

SIGN UP FOR AN  
ULTRA CHALLENGE  
TO RAISE FUNDS  
FOR  
AUTISM FORWARD

ADVANCES IN AUTISM  
PUBLISHES  
RESEARCH PAPER BY  
AUTISM FORWARD  
MENTORS

MERSEYSIDE AUTISTIC  
ADULTS SUPPORT  
GROUP SET UP BY  
AUTISM FORWARD  
GRANT HOLDER

NATIONAL AUTISTIC  
SOCIETY LAUNCHES  
AUTISM AT WORK  
ONLINE SUMMIT  
4 & 5 MARCH 2021

# AUTISM FORWARD NEWS

## Ultra Challenge Series 2021

If you are looking for a target for your lockdown training, why not sign up for a 100km, 50km or 25km Ultra Challenge and walk, jog or run your way along one of 14 courses across the UK. The events are brilliantly organised with full support and rest stops along the way. Autism Forward is now a listed charity with the [Ultra Challenge Series](#) and [Just Giving](#).

Further details of the Ultra Challenge events, including minimum charity fundraising targets, can be found on the [Ultra Challenge website](#). If you sign up before 28 February 2021, use the code NYCHARITY to sign for just £1.



A number of Autism Forward fundraisers have signed up already, including Lauren Moore, an Autism Forward mentor with AS Mentoring in London, who will be taking on the Peak District Challenge on 3 July 2021. If you don't fancy taking part yourself, you can sponsor Lauren on her [JustGiving Page](#). Good luck to Lauren and our other fundraisers and thank you for your support.

## Research Paper published by Autism Forward mentors

Advances in Autism has published a [research paper](#) written by Carl Cameron and Abbey Townend, both Autism Forward employment mentors with [Matthew's Hub](#) in Hull. The purpose of their research was to determine the most appropriate and effective support to enable autistic people to gain and maintain employment in their chosen field. It is encouraging that this important research has been selected for publication and that the work of our mentors across the country to improve employment outcomes for autistic people has been recognised.

The researchers found that the nationally recognised statistic of autistic people in full-time employment as 16% (National Autistic Society, 2016) was ambitious and subject to regional variation. However, based on the results of a programme providing employment and specialist mentoring support funded by Autism Forward, outcomes improve and employment is more likely to be achieved. It was found that 48% of autistic job seekers supported by specialist mentors found paid employment (full-time or part-time), demonstrating a 16% increase in paid employment between those who received mentoring support and those who did not.

**AUTISM  
FORWARD**

## Merseyside Autistic Adults

Our aim at Autism Forward is to improve social inclusion for autistic adults through access to paid or voluntary employment. Our grant holders go into a wide range of careers and roles, with some choosing self-employment as a better route to fulfil their potential. Lydia, one of our clients mentored by Deb Hannah in Merseyside, shares her story with us:

“After receiving my own diagnosis I realised there wasn’t much in the way of autism groups in my area. I decided to start my own support group, Merseyside Autistic Adults, which was formed on the 7th November 2018.

I have run the group in a voluntary capacity since then and the demand has grown from the local area and beyond, expanding from the original group held in Wirral and creating another in Liverpool. The Covid19 pandemic meant the group made the move to online meetings in order to continue and we have been successful in maintaining and growing participant numbers.

I was initially looking for paid work, as well as doing my autism group, when I began receiving mentoring from Autism Forward. When Covid19 hit, the number of autistic people needing help increased. I took this as a sign that I needed to focus my energy on making the group official.

It will take time, but I’m hoping that with funding, and the mentoring support from Autism Forward, I can make the group official and eventually create a paid role from it.”

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/merseysideautisticadults>

Merseyside Autistic Adults is a support and social group that run regular meetings and trips out. The group is for autistic/Asperger’s adults over the age of 16. Officially diagnosed, on the waiting list to be diagnosed and self-diagnosed autistic people are all welcome. The meetings are free, drop-in events.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 the group is currently unable to host the face to face meetings that they usually hold at The Florrie and Wirral Mind. They have replaced these with online Zoom meetings. There are three Zoom meetings per month: on the first Friday at 3:30pm, first Sunday at 12:30pm and third Tuesday at 12:30pm of each month. Email [merseysideautisticadults@gmail.com](mailto:merseysideautisticadults@gmail.com) to receive log in details for the Zoom group.

If you are an autistic job seeker in the Merseyside area in need of support to find employment, you can email our mentor partner Deb Hannah [mentormenw@gmail.com](mailto:mentormenw@gmail.com) for further information. Contact details for all our mentor partners around the country can be found on the [Find a Mentor](#) page on our [website](#).

## AUTISM at WORK

The National Autistic Society are holding an Autism at Work Online Summit on 4 & 5 March 2021.

This will be a unique opportunity to hear about leading initiatives from UK and international employers who are benefiting from the autistic talent pool.

Speakers include Autism Forward trustee Helen Needham, and Daniel Aherne and Ian Iceton, who have both hosted Autism Forward awareness events for our employer network.



## Who should attend?

- D&I professionals
- HR and recruiters
- Business and industry leaders
- SMEs & large corporates
- Line managers

*Tickets available now:*

[Click here to book](#)

