

# Improving Access to Crawley GP surgeries for families whose Children have Autism

We were invited to attend a parent/carer meeting hosted by Autism Support Crawley (ASC). ASC supports parents in Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex whose children have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). One of the parents' main concerns was the understanding and support they were getting from their local GP surgeries. We arrange a meeting with one of the GP practices who we had heard about. The Practice Manager was open to making a change, so we facilitated a joint meeting bringing together families and the practice to listen to each-others' perspectives.

We built on these initial discussion to understand, in more detail, some of the issues autistic people face. One way we did this was to create a survey which ASC promoted. We were delighted that over 100 people shared their experiences.

These rich human stories helped us to have honest and frank discussions with the practice and to agree a range of ways local services could improve on the support they offered.

With the practice manager's commitment, and the lived experience and creativity of local families, training has been received and resources developed to support patients, GPs and their practice staff.

This work is now spreading to other GP surgeries.

*'Just got off the phone to a mum with two young adult sons with Autism - she said that it had completely transformed her younger son's view of the GP surgery and he carries the booklet around with him everywhere like a bible. She was so surprised that something that appears so simple has made such a difference to him and could not praise us all enough'*

Crawley Practice Manager

You can download a [patient booklet](#) to help you have the right conversations with doctors, nurses and receptionists.

**healthwatch**  
West Sussex



@HEALTHWATCHWESTSUSSEX



@HEALTHWATCHWS



0300 012 0122

[WWW.HEALTHWATCHWESTSUSSEX.CO.UK](http://WWW.HEALTHWATCHWESTSUSSEX.CO.UK)

Billingshurst Centre, Roman Way, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH149QW