- Based in-person 70% of the time
- Hours are between Mondays to Fridays, 9am – 3.30pm
- Placements hours are between 10am – 3pm
- 1 Hour per day of an employability session
- Interns have opportunities to try three different placements within the council over the year
- Interns will gain real on-the-job work experience

Eligibility:

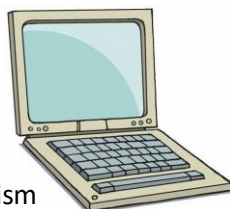
- Aged between 18 – 24 years old
- Have a learning disability and /or autism
- Have an EHCP
- Want to move into paid employment
- Can travel independently
- Have not already attended a Supported Internship

For more information about the Supported Internship, please contact:

Nichola Headings

Nichola.headings@merton.gov.uk

Mobile – 07585 996460



DFN Project Search

DFN Project SEARCH is a transition to work programme for 18-24 year olds, committed to transforming the lives of young people with learning disabilities and autism. The programme provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent-living skills to help young people make successful transitions to a productive adult life. The end goal is paid employment externally or internally.

Applicants will need an active EHCP to be considered for the programme.

Overall, Interns will gain new, key skills and develop a sense of independence when moving into paid employment.

Learn more about it here: [Project Search | CGS](#)

(Below image: DFN Project Search members on a tour of Parliament in February 2025)



Other information

MAPS – Merton Autism Parent Service



A support, information and advice service for parents of 0-25 year olds with a diagnosis of autism or who are likely to receive a diagnosis (e.g. referred for an assessment). Parent

Advisors offer support on communication, challenging behaviours, self-harming, sleep issues, anxiety and many other challenges.

We run on Wednesdays during school term time, between 10am-1pm. To book a session, contact Maria Solari on 07709 715206 or

maps.coordinator@mertonmencap.org.uk



Talk Autism

[Talk Autism - Merton Mencap](#)

A forum for parents and carers of children, young people and adults with autism in Merton.

Talk Autism runs monthly events for parents and carers on autism-related matters – for example, a talk about managing behaviours, establishing sleep patterns and routines.

Meet with other parents at the social events and through the Talk Autism group chat.

Contact Maria Solari on 07709 715206 or maps.coordinator@mertonmencap.org.uk



Merton Family Hub

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/family-support-parenting/hubs/overview>

The Merton Family Hub is a place where children, young people and their families can access the support, help and advice they need. It has brought together 24 'core' services to offer a variety of advice and support to families with children aged 0-19 (or up to 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.)

See the Merton Family Hub Directory SEND Support Section:

[Local Directories | SEND support \(Special education needs and disabilities\)](#)



Merton Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service (MIASS)

MIASS is co-commissioned by Merton Council and the NHS to provide free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and their parents/carers who live in Merton.

Based at Joseph Hood Primary School

Tel: 0208 543 8854

Email: miass@merton.gov.uk



KOOTH

An online counselling and emotional well-being platform for CYP over the age of 11, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop. Kooth's online counselling is used by over a million young people to support them with their mental health and wellbeing.

They offer online counselling and mental health support in partnership with the NHS. Kooth is free, anonymous and a safe space for your person to explore their feelings.

Their online counselling is delivered via live text chat with a qualified counsellor or trained practitioner. There are no waiting lists and you do not need to have seen a doctor first. Simply click their website link and join for free.



Learn more about them here:

<https://www.kooth.com/>

Enable: Social Prescribing Service for Young People in East Merton & Morden

Social Prescribers are here to listen to your young person and help them decide what they would like to do to feel healthier – mentally and physically.

They can help with managing stress, loneliness, meeting new people, gaining new skills, exercising, or learning more about employment, benefits, housing and legal advice.



People referred must be aged 13 - 19 (or up to 25 if they have additional needs) and live in or go to secondary school or be registered with a GP practice in the East Merton or Morden areas to access the service.

Contact here: call or message on 07756868692 or email cypmerton@enablelc.org. Find it here: [Local Directories \(merton.gov.uk\)](https://merton.gov.uk)

Merton Sensory Support Service (Sensory Team)

The Merton Sensory Support Service works with children and young people who have an impairment relating to hearing, sight and multi-sensory needs. Their aim is to work creatively with children, young person, families, schools, settings and other professionals to remove barriers that prevent them from living and learning as independently as possible.



