

# DISABILITY, NEURODIVERGENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Autumn 2024  
Issue 5



Incorporating news and updates from Gloucestershire's Partnership Boards & Partners



## Welcome to Issue 5!

This is the second issue incorporating news from all the Partnership Boards. Many thanks to all of the contributors. Stirling work yet again from Noor for all her work on this newsletter and bringing it all together!

There's been so many brilliant things going on this year. In particular I really welcome the growing closer relationship between the groups represented within this newsletter. I'd really like to thank Jan Marriott (co-chair of several Partnership Boards) for her proactivity and ever enthusiasm and positivity in this regard! The number of times co-chairs of the Partnership Boards and other associated members have presented work together recently has grown and been so valuable. There are so many common issues that a joint approach to both knowledge sharing and influencing can only improve the outcomes for all. I am really looking forward to this continuing into 2025.

And ask! If you have any news items, pieces of work you need involvement with, dates for the diary or anything else relevant, please contact us via [neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk). The next newsletter deadline to submit items is Valentine's day, Friday 14th February 2025.

Finally, if you have any one you know that you think might benefit from this newsletter, please feel free to email onwards. If anyone joins the mailing list of a Partnership Board, they will automatically receive a copy or link to the newsletters, as well as receive relevant Board information. Each Board's direct email address is under the relevant section of this newsletter.

**Andrew Cotterill**

**Autism (and Neurodivergence) Partnership Board Chair.**

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## International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Observed annually on December 3rd, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) celebrates this year's theme *"Amplifying the Leadership of Persons with Disabilities for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future."*

This theme highlights the critical role of disabled individuals in fostering inclusivity and sustainability while calling for greater participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Key Goals and Call to Action include:

- Promoting the leadership of persons with disabilities in all areas of life.
- Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society.
- Increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes.
- Raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Celebrating the achievements of persons with disabilities.



## Talking Therapies - Research Opportunities

Paul Tyrrell from Inclusion Gloucestershire invites individuals with lived experience to contribute to research on talking therapies access. If you have a disability or sensory impairment, your insights are valuable for shaping service provision.

Details here: <https://www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/barriers-to-free-or-low-cost-talking-therapies/>





Since 2022, Barnwood Trust has been working alongside organisations in Gloucestershire to improve access to nature for disabled people, neurodivergent people and people with mental health conditions. On Tuesday 19th November, Barnwood Trust hosted Nature Without Barriers at the Matara Centre.

The event saw over 100 people from different organisations across the county come together to:

- hear from experts about the barriers that disabled people face when accessing nature. Panellists from Inclusion Gloucestershire, Activity Alliance and Barnwood Trust shared insights around a variety of barriers and answered questions from the audience.
- speak to the organisations across Gloucestershire who have been part of Barnwood Trust's Access to Nature learning programme and now form the Access to Nature network. Network members including the National Trust, Wilde Earth Journeys and Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership shared their learning around various topics such as access audits, neuroinclusion in nature, communications and co-creation.
- attend taster sessions led by experts who shared tips and resources to help organisations understand how they can improve access to nature.

In 2025 Barnwood Trust plans to work alongside more organisations to improve access to nature in Gloucestershire. We would like to be in touch with people and organisations that manage 'everyday green and blue spaces' who might be interested in embarking on learning and joining a peer network to improve access to nature. You might work in housing, hospitals/GP surgeries, or local parks. Please be in touch with our Learning Manager Josh Jones if you would like to know more - [josh.jones@barnwoodtrust.org](mailto:josh.jones@barnwoodtrust.org)

A short film about Access to Nature: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnujnAT7wCw>.





Gloucestershire's Employment Hub have been in discussions with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about a new locally led employability programme. Previously known as Universal Support, Connect to Work will support up to 1000 people per year in Gloucestershire who have disabilities, long-term health conditions or other barriers to gaining or sustaining employment. It is an integral part of the new Get Britain Working White Paper which you can find here [Get Britain Working White Paper](#). The White Paper along with the Connect to Work guidance was published on 26th November.

Connect to Work will help people who are both eligible and suitable to move into or stay in paid work. As information about Connect to Work is in the public domain, Gloucestershire Employment Hub can now share a potential model the team have been working on along with more detail about the programme and how it will complement existing employment, health, and community provisions in Gloucestershire. The team are currently at the beginning of the journey in developing the Delivery Plan but want to share their thinking and invite you to be part of the journey.

