

# **A**ssert **Newsletter**

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Assert newsletter. We hope everyone had a good summer and had the opportunity to enjoy some sunshine.

## **Assert Champions**

Assert are excited to be launching our **Assert Champions Scheme**. We hope to encourage service users, members and supporters of Assert to help us maintain our services in the future and sign up to become an Assert Champion.

### **What does becoming an Assert Champion mean?**

Being an Assert Champion is a huge support to us and it helps us to maintain services and plan for the future. Accessing funding is more and more demanding for smaller charities who do not have the capacity to have dedicated fundraisers.

In our last financial year, just 2.5% of our income came from individual donations. Our largest income source is different trusts and foundations, followed by contracts from statutory funding and then other earned income. In July 2017, we had a shortfall in funding of almost £5500.

As accessing funding from local government and trusts becomes more and more difficult, we need your support to help with fundraising and increase the amount we receive from donations. Assert has managed to keep all of its services free of charge and we will endeavour to maintain this as we pride ourselves on being accessible to all.

There are many ways you could support Assert with fundraising. Examples of one-off ways to support Assert include: organising a fundraising event, being sponsored for an activity or event and legacy giving (leaving a donation to Assert in your will). There are also online fundraising tools such as 'Give as you Live' and Amazon Prime.

Getting monthly or annual donations at Assert really helps us in planning for and securing our projects going forward. This is why we are launching Assert Champions (AC).

Assert have a vision to achieve 25% of our income from individual giving in the future. We are asking if people would consider signing up to monthly giving by setting up a standing order each month to Assert, or donating any amount as a one-off donation.



Monthly giving can be set up from as little as £3 per month. If just 50% of people who are registered with Assert donated this each month, we would be able to generate an additional £14,400 of income each year.

To become an AC we ask that people sign up to monthly giving from as little as £3 a month, or make an annual donation of at least £30. You can give more if you wish. It's simple to donate by setting up a standing order or regular payment through PayPal. One-off donations can also be made via the 'Donate to Assert' tab on our website or by PayPal, BACS or cheque.

If you are a UK taxpayer we can also claim an additional 25% Gift Aid on your donation, meaning an even larger donation to Assert can be achieved.

Knowing that we have these additional and regular income avenues means that Assert can be more secure in its longevity and possibilities to extend services.

### **As an Assert Champion you receive:**

- Membership of Assert and a vote at our AGM (optional).
- Assert Champion welcome letter and thank you card.
- Assert Champion pen.
- Assert Champion keyring loop.
- Optional 'thank you' listing on our website. There will be a dedicated page for Assert Champions and a list of names of our supporters.
- Invitation to the Assert Champion coffee morning. The Breakfast of Assert Champions!



If you are interested in becoming an Assert Champion and supporting our work and services in future, please get in touch. We would hugely appreciate your support in helping Assert to maintain its services.

For a registration pack please contact [sarahb@assertbh.org.uk](mailto:sarahb@assertbh.org.uk) or call 01273 234853.

I would like to thank Deborah Tompsett's Mum and Dad (Vicki and Mike) for the in-memory donations to Assert that were an alternative to flowers at Deborah's funeral. We are all missing her smile.

If you have any ideas for fundraising for Assert, please get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

### **Give as you Live now available in the app store**

If you use 'Give as you Live' to raise funds for Assert, there is now a free app for iPhone and iPad, with the Android version coming soon.



## Annual Day Trip

This year's annual day trip was to **Chessington World of Adventures**. Twenty intrepid explorers packed waterproofs and caught the coach from Brighton last Saturday. The forecast was for heavy rain but this didn't dampen people's spirits. We split off into groups when we arrived, with some wanting to experience the big (and in my opinion very scary) rides and others just happy to wander around seeing the animals.

As the rain started to get heavier we all met for lunch, luckily under cover, before heading back into the park. Sarah's group had a lucky escape when the log flume broke just before they were about to get on and they watched people being escorted off the ride. Julia's thrill seekers group enjoyed getting soaked on Rameses Revenge and getting dizzy on The Cobra. Many of us enjoyed the new Gruffalo ride, which did bear a surprising resemblance to Professor Burp's Bubbleworks!