Subscribe to their newsletter:

sarah.rendell@merton.gov.uk | SEN@merton.gov.uk

MAOS (Merton Autism Outreach Service)

MAOS is a **free service** that works in an advisory role with mainstream primary & secondary schools, supporting staff in developing their understanding of ASD and sharing tools and strategies to enable pupils to access learning and social opportunities.

The service is staffed by experienced professionals who have expertise in working with pupils with ASD in both mainstream and specialist settings.

What they can advise on:

- Organising and structuring the environment.
- Appropriate approaches and strategies.
- Structuring work and activities.
- Supporting transitions and unexpected events.

This service aims to support pupils with social & communication difficulties in their school setting and does not require the pupil to have a diagnosis to use this service.

Please contact your school SENCO to refer your child or young person to this service.



Merton CAMHS Early Years Service

Merton CAMHS Early Years Service is an early intervention service for children under the age of five.

They support children for healthy emotional and social development.



They offer 1-1 appointments with children, carers and families and listen to you and your child, and they also understand children through their behaviour and play.

They work with parents and carers to set goals together, and offer advice and support in understanding and improving concerns.

They work closely with your GP and other professionals including nursery teachers and health visitors, to get the best possible support for your child.

Contacting them

You can talk to your GP, health visitor, or any professional working with your child and ask for a referral to the Early Years Service.

After the referral is received, we will contact you to discuss further.



Independent Travel Training

Merton Mencap has a team of accredited travel trainers who support young people and adults with a learning disability and/or autism to become independent travellers. Find out more:

What is travel training? Travel training is practical support to help someone learn to travel on their own

Who provides training? Merton Mencap has 4 accredited travel trainers who are specialists at supporting young people and adults with learning disabilities and/or autism to become safe independent travellers.

Where does training take place? In the local community. Our travel trainers support people individually to learn to travel between two locations



(eg home to college) which may include using buses, trains, trams and negotiating roads.

When does training happen? Our travel trainers arrange training with the person and their families.

How long does travel training take? It depends on the person's abilities and the complexity of the route. Training generally takes between a few weeks and months.

Will the person being trained be left on their own? No. Until the student has learnt to travel safely, and unless parents and carers (and the student) feel otherwise, travel trainers will always accompany them.

What happens at the end of training? When our travel trainers feel training has reached its conclusion, they advise the person and their parent or carer. The decision to travel independently is up to the person and their parent or carers to agree.

Is there a cost to travel training? No. We provide our travel training service free of charge.

Can people give feedback after training ends?

Absolutely. After training ends, we invite the person and their parent or carer to tell us their experience to us.

How can I access travel training:

For travel training for a child/young person aged 11-25:

Jane Birchmore, Senior Independent Travel Trainer:
stream.leaderchildren@mertonmencap.org.uk

For training for an adult aged 25+: Jenny Lockett, Independent Travel Trainer:

travel.trainer3@mertonmencap.org.uk



Adults First

Adults First is Merton's forum for family carers of adults with learning disabilities and/or autism, aged 18 and over living or receiving services in Merton.

The aims of the forum are to provide information to carers which supports them in their caring role. In addition, the forum ensures that the voice of carers is heard in the design and delivery of services which affect them and the person they care for.

The forum does this by organising regular educational workshops and events with experts and local service providers, which also provides the opportunity for carers to meet each other, share experiences and practical support. We support carers to be representatives at all the important local meetings, committees and Boards in Merton and campaign on issues which improve the lives of carers and the person they care for. We also produce this twice-yearly newsletter and keep our members up to date with the latest news throughout the year.



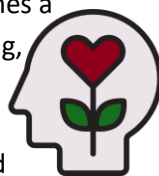
The forum is run by a steering group of volunteer family carers, who decide on the business of the forum and represent our members at meetings and focus groups in Merton. Our steering group members currently represent you at the following meetings:

All Saints Respite Monitoring Group: monitors respite care provision at All Saints Respite Centre in Merton. It provides respite care for adults with a learning disability and autism. The group is made up of officers from Vibrance, Merton commissioners, an officer from the Learning Disability Team, and two carer reps from Adults First. It meets three times a year to discuss the service, usage rates, staffing, issues, and other aspects.

