

# NEURODIVERGENCE IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE



News and updates from your local Autism Partnership Board and introducing updates from Gloucestershire's other Partnership Boards.



## Welcome to Issue 4!

For this issue, we have decided it would be good to try incorporating news from Gloucestershire's other Partnership Boards. One key reason for this decision is that there is a significant number of people who have co-occurring conditions. For example, neurodivergent people with mental health conditions and/or sensory impairments.

Therefore, bringing news together for the partnership boards made sense! We have put in a brief introduction to the different Partnership Boards followed by news from each. Thank you to the co-chairs of the other Partnership Boards for organising items for this newsletter.

Do let us know how you feel about the content within the newsletter, either specifically relating to the neurodivergence sections, or the additional content from the other Partnership Boards. Either email [neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk) or take a short survey by visiting this [link here](#).

If it's thought to be beneficial, we hope to continue with the widened content!

**Andrew Cotterill**

**Chair of Gloucestershire's Autism Partnership Board**

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### Collaborative Activity

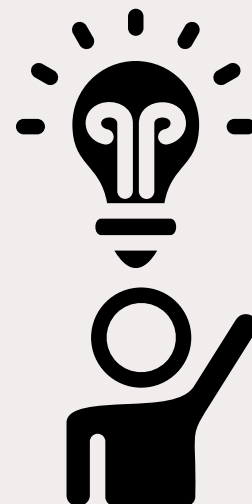
- Building Better Transport Group
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Gloucestershire's Autism Partnership Board brings together people with lived and professional experience of autism and neurodivergence to oversee the implementation of the local Autism strategy. Our local priorities reflect the six overarching themes of the National Autism Strategy. Some of this quarter's highlights are shown below:

### Theme 1 Highlights

#### *Improve understanding and acceptance*

- Gloucestershire County Council's staff network have created a neuroinclusive working group; to support raise the profile of neurodivergent staff needs. More details in this newsletter and to be shared at September's Partnership Board.
- Life in The MiND have been funded for an additional year, to further hear the neurodivergent lived experience voice; and inform future commissioning. More details in this newsletter and to be shared at September's Partnership Board.



### Theme 2 Highlights

#### *Improve access to education & support positive transitions into adulthood*

- The 'Support a Child's Neurodiversity' Website continues to have a good level of views and return visitors.
- Commitment to implement recommendations from NDMC report on Deaths of Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities and Autism, and take forward action.
- Inclusion Gloucestershire continue to work with neurodivergent young people transitioning into adulthood.

### Theme 3 Highlights

#### *Support more people into employment*

- 39 referrals received into the Hub since April 2024 from individuals who have declared that they have autism.
- 12 autistic individuals were supported into paid employment since April 2024.
- Supporting Stroud District Council to raise awareness of Neurodiversity in the workplace including recruitment, support for employees and managers, reasonable adjustments and career development during Inclusion Week September 2024.

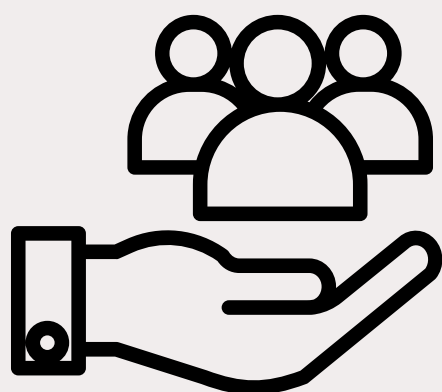


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### Theme 4 Highlights

#### *Tackle health & care inequalities*

- Recruited to all the new posts within the 0-18 Autism and ADHD assessment service.
- Recruited to all the new posts within the 18+ Autism and ADHD assessment service.
- The Autism Liaison Officer has seen over 40 autistic patients this quarter, including children & young people, working closely with the Learning Disability and Mental Health Liaison Teams. Every GP surgery has been informed of role & how to refer.



### Theme 5 Highlights

#### *Build the right support in the community & support people in inpatient care*

- Caseload manager in ICB's Integrated High Needs Team assigned to autism only cases for oversight.
- Links made with Public Health colleagues, particularly around the Suicide Prevention Strategy, to prevent avoidable deaths of autistic people.
- Communications plan reviewed to increase awareness of local LeDeR autism only reviews.

### Theme 6 Highlights

#### *Improve support within criminal & youth justice systems*

- Event arranged for Monday 14 October during Hate Crime Awareness Week; in partnership with Gloucestershire Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, Voluntary & Community Sector partners and those with lived experience - to raise awareness about disability hate crime; intersectionality, and race hate crime. More information available on [Page 5](#).





Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) staff disability network, held their first Safe Space conversation with senior leaders in December 2023, which focussed on neurodivergent colleagues' workplace experiences. This was well attended by both those with lived experience, and senior leaders. Actions came out of the conversation, including a segment at the Council's Leadership Conference in June 2024, coproduced and presented by neurodivergent people.

Since then, a working group has been formed to take forward further action. We will hear more about the work to date and future intentions at our September Autism Partnership Board.

## LIFE IN THE MIND - A PODCAST FOR, BY AND ABOUT NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE

Life in the MiND is a podcast for, by and about Neurodivergent people. The team interview people from all walks of life about their experiences. They also tackle topics facing them and the community. The Life in the MiND project started on 1st July 2023 with the goal to create resources that would engage and support neurodivergent people in Gloucestershire and beyond. The team have interviewed a diverse group of Neurodivergent people on topics including food, work, family, organised religion and comedy. The Team will be at our September Partnership Board to explain what's next for the podcast.

