



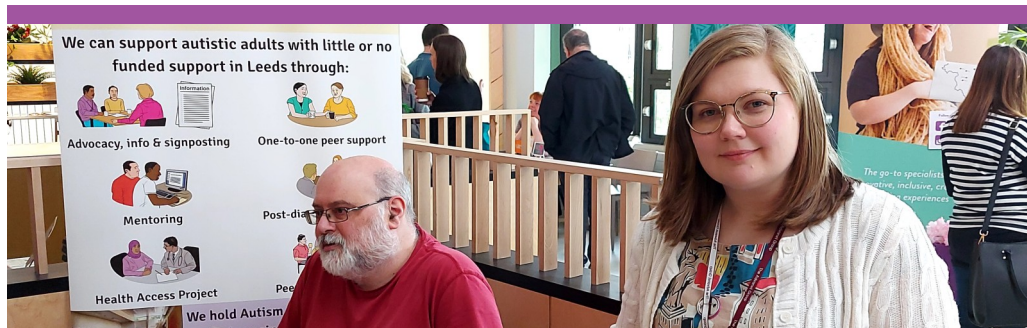
Welcome Booklet

Version 3.0 | June 2025

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About Leeds Autism AIM



Leeds Autism AIM is a free service. We provide information and signposting, self-advocacy resources and guides, post-diagnostic support and run autistic-led peer groups. We also run regular drop-in and booked appointment-only Autism Hubs.

This service is co-led by and run for autistic adults aged 18 and over in Leeds who get little or no funded support.

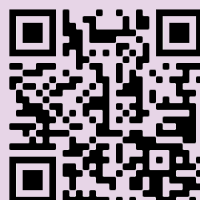
We are part of **The Advonet Group**, a Leeds-based independent advocacy charity. This helps us to have an advocacy approach, ensuring that everyone we work with is heard and has their rights met.

Most members of our staff team are autistic themselves.

We can meet you in person at our office or at the Autism Hub. We can also meet you remotely, using either email, phone call, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

Make a referral to Leeds Autism AIM

If you would like to access any of Leeds Autism AIM's services, we have an online referral form to fill in. Once completed, we will be in touch. To access it, please scan the QR code or go to tinyurl.com/leedsautismaimreferral



What we do and don't do

We do:



Help autistic adults to speak for themselves:
This is self-advocacy



Provide free self-advocacy tools e.g.
autism alert cards



Run autistic-led peer groups, online and in person



Offer one-to-one post-diagnostic support appointments



Work with autistic adults aged 18 and over in Leeds



Provide info and signposting to services you want to use

We do not:



