



Introducing our New Chief Executive Officer



Hi. I am Michelle and I am delighted to have joined Cheshire Autism Practical Support (ChAPS) as the organisations new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The purpose of my role is to work collaboratively with the management team and the Board of Trustees to make strategic decisions that ensure the charity is making the most difference for our members, and autistic individuals and their families across Cheshire in the years ahead.

You, our members, are at the heart of everything we do here at ChAPS and every decision we make. Over the next few months I will be visiting the activities we organise across Cheshire to meet as many of you as possible. We will also be sending out surveys and arranging meetings where members can share their thoughts to guide the strategic plan and vision I will be developing for the charity.

A little bit about me. I have over 14 years' experience working within the charity sector specialising in supporting and empowering autistic individuals. This includes within specialist residential schools, Priors Court and The Loddon School, and at a national autism charity, Ambitious about Autism.

I have a Masters degree in Autism Studies from the Tizard Centre (University of Kent) and I am currently a Trustee at Talkback, a charity who supports autistic individuals and individuals with learning disabilities.

Attached to this email is my one-page profile so you can get to know me a little better under three headings: what people appreciate about me, what's important to me and how best to support me.

I am also neurodiverse myself and in November 2022 I was diagnosed with ADHD.

Me, the rest of the ChAPS team, and the Trustees are dedicated to continue offering the best support for our members and to grow and strengthen the opportunities we can provide to improve quality of life outcomes for autistic individuals and their families.

To celebrate my arrival at ChAPS I would like to offer all our members a 10% discount at the ChAPS café, the Ark in Northwich, throughout February. I have already had the pleasure of sampling some of the gorgeous homemade soup Karen, our Head Chef, creates and a yummy cheese and onion panini. To receive the 10% discount at the Ark Café please use code 'NEWCEO'.

If you have any questions or would like to get in contact with me please email michelle.collard@cheshireautism.org.uk

Best wishes

Michelle

ChAPS Update!

We are changing the system of booking for Animal Therapy Bridge Trafford. The Eventbrite link will be used to register your child's interest for a place on this month's sessions. It will ask for your child's name, your child's age, and whether you have a preference of time slots. Places for the sessions will then be allocated, with anyone did not allocate a position being placed on a waitlist. The Animal Therapy Home Ed class will keep the same booking procedure as before.

We are extremely excited to launch our animal welfare education sessions in partnership with The RSPCA, Stapeley Grange Wildlife Rescue and Cattery. The family sessions will run once a month for the next 6 months starting Sunday 19th February from 11am till 1pm, at **The Ark** in Northwich. The first session will be solely dedicated to learning about the work of the RSPCA, including wildlife rescue, rehoming domestic pets, and careers in the animal care industry. The second topic of the day will be domestic animal welfare – learning the basics about what an animal needs to be happy and healthy (food and water, bed and shelter, protection from pain and harm, exhibit natural behaviour and what company to keep). Run by staff within the education department at Stapeley Grange, sessions will be full of fun activities in a very relaxed session – we think this will be a really enjoyable programme.

Unfortunately, we are no longer able to provide Boxer Boogie sessions in Northwich and Runcorn. We are working hard to find an alternative session and will let you know as soon as we have more news.

In the coming months the counselling service is growing, and we will have more counsellor availability for member/parents/carers and adults on the spectrum. If you are over 18 and are interested in knowing more, please contact **Carey on** families@cheshireautism.org.uk

Just a reminder we now have gift vouchers available in the **Ark Café**, treat yourself or someone special to a tasty afternoon tea or a voucher for our sensory room full of magical tranquillity a calming corner of **The Ark Café** that would be a perfect birthday treat. The sensory room is available to hire, please contact **ChAPS** for details.



We also have extra activities running during February half term across five different areas, these are listed in the diary of events in **orange**. As always, members can book onto these on the 1st of the month from 6am. Events in **blue** are open for booking on Monday 30th at 6am.

Thank you

Each month we receive help and generous donations from our members, groups, and organisations. We are extremely grateful for any donations, whether it be time spent helping with a job at the centre, items such as crafts to sell or funds towards the work we do.

Other Services...

'Who Will Care After I've Gone' Course

Bookings are now being taken for the next 'Who Will Care After I've Gone' course for carers of people with a learning disability and autism. This two-day course offers you the knowledge and emotional support to prepare to plan ahead. The course will be held on Monday 6th and Monday 13th February, at The Salvation Army, Whitby Road, Ellesmere Port, CH65 6RS.

A light lunch will be served where carers and speakers will have an opportunity to discuss topics in more detail and carers share experiences with fellow carers. Following the course, individual support to plan and complete 'My Preferred Priorities for Care'.