### **Follow Life in the MiND:**

- **Facebook:** /life.inthemindpage
- **Instagram:** /life.inthemind
- **TikTok:** /life.inthemind
- **Visit the website:** <https://www.lifeinthemind.co.uk/>



★ You can listen to the podcasts on Podbean: <https://lifeinthemind.podbean.com/>

★ and Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/64iFi8n...>

★ Podcasts on YouTube: [24 Podcasts](#)



In part response to Theme 6 of Gloucestershire's Autism Strategy, and in partnership with the South West Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Gloucestershire Police, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) are holding an event on Hate Crime, with a focus on disability (including neurodivergence), intersectionality and race, particularly in light of the August violent disorder.

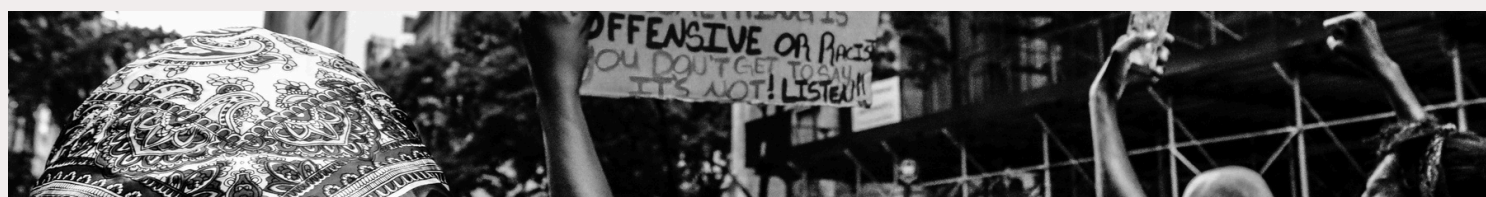
The event, which will take place during Hate Crime Awareness Week and Black History Month, has the following aims:

- To raise awareness of the current Hate Crime picture, with a particular focus on disability, intersectionality, and race in light of the August violent disorder.
- To understand the impact of hate crime on individuals and wider communities.
- To clarify roles of agencies and partners in supporting victims and preventing hate crime. including sharing the lessons learnt from the August violent disorder.
- To educate and empower upstanders to not be bystanders.

The Event will be hybrid, with speakers from the County Council, Gloucestershire Police, Crown Prosecution Service and Voluntary Community Sector.

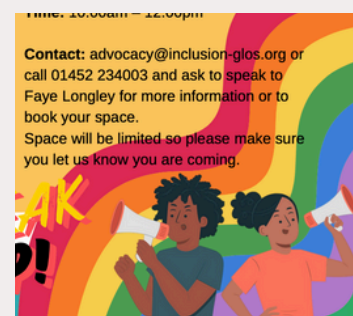
If you would like to join the conversation, you will need to register your place - using the following link [Gloucestershire's Hate Crime Event at Online event tickets from TicketSource](#).

A Microsoft Teams link will be sent nearer the time, as well as an agenda for the day.



### Speak Up Group: Neurodiversity & Sexuality

- Do you have lived experience of Neurodivergence?
- Are you part of the LGBTQIA+ community?
- Do you have an interest in sharing your story to help our new content creators course?



The next Speak up Group offers a supportive space for neurodivergent individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community to explore various subjects, share their experiences and hear what others have to say on the topic. This aims to support the drama group's Content Creators course which follows it. The course that follows aims to improve confidence to discuss important topics and develop research and video production skills.

**Where:** Railway House, Bruton Way, Gloucester, GL1 1DG

**When:** Tuesday 10th September 2024 || **Time:** 10.00am – 12.00pm

**Contact:** [advocacy@inclusion-glos.org](mailto:advocacy@inclusion-glos.org) or call 01452 234003 and ask to speak to Faye Longley for more information or to book your space. **Spaces will be limited so please make sure you confirm!**



In late 2023, the Adult Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) assessment service for Gloucestershire secured additional funding following a successful business case to the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

This has allowed us (Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC)) to start working on service design and development. The team have been working closely with the ICB, trust project managers and Partnership board and Experts by Experience, to consider and implement efficiencies needed in our current processes, and possible new pathways to improve the experience of those referred to our service.

A significant part of the funding received has allowed the service to undertake recruitment to the team. We are pleased to report that we have successfully recruited new members to the team throughout 2024. These new team members will be supported with the appropriate training and education to deliver high quality neurodevelopmental assessments to those on our waiting lists.

The service has also been working on developing information booklets that outline the service we provide, the processes involved from triage to assessment and what to expect when accessing our service.

These have been developed in consultation with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (led by our Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist) and our experts by experience. In the development we utilised the Clear language guidance from NHS England and the National Autistic Society.

As a service, we are committed to providing high quality assessments but also recognise the importance of related mental health needs and the role that these have in achieving the best possible outcomes for our local population needs.

To support us in achieving this aim, we are working closely with our primary care colleagues to develop a proposed new pathway for those seeking a referral to our service and for what happens after assessment. Our goal is to achieve a more holistic approach for those seeking assessment allowing for support with general mental health and the process involved with a referral to our service.

We are passionate about increasing access to leisure activities for neurodivergent individuals and their families. We achieve this by bringing together providers and neurodivergent communities to share information and resources at our workshops, talks and listening sessions.

### Half Day Conference

Following on from the success of the **Neurodiversity Network Conference** in March, we're excited to announce that the Neurodiversity Network plans to host a half day conference in the coming months. This will be an enjoyable morning of networking and workshops focused on neurodiversity and inclusion. Make sure you're signed up as a network member and you'll be the first to hear our event updates!