Work with anyone aged under 18



Offer autism diagnoses ourselves



Provide support workers



Work with people not living in Leeds or who aren't with a Leeds GP



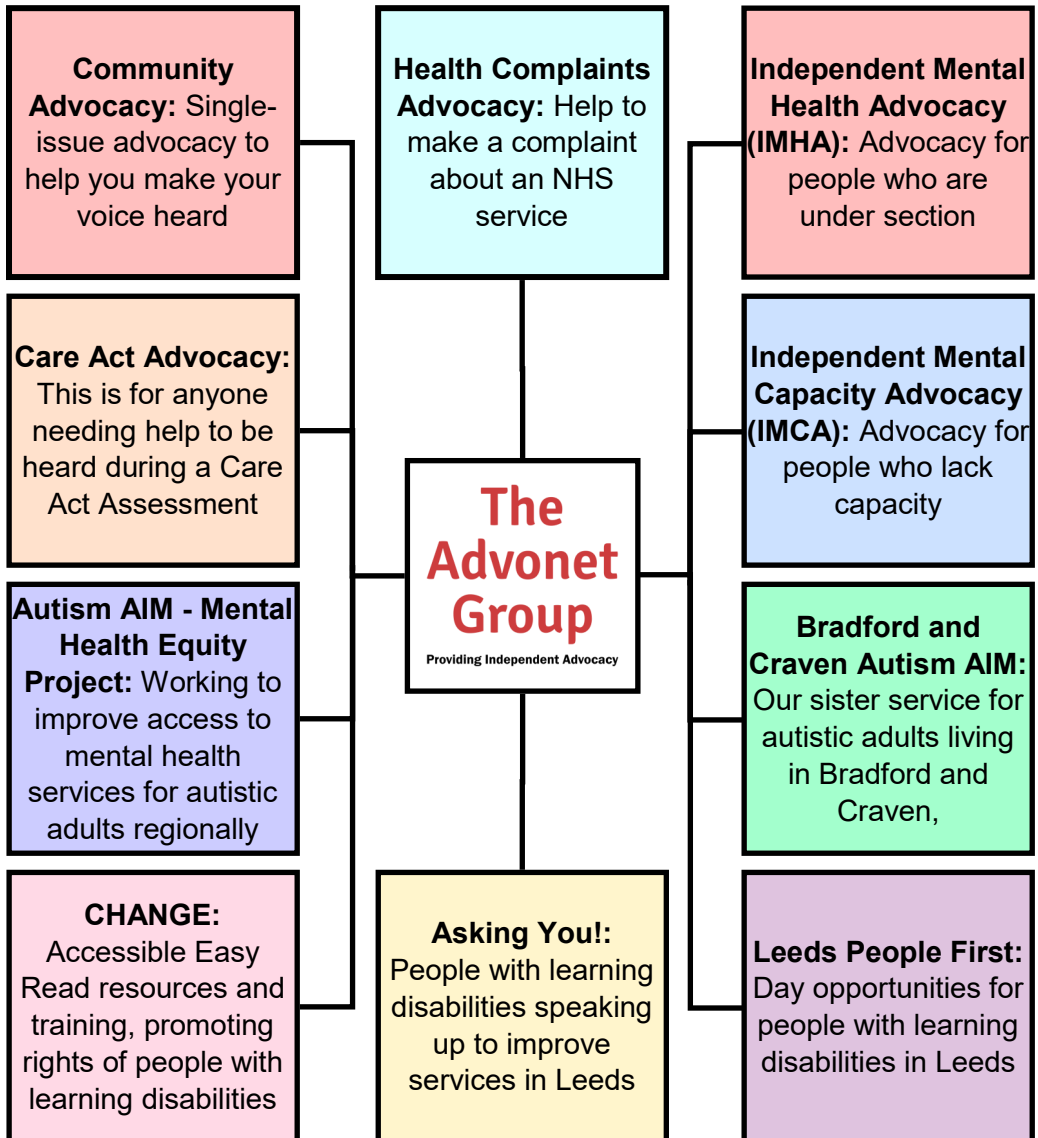
Provide one-to-one advocacy, but can link to services that do



Work with people who get funded support for social care

The Advonet Group

We are part of The Advonet Group, an independent advocacy charity in Leeds. They have lots of other advocacy and inclusion services that are all connected to us. Read all about them in the diagram below.



Meet the AIM team



Danielle Furness
Mental Health
Projects Coordinator



David Radford
Hub Supporter



Georgia Holden-Burnett
Deputy Manager, MH
Equity Project



Gill Loomes-Quinn
Peer Development
Worker



Kelsie Easterby
Leeds Autism AIM
Coordinator



Lawrence Cwerner
Peer Development
Worker



Lex Ragaliauskas
Peer Development
Worker



Luke Aylward
Information Officer



Nelly Doherty
Peer Development
Worker



Owen Walker
Autism AIM Senior
Manager



Trudi Longbottom
Leeds Autism AIM
Deputy Manager

Self-Advocacy and Resources

Leeds Autism AIM can support you to speak up for yourself. Speaking up for yourself, your rights and wishes is called **self-advocacy**.

On our website, we have many free self-advocacy resources that you can download and use whenever you need them. They include:



Leeds Autism Alert Card: A free card made by us, West Yorkshire Police and other local services where you can communicate your needs when unable to speak up by showing it to people.