The meeting will be held on 10th December at 3pm. Please book using the link below.

[Select tickets – Connect to Work – Information Session – Microsoft TEAMS](#)

## Beyond the label: A celebration of ability - Inclusive Job & Wellbeing Fair

Gloucestershire's Employment and Skills Hub are hosting an inclusive Job and Wellbeing Fair on International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

**Venue:** Stroud District Council, Ebley Mill, Westward Road, Stroud, GL5 4UB

**On:** Tuesday 3 December - from 10.00am to 12.00pm







## New project exploring access to Pharmacy Services:

Healthwatch Gloucestershire are carrying out a project as a result of feedback received from people in Gloucestershire who have been struggling to get their prescriptions due to medication shortages, e.g. ADHD and HRT, or because they are unable to get to a pharmacy or have their prescriptions delivered on time. We also want to explore what impact recent pharmacy closures or changes in ownership is having, as well as the uptake of Pharmacy First, which has been implemented to try to relieve pressures in accessing GPs and urgent and emergency care services.

We have a survey running throughout December 2024 and hope to gather stories from local residents of all ages and backgrounds to highlight what is working well and what needs to be improved. We will use this to write a report with recommendations that will be shared with those that commission Pharmacy services, and published. We want to hear your experiences so that we can advocate for better pharmacy services and support in Gloucestershire. The survey can be accessed here - <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/PharmacySurveyHWG/>

Or if you would like to talk to us about this, if you have any questions or require assistance with completing the survey, please feel free to contact our project team at:

**Email:** [info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk)

**Phone:** 0800 652 5193



### About Us

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's health and social care champion. We're here to listen to your experiences of using local health and care services and to hear about the issues that really matter to you. We are entirely independent and impartial, and anything you share with us is confidential. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice to help you to get the care and support you need. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care. Please see our website for more information and published reports: <https://www.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/>





In partnership with Gloucestershire Police & CPS South West, the County Council held an event during Hate Crime Awareness Week. The event's aims were:-

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



- **54 people** registered to attend in person, at the Council Chamber (Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TG), and
- **140 people** registered online to attend via Microsoft Teams

We would like to thank all our many participants (both online and in person) as well as all our speakers for coming to share their expertise and lived experience with us at our October hate crime conference. It was wonderful to see and hear from members of our richly diverse community and faith groups along with partners such as Victim Support; Inclusion Gloucestershire; the LGBT+ partnership, and Chairs of our Disability Partnership Boards. We would also like to thank members of the County Strategic Hate Crime group, Phil Sullivan and Robin Agascar for their contributions along with Rupert Walters (Social Value and Gloucester City Commission on Race Relations) and Anira Khokhar (Gloucestershire Race Collective) for their insights from a race equality perspective.



**WORD CLOUD OF PARTICIPANT  
VIEWS ON THE BARRIERS TO  
REPORTING HATE CRIME**





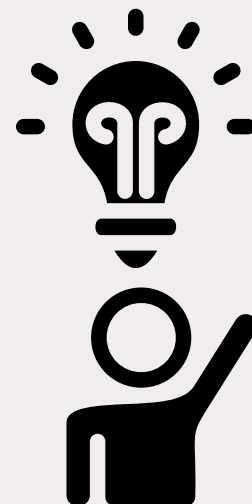


Gloucestershire's Autism Partnership Board brings together people with lived and professional experience of autism and neurodivergence to oversee the implementation of the local Autism strategy. Our local priorities reflect the six overarching themes of the National Autism Strategy. Some of this quarter's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

### Theme 1 Highlights

#### *Improve understanding and acceptance*

- Let's Talk about Neurodiversity conversations celebrated a year of conversations with health and care staff across Gloucestershire. A platform to share neurodiversity resources for members will be launched in early 2025.
- Launched inclusivity works, the dedicated employer site to collate and share good news, best practice, helpful tips and encouragement to all Gloucestershire employers to benefit from an inclusive approach to recruitment.



### Theme 2 Highlights

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

- Improved working with education to strengthen autism and ADHD referral processes and encourage access to support within settings.
- Inclusion Gloucestershire continue to work with neurodivergent young people transitioning into adulthood.