Sign-up form for providers: **click here.**

Sign-up form for neurodivergent individuals and their families/carers is **here:**

### YOU'RE WELCOME

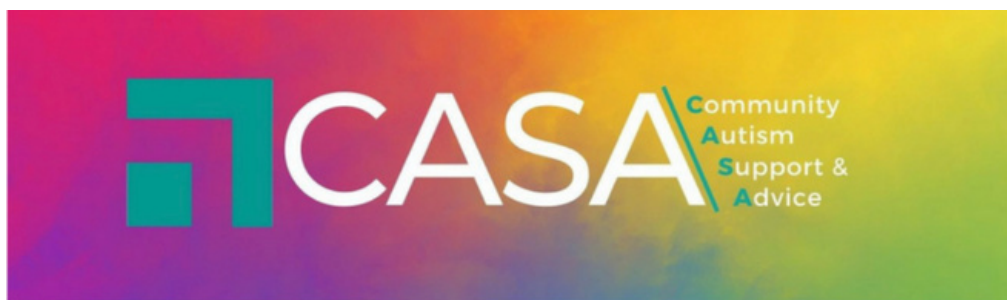


If you're a provider of leisure activities, you can create a profile for free and promote your upcoming events on You're Welcome, the inclusive activities directory. You can tag your activities by which access requirements you meet (e.g., autism friendly, quiet space) and we'd love you to add the Neurodiversity Network to your events as an associated organisation.

This means all your activities will also be listed under the Neurodiversity Network page, which will provide a great at-a-glance menu of neurodivergent-friendly things to do in the county. <https://yourewelcomeglos.org/>

We look forward to having you on board!

Mar Plowman, Neurodiversity Network Coordinator [ndnetwork@activeimpact.org.uk](mailto:ndnetwork@activeimpact.org.uk)



The Community Autism Support and Advice (CASA) service is countrywide, providing post-diagnostic one-to-one support for autistic individuals and peer support for those considering a diagnosis.

### What can I get from the service?

- One-to-one support to help identify your strengths and challenges
- A wide range of interventions, information and advice for you and your family enabling them to have a greater understanding of your autism
- Opportunities for you to meet peers and develop support networks through our countywide drop-ins
- Access to helpful resources
- Improved access to services through reasonable adjustments
- Referrals to other appropriate services

### Who is the service for?

- Adults over the age of 18
- Resident in Gloucestershire or registered with a Gloucestershire GP

Please note: Those with co-existing Learning Disabilities should contact the Learning Disability Services. If you would like to discuss this, please contact CASA.

Drop-ins are currently available weekly or biweekly in Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Cinderford or online. Watch members talking about Cheltenham drop in [here](#).

### For further information:

- **Email:** [infocasa@grcc.org.uk](mailto:infocasa@grcc.org.uk)
- **Call:** 01452 317460 or
- **Visit** their website [here](#)

CASA is also on social media, which you can follow below :

- [Instagram:](#)
- [Facebook:](#)





Each issue, we will introduce a topic of interest that is highly prevalent in autism and/or other types of neurodivergence. Please be aware that due to the summary nature of the “What is” introduction there is not space to explore the intricate detail and nuances that some of you will be aware of!

## Introduction.

Executive function is the set of mental skills such as planning, prioritising, keeping focus, remembering instructions allowing individuals to manage everyday tasks effectively. Any problems with parts of these skills can therefore effect so many aspects of everyday life.

A significant majority of neurodivergent individuals (e.g. recent research suggesting as much as 80% or more of autistic or ADHD individuals) have impairments in some aspects of executive function that can have moderate to severe impact on their ability to navigate through everyday tasks.

Unfortunately the severity of impairments may vary day to day and be impacted very significantly (more than would effect a neurotypical person) by such as environment (over stimulus), routine changes, social interaction, cooccurring mental health conditions and many other factors.

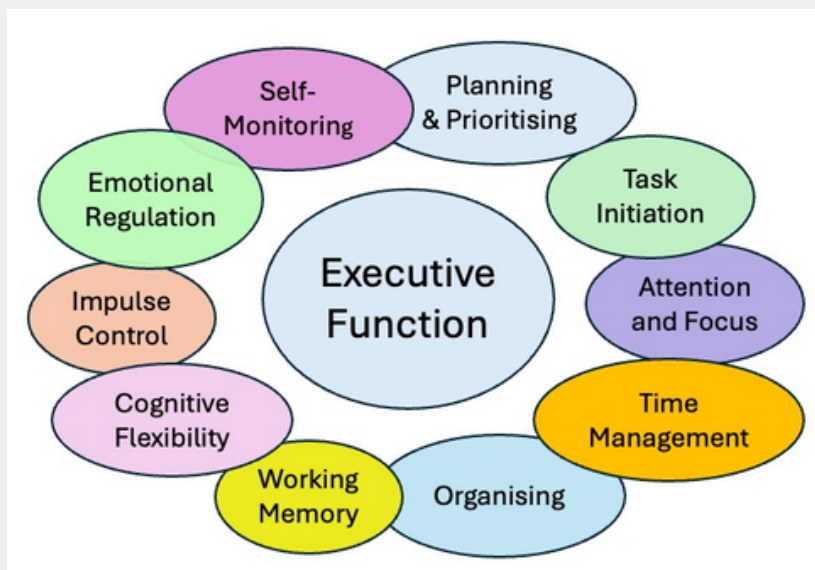
Hopefully what is presented may help you think about the topic and how it applies either to you as a neurodivergent individual, you as family or a friend of one or for example someone making adjustments in dealing professionally with a neurodivergent individual.