Autism Partnership Steering Group:

Oversees Merton's 5-year Autism Strategy and action plan which is due for a refresh. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that Merton is an autism-friendly borough in which autistic people can reach their full potential. It encompasses children, young people and adults with autism, and takes into consideration the needs of families and carers.

Carers Strategy Implementation Board: oversees the implementation and progress of Merton's 5-year Carers Strategy launched in 2021 to improve the identification, recognition and support available to



Carers in the borough. **(This meeting is currently on hold).**

Employability Forum: Steering group members from Kids First and Adults First joined Merton's Employability Forum which oversees employability support and the development of supported internships in Merton. A Pathways to Employment booklet was finalised as part of this work and circulated to Kids First and Adults First members:

<https://bit.ly/3RMeEMv>

LD Forum: A rep attends meetings as well as planning meetings of the forum. Highlights issues raised by forum members and updates attendees about forum work and upcoming forum events.

Merton Health and Care Community Voice Forum:

This is currently on hold. The forum was made to replace the Patient Engagement Group (which an Adults First carer rep attended for many years), and to gather the views of people and organisations in the borough on all health and adult social care issues.

Preparation for Adulthood Board: monitors work to improve transition planning and preparation for adulthood and highlighting areas for improvement.

Stakeholder Reference Group: overseeing Merton's review of day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism to ensure the best possible outcome is achieved for people using the services.

Merton Healthwatch Advisory Group

Merton Healthwatch acts as the consumer champion for health and social care by making sure the views of people who use the services are heard. It also provides a monthly newsletter and tries to influence how services are set up and commissioned. The Advisory Group meets six times a year to support and advise the Healthwatch team on key areas of interest to local people, monitor progress, generally champion the public and patient views, and more.

Supported Living Framework: oversees the work around Merton's commissioning of the Supported Living Services Framework. This work involves looking at the specification and expectations from providers, co-creation of tender questions to providers and model answers and the possibility of being involved in the evaluation of tenders and longer-term involvement in monitoring meetings.

This meeting is currently on hold.

Adults First would love to have more steering group members so that we are truly representative of our membership. If you'd like to find out more about joining the steering group, please contact us (see page 12 for contact details) or have a chat with us at one of our sessions. And don't forget to read the minutes of steering group meetings to keep up to date with everything that is going on.

Tell us your issues!

Are you experiencing any problems with statutory services, such as issues relating to day services, direct payments, support living, health, Merton Adult Learning, planning for the future, respite, transport, communication, etc? If yes, please tell us about it. All issues are logged and used anonymously in our representative work. We also record positive experiences, so please tell us about those too!

af.admin@mertonmencap.org.uk

Carers Cards

A carer ID card is a physical card that allows you to identify yourself as a carer. Some cards offer discounts at certain venues; some have a code in which you can view your emergency carers plan. Venues may also offer discounts even if not listed on your card, depending on their individual policies for carers.

See below for a few companies offering carers' cards in the UK.

Carers Card UK

<https://www.carerscarduk.co.uk/>

Some things they offer:

- Their card helps you save with exclusive discounts
- Includes emergency contact details
- Offers access to their Wellbeing Hub, free events, the Carer Circle tool, and much more through their app. The 'Carer Circle' tool allows you to organise notes, tasks, appointments, and medication lists and you can invite family and friends to contribute.
- A scan code with your emergency carers plan, so someone can provide care in your absence
- Includes photo ID
- Their card fee is £8 for a 2-year membership.
- Available to all unpaid and paid carers.

National Disability Carers Card

<https://www.nationalcarerscard.org.uk/>

No documentation is required to apply for a National Carers Card at present, but you must self-certify by declaring on the application form that you look after someone who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, mental health condition or addiction.

Some features of the card and other information:

- Discounts at various venues including Disneyland Paris
- Photo ID, with date of birth

- The card is protected by high quality security features including a secure watermark over the card and more so it cannot be easily duplicated.
- Valid for 2 years for a one off £20 payment.