We saw rhinos and a whole family of giraffes on the Zufari ride, though many of the other animals had decided to stay inside out of the rain. The lions, tigers and gorillas came out looking majestic on the Trail of Kings and in the Sealife Centre we found that you could get a mini manicure courtesy of the 'cleaner shrimp'.

Thank you to everyone who came and made the day so much fun.

**Cat Hogan-Jones**

If you have any ideas for activities that you would like to do, please come and talk to me at a drop-in or email, phone or text me: [activities@assertbh.org.uk](mailto:activities@assertbh.org.uk) 07950 277420

## Activities

August's activity was **weighted blanket making** and we were a small but select group—which was good as the room was tiny! Due to the size of the room and the amount of rice needed to make the blankets, each person made one to fit inside a pillow case. These were very effective to lie on your chest, we found, with one or two people testing them out at the end and nearly falling asleep! We found out several things during the workshop: 1, that duct tape has a very annoying habit of sticking to itself; 2, that rice gets everywhere no matter how careful you try to be; and 3, that 100% Egyptian cotton pillowcases are the best to cover your weighted blanket!



Assisted by two of our lovely volunteers, David and Cristina, our group spent a good hour filling bags, laying them out on the table (avoiding the bags of the person next to you) and then launching into the fight with the roll of duct tape that wanted to stick to itself far more than it wanted to participate with the activity in a useful way. But in the end everyone was successful and went away with a weighted blanket that was useable. It was decided that if the activity was to be done in future even more rice would be needed to make them heavier, though I might have to do some weight lifting before then to build up my arm strength!



Thank you to all who came—as you can see, everyone enjoyed themselves.

We have lots of upcoming activities to look forward to including a **walking tour** of Hove, learning about the Historic Women who lived there, another **craft session** in November and the **Christmas Meal** in December.

## Benefits Update

The full-service rollout for Universal Credit continues and in June 2018 full service went live in Mid Sussex, meaning people living in Haywards Heath & Horsham wishing to make a new claim for Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit or Job Seekers Allowance will need to make a claim for Universal Credit. These changes also went live in Worthing in July 2018 and full service is scheduled to go live in Lewes and Newhaven in September 2018.

Please note, these changes will only affect claimants wishing to make a new claim for any of the above 'legacy' benefits, or claimants whose circumstances have changed where this change would ordinarily prompt a new benefit claim. 'Managed migration' (where the DWP will transfer claimants of the above 6 'legacy' benefits) is scheduled to commence gradually across the country from January 2019, although no further details of the scheduling of this are available and this date may be subject to change.

## Autism Alert Cards

Autism, being a hidden condition, can often be missed by others. This can lead to difficult situations, especially when an autistic person is feeling overwhelmed and may be unable to communicate effectively. One example of this could be when emergency services have been called. This is a stressful situation, and may cause difficulties in communicating to the emergency services.

There are a number of alert cards that can help support in these incidences. These alert cards can be shown to emergency services, shop assistants or anybody that someone may need a little help communicating with. They will simply show that there may be some communication difficulties and, hopefully, indicate to that person to take a little more care with how they interact with the person presenting the card.

Following are the alert cards we know about:

**Autism Alert Card—National Autistic Society:** A mini-information pack, designed for adults, for situations when communication may be difficult. Developed by the NAS in consultation with people with autism or Asperger syndrome and their families. The pack includes a key facts leaflet about autism and a credit-card style insert for emergency contacts. There is a cost of £2.50. More info can be found here: <https://www.autism.org.uk/products/free-resources/autism-alert-cards.aspx>

**Autism Alert Cards—The Curly Hair Project:** 2 part plastic card—card + fob card. Fob card has a hole to put on your keyring or to wear round your neck. 0.76 mm thick (same thickness as standard credit card). Two signature strips on reverse—one for your name, one for your carer's details. Show your card whenever you need to tell someone about your condition. There is a cost of £6.00. More info can be found here: <https://thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk/autism-alert-cards/>

**Pegasus Scheme—Sussex Police:** Anyone who has a condition, disability or illness that may make it hard to communicate with the police in an emergency or difficult situation can register for a Pegasus card. You will then be issued with a personal identification number (PIN) you can use when calling the police. If you need to call, you tell them your PIN and they can access your details right away. You can also show your card to a police officer, member of police staff or other emergency services staff should you require assistance in person. When you show the card to someone, this will let the officer or emergency services worker know that you may require additional help and support. This is a free service. More info can be found here:

