

# Press Release



Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009, London, UK

## “Dear Gordon Brown ...” - a mother’s personal campaign

Autism mother, Polly Tommey’s journey continues in her pursuit of the attention of Prime Minister Gordon Brown on behalf of the thousands of mothers of children with autism in the UK.



Yesterday, Polly and her son Billy, who is a 12 year old and has autism, went to 10 Downing Street to deliver her letter requesting a personal meeting with Mr Brown.



For most mothers that would be enough, but not for Polly Tommey. Polly has also secured extensive support from the advertising world and now also has her name and telephone number plastered across premium billboard sites throughout the United Kingdom in the hope that this will convince Mr Brown to get in touch. One of the three different images is above.

Made possible by a generous group of commercial donors, the extensive billboard campaign allows Polly to make her personal appeal in a very public way, in the hope of securing some time to speak to Gordon Brown about the future of her 12 year old son Billy and the thousands of other children and adults with autism in London and the rest of the UK. Over £500,000 of space, time and input has been donated for this specific campaign.

# Press Release



Polly Tommey is not only an inspirational and dynamic mother as well as being Editor-in-Chief of The Autism File magazine, but she is also the Founder of the registered charity The Autism Trust. Her campaign is intended to highlight the critical situation that individuals with autism and their families live with.

Polly says, "Autism has become a taboo subject here in the UK. It affects over half a million people and yet our government and political leaders appear to disregard the often overwhelming stress and demands faced by families of those with autism. This is not a passing matter; autism numbers have increased dramatically in the last twenty years from 1 in 10,000 in 1988 to 1 in 100 today. Unless the problems of autism are understood; unless services become more available; and unless support is more widespread, we will see an underclass of disaffected and desperate autism households emerge."

Polly continues, "We want better support, we want politicians to engage with us and we want the acknowledgement and support that our children deserve as fully contributing members of society."

Polly wants to hear back from Gordon Brown, to explain to him why the untapped potential of so many with autism has to be embraced; discrimination has to be overcome; and the personal lives of this important and large autism population have to be supported.

Polly concludes, "Billy has a bleak future today in our blinkered world. He is the inspiration to all of us in our family and everyone who meets him. It is simply not fair that his potential is dismissed."

## **Notes for Editors**

***The Autism Trust (registered charity Nr 1117657)***

[www.theautismtrust.org.uk](http://www.theautismtrust.org.uk)

***The Autism Trust's focus is on building inspiring, sustainable and real futures for the many children with autism in the world today:***

### ***A Safe Haven for People with Autism***

The objective of The Autism Trust is simple: to create a future with purpose for children everywhere with autism. We aim to do this by developing a worldwide network of innovative, high-quality environments: Centres of Excellence in Autism.

The Autism Trust recognises the immense gap that exists between the demand for and current availability of existing residential and professional support options once children with autism leave supported education throughout the world.

# Press Release



Our goal as The Autism Trust is to provide this through the development of a network of consistently outstanding and innovative outreach centres for autism worldwide. We consider it essential that each of these Centres of Excellence not only provides help and support to individuals with autism but also to their families and those involved with their care, support, ongoing education and development.

## ***Polly Tommey***

Polly Tommey is a mother dealing with autism. She is also the founder and Editor-in-Chief of The Autism File. Polly has been producing what is now the leading retail magazine on autism in the UK, USA & Canada (with a current issue circulation of over 40,000 copies) from her family's house in Hampton, West London since 1999. Polly is also the Founder of The Autism Trust, a UK registered charity focused on building an inspiring and sustainable future for children with autism in the UK when they leave full time education.

Polly is regarded as one of the leading figures in autism in the UK as a campaigning and influential journalist and is featured regularly as a sector expert in the media. She is currently directing an investigative television documentary on autism to be broadcast in 2009. Polly also presents a regular radio programme: Autism Issues From Around the World on Autism One Radio; she is Secretary of the Autism Human Rights & Discrimination Initiative; and is a regular attendee and presenter at conferences worldwide. She is married to Jonathan Tommey who runs The Autism Clinic and they have three children, one of whom has autism.

## ***For further information contact:***

***Oliver Jones***  
***Polly Tommey***

***Chairman, The Autism Trust***  
***Founder, The Autism Trust***

***07802 985053***  
***020 8979 2525***