Forward Carers

<https://forwardcarers.org.uk/carers-id-cards/>

Some information:

- Proof that you are a carer when you are out and about
- Gives you access to their exclusive Carer Friendly Community and online support
- Provides In Case of Emergency (ICE) contact details
- Access to online and high street discounts
- Their digital card platform gives you access to: Advice & Guidance, Health Support (within your plan, you can access this advice for health concerns you have in your private online plan), Local Services (assisting you with locating nearby services).



Positive Behaviour Support

Join these face-to-face drop-in sessions to receive support with understanding and managing your cared for person's behaviour.

Join if you:

- Support an adult with a Learning Disability
- Struggle to make sense of any behaviours that you see

Come and meet **Mira** (Positive Behaviour Practitioner), and **Liz** (Speech & Language Therapist) to discuss any concerns around any behaviours of distress. **No referral required.**

How to book:

Simply turn up on the day or book in advance by contacting either Mira or Liz.

Mira - 0208 545 4549

Mira.Funga@merton.gov.uk

Liz - 0208 545 4395

Elizabeth.Edmonds@merton.gov.uk

Where: Sessions are generally at Jan Malinowski Centre (JMC) Riverside Drive, Mitcham, CR4 4BW Or All Saints Centre 44 All Saints Rd, Wimbledon SW19 1BX

When: Sessions usually take place on a monthly basis between 9:30 and 14:00.



Supporting unpaid carers at St George's – St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

St George's has recently added a webpage to their site about unpaid carers visiting and using services at St George's hospital. This page, co-designed with carers, offers resources to make your visit easier.

Some information from their webpage:

Carers play a vital role during outpatient visits, inpatient stays, or procedures, and we're here to support you:

- Join consultations and tests with consent and where it is safe.
- Speak on behalf of the person you support, with their permission.
- Request to stay with them during hospital stays, where practical.
- Let us know about other responsibilities you have so we can better support you.
- Share feedback to help us improve our services.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/supporting-unpaid-carers/>

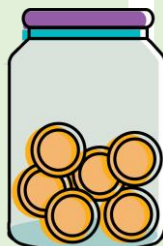
Pension Credit & other information – an update from Suzie Rollins, Merton's Welfare Benefits Co-ordinator

The following article contains information provided at a recent Adults First workshop during which Suzie Rollins presented. This workshop was the 'Welfare Benefits Advice including PIP (Personal Independence Payment), ESA (Employment and Support Allowance), Universal Credit, Carers Allowance and Attendance Allowance' session, which took place on Thursday 13 February 2025. Please be aware that some information may have changed since the above date.

Pension Credit (PC) is an income-related/means tested benefit made up of 2 parts - Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit made payable to people of retirement age.

It is made up of the following:

- **Guarantee Credit** tops up a weekly income if it's below *£218.15 (for single people) or *£332.95 (for



couples). You may still be eligible if you have savings (under £10,000) a pension or if you own your home.

- **Savings Credit** is an extra payment for people who saved some money towards their retirement, for example, a private pension or a work pension.

PC can be considered for someone of retirement age only, and for couples, both must be of retirement age before claiming pensions credit.

Some key notes are:

- The applicant must be in receipt of a state pension or soon to be receiving one within 3 months of the application
- You need to have savings of less than £10,000
- You must declare any other income, such as a private pension or work pension.

There has been an increase in PC applications compared to last year, following the government's announcement that the Winter Fuel Payments benefit would only be available for applications who are in receipt of PC.

Winter Fuel Payments benefit can help you pay your heating bills for winter 2024 to 2025. Applicants can receive between £200-£300. Please read more about this benefit and other support services for your heating bills, here: [Winter Fuel Payment: Overview - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)

Merton's Welfare Benefits team can support people in applying for PC and feel they have had a good success rate in terms of successful applications. Some of the applicants they are supporting have been awaiting decisions going back to November and December due to the increased volume of applications for this benefit.

The Welfare Benefits Team advises that people can apply if they meet the eligibility criteria even if they have other income.

Being eligible for even a small amount of PC benefit means that recipients can pursue other potential means tested benefits, such as support with rent and council tax.