### Theme 3 Highlights

#### *Support more people into employment*

- 109 referrals received into the Hub since April 2024 from individuals who have declared that they have autism
- Hosting a Beyond the Label: A Celebration of Ability - Inclusive job and wellbeing fair at Stroud district council on Tuesday 3rd December



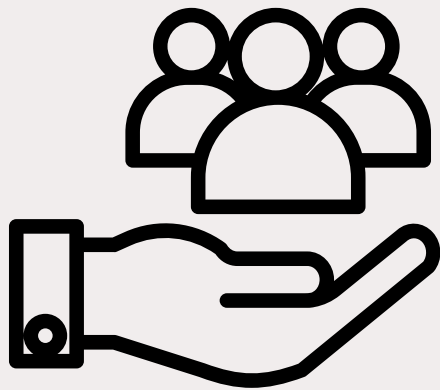


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### Theme 4 Highlights

#### *Tackle health & care inequalities*

- Under 11 ADHD Service will move to GHC from 1st January 2025, and CYP Autism waiting list initiative has been given further resource to extend, to continue to help manage the increasing requests for assessment.
- Autism Liaison Officer in working closely with both the Learning Disability and Mental Health Liaison Nurses at the Hospitals Trust, and has seen over 100 patients this quarter, including children and young people.



### Theme 5 Highlights

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

- Autism-only care act assessment audit underway to understand key themes and inform learning into action.
- Caseload manager in the Integrated High Needs Team in the ICB continues to have oversight of transitions & autism only individuals on the Dynamic Support Register.

### Theme 6 Highlights

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

- Event on 14 October was well attended, with key learning shared from across the CPS South West, Gloucestershire Police and Gloucestershire County Council, as well as VCS partners. Report produced and follow up event planned for 2025.
- Meetings with Gloucestershire's Safeguarding Adults Board, Probation as well as Criminal Liaison Teams held this month. Key learning shared and partnerships agreed, with a steering group set up for January 2025.







The Youth Forum is for autistic and other neurodivergent young people between the ages of 13 and 19. It is about having your say about how things can be better for autistic and neurodivergent young people in Gloucestershire.

It is a chance to meet other autistic and neurodiverse young people and support each other.

It is a monthly Zoom group hosted by Inclusion Gloucestershire. It is on a Tuesday evening between 5.30pm and 6.30pm.

If you want to join the forum and have your say about things that are important to you, a parent or guardian needs to complete a consent form.

For more information, email: [emilyl@inclusion-glos.org](mailto:emilyl@inclusion-glos.org).



## **Young people's Autism Post diagnosis support group:**

Inclusion Gloucestershire have been working alongside SCAAS (Social Communication and Autism Assessment Service), the service which carries out autism assessments for young people, to develop a 6 week post diagnostic support group.

Currently, support after a young person is diagnosed is only offered to their parents or guardians, so this will be the first group of its kind.

We aim to start early next year, with sessions on self-care after meltdowns and shutdowns, friendships and relationships, stimming, reasonable adjustments, coping with change and transitions, and daily planning.

For more information, contact Bee Barker at Inclusion Gloucestershire.



At September's in person Autism (and Neurodivergence) Partnership Board, we held a session focused on all forms of advocacy. There were a number of presentations from a range of organisations, for which we are grateful. There was a lot of partnership working and sharing of information, all of which will inform future ambitions for community advocacy. **POhWER** (Gloucestershire's statutory advocacy provider), as well as various community providers of informal advocacy, presented their current offers, sharing strengths as well as current advocacy gaps for autistic and neurodivergent people in Gloucestershire.

An event was also held at the Friendship Cafe on 9th October, working closely with the Community Engagement Team. 'POhWER' alongside a couple of other VCSE providers were invited. to raise awareness about available advocacy services. The event brought together almost 60 people who were invited specifically because they have, in a paid or voluntary capacity, involvement with different communities who may benefit from the advocacy services. This included key members of the Arab, Chinese, Afro-Caribbean, Kurdish and South Asian communities. The highlight of the morning was hearing Ezra's very personal story of how her family endured hardships whilst supporting a close family member with serious mental illness. Without an advocate to speak for them, they faced real struggles over several years.

These sessions highlighted a number of areas for improvement, mainly related to lack of awareness, so our intention is that these will not be one-off events but that we work together to address the issues over the coming months.

