Press Release
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**Library network to become autism friendly**

Today is not only World Autism Awareness Day but also International Children’s Book Day. And following research showing that more than 9 in 10 people with autism would use their library more if some autism friendly adjustments were made, the Association of Senior Children’s and Education Librarians (ASCEL) is to offer training and support to all 3000 of the nation’s public libraries.

The research, conducted by social care organisation Dimensions, showed that whilst people with autism are already more likely than other people to use a library, a few changes could lead to 92% increasing their use of their local library.

Lisa Hopkins, Managing Director of Dimensions, said, “Dimensions already works in partnership with the UK’s 4 major cinema chains to offer autism friendly cinema screenings every month and we are delighted to be able to extend our expertise to the libraries network through the partnership which we are announcing today.”

Sarah Mears, Chair of ASCEL, said, “Libraries are at the heart of our communities and I am deeply proud that this initiative will encourage individual libraries to help more people to visit by adopting autism friendly approaches.”

The project, which was supported using public funding by Arts Council England, will lead to a training video for librarians, fact sheets, signage and social stories. The training will be launched at the Society of Chief Librarians seminar in June.

Hopkins added, “The research told us clearly that the major barrier is awareness of autism, amongst library staff and library users alike. Respondents didn’t want much: a little kindness, to be not judged, and for a few simple adaptations to allow for sensory sensitivities. All parts of the community could learn something from that.”

**ENDS**

**Notes to the Editor**

For more information, interviews, and case studies contact Duncan Bell, PR Manager at Dimensions, on (e) Duncan.bell@dimensions-uk.org (t) 0300 303 9062 or (m) 07506 663 793.

Dimensions is a specialist provider of a wide range of services for people with learning disabilities and people who experience autism. We are a not-for-profit organisation, supporting around 3,500 people and their families throughout England and Wales.

We have been providing support packages for families for almost 40 years. We offer a range of support services to adults of all ages, including those with complex needs or challenging behaviour. We enable people to be part of their community and make their own choices and decisions about their lives.

We are proud to be a not-for-profit organisation, not here for commercial gain. This means we're able to invest all our efforts and resources into helping us achieve person-centred processes with positive outcomes for everyone we work with.