Contact the Merton Welfare Benefits team for support with your application:

Telephone: 020 8545 4178

Email: welfarebenefitsteam@merton.gov.uk

You can contact the Pension Credit claim line here:

Tel: 0800 99 1234 - Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm to submit a telephone application.

Before you call, you will need:



- Your contact details, for example, telephone number
- Your date of birth and National Insurance number
- Your bank/building society account number and sort code
- Your work/private pension details
- Details of your savings/capital/investments
- Details of any other income you are currently receiving

The Pension Service can usually inform you straightaway if you are entitled to Pension Credit.

Other information

LD Carers Support Service

We support carers of adults through the completion of carers assessments and reviews, help with problems and enquiries relating to your caring role, and offer a listening ear and emotional support. Contact Yvonne Dawes on 020 3963 0595 or ldcarers.support@mertonmencap.org.uk

Carers Caseworker

We aim to improve the lives of carers of adults with learning disabilities and/or autism in Merton. We offer a range of support including a listening ear to talk through problems and possible solutions. We help the carer and the person they care for better understand the local services on offer. Contact Carolyn Doyle on 07815 462913 or LDCarers.caseworker@mertonmencap.org.uk

Community Facilitator

We provide support for adults with a learning disability and/or autism to plan their lives, reach their goals and get the most from life. This may involve helping someone to be aware of services that are available and offering short-term support during a particular difficulty including post Covid-related issues.

Contact **Maria Solari** on 07709 715 206

Email: community.facilitator@mertonmencap.org.uk

Visit for more: [LD Carers Support - Merton Mencap](#)

Talk Autism

Talk Autism is a forum for parents and carers of children, young people and adults with autism. Talk Autism is free to join and provides monthly events for parents and carers on matters relating to autism – for example, a specialist speaker giving a talk on managing behaviours, establishing sleep patterns and routines. Talk Autism also includes social events where parents and carers may develop peer support and friendships.

Joining Talk Autism is free and easy. Simply contact Maria here: 07709 715 206 /

maps.coordinator@mertonmencap.org.uk

Read more here: [Talk Autism - Merton Mencap](#)



Online counselling service for people who find it difficult to leave the house

Wimbledon Guild is offering free online counselling service for people who are housebound.

Sessions will take place either online via Zoom or by telephone with a qualified counsellor who understands the impact that being housebound can have on mental health.

Eligibility:

- You struggle to leave your home
- You are over 18
- You live, work or study in Merton
- You need help with mild to moderate mental health issues
- You can attend weekly sessions at the same day and time



Book here:

Tel: 020 8296 0030

Email: counselling@wimbledonguild.co.uk

Learn more here:

<https://www.wimbledonguild.co.uk/how-we-help/talking-therapies/online-counselling-housebound>

Motivate Merton

Motivate Merton is a partnership of 10 Merton, You-focused organisations. The aim is to help young people develop, grow, and reach their full potential, becoming active citizens who contribute positively to their communities and broader society.

Learn more:

<https://www.mertonconnected.co.uk/organisations/motivatemerton>



Propel

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MAYOR OF LONDON

The Merton Mencap Community Café

(All photos were taken at the Merton Mencap Community Café)

Our Community Café is open to the public each Monday and Wednesday from 10.45am to 2pm at the Holy Trinity Church, The Broadway, Wimbledon, and offers a range of healthy home-made hot and cold dishes. The Café is run by adults with a learning disability, supported by Merton Mencap staff and volunteers.

The café functions as most cafés would, serving and taking food orders with many of the cakes and menu items being freshly made on-site.

A little bit of information about vocation training at our café:

- Mild and moderate learning disabilities and/or autism
- Mondays and/or Wednesdays, 10.45am to 2pm
- Self-referral
- Funded by personal budget/direct payment holders/self-funders

It provides vocational and practical training, and the opportunity for adults with a learning disability and/or autism to learn skills which will also help them throughout their life.

Our menu

We offer a variety of menu items, depending upon the season. We also offer a range of vegan, vegetarian, gluten free and dairy free options. Some of this may depend on the menu at the time.

- Quiches
- Cakes
- Soups
- Sweet potato chilli
- Milkshakes
- Summer drinks
- Coffees, teas and juices

The café is wheelchair accessible, and we are working with the Dementia Hub to also make it dementia friendly, so that it is more accessible for people with dementia.