<https://sussex.police.uk/contact-us/accessible-contact-methods/pegasus-scheme/>

**Emergency Card—South-East Ambulance Service:** South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, (SECAMB), has a series of alert cards designed to support people with learning disabilities and difficulties with communication. The card aims to assist people by informing others about their condition and how they might be helped. A series of cards can be displayed in a clear plastic wallet and can be shown if the holder needs: help from the ambulance service or other health care providers; help from other emergency services; support from their contacts; help in difficult or stressful situations; help on public transport; to explain about their disability; or to alert others of their needs to communicate more effectively. Free of charge. More info can be found here:

[www.healthwatchmedway.co.uk/article-secamb\\_launches\\_learning\\_disability\\_alert\\_card.html](http://www.healthwatchmedway.co.uk/article-secamb_launches_learning_disability_alert_card.html)

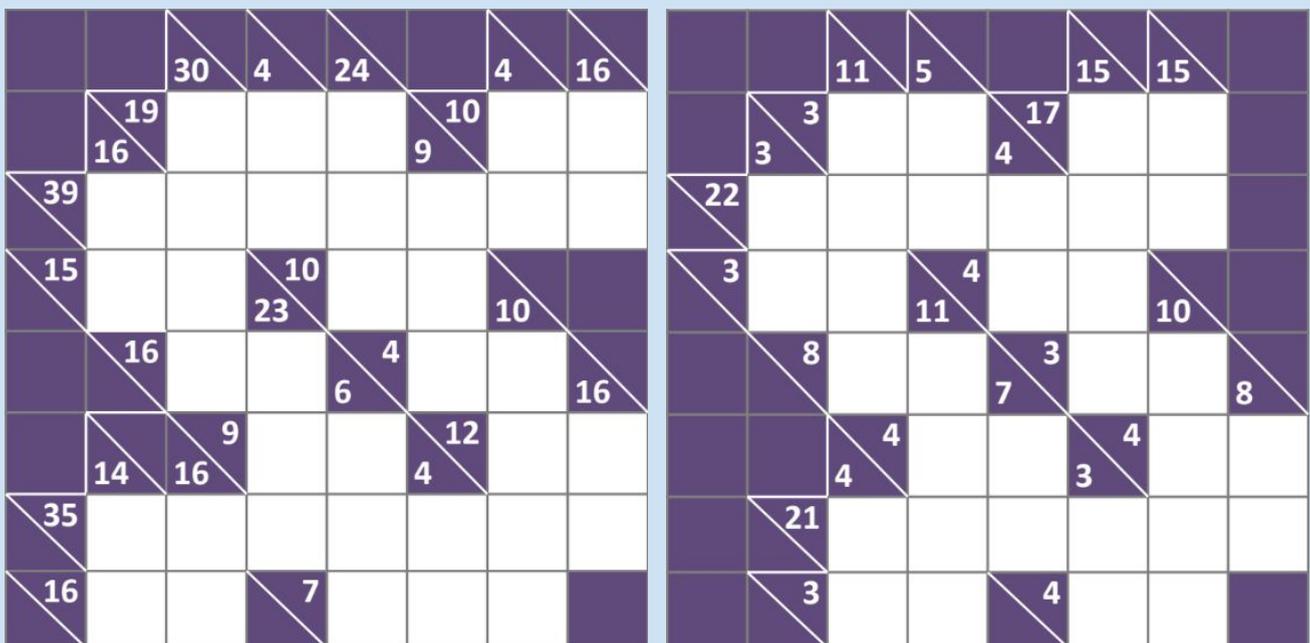
**National Disabled Identification Card (DID):** The aim of the National DID Card is to remove the need for individuals to carry their paper documentation with them at all times. The card will have a photograph of the cardholder and will only be issued to disabled people who are in receipt of some form of disability allowance or medical evidence to support your application. The card can be used as proof that they are in receipt of an eligible benefit and therefore entitled to gain entry at concessionary rate. Many establishments, theatres, museums, attractions, leisure facilities etc. offer concessionary prices for disabled people and in some cases offer free entry to another person assisting the disabled person. More info can be found here: <https://www.did-card.co.uk/>

None of these cards are associated with Assert in any way, but if you need any help with applying for them you are welcome to book a casework meeting with myself.

