



**AUTISTICA**  
**DISCOVER**  
CONFERENCE 2018



**AUTISTICA**  
Building brighter futures through autism research



Programme of events 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018

# Welcome



Welcome to Autistica's inaugural annual autism research conference. We are excited to bring together autistic people and family members, researchers and professionals from across the

UK. This is an opportunity for us to build the future of autism research together.

As a group, we will discuss the latest autism research and find new ways to make progress. This year's focus is on areas that we know are top priorities for autistic people and their families: mental health, language and communication, epilepsy, social care, complex needs and ageing and physical health.

I would encourage you to not only attend to the research that is already in line with your particular interests, but also to explore new topics that you may be less familiar with.

This is a research conference, so you will hear things you agree with and things you don't. By bringing everyone together we hope to have respectful and progressive discussions about how to make progress towards long, healthy, happy lives for autistic people.

We hope you find the day stimulating and inspiring.

**Dr James Cusack,**  
Director of Science



Our understanding of autism has grown enormously since rigorous research efforts began to accelerate in the 1960s. Hundreds of empirical studies have contributed to an evermore

detailed description of the defining and associated characteristics of autism at multiple levels, and an increasing number of clinical trials are generating evidence-based strategies for optimizing outcomes.

Whilst progress has certainly been made, we do need to reflect critically on how far research has come and how much farther it needs to go. Are we asking the most relevant and important questions? Are we seeking answers in the most productive ways? Are we giving due consideration to the assumptions that we might bring to our research? And do we maintain enough focus on the best interests of the people we ultimately seek to serve? As a scientist, these questions have bothered me throughout my research career and I feel extremely privileged to join Autistica in giving these important issues a stage at this Inaugural conference.

No doubt, there will be challenges ahead, but by bringing together autistic individuals, family members, researchers and professionals, this conference will provide a unique opportunity to accelerate the translation of research into tangible benefits for the autism community.

I am looking forward to the exciting journey ahead!

**Sebastian Gaigg,**  
Dr Sebastian Gaigg, Conference Programme Chair

## AUTISTICA

Building brighter futures through autism research

Autistica is the UK's leading autism research charity. Our vision is a long, healthy, happy life for autistic people and their families.

# Join DISCOVER

We want everyone with an experience of autism to join Discover and push forward autism research.

- Autistic people and families and professionals get email updates about the latest research and how to take part.
- Researchers will hear about funding, study recruitment and training opportunities.

Join today: [autistica.org.uk/take-part](https://autistica.org.uk/take-part)

## Conference Programme Chair

**Dr Sebastian Gaigg** - has been a long-standing member of the Autism Research Group at City, University of London, where his research pursues two principal issues. One strand of his work focuses on understanding learning and memory processes across the autism spectrum, ranging from the examination of episodic memory in autistic adults who live relatively independent lives, to studies of learning processes in minimally verbal autistic children and individuals with complex needs. His second strand of work seeks to develop a better understanding of the emotional lives of autistic individuals, particularly concerning the mechanisms underlying the unusually high prevalence of anxiety disorders in this population, and their implications for the development of effective treatments.

## Keynote speakers



**Professor Francesca Happé** is Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience and Director of the Social, Genetic & Developmental Psychiatry Centre at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London. Her research focuses on autism spectrum conditions. She has explored the nature of social understanding

in neurotypical development and 'mentalising' difficulties in autism. She is also actively engaged in studies of abilities and assets in autism, and their relation to detail-focused cognitive style. Some of her recent work focuses on mental health on the autism spectrum, and under-researched subgroups including women and the elderly. Her research spans cognitive experiments, functional neuroimaging, exploration of acquired brain lesions, and behaviour genetic methods. She was recently ranked in the top 10 most productive and highly cited authors in autism research worldwide (Sweileh, et al., 2016). She is a Fellow of the British Academy and the Academy of Medical Sciences, past-President of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR; 2013-2015), and has received the British Psychological Society Spearman Medal, the Experimental Psychology Society Prize and the Royal Society Rosalind Franklin Award.

