

## Press release

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### For immediate release

#### **Haringey campaign group pledge to 'keep on fighting' despite council's shocking decision to slash vital autism services**

Local campaigners have pledged to 'keep on fighting' despite the shocking decision by Haringey Council, on 23 February, to slash autism services and cut £24.5million from adult social care funding in the borough over the next three years.

The National Autistic Society (NAS) has been supporting local campaigns group, Save Autism Services Haringey (SASH), whose members are all parents of adults or carers of adults with autism.

The campaigners have worked tirelessly to save autism services since the proposed budget was announced by Haringey Council in December 2014.

Although the overall budget was voted through at the full council meeting on 23 February, SASH were successful in preventing the council's proposed £5.7million cut to care packages.

Despite this achievement, SASH and the NAS are appalled that Haringey Council failed to save the Roundway day centre – the only autism-specific day service in the borough – from closure. Despite promises to the contrary, campaigners attending the council meeting were horrified to witness the unanimous decision by councillors to abandon a proposed vote to keep the centre open.

**Anna Nicholson, the NAS' Area Policy and Participation Officer**, said: "We are extremely proud of the members of SASH who have worked so hard to keep the cuts on the news agenda. Their regular appearances on BBC London radio and television, ensured that a much wider audience was made aware of the devastating impact the cuts to care packages and services would have, not just on adults with autism, but on the lives of their carers, and wider families too."

SASH campaign member, Mary Langan, gathered almost 7,000 signatures in less than two months to demonstrate to the council the extent of public opposition to cuts to care packages and day centres.

Mary, who along with three mums who have children attending the Roundway service, spoke at the Haringey council meeting, and finished her speech by saying: "If these cuts got through, we have no choice, we will continue to fight because we always have to fight for our families."

The NAS will also continue to support Mary and all the dedicated members of SASH.

**ENDS**

For more information or to arrange an interview with members of SASH please call Louisa Mullan at [Louisa.mullan@nas.org.uk](mailto:Louisa.mullan@nas.org.uk) or on 0207 903 3588

## Notes to editors:

### About autism

- Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some people with autism are able to live relatively independent lives but others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support. People with autism may also experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours.
- Asperger syndrome is a form of autism. People with Asperger syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence. They have fewer problems with speech but may still have difficulties with understanding and processing language.

### About the NAS

- The National Autistic Society (NAS) is the UK's leading charity for people with autism and their families. Founded in 1962, it continues to spearhead national and international initiatives and provide a strong voice for all people with autism. The NAS provides a wide range of services to help people with autism and Asperger syndrome live their lives with as much independence as possible.
- The NAS relies on the support of its members and donors to continue its vital work for people with autism. To become a member, make a donation or to find out more about the work of the NAS, visit the NAS website [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)
- For more information about autism and for help in your area, call the NAS Autism Helpline on: 0808 800 4104 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday, (free from landlines and most mobiles).
- The NAS Autism Services Directory is the UK's most comprehensive directory of services and events for people with autism. Visit [www.autism.org.uk/autismdirectory](http://www.autism.org.uk/autismdirectory) to find autism services and support networks in your area.
- Follow the NAS on Twitter ([@Autism](https://twitter.com/Autism)) or on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/NationalAutisticSociety](https://www.facebook.com/NationalAutisticSociety)).