## Aspects of Executive Function (see diagram)

**Planning and Prioritising:** The ability to set goals, develop strategies to achieve them, and determine the order in which tasks should be completed based on their importance and urgency - This is essential for managing complex tasks and ensuring that critical activities are addressed first.

**Task Initiation:** The ability to start a task promptly and without procrastination - It is key to overcoming inertia and getting work done efficiently.

**Attention and Focus:** The ability to maintain concentration on a task or activity, especially over extended periods. These are essential for completing



tasks accurately and efficiently, and for avoiding distractions.

**Time Management:** The skill of planning and controlling how much time to spend on specific activities. This is vital for meeting deadlines, balancing responsibilities, and avoiding procrastination.

**Organising:** The ability to arrange information, tasks, or materials in a structured and systematic way - essential for maintaining order and efficiency, reducing stress, and ensuring that tasks are completed correctly.

**Working Memory:** The ability to hold and manipulate information in the mind over short periods. This is critical for following instructions, performing complex tasks, and learning new information.

**Cognitive Flexibility:** The capacity to adapt one’s thinking and behavior in response to changing circumstances or new information. This enables problem-solving, creativity, and the ability to switch between tasks or ideas effectively.

**Impulse Control:** The ability to resist urges or temptations to act impulsively. This is important for making thoughtful decisions and avoiding behaviors that may have negative consequences.

**Aspects of Executive Function continued:**

**Emotional Regulation:** The ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a controlled and appropriately. It helps maintain focus and make rational decisions, especially in stressful situations.

**Self-Monitoring:** The ability to assess and evaluate one's own performance and behavior in real-time, making adjustments as needed - Crucial for staying on track, improving performance, and achieving goals.

**Why neurodivergent people are affected so much?**

As executive function is so integral to almost every aspect of daily living—ranging from managing time and tasks to regulating emotions and social interactions—issues in this area can have a profound effect on the life of a neurodivergent person. These challenges can contribute to academic or occupational difficulties, strained relationships, and a reduced sense of autonomy and confidence. However, with the right support and strategies, neurodivergent individuals can develop tools to manage these challenges and lead successful, fulfilling lives.

**A few examples.**

**Sensory and Emotional Overload:** Many neurodivergent individuals experience heightened sensitivity to sensory inputs and emotions. This can overwhelm the individual leading to difficulties with impulse control, emotional regulation, and maintaining focus.

**Impact on Social Interactions:** Social situations often require quick thinking, perspective-taking, and emotional regulation — all closely tied to executive function. Neurodivergent individuals may find these interactions draining or challenging, which can affect their ability to form and maintain relationships.

**Strain on Mental Resources:** Executive function tasks require significant cognitive effort. For neurodivergent individuals, who may already be expending extra mental energy to manage sensory sensitivities, social interactions, or learning differences, this can lead to quicker mental fatigue and reduced capacity to handle other tasks.

**Need for Structure and Predictability:** Many neurodivergent individuals thrive in structured

environments where routines and expectations are clear. Executive function challenges can make it difficult to create or maintain such structures independently, leading to increased anxiety and difficulty in managing daily life.

**Compounding Effects:** Struggles with executive function can create a cycle of stress and frustration. For example, difficulty with time management might lead to missed deadlines, which in turn increases stress, further impairing executive function and exacerbating challenges.

**A personal perspective.**

For me as an autistic individual, I have never quite accepted the differences I have - so feel a constant failure that I have never been able to get strategies for my EF weaknesses. I recognise that many non-neurodivergent people can have issues with EF. However I know I just have daily battles with aspects that I am acutely aware of and can't ever seem to improve no matter what strategies I employ. In times of feeling under stress and anxiety (which is often) any aspects just randomly fail.

One is task initiation. There's a constant psychological inertia that I fight against. In a short space it's hard to describe but I might dwell on just a two of the many strategies I employ daily to help overcome the issue.

One is "the half a dozen things". If clearing a space (just tidying - easy right?), to make easier to start I just tell myself that's all I have to do before starting. I then count each time I put an item (or hopefully hands full) away and just say to myself I can break after I have done 6 things and then set a timer (of say 5 or 10 mins) to restart. Sometimes that's all I can do, but often that breaks the inertia and I can continue do several lots of half dozen things. without a break.

Even if I know I might enjoy the activity, my ability to start seems impaired by anxiety by all the steps. Going to the climbing wall, it might take hours to work up to going if at all. I might tell myself to at least go for a coffee and then I can decide to come back without climbing. Of course once I am there I want to start ... and not stop even when other things are pressing (leading to time management issues if I am not careful!!).



This page is a list of Gloucestershire focused resources specifically for, or inclusive of, autistic and other neurodivergent conditions.

**Autism Central Peer Education Programme** [<https://www.bristolautismsupport.org/gloucestershire/>]: Provides information, support and training for parents and carers of autistic children in Gloucestershire.

**Local Offer** [<http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk>]: A central source of information on services for children and young people aged 0-25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families in Gloucestershire, including information on Autism and ADHD.

**Neuro Directory** [<https://www.theneurodirectory.co.uk>]: To connect, empower, & celebrate neurodiversity.

**Neurodiversity Network** [<https://www.activeimpact.org.uk/neurodiversitynetwork/>]: A user-led network of activity providers, committed to being inclusive of neurodivergent children and adults in Gloucestershire.

**Forwards Gloucestershire** [<https://www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk>]: All age, all disability service; supporting people with disabilities achieve employment dreams. Forwards can provide help to identify skills and job goals, improve confidence, manage anxiety and overcome barriers.

