Introduction
Welcome to this newsletter, which has again been compiled by Ian Bell.

There’s not a great deal to report at the moment. However, as it’s now 6 months since the last newsletter, it seems worth issuing another one and keeping visual impairment and autism alive.

RNIB retain the visual impairment and autism pages on their website. The address is www.rnib.org.uk/autism.

My own website
I have now posted quite a lot of material on my website. As yet, most of it is on the “Communication in children and adults who have VI” page. However, much of this material should be relevant to those concerned with people who have visual impairment and autism.

The purpose of my website is to share ideas, so I would very much like to hear from anyone with further material (including articles) which can be added. And, of course, I welcome comments and ideas. I look forward to hearing from you.

I am now posting these newsletters on the “Visual Impairment & Autism” page of my website. In addition, I provide a little information there about the Visual Impairment and Autism Project and the Resource Pack.

A couple of months ago I posted a lengthy review of the book by Hagood which I mentioned in the last newsletter. The book is of potential interest to practitioners supporting people with visual impairment and autism. A much shorter version of the review appeared in the recent issue of RNIB’s Insight magazine. Currently the review and some other material are available to download at www.rnib.org.uk/insightmagazine. On this page, click on “Guidance for practitioners”. The downloadable item is in the form of a list of published material which may be of value to practitioners working with people who have both visual impairment and autism. It is followed by some brief comments about each publication, and then the book review.
Very recently, I have posted an article on the “Visual Impairment & Autism” page. Written by Tim Kehoe, this examines the role of repetitive questioning in a pupil with visual impairment and autism.

My website is at [http://ianpbell.wordpress.com/](http://ianpbell.wordpress.com/)

**Resource Pack**

If you have not yet purchased the Resource Pack developed by the Visual Impairment and Autism Project team, you can still do so. It costs only £10. It’s available from the RNIB online shop at [http://www.rnib.org.uk/shop/Pages/ProductDetails.aspx?productID=pr1233301](http://www.rnib.org.uk/shop/Pages/ProductDetails.aspx?productID=pr1233301)

**Evaluation of the Resource Pack**

The formal Resource Pack evaluation has now been completed. It was undertaken by Sue Keil (Research Officer, RNIB) and Teresa Whitehurst (formerly Research and Development Officer, Sunfield, now an Independent Consultant). Both of them were members of the Visual Impairment and Autism Project team.

Our thanks go to all those who contributed to the evaluation by returning the questionnaire; your feedback was most helpful and is being carefully considered.

**Research about families' views on individual budgets**

I’ve been forwarded an email from Kate Williams who is Head of Policy and Public Affairs for Ambitious about Autism. Her email reads:

> “Ambitious about Autism is conducting research about families' views on individual budgets, in light of the Government’s special educational needs reforms proposal to introduce personal budgets.

[www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/a0075339/sengreenpaper](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/a0075339/sengreenpaper)

> “The research is being undertaken by Emma Greene at Ambitious about Autism. She is being supervised by the Centre for Research in Autism and Education (CRAE) at the Institute of Education.
“If you would like to help with the research we are looking for parents or carers of young people between the age of four and 16 who have been diagnosed with autism and have (a) received an individual budget, (b) been offered but refused an individual budget or (c) are simply aware of the individual budget scheme.

“Emma Greene says: ‘I would like to gain an understanding of how local authorities are currently delivering individual budgets to families of children with autism and, most importantly, what the families' experiences are thus far and what their hopes and fears are for the future.’

“If you would like more information, have any questions or wish to take part in a short interview, please contact Emma at EGreene@treehouseschool.org.uk.”

If you are interested in taking part in this research, please contact Emma Greene, as above; please do not contact me.

Please pass on this Newsletter
If you know of anyone who does not receive this newsletter, but who is interested in visual impairment and autism, please do pass the newsletter on. Obviously, the easiest and greenest way is to share it by email. But, if you feel it’s appropriate, please do print it and pass it on, or display it somewhere to attract attention.

Newcomers to visual impairment and autism
If this newsletter is your introduction to visual impairment and autism, welcome. If you wish to be added to our database, or if you have any comments or queries, please do contact us – contact details follow.

Also, please do visit the web-pages at: www.rnib.org.uk/autism
Contact details
The visual impairment and autism email address is still

vi-autism.medina@tiscali.co.uk

The postal address is:

c/o Medina House, Mill Lane
Codsall
Wolverhampton
WV8 1QH
UK

If you do not wish us to retain your name and email address, please email (address above) and asked to have your details removed. But, please note: if we do not have your details, we will be unable to send any further newsletters or other up-dates.

This newsletter was written and distributed by Ian Bell, Specialist Independent Speech and Language Therapist; Formerly Project Leader, Visual Impairment and Autism Project (September 2008 to March 2011)

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Website: http://ianpbell.wordpress.com/