

Asperger adults get own team

WE HAVE set up a specialist team to support the growing number of adults with Asperger's Disorder in Nottinghamshire.

Asperger's, thought to affect around 2,200 adults in the county, is an autistic spectrum disorder. Symptoms include:

- ◆ a lack of use and understanding of non-verbal behaviour such as facial expression and body language
- ◆ difficulty identifying social clues and conventions
- ◆ difficulties with conversation skills, such as understanding metaphors used in everyday language.
- ◆ unusually intense interest in particular subjects such as trains, astronomy or history.

The specialist team will initially be made up of social care staff who will liaise with other agencies – particularly the health service.

It will offer one co-ordinated service for

over 18s, including assessment, care management and support services, and support carers of people with Asperger's Disorder.

Coun Alan Rhodes, Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health, said: "Many children with Asperger's who we currently support are approaching adulthood. We want to make sure they get a similarly high quality service that meets their needs in later life."

"This specialist team will offer a co-ordinated service, with relevant links to different agencies, which is tailored to the needs of each individual and their carers."

"We believe this will make life easier and reduce some of the frustration they may have felt finding out about services in the past."

The team will be based in Mansfield but will cover the whole county. There is a possibility that it will include staff from different agencies in the future.

Care homes - decision soon

WE'RE set to make a decision on the way forward for care of the elderly this spring.

We've been consulting widely on what people think we should do, and this will be taken into consideration when Councillors meet to talk about the options.

We asked people what they think about these proposals:

- ◆ at least 150 additional extra care places as alternatives to residential care. Extra care is a modern form of sheltered housing
- ◆ a review of day services and how they can be provided in different ways
- ◆ continuing residential care

for older people from one care home in each district which will focus on specialist services like emergency care, short term care, breaks for carers, day care and some long term care

These will be:

- Westwood in **Worksop**
- Maun View in **Mansfield**
- Jubilee Court in **Hucknall**
- Woods Court in **Newark**
- Braywood Gardens in **Gedling**
- Bramwell in **Chilwell**
- Leawood Manor in **Edwalton**.

As part of our investment in extra care services, we will replace the remaining care

homes with alternative modern facilities in a similar location.

This will mean that the following care homes could close but only when alternative modern facilities were available in a similar location:

- St Michael's View in **Retford**
- James Hince Court in **Carlton-in-Lindrick**
- Daleside in **Mansfield**
- Ashcroft in **Sutton-in-Ashfield**
- Kirklands in **Kirkby-in-Ashfield**
- Leivers Court in **Arnold**
- Beauvale Court in **Eastwood**
- Bishops Court in **Boughton**.

Youngsters set to stand up to bullies

BULLYING text messages and happy slapping are being tackled by the County's teenagers themselves.

They're signing up for a series of workshops on cyber bullying, which will thrash out problems like unpleasant text messages and e-mails, happy slapping, and recording attacks on mobiles and posting the footage on the internet.

We decided to take positive action after it emerged that e-bullying has increased to unacceptable levels.

A survey last year of more than 11,000 children found nearly 15% had received nasty or aggressive messages. The survey also revealed that boys are less likely to report abuse than girls.

We already run a series of anti-bullying workshops - on name calling, leaving people out and extortion of money - for 6-11 year-olds.

The new courses are for 11-15 year-olds, and will also deal with racial bullying.

They take the form of a drama, which shows youngsters the affects of bullying and how to prevent or report it.

Claudia Schaff, drama projects co-ordinator for Personal Development of Learners, said that active steps must be taken to tackle modern bullying.

"The children interact in the workshops, and help come up with ways to prevent bullying."

"We also work with staff, and

Now that's a bright idea



WE'VE given away over 1,000 free safety reflectors to Out of School clubs which use a walking bus, as part of a campaign to make sure children are visible during the dark nights of winter.

Pictured are children from the Abbey Road Kids Club in West Bridgford, which was the first club to receive the free reflectors. It has a walking bus of around 30 children.

help them to revise their anti-bullying measures," she said.

"We all see in the news every week how new technologies present

more threats to our children. These workshops are in place to show young people that bullying is not acceptable in any form," added

Coun Joyce Bosnjak, cabinet member for Children and Young People.

The e-bullying workshops are starting up in spring.

Landfill pot boost for community projects

COMMUNITY projects across Nottinghamshire are sharing over £500,000.

They include:

- Everton** Village Hall - £40,000 for its upgrade
- Hoveringham** Village Hall - £38,900 to help pay for urgent roof and floor improvements at the village hall
- Jacksdale** Community Centre - £3,661 towards replacing kitchen units and new curtains
- Kirkby-in-Ashfield** - £30,000 to improve the footpath network and create wildlife habitats at Lane End
- Kirkby-in-Ashfield** - £29,275 towards a games area in West Park
- Sutton-cum-Lound** - £3,880 towards improv-

ing access to Daneshill Gravel Pits Nature Reserve

Mansfield - £50,000 towards the cost of building a brand new community centre at St Philip Neri Church

Newark - £50,000 for work to make the Queen's Sconce Civil War earthwork (a scheduled ancient monument and the finest earthwork of its type in the country) more accessible

Newark Egmonton Village Hall - £20,130 to help refurbish the village hall and provide a better entrance hall

Rainworth - £24,000 for a new skate and BMX area

Ranskill - £50,000 for a new community centre

Rufford Abbey Country Park - £6,951 for better equipment

Scrooby Village Hall - £30,000 to improve the hall

Skegby - £38,557 for the historic gardens of Skegby Hall.

The money has come from the Landfill Communities Fund, which gives landfill operators like the County Council the chance to divert some of their annual landfill tax bill into projects for the communities around landfill sites.

Organisations and community groups who would like to try for funding should visit www.wren.org.uk or call 01953 717165 for some advice.

Make travel easier for post-16s

A MAJOR study of rural transport for teenage learners recommends big investments.

We were part of the study, along with Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Dorset and Cornwall County Councils, and we hope the Government will use the results to make it easier for young people in the countryside to get training and education.

As a rural authority one of our major challenges in encouraging young people into post 16 education is good transport links.

We are submitting a School and College Travel Pathfinder Scheme for this very reason and are hoping to get government funding to improve transport links in rural areas."

The views of college and sixth form students from rural areas, bus operators and disability specialists are all in the report.

There are ten recommendations, which include:

- ◆ free transport for all young people in learning up to the age of 19, as they do in London
- ◆ if free fares are not possible, concessionary fares, with extra for those facing hardship or with disabilities.

And we're keen to get on board a Pathfinder scheme, to improve school journeys for young people with:

- ◆ better travel security, including CCTV and working with pupils to improve behaviour
- ◆ increased promotion in schools of bus travel, walking and cycling new travel routes and times more relevant to individual schools
- ◆ possible introduction of a half price travel scheme for weekends, evenings and school holidays.

The scheme, if approved, will run across Notts from 2009.

We're one of 20 authorities in the country which has been invited to join. Successful councils will share a pot of £12m funding to put into their new service.

On top of the planned improvements, the free fares policy for young people travelling over three miles will remain.