**NeuroThrive** [<https://www.neurothrive.org.uk>]: Provides education, guidance, mentoring, coaching, practical tips, and a sense of community to professionals, parents and carers who support or care for neurodiverse children, teens, or adults.

**Children's Social Communication and Autism Assessment Service (SCAAS) and CAMHS Neurodiversity Team** [<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/children-and-young-people/camhs/scaas/>]: Clinical psychologists, paediatricians, psychiatrists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists offering assessment of social communication to understand if a child is Autistic and, for children in secondary school, assessment of attention to understand if a child has ADHD.

**Support a Child's Neurodiversity** [<https://support-child-neurodiversity-southwest.nhs.uk>]: Resources to help support neurodivergent children at home and at school.

**Gloucestershire Neurodiversity Project:** [<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/gloucestershire-neurodiversity-youth-project/>]: Gloucestershire third sector / charities and local voluntary groups will be able to enrol their youth workers and young members on a 2-day skills building programme.

## OTHER SELECTED RESOURCES



Here you'll find some neurodivergent resources that may be of interest.

Please be aware that content linked to from this page is not necessarily provided by us, we cannot guarantee that all the content is perfect - merely that we hope you might find it of interest!

### Youtuber of the issue!

[https://www.youtube.com/@ADHD\\_love](https://www.youtube.com/@ADHD_love)

A couple, him neurotypical, her ADHD, share their experiences and personal insight into ADHD through a super set of amusing videos.



#### **ADHD Love**

Rich - Neurotypical, Rox - ADHD AF Business email:

✉ mark@freefocus.com

YouTube

## Theme based resources of the issue!

### Employment and Neurodivergence

Forwards Gloucestershire are Gloucestershire's first stop for disability employment. During Autism Acceptance Week, the team hosted a series of five "Lunch and Learn" informational sessions, to support employers increase their knowledge and understanding of autism and neurodivergence. You can watch these below:

1. **Introduction to Autism and other types of Neurodivergence:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caMXbfyepb4&t=2197s>

2. **Support in the Workplace:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cW\\_zb2aqLJU&t=2150s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cW_zb2aqLJU&t=2150s)

3. **Recruitment:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIjzHvp1b5o>

4. **Maintaining a workforce:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXrJZgDtfHE&t=729s>

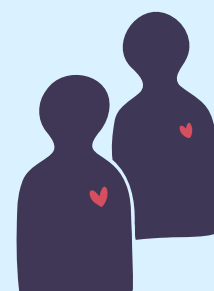
5. **Other resources:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p59ij6sL0U>



For more videos, visit <https://www.youtube.com/@forwardsemploymentservice6547/videos>

### An Autistic Guide to Healthy Relationships

A guide jointly created by an autistic advocate and people from the universities of Durham, Stirling and Bristol, can be found [here](#).





# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Here are support groups, meet ups or events happening around Gloucestershire over the next quarter. Let us know if you need anything relevant adding.

## **Your Voice SW Neurodiversity Group**

Meets online on the first Thursday of every month from 18:00-19:30. Contact Sammy Roberts on [sammyr@inclusion-glos.org](mailto:sammyr@inclusion-glos.org)

## **APB Autism Lived Experience Group**

Meets online, usually once a month on a Monday from 14:00-15:30. Contact [Andrew@Cotterill.info](mailto:Andrew@Cotterill.info)

## **Churchdown Autism Group**

Meets at Churchdown community centre on the first Thursday of the month from 14:00-15:30. Contact [rachel.hodges-cox@nhs.net](mailto:rachel.hodges-cox@nhs.net) or [cashmir.martin@nhs.net](mailto:cashmir.martin@nhs.net)

## **Community Autism Support and Advice (CASA)**

Support groups and drop-ins at various locations. For more details: <https://www.grcc.org.uk/what-we-do/community-autism-support-advice-casa> or email [infocasa@grcc.org.uk](mailto:infocasa@grcc.org.uk).

## **Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum 'Listen To Me' Meet-ups**

Various locations. For more information visit [www.glosparentcarerforum.org.uk](http://www.glosparentcarerforum.org.uk)



## **Your next Autism Partnership Board**

Tuesday 10 September 2024 | 10.00am to 1.00pm  
Venue: Shire Hall

### **Main Topics:**

Advocacy [including self]  
Employer engagement

### **Future Partnership Board Dates:**

Tuesday 3 December 2024 | 10.00am to 12.30pm  
Venue: Zoom [Online]

Tuesday 4 March 2025 | 10.00am to 12.30pm  
Venue: Zoom [Online]

## **WANT TO JOIN US?**

THE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETS  
ONCE PER QUARTER. IF YOU  
WOULD LIKE TO COME ALONG TO  
OUR NEXT MEETING, SEND A  
REQUEST TO:  
[NEURODIVERSITY@GLOUCESTER  
SHIRE.GOV.UK.](mailto:NEURODIVERSITY@GLOUCESTERSHIRE.GOV.UK)

## **MORE INFORMATION**

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE, AS WELL  
AS VIEW PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS  
AT:  
[HTTPS://GLOUCESTERSHIRE.GOV.U  
K/HEALTH-AND-SOCIAL-  
CARE/DISABILITIES/AUTISM-  
PARTNERSHIP-BOARD/](https://gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/disabilities/autism-partnership-board/)

Did you know we have 5 individual Partnership Boards in Gloucestershire? Each Partnership Board has a particular theme of focus.

