

# AUTISM IN BATTLE - AN AUDIT OF SERVICES, DIFFICULTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Audit has been undertaken with the very positive assistance of Meraud Davis, Positive Behaviour Support Specialist with Aspens, the Charity specialising in supporting people with Autism in the Community.

In the area Aspens has 3 supported housing units in St Leonards, 1 in Bexhill and 1 in Robertsbridge.. Additionally they arrange home care services across the area to people with Autism living at home. The extent of the problems faced in everyday living range from manageable high level to those requiring one to one care at all times.

Effectively this means people with Autism can range from being clearly disabled to having a silent disability.

It is considered that in Battle the problems of accessibility experienced by people with mobility difficulties apply across to people with Autism. It is in the area of behavioural issues that discrimination has the potential to exist.

It was encouraging that there was little complaint from Service Users or carers on the way the public and traders react to service users once they are aware of the disability.

It is believed that minor changes in our Town could improve the quality of life when help is needed most.

There are opportunities for involvement in and with the community. As an example thought is being given to using the Emmanuel Centre for simple visits into the community outside of the fixed setting of the day centre. This already happens in an, of necessity, rigid pattern. Help with funding, on a small scale could, substantially widen the scope of visits into the wider community.

The principal change which could take place in Battle which the Council could be key in facilitating would be the extension of a scheme currently existing in other parts of East Sussex. This project is called the autism alert scheme. The best guidance on this project is contained in the attached papers.

Having facilitated the Christmas Carol Service for Aspens, the degree of positive gratitude expressed by staff and carers indicated both the willingness and desire to be an integrated part of our Community. I intend to be involved developing this contact and believe there are huge opportunities for the Town Council to be innovators with this client and resident group.