For more information on **POhWER**, contact [www.pohwer.com/gloucestershire](http://www.pohwer.com/gloucestershire)

For more information on **advocacy** - [Advocacy - what is it? | Gloucestershire County Council](#)



### **Inclusion Gloucestershire Youth Self Advocacy.**

At the Partnership Board, Bee Barker provided a super video that is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrnGWS4RC0A>. This video highlights the organisation's commitment to empowering autistic and neurodiverse young people age. The forum provides a platform for them to share their experiences, advocate for change, and discuss key issues such as reasonable adjustments. It fosters connection among peers, supports mutual learning, and emphasises the importance of inclusivity and understanding in creating supportive environments.

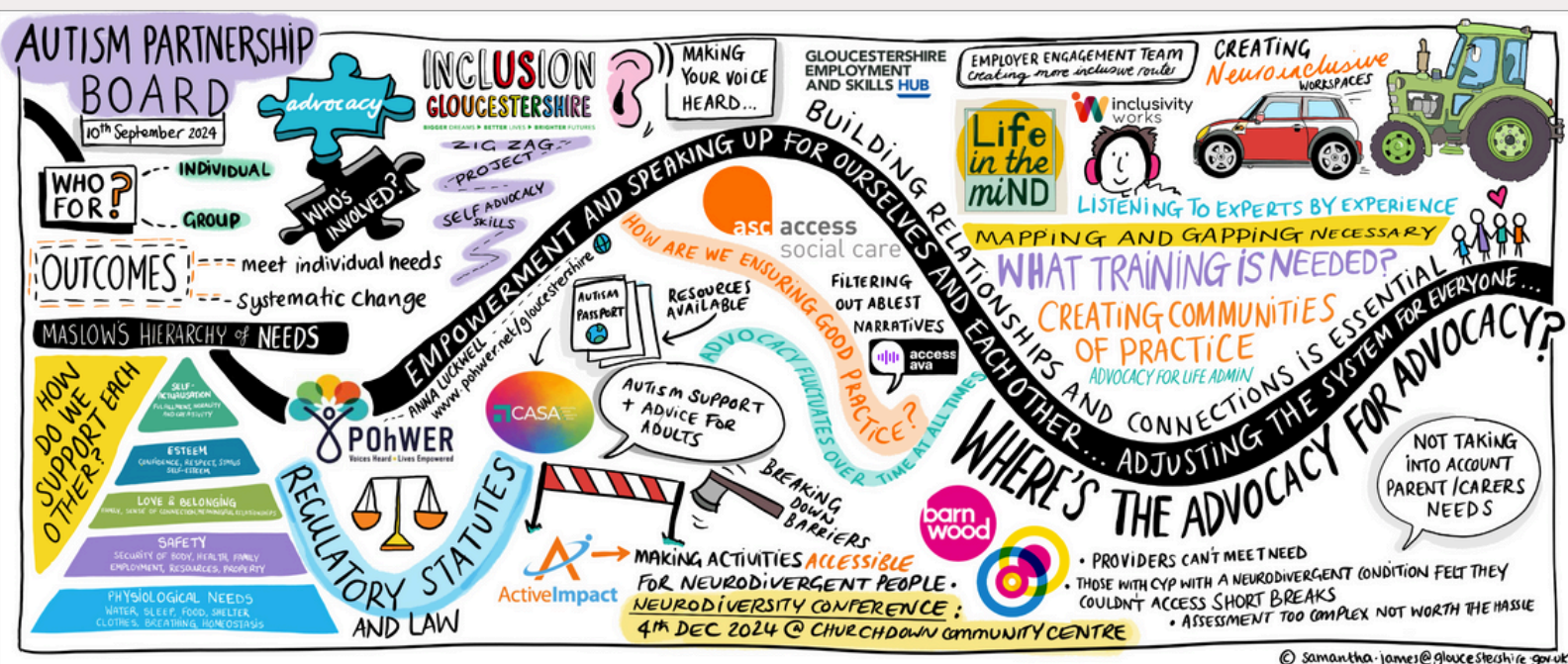


Topic areas discussed in the breakout groups covered:

- What other organisation provide advocacy whom we might not be aware of?
- What are the barriers to advocacy and what might help to reduce them?
- Bridging the gap - spreading awareness to unpaid carers that they are often providing advocacy (and therefore the need to support and/or up skill them via training.
- What are the gaps in the current advocacy support?
- What might be the priorities to shape a countywide advocacy strategy?
- What other things are missing?