These Partnership Boards are

- **Autism** which also now includes other types of neurodivergence
- **Carers** focusing on the need of unpaid carers
- **Learning Disability**
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing**
- **Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment with a Neurology Subgroup**



Gloucestershire's Partnership Boards bring together people with lived experience, families and carers, and a wide range of organisations and professionals from different sectors. They work together on making things better for people.

We also have a **Collaborative Partnership Board**. Here representatives from each of the individual partnership boards meet to share information and discuss issues affecting more than one of them. Where possible we can then work in a more coordinated way to achieve effective change.

At the Collaborative Partnership Board representatives from other disability groups may also be represented.



The next few pages contain news from these Partnership Boards.

## Carers Partnership Board

**Chair:** Joanna Davies

**Vice Chairs:** Jenny Hinks (Adult Carer) & Helen Bond (Parent Carer)

### Carers Rights Day 2024 events hosted by Gloucestershire Carers Hub

Carers Rights Day is an annual event held every November. On Thursday 21st November 2024, unpaid Carers will come together to raise awareness of the rights and needs of unpaid Carers. As an unpaid Carer, you are providing a vital service to the individual who you support, but you may be doing so at a cost to your own physical and mental health, as well as your own finances and employment. Carers Rights Day is an opportunity to remind you of your rights and to raise awareness of support available.

#### Here are some of your rights as a Carer:

- Right to a Carer's Assessment.
- Right to engage in employment, education, training and leisure.
- Right to choose whether or not to be a Carer.
- Right to self-determine willingness and ability to care.
- Right to be supported to identify which of the cared-for's needs you might be willing and able to support.
- Right for the Carer's views to be considered by Social Services when organising provision for the cared-for person.

On Carers Rights Day, take some time to reflect on your own needs and to make sure that you are getting the support that you need. You could share your reflections on our social media channels or by emailing [bookings@peopleplus.co.uk](mailto:bookings@peopleplus.co.uk).

#### Joining the Carers Partnership Board

The Carers Partnership Board is a forum for organisations and individuals wanting to raise awareness of the issues faced by carers and improve health and social care services for carers within the county. They meet quarterly online. **Meeting dates and minutes**. If you would like to find out more about being involved in the Carers Partnership Board, please email [commissioninghubadults@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:commissioninghubadults@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

## NHS Information Bus

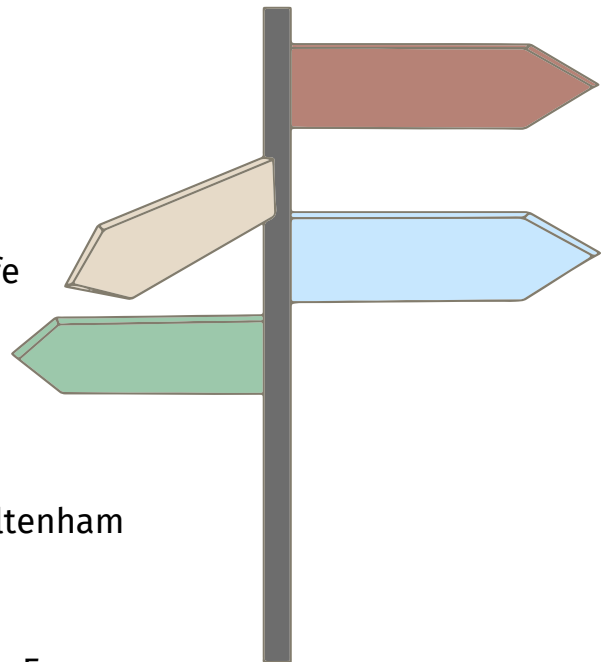
In the run up and after Carers Rights Day, we will be touring some of the county with other professionals to offer support and information to unpaid Carers. If you or someone you know may benefit from advice and support, please come along and see us on one of our tour dates:

### October

- 2nd October – Bishop's Cleeve Library
- 11th October – Lydney Tesco
- 15th October – Tetbury Tesco
- 21st October – Dursley Town Centre, outside Bank Cafe

### November

- 6th November – Fairford Market
- 15th November – Tewkesbury Morrison's
- 25th November – Hester's Way Shopping Parade, Cheltenham
- 26th November – Northleach, Westwoods Centre
- 27th November – Cirencester Market Place
- 28th November – Moreton in the Marsh, outside Tesco Express



**We will be at these locations from approximately 9.30am - 3.00pm.** Why not pop along and say hello, find out more about our service and the support we can provide to you as a Carer.

## Carers Rights Day Event

Come and join us and other Gloucestershire based organisations this Carers Rights Day. Meet with a variety of representatives and receive valuable information and advice. The event will be running from 1.30pm with a number of talks being held between 4.00pm – 6.30pm, further details of the organisations and talks will be released closer to the time via the Gloucestershire Carers Hub website: [www.gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk](http://www.gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk).

**When?** Thursday 21st November 2024

**What Time?** Drop into the information event between 1.30pm - 6.30pm

**Where?** Shurdington Community Centre, Bishop Road, Shurdington, Cheltenham, GL51 4TB

**Parking?** There is parking available at the venue.

We hope to see you there!





## Learning Disability Partnership Board

### From your Co-Chairs:

Wendy Wall and Jan Marriott

The Learning Disability Partnership Board has a new Co-Chair after the amazing Tim Heaven decided to concentrate on his other roles at Inclusion Gloucestershire. He has been Co-Chair for 10 years and will be missed but hopes to still come to meetings. Wendy Wall is the new Co-Chair.

