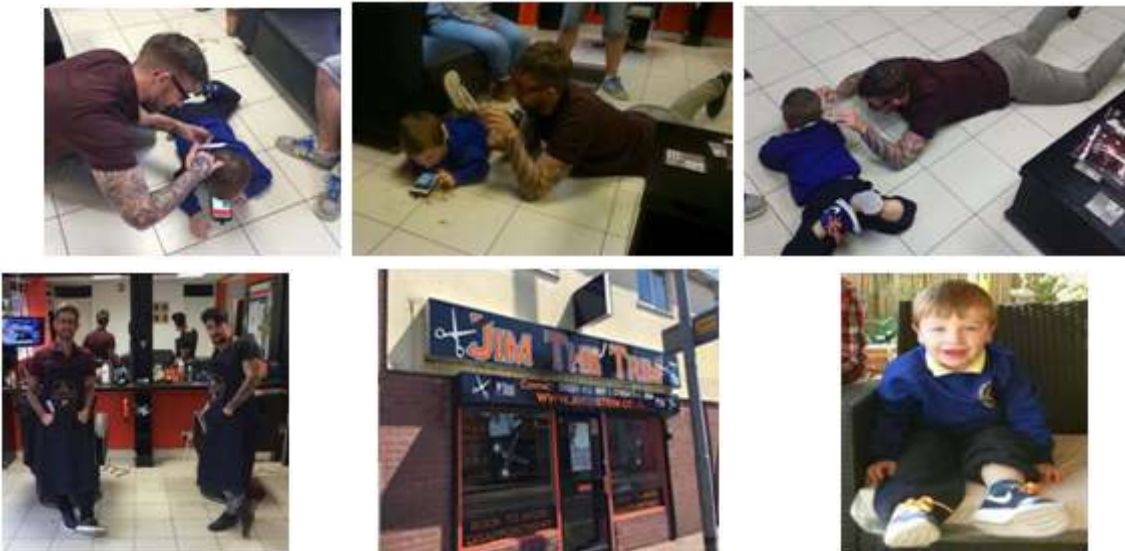


# Hairdresser finds brilliant way to help autistic boy terrified of barber's chair

Mason Lewis hasn't had a proper haircut for years, because of a nasty experience he had when he was 18 months old



This is the heart-warming moment a hairdresser lies down on the floor to cut an autistic child's locks – because the youngster is terrified of barber's chairs. Mason Lewis hasn't had a proper haircut for years, because of a nasty experience he had when 18 months old. Becoming desperate with Mason's scruffy and patchy do, his mum Denine Davies took him to barber James Williams, 26, who is said to be good with children. Denine and partner Jamie Lewis, 29, visited James at Jim the Trim in Briton Ferry, Wales, numerous times and James slowly built up a relationship with Mason, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). On Tuesday, Mason was lay on the floor calmly playing with his mum's iPhone and so James seized upon the opportunity, lay on the floor and gave Mason his first proper hair cut in two and a half years. Denine, who lives nearby in Port Talbot, Wales, said: "I can't believe what James did – most barbers would be eager to get on to their next customer as they would be losing money but he didn't mind at all and dedicate all his attention on helping Mason. "People don't realise how difficult it can be for a child with ASD and how much it means to parents like me and Jamie. This was the first proper hair cut he has had since he was 18 months old. "Seeing Mason get stressed and upset is so traumatic so when James did this it meant the world."

James, who set up his barber shop six years ago after working at two other barber shops to learn the trade, said he is often approached by parents with children who need help getting their hair cut. James said: "I know how difficult it can be and I my main concern was making sure Mason was happy and not upset. "So when I saw he was comfortable on the floor, I thought nothing of getting down on my belly and having a go. It's the oddest place I've ever cut someone's hair, but if that is what works, that is fine with me. "Once I started doing it I looked up at Denine and Jamie and they were both speechless. They clearly couldn't believe it and were so happy. "They have clearly gone

through so much with him so to see him let me do it with no fuss clearly meant a lot. “I felt chuffed to have been able to help but didn’t think much more about it. But before I knew it, the pictures had gone viral and I had lots of other parents coming up and say did I realise how much what I had done meant. “There are lots of parents saying they will bring their children here now.”

The pictures of James and Mason lay on the floor together have since clocked up 24,000 ‘likes’ and more than 4,000 shares.

James has had parents contact him from across the UK and even the US and Australia commending what he did.

Denine, who is a full-time mum-of-three, said: “Mason ear must have been slightly caught by the clipper when he had his last haircut when he was 18months old as he won’t let anyone go near that ear and is terrified of the barber. “We looked for specialist barbers but had had no luck. Both me and his dad Jamie were really upset as his hair was getting scruffy and we could only off chunks so it looked and mess and stuck up. I had resorted to cutting it myself but I didn’t exactly do a good job and often left his fringe wonky or bits missed as it would upset him too much. “Then I heard about James and that he is good with kids and had successfully cut the hair of another child with autism. “James let us come in lots of times over the last few months just to let Mason get used to the place and eventually he tried cutting his hair – but with no luck. He would get a few pieces off but Mason would then get too upset and we would have to stop. “Then on Tuesday Mason was lay on the flooring playing with my iPhone. James lay on the floor next to him, on his belly and began cutting his hair. We all just stood in silence watching. We couldn’t believe it. “All the other parents with children who have ASD now want to go and meet James too and see if he can help with their children. I’m very grateful for what he did and the time he gave up without a second thought. “Even Mason was impressed. Usually he give him a high five when he leaves but after this occasion he ran over and hugged and kissed him.” Mason suffers from a moderate form of ASD, which means his speech development has been slow and he can only say a few words.