**Francesca's talk is titled:** *Autism research: looking back to look forward?*



**Dr Damian Milton** works for the Tizard Centre, University of Kent as a part-time Lecturer in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. He also works part-time for the National Autistic Society (NAS) as an Autism Knowledge and Expertise Consultant. Damian also teaches on the MA Education (Autism) programme at

London South Bank University and has been a consultant for the Transform Autism Education (TAE) project and a number of projects for the Autism Education Trust (AET), and is project lead for the National Autistic Taskforce (NAT). Damian's interest in autism began when his son was diagnosed in 2005 as autistic at the age of two. Damian was also diagnosed with Asperger's in 2009 at the age of thirty-six. Damian's primary focus is on increasing the meaningful participation of autistic people and people with learning disabilities in the research process, and chairs the Participatory Autism Research Collective (PARC): [www.PARCautism.co.uk](http://www.PARCautism.co.uk)

**Damian's talk is titled:** *Researching autism from a sociological perspective*



**Professor Tony Charman** is the Chair of Clinical Child Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London and also works as a Clinical Psychologist in a specialist service for children with autism and complex neurodevelopmental conditions at the South London and Maudsley NHS

Foundation Trust. His main research interest is the investigation of social cognitive development in children with autism and the clinical application of this work via screening, diagnostic, epidemiological, intervention, and 'at risk' studies. He has published more than 250 peer-reviewed papers and over 30 book chapters. He has served on a number of expert panels for the MRC and NICE in the UK, NIH in the USA and the WHO.

**Tony's talk is titled:** *Personalising treatments: trials, tribulations, mechanisms and outcomes.*



**Sue Fletcher-Watson** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Patrick Wild Centre, University of Edinburgh. She is a developmental psychologist, studying how children grow and learn, with a particular focus on non-normative experiences, such as autism and preterm birth. Her work aims to apply rigorous methods from psychology to

questions with clinical, educational and societal impact. Current research themes include: investigations of how digital interactive technologies can best be deployed to support learning and personal growth for autistic children; describing the impact of bilingualism on cognitive development and life experiences in autistic people; and innovative empirical tests of the 'double empathy problem' in the context of interaction between neurodivergent and neurotypical adults. She strives to achieve meaningful partnerships with community representatives and to support neurodivergent leadership in research. She is a recipient of the British Psychological Society Margaret Donaldson Award and a Certificate of Excellence from Autism Rights Group Highland.

**Sue's talk is titled:** *Merging psychological theory with a neurodiversity framework: a way forward through participatory working*



# Conference Schedule - Morning

08:00	<b>REGISTRATION</b> - Northampton Square Reception
08:45	<b>Welcome:</b> James Cusack & Sebastian Gaigg (OTLT)
09:00	<b>Keynote 1:</b> Francesca Happé: Autism Research: Looking back to look forward (OTLT)
09:50	<b>Keynote 2:</b> Damian Milton: Researching autism from a sociological perspective (OTLT)

10:40	<b>BREAK</b> (Tea & Coffee) (OTLT Foyer)
-------	--

	<b>Mental Health</b> (ELG15)	<b>Ageing &amp; Physical Health</b> (ELG01)	<b>Language &amp; Communication</b> (ELG03)
11:00	Session Intro by Chairs: <b>Emily Simonoff &amp; Louise O'Reagain</b>	Session Intro by Chairs: <b>Jeremy Parr &amp; Sarah Douglas</b>	Session Intro by Chairs: <b>Vicky Slonims &amp; Fiona Clarke</b>
11:15	<b>Louise Neil:</b> Parent-child interactions and anxiety in autistic and typically developing children.	<b>Amanda Roestorf:</b> Ageing with Autism: Longitudinal Outcomes and Quality of Life.	<b>Berengere Digard:</b> Bilingualism in autism: language learning profiles and social experiences.
11:20	<b>Melanie Palmer:</b> Development of the Observation Schedule for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder - Anxiety and Behaviour (OSCA-AB).	<b>Rachel Hallett:</b> Physical Activity Interventions for Autistic Adults: A Systematic Review.	<b>Sarah Crockford:</b> Does multilingual exposure have an effect on the prevalence of autistic symptomatology?
11:25	<b>Eilidh Cage:</b> The costs, contexts and reasons for camouflaging.	<b>Helen Basu Chaudhuri:</b> Awareness of Internal Sensations in Autistic Adults.	<b>Jennifer Palmiotto:</b> A content analysis of parent-child interaction in autism within RDI guiding engagements.
11:30	<b>Charlotte Frances Huggins:</b> Differences in self-reported emotional granularity between autistic and non-autistic participants emerge during development.	<b>Andrew Surtees:</b> Sleep problems in Autism: a matched comparison to sleep in neurotypical children using actigraphy, diaries and questionnaires.	<b>Joanne Saul:</b> Is speech production a limiting factor for expressive language in minimally verbal autistic pre-schoolers?
11:40	<b>Felicity Sedgewick:</b> Differences in mental health outcomes of autistic men, women, and non-binary people and their neurotypical counterparts.	<b>Amanda Roestorf:</b> Ageing and ASD: Mental health and physical health concerns across the adult lifespan.	<b>Lucy Anne Livingston:</b> "It's like learning a foreign language, it never becomes native": Investigating social compensatory strategies in ASD.
12:00	<b>Margiad Williams:</b> Parenting for Autism, Language, And Communication Evaluation Study (PALACES).	<b>Georgia Pavlopoulou:</b> Establishing Priority Research Areas to Improve Sleep of Autistic Adults.	<b>Lauren Taylor:</b> Associations between early sociocognitive skills, language and autism severity in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
12:20	<b>Sarah Cassidy:</b> Measurement properties of the Suicide Behaviours Questionnaire - Revised in autistic adults.	<b>Rachel Moseley:</b> A choice, an addiction, a way to "get out of the lost"; Exploring features, risk factors and perceptions of self-injury in autism.	<b>Rebecca Wood:</b> Lessons from the Communication of Autistic Children in Schools.