### Introducing the new Co-chair - Wendy Wall

*"Hi, my name is Wendy and I'm the new Co-Chair of the Learning Disability Partnership Board. I am a volunteer at Skillzone, where I work with children from different schools helping to show them how to be safe when out by themselves or with friends.*

*I have been a Zumba instructor in the past and still go to the classes when I can.*

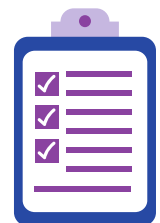
*I have co-chaired my first Board meeting. I thought it went really well, with everyone taking part in the discussions. I'm looking forward to the next meeting."*



### Focus of the Learning Disability Partnership Board

The Learning Disability Partnership Board have coproduced four things they want to work on for the next year or so. They are:

- Relationships and friendships
- Changing Attitudes (Better understanding of invisible disabilities)
- Transport
- Feeling Safe (Hate Crime)



At the last meeting we spent time thinking about what we wanted to work on for each work area.

### Joining the Learning Disability Partnership Board

The Board meets every two months on a Monday at the Treasure Seekers Hub in Eastgate Street, Gloucester. If you would like to join us please either email: [partnershipboards@inclusion-glos.org](mailto:partnershipboards@inclusion-glos.org) or call Inclusion Gloucestershire on **01452 234003**.



## Mental Health Partnership Board *A note from Jan Marriott:*

*“Sadly **Dan Beale Cocks**, the wonderful Co-Chair of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board died on 21 August 2024 after a long illness. Dan made a fantastic contribution to improving mental health and coproduction in Gloucestershire for many years and he will be greatly missed.*

*Before Dan died, we asked if we could plan an annual Dan Beale Cocks Celebration of Best Practice in Coproduction and he was delighted with the idea. It is intended to take this forward in collaboration with the other Partnership Boards.”*

## Updates from July’s Mental Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board

We heard about the following:

- **The new prevention of Suicide Strategy:** This is being developed at present.
- **Community Mental Health Transformation:** We had an update on the transformation of community mental health services, which aims to ensure people can access a service more easily from either the NHS or voluntary sector organisations. Information was given about how the police are working with the NHS and others to reduce the inappropriate involvement of the police with people with mental health and other problems.
- **Frequent Engagement Response Network [FERN]:** This Service involves a range of partners working to improve responses for people experiencing high levels of risk and distress.

## MHELO (Mental Health Expert Led Opportunities)

MHELO is an independent network of people in Gloucestershire who have had or are experiencing mental health difficulties. Or for those who are interested in mental health and mental health support within the county. This network exists because, however good services and doctors might be, they are not experts by experience- what people with experience can offer others with a range of issues arising from mental ill health, is quite different, more empowering, and can be a massive benefit to all involved.

They aspire to be the people who can help change mental health service for the better. They want to build up recognised strengths in groups and individuals whose lives are touched by mental illness.

Get involved via their [Facebook page](#), [website](#) or contact by email [mhelo@inclusion-glos.org](mailto:mhelo@inclusion-glos.org).

## Joining the Mental Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board.

The Board meets every three months online. We used to have regular network meetings as well, which will restart again very soon. If anyone is interested in the joining the Board or network meetings please email: [disabilitiescommissi@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:disabilitiescommissi@gloucestershire.gov.uk).

## Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment Partnership Board

**From your Co-Chairs:**

Katie Peacock and Jan Marriott

### What We've Been Up To: Listening, Planning and Taking Action!

#### Over the past eight months...

We've been on a mission to amplify the voices of people with physical and sensory impairments across Gloucestershire. We've engaged with experts by experience both on and off-line, local organisations, community groups, and participants from the Partnership Board. A special shoutout goes to the GDA for hosting our first face-to-face meeting, for quite some time, back in July — it was a fantastic to have everybody together

We launched a survey to hear directly from you about the most pressing issues impacting those with physical and sensory impairments. Your responses have been invaluable in shaping our work moving forward. At the heart of everything we do is one guiding principle: \*Nothing about us without us\*. This means that your voices, your experiences, and your needs are at the forefront of all our initiatives.



#### 4 Key Priorities You Helped Us Identify:

##### 1. Holistic Health and Social Care Approaches

- Advocating for a person-centred approach across health, social care, and benefits systems.
- Highlighting the challenges faced when navigating services, which can often feel like an uphill battle.
- Stressing the need for GP home visits for those who are housebound.
- Addressing the ongoing, long-lasting impacts of COVID-19 on our community.

##### 2. Physical Accessibility in the Community

- The urgent need for more accessible toilets and better information about their locations.
- Expanding disabled parking options to accommodate everyone who needs them, not just those in wheelchairs.



### 3. Advocacy and Support Services

- Ensuring access to the benefits system is fair and straightforward.
- Providing support to navigate social care, especially in the face of budget cuts.
- Making affordable counselling services available to all who need them.

### 4. Transport Accessibility

- Increasing the availability of accessible taxis.
- Raising awareness that people with Blue Badges have diverse mobility needs beyond wheelchair use.
- Trying to reduce the need for people with permanent disabilities completing the very long blue badge application form every 3 years.

These priorities are just a snapshot of the feedback we received, all of which will guide our efforts over the coming year. There's plenty of work ahead, and we're excited to dig in!

### What's Happening Behind the Scenes?

We've been busy! Here's some of the activities and collaborations we've been working on:

- **Council Collaboration:** Katie has participated in interviews for senior council staff positions, ensuring that co-production remains a key focus.
- **Accessible Taxis:** Jan is coordinating a meeting with district/borough licensing officers to discuss the need for more accessible taxi services.
- **Inclusive Meetings:** We're looking forward to teaming up with colleagues from the GDA and the Sight Loss Council to make our meetings more accessible to those with sensory impairments. We're also connecting with students at the Star College to ensure their voices are heard on the Board.
- **Recognising individual contributions:** Katie and Jan participated in a workshop to look at different ways for community members to be recognised for their valuable contributions.

