



Supporting carers and families

Jacob is nine years old and is on the autistic spectrum. At home, he struggles to sit at the dinner table which Jacob's parents find hard work. Meal times have become stressful and this is affecting the behaviour of Jacob's younger siblings. Jacob also has trouble settling in bed as he can't settle in bed long enough to feel sleepy and fall asleep. Jacob gets out of bed every 10 minutes until about 10.45pm on average. In addition to his trouble settling, Jacob also wakes very early pacing about the house which wakes his younger siblings and parents. Sleep for the whole family is affected and relaxation time is rare.

Jacob's mother contacted Berkshire Autistic Society (BAS) to ask for advice. BAS were able to loan her a weighted lap blanket. The blanket rests on Jacob's lap and the weight provides reassurance and comfort which enables Jacob to sit for longer periods of time.

Jacob has sensory issues – the behaviour he demonstrated is due to ***Vestibular Processing (movement and balance system)***. This means Jacob often feels uneasy because of the way his body processes the feelings of balance and gravity. A weighted blanket provides a light pressure that reassures him and eases the feelings of uneasiness. This allows him to sit for longer and concentrate on the world around him. He is calmer and more engaged with the world and people around him – at school and at home.



Jacob now has a weighted lap blanket and a weighted bed blanket. He now settles in bed about 9pm: his parents get relaxation time and Jacob benefits from more sleep and rest. The weighted lap blanket has helped Jacob to settle and concentrate. Family meal times are more enjoyable. In the morning, when Jacob wakes early, he does not pace about and wake his family. He can now sit and play his computer games while using his lap blanket which means the rest of the family can sleep an extra hour which makes a huge difference to his siblings and reduces the stress on his parents. The family is happier and more at ease.

The weighted lap blanket Jacob's Mum borrowed from BAS cost £15. Having the opportunity to try using the blanket has transformed the quality of life for this family.