Abbreviations: OTLT: Oliver Thompson Lecture Theatre, ELG: Breakout rooms for panel sessions - a map of the venue will be included in the delegates pack at registration

## Conference Schedule - Afternoon

12:45

**LUNCH** (OTLT Foyer)

	<b>Complex Needs</b> (ELG15)	<b>Social Care</b> (ELG01)	<b>Epilepsy</b> (ELG03)
13:45	Session Intro by Chairs: <b>Chris Oliver &amp; Fiona Clarke</b>	Session Intro by Chairs: <b>Jill Bradshaw &amp; Leneh Buckle</b>	Session Intro by Chairs: <b>Rohit Shankar &amp; Joseph Scanlon</b>
14:00	<b>Anna Lambrechts:</b> Rewards and learning in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and learning difficulties.	<b>Howard Childs:</b> Social care needs of autistic adults attending a diagnostic clinic.	<b>Christopher Eaton:</b> Epilepsy and seizures in young people with 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome: Prevalence and links with neurodevelopmental disorders.
14:15	<b>Michelle O'Donoghue:</b> An exploration of the experiences of peers engaged in peer-mediated intervention with minimally verbal autistic people.	<b>Sarah Hepburn:</b> Developing a post diagnostic service for autistic adults.	<b>Yujiang Wang:</b> Shared brain network abnormalities between Autism Spectrum Disorder and idiopathic generalized Epilepsy.
14:30	<b>Caroline Richards:</b> Autism and intellectual disability: Modelling risk to understand self-injurious behaviour.	<b>Max Taken:</b> Managing the impact of autism on the lives of young people at home and in educational settings.	<b>Michael Asboud:</b> Genetic pleiotropy in Atypical Benign Partial Epilepsy with high prevalence of autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders.
14:45	<b>Clare Cummins:</b> Supporting minimally verbal autistic girls with intellectual disabilities through puberty: perspectives of parents and educators.	<b>Tracy Turner:</b> The work life experiences of UK autistic women.	<b>Jan Sprengers:</b> Neurophysiological variability in children with ASD with and without epilepsy comorbidity
15:00	TBC	<b>Jade Norris:</b> Interviewing autistic adults: adaptations to support recall in police, employment, and healthcare interviews.	<b>Dorinde van Andel:</b> Bumetanide to ameliorate behavioural problems in tuberous sclerosis complex.

15:20

**BREAK** (Tea & Coffee) (OTLT Foyer)

15:45

**Tony Charman:** Personalising treatments: trials, tribulations, mechanisms and outcomes (OTLT)

16:35

**Sue Fletcher-Watson:** Merging psychological theory with a neurodiversity framework: a way forward through participatory working

