



# Compact Innovation Award

---

## Redbridge Autism Ambassadors and RAAR projects

### Overview

Our Autism Ambassadors and RAAR projects are designed and delivered by young people with autism to raise autism awareness and improve accessibility to buildings and services in Redbridge for autistic people. Our projects have been funded by London Borough of Redbridge for the past two years and have been successful through developing partnerships in the community, designing new innovative activities and providing solutions resulting in positive outcomes for everyone involved with our schemes.

The Autism Ambassadors (AA's) project delivers innovative and interactive autism awareness training sessions followed by a question and answer session to look at removing the barriers which prevent people with autism accessing local services, clubs and provisions.

The Redbridge Autism Awareness Roadshow (RAAR) project is managed by a person with autism who has created an accessibility audit survey to look at how local services can become more accessible not only to people with autism but those with other disabilities and non-disabled people. The survey focuses on looking at how the barriers to utilising local opportunities can be removed and how more disabled people can access services in their community, through companies and providers making reasonable adjustments.

The AA's and RAAR work closely with local schools and colleges, the council and other organisations to recruit young people with autism living in Redbridge to become involved, trained and engaged in the projects. The projects use a variety of communication methods to ensure participants are able to take an active part in delivering autism awareness sessions or assisting in completing access visits and compiling evaluation reports to improve services and increase opportunities available to disabled people living in Redbridge and the surrounding area. Our projects deliver unique autism awareness training sessions that are impacting real changes to how individuals understand autism and how they can make long term embedded procedural changes to make services more accessible and open for local residents and visitors to Redbridge.

### Impact

These projects have enabled over fifty people with autism to enhance their social and communication skills by becoming Ambassadors and created three paid employment roles for local disabled people. Young people have learnt new

skills, gained confidence to deliver presentations to raise autism awareness and enjoyed travel training as they learn to move safely around their community. The projects have delivered over 150 sessions to over 4000 individuals. Sessions have been held at Job Centres where adjustments including changing entrances, reception areas, providing training and general information have enabled more disabled people to look for work. We have also worked with Local Authority, health and voluntary sector settings in order to help these services implement areas of the Autism Strategy.

The Ambassadors have worked with schools and colleges to increase the understanding of autism and help reduce incidents of bullying. RAAR has worked with shops, banks and leisure services to look at access issues and raise autism awareness. The AA's and RAAR are working with Transport for London in 2015 to meet with managers, drivers, trainers, internal staff, security, inspectors and engineers to look at ways to encourage more people with autism to utilise public transport in the capital.

AA's and RAAR's vision is to make Redbridge the first Autism friendly zone in England through raising autism awareness and access to buildings, services and opportunities for autistic people.

Many of the suggested reasonable adjustments have been implemented and will not only benefit people with autism but also the wider community including families with young children, senior citizens and disabled people with other impairments.