Professionals have been invited to share their expertise on Will Writing, Trusts and Power of Attorney, Funeral Planning, Social Care and Supported Living and End of Life Care.

For further information and to book a place, please contact Yvonne Johnson 01606 606694/07773226174 or email cheshirewestcarersupport@makingspace.co.uk.

Storyhouse -Young leaders 14-17s new intake

Storyhouse are now accepting referrals for their next intake of 14–17-year-old young leaders for their programme starting at the end of February.

Young Leaders is for people who may need extra support to gain skills, connect with others, discover their passion, and develop work skills and knowledge of the creative industry.

Young Leaders are usually referred to us and sometimes they are home-schooled, are on EHC plans, are in care or have left care, are fostered, are a young carer, are neurodiverse, have accessibility needs, have low confidence, or have mental health concerns. This referral could be by a professional organisation a parent or young people can refer themselves.

Other Activities...



Totally Roarsome at Arley Hall.

From 17th February to 26th March

Totally Roarsome is an outdoor 1.5k woodland walk with hundreds of dinosaur themed props throughout the trail.

ChAPS have been able to secure a 20% discount code on individual and family tickets. Use the code TRNWGRP20 for the discount.

Bookings and more information can be found at:

[Totally Roarsome - Arley Hall - Totally Tickets | Book for Family Attractions Totally Roarsome, Totally Gruesome and Totally Christmas](#)

Diary of Events – Key

(A) - For Adult members

(C) – For children (please see the Eventbrite to check if siblings are included!)

(P) – For parents and carers

If you have any suggestions for our **ChAPS** newsletter or ideas about how we can make it easier to understand, please email admin@cheshireautism.org.uk

Diary of Events

Wednesday 1 Feb	B'TRAFFORD (C)	Home Ed Animal Therapy at Freedom Equine Centre CH2 4JT with Diane.	10.30-11.15am
Wednesday 1 Feb	NORTHWICH (P)	Parents of Teens Meet at The Ark Café CW81BE with Caron.	10am-11.30am
Wednesday 1 Feb	RUNCORN (A)	Adults Meet at the Old Police Station WA7 1DF with Emma & Michelle.	12-1.30pm
Wednesday 1 Feb	TEAMS (A)	Adults Mental Health Support Group with Emma.	6-7pm
Thursday 2 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Sara & Terri.	10am-4pm
Thursday 2 Feb	E'PORT (C)	Kids Club at The Community Hub CH65 9BD with Diane & Jess.	5.45-7.15pm
Thursday 2 Feb	E'PORT (P)	Parents Meeting at The Community Hub CH65 9BD with Diane & Leona.	7.30-9pm

Friday 3 Feb	WARR'TON (A)	Learning4Life at The Oaks Centre WA5 2QS with Chelsey & Diane.	10am-4pm
Saturday 4 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(C)(P)	Family Swim at Memorial Court Northwich CW9 5QJ with Terri.	4.30-5.30pm
Monday 6 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Sara & Terri.	10am-1pm
Monday 6 Feb	CHESTER (C)	Youth Club at St Mary's Handbridge CH4 7HL with Diane, Cady & Jessica.	4.30-6pm
Monday 6 Feb	NORTHWICH (C)	Kids Club at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri, Bobbie & Amanda.	5-6.30pm
Monday 6 Feb	ZOOM! (C)	Children's Chat with Di MinDees.	7pm
Monday 6 Feb	ZOOM! (C)	Teen Mindfulness – 12yrs+ with Di MinDees.	8pm
Monday 6 Feb	WINSFORD (A)	Spectrum Connect at The Hive CW7 3DA with Terri & Bobbie.	7.30-9pm
Tuesday 7 Feb	RUNCORN (A)	Learning4Life at The Old Police Station WA7 1DF with Chelsey & Diane.	10am-4pm
Tuesday 7 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(C)(P)	Geek Retreat at Barons Quay CW9 5FT with Terri & Seb.	6.30-8pm
Wednesday 8 Feb	WARR'TON (A)	Adults Meet at Saint Paul's Church WA5 2RX with Emma.	12-1.30pm
Wednesday 8 Feb	TEAMS (A)	Adults Mental Health Support Group with Emma.	6-7pm
Wednesday 8 Feb	WARR'TON (C)	Climbing Club at North West Face Climbing Centre WA2 7NE with Lauren.	6.30-7.30pm
Thursday 9 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Sara & Terri.	10am-4pm
Thursday 9 Feb	E'PORT (C)	Youth Club at The Community Hub CH65 9BD with Diane, Jacqui & Jess.	6-7.30pm
Friday 10 Feb	WARR'TON (A)	Learning4Life at The Old School WA1 3AJ with Chelsey & Diane.	10am-4pm
Saturday 11 Feb	E'PORT (A)(C)(P)	Family Swim at E'Port Sports Village CH65 9LB with Johnnie & Simon.	4.45-5.45pm
Sunday 12 Feb	WIDNES (C)	Anti-Gravity Yoga at Martial Arts Centre WA8 0QZ.	12.30-2.15pm
Sunday 12 Feb	NORTHWICH (P)	Wellbeing Weekend at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri.	11-2pm
Monday 13 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Sara & Terri.	10am-1pm
Monday 13 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(P)	Crafty Club at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri.	1-2.30pm