Autism Health Passport: Made by local NHS services, us and Leeds Mind, it is a profile where you can say what your sensory and communication needs are when accessing NHS services in Leeds.



Self-advocacy and planning tools: These include daily, weekly and monthly planners, a social profile, a services profile to help communicate your needs when using services and a self-care plan.



Strategy guides: These cover a range of topics like employment, health and communication. They have tips and links to useful websites on each topic and were all written by autistic people.

Video: What is Self-Advocacy?

The Advonet Group made a short video to explain what self-advocacy is and how some of their free resources work. Watch it at <https://youtube.com/watch?v=i23mL2Anhu8> or scan the QR code



Info, signposting, access to services

We are able to provide information on any local services that you may want to access. We can do this in one-to-one booked appointments, via email, phone, text chat or video call. There is also plenty of info on our website about local services and support available.



As well as giving information, we can also signpost you in the direction of services you would like to access. We can signpost to services like diagnosis, mental health, GPs, housing, education and employment.

Accessing services

A big part of what we do is trying to improve access to local services such as housing and healthcare for autistic adults. We do this by:



Providing training to organisations around the needs of autistic adults, delivered by autistic members of



Sharing consultations via social media and our newsletter



Speaking to you one-to-one to see how we can help make the services you want to use more accessible



Passing on feedback about services and supporting you if needing to make a complaint about a service you have accessed



Working with the Autism Reference Group and Leeds Adult Autism Partnership Board to raise your concerns about local services

Post-diagnostic support

Our post-diagnostic support is a free service giving newly-diagnosed autistic adults (diagnosed in the past year) the opportunity to meet and talk one-to-one with an autistic member of staff. You will get up to three sessions, each 45 minutes long and can discuss the following topics:



Your diagnosis



Understanding your autism



Strategies to manage day-to-day



Families and relationships



Help to put forward your needs



Disclosing your diagnosis or not



Sensory issues



Your rights/reasonable adjustments



Mental health and/or counselling signposting

Our post-diagnostic sessions can be delivered in person or remotely. To access it, please refer at tinyurl.com/leedsautismaimreferral. Please note that in order to access it, you need to have had your autism diagnosis within a year of your first appointment.

Please visit leedsautismaim.org.uk/our-services/post-diagnostic-support to check if our service's waiting list is open or not.

Autistic-led peer groups

We run a number of different groups led by and run for autistic adults. They meet regularly in person or online. The groups are:



Peer Support: This is on the **third Monday of the month** from **6pm-7pm** on Zoom.

Group members can share and give support in a safe, welcoming place online.



Women-Aligned Group: For autistic women and femme-aligned non-binary people, they meet the **second Tuesday of the month** from **5:30pm-6:30pm** on Zoom. On alternating months, they have check-ins and themed discussions



Mental Health Peer Support Groups: We run mental health-focused peer support groups, with a different topic chosen by group members to discuss each month.

They run one in-person group at the Autism Hub on the **first Thursday of the month** and an online group on the **third Thursday of the month**, held on Zoom. Both run from **6pm-7pm** and are free to attend.

To join any of the groups mentioned on this page, you will need to make a referral beforehand. If you haven't already referred to us, please do so at tinyurl.com/leedsautismaimreferral.

If you want to join but have made a referral to us before, please contact us. Our details are on page 15 of this booklet.

Mental Health Equity Project (MHEP)



Mental Health Equity Project

This project aims to improve how mental health services across West Yorkshire work with autistic adults accessing support from them. The Mental Health Equity Project offers the following services:



Enabling autistic adults to have a stronger voice in how local mental health services work



Consultations on how mental health services can improve their work with autistic adults



Autistic peer support – training local services to provide peer support to autistic adults and regular peer support groups



Training advocacy and social prescribing services to help autistic adults access services



Personalised self-advocacy tools to help put forward your needs



The Mental Health Equity Project is funded by a grant from Comic Relief's Change Makers fund.