**Liam Ragless**

**Puzzles**

If you are into sudokus but looking for a change, kakuro puzzles may be just the thing. Although they have a similar look, the rules are quite a bit different. To solve these you will need to add numbers together, which is great for a little extra mental exercise.



**Kakuro Rules**

Just like in sudoku, fill in the grid with the digits from 1 to 9. Each group of digits must add up to the number that is just to the left or above it. No group can repeat the same digit twice.

Although they are aligned vertically or horizontally, a group does not necessarily span the whole column or row. This means that although you may not repeat a digit within a group, you may repeat it within a column or row. There is no requirement to use all of the digits.

**Solutions on page 8**

## Assert Member Article

I wish I stimmed more. I have a lot of internalised shame around being viewed as Autistic because I have been treated badly for such a long time for being different so when I was young I shut down my ability to stim. I watch my friends with Asperger's and people at drop ins stimming and I admire them so much. I would love to be able to feel like I could be myself and inhabit the world unapologetically as myself and take up as much space as the next person. When I am with other people like me I can relax and I do let myself stim a little bit and it gives me such relief. I feel waves of stress just fall off me.

The relief I feel when I stim got me thinking. I decided to look up on the internet what I could find out about it. What I learnt was that people with Autism often have trouble filtering out excess information that neuro-typical brains ignore. This means I am being overloaded with information and struggle to keep on top of activities because of outside stimuli. Stimming helps with this. Stimming allows people like me to process and almost 'shake off' the extra information that is clouding my thinking, emotions and what I am doing. Stimming is an asset. Stimming is a performance enhancing activity.

Choice is important to me. If I am stressed and not stimming to help me process, I am not in control of my emotions or behaviour and things run away with me. In these situations I am just reacting, I am not thinking and responding. Because I am a neuro-atypical in a neuro-typical world I find it hard to get by because I don't have their filter. When I stim I am much more able to choose what I want to say or how I want to react to something because I am able to process the information so much more easily, process out excess information and am less stressed. I have choice. I have choice in my behaviour, responses and repercussions.

Before I was diagnosed in 2009 and for many, many years after I still didn't understand my condition or myself. I didn't know how to be me. I was living in fear and shame and just wanted to be invisible and 'pass' for neuro-typical and hide away. Recently I have been learning about stimming, women with Autism and women with Autism and mental health conditions. I have found that due to my Autism I struggle not only with understanding other people but also me.

I am choosing now to learn how to be me. I am choosing to learn how to be the best real Autistic me I can be. I am choosing to relearn how to stim. I am choosing to be happy and proud in my skin.

### Anonymous

#### Facebook and Twitter

Assert have a Twitter account and a new Facebook page. Follow us to get updates on activities, news and other general info.

Twitter: [twitter.com/ASSERT\\_BH](https://twitter.com/ASSERT_BH)

Facebook: [facebook.com/assertbandh](https://facebook.com/assertbandh)

# GIVING TUESDAY

This #GivingTuesday, Facebook will match donations of up to £200,000 made through the site.

**Giving Tuesday is a national fundraising scheme that takes place on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November.**

Facebook has announced that it will match £400 per fundraiser and £10,000 per charity on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November, the global day to do good stuff. Facebook will begin matching donations to charities at 12am local time in the UK, and will continue matching donations to charities until the £200K in matching funds runs out. Just give via the donate button on the Assert Facebook page on Giving Tuesday (27<sup>th</sup> November) from midnight.

## Solutions (Kakuro, page 6)

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	3	1	6	2	4	5	
	1	2		1	3		

## Newsletter Contributions

Contact Assert if you have suggestions for the newsletter, or would like us to include something from you such as a poem or article you have written, artwork or photos:

[assert.bh@assertbh.org.uk](mailto:assert.bh@assertbh.org.uk)



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## Change of contact details?

Have you moved house, or changed your phone number or email address? If so, please get in touch and let us know your new contact details.