17:30

**Closing Comments & Awards:** James Cusack & Session Chairs (OTLT)

18:00

**EVENING RECEPTION** (OTLT Foyer)

### Organising committee

**Conference Programme Chair:** Dr Sebastian Gaigg

**Autistica:** James Cusack and Abigail Thompson

**Panel chairs and co-chairs:**

**Mental health:** Emily Simonoff, Louise O'Reagain

**Ageing and Physical Health:** Jeremy Parr, Sarah Douglas

**Language & Communication:** Vicky Slonims, Fiona Clarke

**Complex Needs:** Chris Oliver, Fiona Clarke

**Social care:** Jill Bradshaw, Leneh Buckle

**Epilepsy:** Rohit Shankar, Joseph Scanlon

## Poster Presenters

Abstract number	Presenter name	Primary affiliation	Abstract title
1	Miss Anwen Jones	School of Psychology, Bangor University	Micro-Costing of 'The Incredible Years Autism Spectrum and Language Delays' Programme
2	Dr Alyssa Alcorn	Centre for Research in Autism and Education, UCL Institute of Education	Exploring child and researcher verbalisations during an emotion-recognition teaching programme
3	Miss Eloise Ainger	Centre for Research in Autism and Education (CRAE), UCL	Observing interactions between teaching staff and autistic children: Who communicates, how often, and why? A cross-cultural comparison between UK and Serbia
4	Dr Adela Barbulescu	University Grenoble Alpes	EMOFACE: an educational video game for training social skills
5	Miss Louisa Thomas		Individual differences in social contagion
6	Ms Ishita Chowdhury	UCL Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience	Do people with Autism know their own minds: Metacognition and cognitive offloading of delayed intentions in ASD
7	Mrs Wesam Almeahmadi	Bangor University	Pragmatic and Conversational Features of Arabic-Speaking Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); examining caregivers' perceptions and actual performance
8	Dr Shu Yau		Neuroimaging Low Functioning and Nonverbal Children with Autism
9	Miss Devyn Glass	University of Sussex	Shared Spaces: The Benefits of Working Collaboratively on Social Motor Synchronisation for Minimally Verbal Children with Autism Spectrum Conditions
10	Ms Aryana Shirazi	University of Birmingham	Behavioural markers of anxiety in minimally verbal people with autism
11	Ms Hannah Long	University of Bath	Cognitive Rigidity and treatment outcome in young people with autism spectrum disorder and anxiety
12	Dr Freya Rumball	King's College London	Traumatic Life Events and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders
13	Dr Amber Ruigrok	Autism Research Centre, Department of Psychiatry, University of Cambridge	Cognitive Emotion Regulation in Autism
14	Miss Isabel Yorke	King's College London	Developing an observational measure for assessing elements of parent-child interaction relevant to mental health in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their caregivers.
15	Ms Siobhan Blackwell	University of Birmingham, Centre for Applied Psychology	Flexible scheduling to prevent the development of disabling resistance to change
16	Dr Susie Chandler	King's College London	Stability and persistence of emotional and behavioural problems in children with ASD



Abstract number	Presenter name	Primary affiliation	Abstract title
17	Dr Virginia Carter Leno	King's College London	Emotional and Behavioural Problems in Adolescents with ASD are Associated with Alterations in Neural Indices of Perceptual Processing
18	Mrs Mirabel Pelton	Coventry University	Interpersonal needs and suicidality: understanding and tackling suicide risk in autistic people
19	Miss Lily Cresswell	Royal Holloway University of London	Who am I? Do conceptions of personal identity and acculturation relate to psychological wellbeing and self-esteem in autistic adolescents?
20	Ms Laura Hull	University College London	For better or for worse? Social Camouflaging, Mental Health and Wellbeing in Autistic Adults
21	Dr Samantha Holt	Children and Technology Lab, University of Sussex	A Real-time Text Messaging Service to reduce dental anxiety in children and young people with autism
22	Miss Wasmiah BinEid	Lifespan Learning and Sleep laboratory, UCL	Cross cultural study of sleep and well-being of mothers and autistic children.
23	Mrs Katy Unwin	Wales Autism Research Centre, Cardiff University	Beliefs and experiences of educational practitioners using multi-sensory environments with autistic children: A sequential mixed methods study
24	Miss Janina Brede	Univeristy College London	Understanding Anorexia Nervosa in Autistic Women
25	Ms Susan Simmons	UCL	Can Vivomixx probiotic improve physical health and overall function in autistic children with gastrointestinal symptoms?
26	Dr Catherine Frogley	Evelina London Children's Hospital	How do we treat children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Feeding Difficulties? A Review of the Evidence
27	Mr Brett Heasman	LSE	Neurodivergent intersubjectivity: Distinctive features of how autistic people create shared understanding
28	Ms Pippa White	King's College London	Stick or switch? Factors that influence educational placement over time for children with autism.
29	Miss Charlotte Blackmore	King's College London	Adults with autism spectrum disorder and the Criminal Justice System: An investigation of prevalence of offending, risk factors and gender differences.
30	Dr Bethlehem Tekola	Department of Psychology, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London, London, UK	Stigma experience and social support for families with children with autism and learning difficulties: perspectives from Ethiopia
31	Miss Annemarie Lodder	University of Bedfordshire	Stigma of living as an autism carer: a brief psycho-social support intervention (SOLACE), a randomised controlled feasibility study.







# Support the future of autism research

**Today we are discussing  
the incredible potential of  
research to change lives.**

With a monthly gift you can help us to  
make it happen.

Giving regularly helps us plan for a future  
where every autistic person has the chance  
of a long, happy healthy life.

Start your monthly gift from as little as  
£5 today: [autistica.org.uk/monthly](https://autistica.org.uk/monthly)



# AUTISTICA

Building brighter futures through autism research