Our locations



The Community Wellbeing Hub: For booked appointments and drop-in Autism Hub sessions

- **Address:** The Community Wellbeing Hub, Reginald Terrace, Chapeltown, Leeds LS7 3EZ
- **Parking:** There are a handful of parking spaces outside the building, including some accessible parking bays
- **Bus services:** The 2, 3, 3A, 36 and 48 stop nearby either side of Chapeltown Road, a short walk from the Hub. All services go to and from Leeds City Centre

Find us on What3Words: [decent.voices.clubs](#)

Advonet Group office: For booked appointments only, open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm



- **Address:** Unity Business Centre, 26 Roundhay Rd, Leeds LS7 1AB
- **Parking:** There is some parking available outside the office on Manor Street, but it can be busy at times.
- **Bus services:** The 12, 13 and 13A services stop either side at the bottom of Roundhay Road. The 2, 3, 3A, 7, 7A, &s, 36 and 48 stop at Sheepscar Junction before North Street starts

Find us on What3Words: [being.deputy.pepper](#)

Documents with directions to the Hub or office are available on request.

What to expect when meeting us



At the Autism Hub: Whether you are coming for a booked appointment or to the monthly drop-in, we will ask you to sign in when at the reception desk. Then, we will let the person you're there to see know that you are there.

We will give you some time to get settled before your meeting. Once the person you are seeing is ready, they will call for you.



On the phone: Before calling, we will ask when you would like to speak, making it less surprising when we do ring.

We will also ensure our number doesn't come up as a 'Private Number' on your phone. Whilst speaking to you, we will make sure there is no background noise coming from our end of the call.



At the Advonet Group office: We will arrange to meet you in an office space and try to keep background noise to a minimum. If you like, we are happy to get you a tea, coffee or water.

If you are coming to the office by car, please use the car park outside the fencing near the Unity Business Centre building.



On Zoom or Teams: Before a meeting, we will send you a link plus (if on Zoom) a Call ID and Passcode. Please use the details provided to join when the meeting is due to start.

You don't need to have your camera on. If you prefer, you can use the text chat instead of audio.

What else you need to know



Cancelling an appointment: If you need to cancel an appointment with us, please let us know by sending an email to leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk.

Should you need it, we are happy to rearrange your appointment for a time that suits you. If you cannot make it to your appointment for any reason, we are able to support someone else at that time.



Our expectations: As we have supported over 900 people between April 2023-March 2024, our service is in demand. By coming to your appointment, you are helping to make sure we can support as many people as possible. Unless you let us know you cannot make your appointment or there are circumstances beyond your or our control, we hope you can make it to your appointment on time.



Ground Rules: At the Hub, we have our ground rules displayed on the walls of some of the rooms. They are in place to make sure you and everyone else feels safe in attending. Please try to follow them as best you can.



Data protection: We follow The Advonet Group's Data Protection policies. We ensure that we will only use your personal data to contact you about any AIM service you want to access and nothing else.

Your data is stored securely for up to seven years.

Contact us



Leeds Autism AIM Email: leedsautismaim@advonet.org.uk

**Mental Health Equity Project (MHEP) Email:
yaamhep@advonet.org.uk**

**Phone: 0113 244 0606 - please ask for someone from the
Leeds Autism AIM team**

Website: leedsautismaim.org.uk

Facebook: [@leedsautismaim](https://www.facebook.com/leedsautismaim)

Bluesky: [@leedsautismaim.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/leedsautismaim.bsky.social)

Instagram and Threads: [@leedsautismaim](https://www.instagram.com/leedsautismaim)

YouTube: [Leeds Autism AIM](https://www.youtube.com/LeedsAutismAIM)

We are
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COMMUNITY
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NHS West Yorkshire
Integrated Care Board



**The
Advonet
Group**

Providing Independent Advocacy



**Bradford
and Craven**
Autism AIM



Leeds
Autism
AIM



Mental Health
Equity Project

Leeds Autism AIM is part of The Advonet Group, an independent advocacy charity in Leeds.

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