

# A space for autism parents and carers...

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A new support group for parents and carers of children with autism, ADHD and related conditions will be launched next month.

Space will be holding monthly meetings at St Nicholas and Martins Wood Children's Centre, at The Oval on Stevenage's Vardon Road, from Monday, March 13.

The meetings will provide an opportunity for parents and carers to meet others in similar circumstances and to listen to professional speakers.

Space, which has successfully run support groups across Hertfordshire since 2007, also hosts workshops, seminars and social events, as well as having a Facebook page, and has been given a grant by Stevenage Community Trust to buy books for parents and carers to borrow.

Lisa McGivern, who was raised in Stevenage and whose son Bobby has autism, is launching the Stevenage group.

She said: "As a baby, Bobby was like any other baby, but he was late at meeting his milestones, which I did keep a very close eye on. In my family there is autism, ADHD and learning difficulties.

"As Bobby got older my concerns



■ Lisa McGivern, second from left, with the rest of the Space team and professional speaker Dean Beadle.

Picture: SUBMITTED

grew."

At the age of two, Bobby was diagnosed with autism and sensory processing disorder and Lisa said "the emotional rollercoaster journey began".

Bobby attended Tracks autism in

Stevenage - a specialist early years centre for children on the autistic spectrum - and Grace's Space, which is a monthly support group for all the family at Grace's Community Church on Hydean Way in Stevenage.

Lisa said: "I know first-hand how

hard it can be to raise a child with additional needs, plus be a sibling to a brother and sister with additional needs. It can be very lonely and isolating at times. This is why I wanted to help other parents and carers, as I know the journey is not easy."

Space meetings will run in Stevenage on the second Monday of every month, during term-time only, between 10am and noon.

■ For more about Space, visit [www.spaceherts.org.uk](http://www.spaceherts.org.uk).

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