The detail under these discussion will be used to inform commissioning plans on advocacy and also the production of some materials to share. More in due course!

Thanks to the talented Sam James for this graphic of our last Board's discussions!



Join us for complimentary breakfast pastries and refreshments at a morning of networking and workshops aimed at fostering community connections.

**Date:** Wednesday 4 December

**Time:** 9:15am – 12:30pm

**Location:** Churchdown Community Centre, GL3 2JH

We emphasise a strengths-based approach to neurodiversity, focusing on accessibility for neurodivergent individuals. Organisations in arts, leisure, or wellbeing sectors in Gloucestershire will find valuable insights on welcoming neurodivergent attendees and enhancing event accessibility. Share your projects and learn about local initiatives while building relationships across organisations. Two engaging sessions will deepen your understanding of inclusion. For neurodivergent individuals and groups, this is a unique opportunity to share your experiences, connect with local organisations, and advocate for your needs. Together, let's strengthen connections and create meaningful, inclusive spaces. Spaces are limited. Learn more about what to expect and reserve your ticket today.

[Click here to book your FREE place today.](#)



## Meet the Autism Liaison Officer!

Martin is the Autism Liaison Officer and works at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. He started at the Hospital in April 2024, and has been really important in opening an insight into the profile of autistic people who attend Cheltenham General Hospital or Gloucestershire Royal Hospital either as an inpatient, outpatient or an Emergency Department admission. He helps to identify and implement any Reasonable Adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 to make the hospital environment less overwhelming and ensure they access and receive the best healthcare. The numbers of patients he works with has been growing steadily month by month. The needs of these autistic patients is bespoke to each of them. He's also helped spread awareness and acceptance across the Hospital sites, delivering training where needed.

Martin will be at our next Partnership Board and will share how autistic patients can access his support if needed.





Each issue, we will introduce a topic of interest in neurodivergence. Due to the summary nature, there is not space to explore the intricate detail and nuances that some of you will be aware of!!

This article looks at some aspects of why someone might or might not seek a diagnosis. It is not a recommendation one way or another - it's up to the person to consider whether to go forward with one. Also, I do not address (other than a brief mention at the end) or discuss the long waiting lists!

## Why might motivate a neurodivergent person to seek a diagnosis?

### 1. Self-Understanding and Validation

- **Explanation of Differences:** It may help a person understand why they think, feel, or behave in certain ways.
- **Validation:** It can confirm that challenges are not due to personal failure or inadequacy but part of a recognised neurological make up.
- **Identity Formation:** Some find a sense of belonging or empowerment in identifying with a neurodivergent community.

### 2. Access to Support and Resources

- **Tailored Support:** It can enable access to therapies, tools, and accommodations designed for specific needs.
- **Educational Accommodations:** Students may receive support like extra time on exams, modified curriculums, or sensory-friendly environments.
- **Workplace Adjustments:** People may seek reasonable adjustments, such as flexible hours, quiet spaces, or alternative communication methods.



### 3. Improved Relationships and Communication

- **Explaining Needs:** A diagnosis can provide language to describe experiences to friends, family, or colleagues, improving understanding and communication.
- **Parenting or Partnering:** It can help neurodivergent parents or partners understand how traits might affect family dynamics and relationships.

### 4. Mental Health and Wellbeing

- **Reducing Self-Criticism:** Understanding that challenges are neurological rather than character flaws can improve self-esteem.
- **Access to Mental Health Services:** can facilitate access to counselling or therapy tailored to neurodivergent individuals.
- **Coping Strategies:** Learning can help individuals develop or adopt effective strategies to manage challenges.





### 5. Advocacy

- **Legal Protections:** A diagnosis may provide protections under disability rights laws.
- **Advocacy for Children:** Parents often seek diagnoses to receive appropriate support in school and other settings.

### 6. Personal Growth and Self-Awareness

- **Discovering Strengths:** Diagnosis can highlight unique strengths or talents often associated with neurodivergence, such as creativity, hyper-focus, or pattern recognition.
- **Learning and Growth:** Individuals may use their diagnosis as a starting point for exploring strategies to better navigate life's challenges.