Monday 13 Feb	CHESTER (C)	Kids Club at St Mary's Handbridge CH4 7HL with Diane, Cady & Jessica.	4.30-6pm
Monday 13 Feb	ZOOM! (C)	Children's Chat with Di MinDees.	7pm
Monday 13 Feb	NORTHWICH (C)	Youth Club at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri, Bobbie & Amanda.	5-6.30pm
Tuesday 14 Feb	RUNCORN (A)	Learning4Life at The Old Police Station WA7 1DF with Chelsey & Diane.	10am-4pm
Tuesday 14 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(C)(P)	SOSA Dance Fitness 11yrs+ at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri.	7-8pm
Wednesday 15 Feb	CHESTER (P)	Parents Meeting at Lache Comm. Centre CH4 8HX with Diane.	10am-12pm
Wednesday 15 Feb	RUNCORN (A)	Adults Meet at the Old Police Station WA7 1DF with Emma.	12-1.30pm
Wednesday 15 Feb	TEAMS (A)	Adults Mental Health Support Group with Emma.	6-7pm
Wednesday 15 Feb	ZOOM! (C)	Children's Chat with Di MinDees.	7pm
Thursday 16 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Sara & Terri.	10am-4pm
Thursday 16 Feb	E'PORT (C)	Kids Club at The Community Hub CH65 9BD with Diane & Jess.	5.45-7.15pm
Friday 17 Feb	WARR'TON (A)	Learning4Life at The Oaks Centre WA5 2QS with Chelsey & Diane.	10am-4pm
Friday 17 Feb	DELAMERE (A)(P)	Parents & Adults Walk at Delamere Forest CW8 2HZ with Carey.	12-2pm
Saturday 18 Feb	CHESTER (P)	Wellbeing Weekend at St Mary's Handbridge CH4 7HL with Cady.	10am-1pm
Saturday 18 Feb	RUNCORN (A)(C)(P)	Family Swim at Beechwood Comm. Centre WA7 3HB with Lauren.	5.30-6.30pm
Sunday 19 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(C)(P)	RSPCA Family: Understanding Animal Welfare Needs with Chloe.	11am-2pm
Sunday 19 Feb	B'TRAFFORD (C)	Animal Therapy at Freedom Equine Centre CH2 4JT with Diane.	12.30-4.15pm
Monday 20 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Sara & Terri.	10am-1pm
Monday 20 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(C)(P)	Dungeons & Dragons at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE.	1pm-4pm
Monday 20 Feb	CHESTER (C)	Youth Club at St Mary's Handbridge CH4 7HL with Diane, Cady & Jessica.	4.30-6pm
Monday 20 Feb	ZOOM! (C)	Teen Mindfulness – 12yrs+ with Di MinDees.	8pm