### Introducing the Neurology Subgroup:

**Co-Chairs:** Dave Evans and Jan Marriott



This is a subgroup of the Partnership Board that was established during Covid-19, as people with neurological conditions were struggling to get the support they needed. We have continued with the subgroup as we were keen to increase awareness of neurological conditions, which can often be complex and need specialist support and understanding.

The group is a place to share experiences and challenges and look, wherever possible, to offer support and solutions. It works towards identifying similarities and differences between the various neurological conditions so that good practice can be shared as widely as possible.





**GLOUCESTERSHIRE**  
PHYSICAL DISABILITY AND SENSORY  
IMPAIRMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD



In fact, some of the group's members and others who live with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) are working with Health colleagues and also the service lead of Bristol ME Service located in the North Bristol NHS Trust, as experts by experience, to implement the NICE Guidelines to improve the communication and quality of the patient experience.

We encourage a range of people from health, social care and voluntary and community organisations to encourage collaborative working and improve the health and social care pathway for the people who use their services. This is intended to improve outcomes for individuals living with neurological conditions.

Membership of the group needs to include people both with a lived and learned experience of a neurological condition, charities and organisations that focus on a particular condition and carers of people who have a condition and live independently in the community.

## Join Us!

We're always looking for new members to join the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board and Neurology Subgroup. If you're interested in getting involved or want to learn more, please don't hesitate to reach out. Together, we can make Gloucestershire a more inclusive and accessible place for everyone! Please contact:

- **Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board:**  
[partnershipboards@inclusion-glos.org](mailto:partnershipboards@inclusion-glos.org)
- **Neurology Subgroup:** [disabilitiescommissi@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:disabilitiescommissi@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

We look forward to hearing from you!





### **Building Better Transport group**

The Partnership Boards have a meeting called Building Better Transport approximately every 3 months. It is hosted by the County Council Transport Team and is online.

We talk about many issues relating to transport in Gloucestershire to coproduce possible solutions. People with lived experience of a range of disabilities join, as well as voluntary organisations and a representative from the trains.

We are currently arranging to meet the people in charge of Districts' Taxi Licensing to share with them the problems people with disabilities have in finding and using taxis. Inclusion Gloucestershire, Age UK and the County Council Adult Education Team are working together to work out whether they can do more to support people to be confident to use public transport.

If you would like to join the meetings or want to know more, email [disabilitiescommissi@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:disabilitiescommissi@gloucestershire.gov.uk) with the subject line of 'Building Better Transport Group'.

### **Understanding Deafness with GDA (Gloucestershire Deaf Association).**

The following is extracted from their poster:

One in 5 people have some level of hearing loss.



Everyday they struggle to access information and services that hearing people take for granted.

The GDA carry out training for businesses, individuals and groups. Providing bespoke in-person training delivered by a Deaf trainer, providing practical steps on enhancing (your) service to help met equality and diversity responsibilities to deaf and hard of hearing people.

The GDA are offering a free 1 hour taster session.

“Suitable for staff at organisations who want to take the first step in becoming deaf aware”.

Introductory training on

- How do I communicate with a Deaf person.
- What is Deafness? We will explore terminology and communication.
- Do you know: What percentage of information is lost if someone relies on lipreading alone? Is Sign language universal? British Sign language has regional variations, lilke accents? How do you appropriately get a deaf person's attention? Can deaf people use the telephone? Can deaf people enoy music? Can deaf people drive a car? Drive a train? Fly a plane?

Contact the GDA for more information on: [understandingdeafness@gda.org.uk](mailto:understandingdeafness@gda.org.uk)

**GDA website:** <https://www.gda.org.uk/>

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## CARERS PARTNERSHIP BOARD

**DATE:** THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2024

**VENUE:** TBC

## NOTE

**ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE SO MAKE SURE YOU CONTACT THE RELEVANT EMAIL IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.**

**YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ALL THE PARTNERSHIP BOARDS [HERE](#).**

## LEARNING DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

**DATE:** MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER  
- 11.00AM - 1.00PM

**VENUE:** KINGFISHER TREASURE SEEKERS, GLOUCESTER

**DATE:** MONDAY 25 NOVEMBER  
- 11.00AM - 1.00PM

**VENUE:** KINGFISHER TREASURE SEEKERS, GLOUCESTER

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

**DATE:** THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER  
- 10.00AM - 12.00PM

**VENUE:** ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

**DATE:** THURSDAY 9 JANUARY -  
10.00AM - 12.00PM

**VENUE:** ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING NETWORK MEETING

**DATE:** WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER  
**TIME:** FROM 1:30PM

**VENUE:** SHIRE HALL

## NEUROLOGY SUBGROUP

**DATE:** TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER  
- 11.00AM - 12.00PM

**VENUE:** ONLINE VIA ZOOM

**DATE:** TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER -  
11.00AM - 12.00PM

**VENUE:** ONLINE VIA ZOOM

## PHYSICAL DISABILITY AND SENSORY IMPAIRMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

**DATE:** TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER -  
11.00AM - 12.30PM

**VENUE:** ONLINE VIA ZOOM

**DATE:** TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER  
- 11.00AM - 12.30PM

**VENUE:** ONLINE VIA ZOOM