(Image of dementia awareness training in progress)

Make sure to follow the café on social media to see their updates every week.

X/Twitter: <https://x.com/MertonMencap>

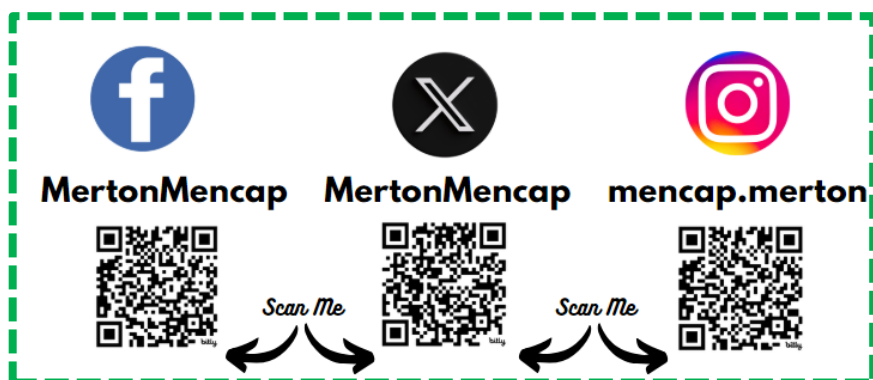
Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/MertonMencap>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/mencap.merton/>

Scan the codes below to visit our social media pages:



Upcoming Workshops & Events

Joint Kids First and Adults First sessions

Planning for the Future with Wills and Trusts

With Philip Warford, Managing Director of Renaissance Legal

Thursday 24 April 2025, 10am to 11:30am (Zoom meeting)

Philip Warford, Lawyer and specialist in planning for the future of disabled and vulnerable people, will deliver a talk about the options available to protect a disabled person using specialist Wills and Trusts. Book by Thursday 17 April!

Mental Capacity, Lasting Power of Attorneys and Deputyships explained

When: Wednesday 30 April 2025, 10am to 11.30am (Zoom meeting)

With Phillip Warford, Managing Director of Renaissance Legal

If you are a parent or carer of a child, young person or adult who may not be able to make decisions about their welfare and finances now or in the future, you will need to consider the best ways to protect them. Book by Tuesday 22 April!



Kids First

Thursday 22nd May, 10am-12pm (in-person)

Off The Record & KOOTH – Hear about the support available to young people struggling with emotional and well-being issues.

Tuesday 10th June, 10am-12pm (on Zoom)

Support for siblings of children with special needs and disabilities – Hear about this from the organisations 'Sibs' and 'Carers First'.

Friday 4th July, 10am-12pm (Zoom/in-person/TBC)

Send Update – Hear the latest news from senior officers in Merton.

For more information on the online and in-person sessions, click the link: <https://bit.ly/42ro3Nb>

**We hope
to see
you there!**



Adults First

Tuesday 27 May, 10am-12pm (in-person)

Making Merton Dementia Friendly – Learn about brain health and signs to look out for. Hear from Merton Memory Hub / Alzheimer's Society.

Tuesday 17th of June, 10am-12pm (in-person)

Visiting Supported Living Sites – Hear further from LBM following their visits to Supported Living sites run by the council such as the Gables.

Thursday 17th July, 10am-12pm (on Zoom)

Merton Carers First – Find out more about the support available for carers and families of adults with learning disabilities.

For more information on the online and in-person sessions, click the link: <https://bit.ly/488CAib>

Tell us your issues!

Are you experiencing any problems with statutory services, the NHS, your child's school, etc? If yes, please tell us about it. You can use one of our issues forms (download from our website) or just email us with the information. All issues are logged and used anonymously in our representative work with the LA and the SW London Integrated Care System. We also record positive experiences, so please tell us about them too! kf.admin@mertonmencap.org.uk

Watch our event recordings

Click the link to watch some of our event recordings. Contact Tuhina to request event slides or more:

<https://bit.ly/4hrFt2b>



Contact us!

Aurelie Leonard

Parent & Carer Forums Manager

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Contact us!

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