Monday 20 Feb	NORTHWICH (C)	Kids Club at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri, Bobbie & Amanda.	5-6.30pm
Monday 20 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Spectrum Connect at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri & Bobbie.	7-8.30pm
Tuesday 21 Feb	NORTHWICH (C)	Stay & Play at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with ChAPS Staff.	10.30-12pm
Tuesday 21 Feb	NORTHWICH (C)	Café Fun for Stay & Play Siblings at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with ChAPS Staff.	10.30-12pm
Tuesday 21 Feb	RUNCORN (A)	Learning4Life at The Old Police Station WA7 1DF with Carey & Diane.	10am-4pm
Tuesday 21 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(C)(P)	Geek Retreat at Barons Quay CW9 5FT with Terri & Seb.	6.30-8pm
Wednesday 22 Feb	NORTHWICH (C)	Stay & Play at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with ChAPS Staff.	10.30-12pm
Wednesday 22 Feb	NORTHWICH (C)	Café Fun for Stay & Play Siblings at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with ChAPS Staff.	10.30-12pm
Wednesday 22 Feb	WARR'TON (A)	Adults Meet at Saint Paul's Church WA5 2RX with Michelle & Chloe.	12-1.30pm
Wednesday 22 Feb	WINSFORD (C)	Urban Air Trampoline Park CW7 3RL with Carey, Bobbie & Nic.	4.30-6.30pm
Wednesday 22 Feb	TEAMS (A)	Adults Mental Health Support Group.	6-7pm
Wednesday 22 Feb	WARR'TON (C)	Climbing Club at North West Face Climbing Centre WA2 7NE with Lauren.	6.30-7.30pm
Thursday 23 Feb	Chester (A)(C)(P)	Puss in Boots: The Last Wish Relaxed Screening at Storyhouse, Chester CH1 2AR with Chloe.	10-11.45am
Thursday 23 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Sara & Terri.	10am-4pm
Thursday 23 Feb	WIDNES (C)	Anti-Gravity Yoga at Martial Arts Centre WA8 0QZ with Michelle.	12.30-2.15pm
Thursday 23 Feb	E'PORT (C)	Youth Club at The Community Hub CH65 9BD with Diane, Jacqui & Jess.	6-7.30pm
Friday 24 Feb	WARR'TON (A)	Learning4Life at The Old School WA1 3AJ with Chelsey & Diane.	10am-4pm
Friday 24 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(C)(P)	Pizza Making at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with ChAPS Staff	12-2pm
Friday 24 Feb	KNUTSFORD (P)	Parents of Adults at the Kilton Inn WA16 0PZ with Carey.	11am-1pm
Saturday 25 Feb	E'PORT (A)(C)(P)	Family Swim at E'Port Sports Village CH65 9LB with Johnnie & Simon.	4.45-5.45pm
Monday 27 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)	Learning4Life at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Sara & Terri.	10am-1pm

Monday 27 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(P)	Crafty Club at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri.	1-2.30pm
Monday 27 Feb	CHESTER (C)	Kids Club at St Mary's Handbridge CH4 7HL with Caron, Cady & Jessica.	4.30-6pm
Monday 27 Feb	ZOOM! (C)	Children's Chat with Di MinDees.	7pm
Monday 27 Feb	ZOOM! (C)	Teen Mindfulness – 12yrs+ with Di MinDees.	8pm
Monday 27 Feb	NORTHWICH (C)	Youth Club at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri, Bobbie & Amanda.	5-6.30pm
Tuesday 28 Feb	RUNCORN (A)	Learning4Life at The Old Police Station WA7 1DF with Chelsey & Diane.	10am-4pm
Tuesday 28 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(P)	Yoga for Adults at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Carey.	1-2pm
Tuesday 28 Feb	NORTHWICH (A)(C)(P)	SOSA Dance Fitness 11yrs+ at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri.	7-8pm
Tuesday 28 Feb	NORTHWICH (P)	Parents Meeting at ChAPS Autism Ark CW8 1BE with Terri & Leona.	8-9.15pm

Need More Help or Information?

Ruth/Lisa Admin Staff - For Attention Cards, Gift Aid, Child Registration Forms & everything else Admin

E: admin@cheshireautism.org.uk

E: lisa.dutton@cheshireautism.org.uk

T: 0344 850 8607



Chloe, Activities and Fundraising Coordinator – For Activities, Room Bookings at The Ark and Fundraising

E: chloe.carter@cheshireautism.org.uk

T: 07491 001360



Emma, Specialist Teacher - For Mental Health Therapy, Adult Sessions, Support & Training

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M: 07462 868322



Caron, Support Worker - For Advice & Support

E: caron.pitigala@cheshireautism.org.uk

M: 07462 887815

Carey, Families Manager - For Intensive Group Sessions, Counselling, Learning4Life, Swimming & Support

E: families@cheshireautism.org.uk

M: 07462 887815



Natalie, Business Manager - For Recruitment, Finance, GDPR, Safeguarding, Health & Safety & Marketing

E: business@cheshireautism.org.uk

M: 07476 280356



Michelle, Chief Executive Officer – For Strategic Planning, Governance, Funding and Operational Management

E: michelle.collard@cheshireautism.org.uk



Please note we take every precaution to ensure the information we share is accurate, but the information we signpost is not a recommendation from ChAPS (unless stated) and parents should do their own research about organisations and events signposted in our Newsletter. Professional colleagues who wish to **opt out** from receiving this Newsletter should reply to this email with unsubscribe as the message subject.



Cheshire and Merseyside

Health and Care Partnership



Steve Morgan
FOUNDATION