### 7. Joining a Community

- **Connection:** Some seek a diagnosis to connect with others who share similar experiences.
- **Support Networks:** Being part of a neurodivergent community can provide emotional support and shared understanding.

### 8. Guiding Life Decisions

- **Career Choices:** Understanding neurodivergence can guide people towards jobs or environments better suited to their strengths.
- **Life Management:** Knowing their diagnosis can help in planning daily routines, managing sensory needs, or prioritising mental health.

## Why might motivate a neurodivergent person **not** to seek a diagnosis?

There are many reasons why a person who suspects they are neurodivergent might choose not to seek a formal diagnosis. These decisions are often deeply personal and influenced by various factors. Here are some common considerations:

### 1. Fear of Stigma and Judgment

- **Social Perception:** Concern about being treated differently by family, friends, or colleagues due to misconceptions about neurodivergence.
- **Workplace Impact:** Fear that a diagnosis might negatively affect career opportunities or relationships.

### 2. Accessibility and cost

- **Unsure of diagnostic pathway:** Pathways and processes can vary between children, younger people and adults, which can be confusing.
- **Limited Access to Services:** Long waitlists or a lack of local specialists can be a deterrent.
- **Financial Barriers:** If unavailable via the NHS (Autism and ADHD diagnostic evaluations can be sought through 'Right to Choose'), assessments can be expensive.

### 3. Internalised Beliefs or Doubts

- **Imposter Syndrome:** Feeling not "neurodivergent enough" or doubting experiences are valid.
- **Self-Stigma:** Belief a diagnosis might be a label in ways people don't want to be defined by.





### 4. Satisfaction with Current Self-Understanding

- **Self-Discovery Without Diagnosis:** Some feel they've learned enough about their neurodivergence through self-reflection, research, or informal assessments.
- **No Need for Validation:** Feel no need for external confirmation if already have understanding and acceptance.

### 5. Fear of Being Dismissed or Misdiagnosed

- **Dismissal by Professionals:** Doubt that concerns won't be taken seriously, particularly if experienced this in the past.
- **Misdiagnosis:** Fear of being misdiagnosed with a condition that doesn't fully explain experiences.

### 6. Lack of Perceived Benefit

- **No Immediate Need for Support:** If managing, may not see diagnosis value.
- **Skepticism About Resources:** Belief that a diagnosis won't significantly improve their access to accommodations or support.

### 7. Emotional Barriers

- **Process Fear:** The diagnostic process can feel overwhelming (including just too difficult or long a process), invasive, or emotionally draining.
- **Impact of a Label:** Concern that a formal diagnosis might feel limiting or change how they perceive themselves.

### 8. Cultural or Familial Factors

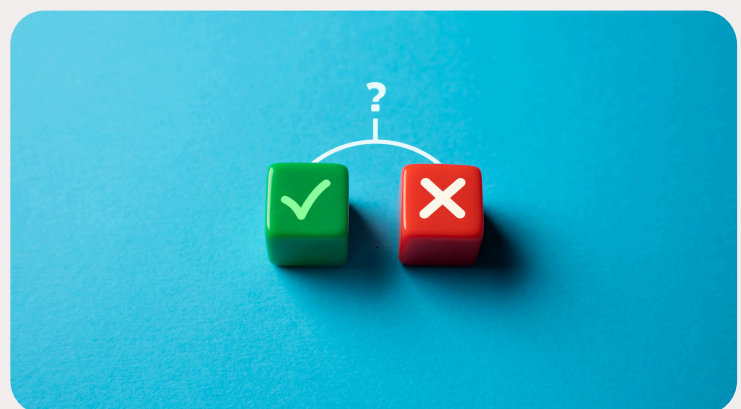
- **Cultural Beliefs:** In some cultures, mental health and neurodivergence carry stigma, discouraging seeking diagnoses.
- **Family Influence:** Pressure to avoid labelling or discussing neurodivergence.

### 9. Distrust of the Medical System

- **Negative Experiences:** Previous interactions with healthcare providers may lead to a reluctance to engage with the system again.
- **Lack of Understanding:** Belief that healthcare professionals may not fully understand or recognise experiences.

### 10. Desire for Privacy or Independence

- **Avoiding Official Records:** Worry that a diagnosis might impact opportunities, such as insurance or employment.
- **Self-Advocacy Without a Diagnosis:** Preference for managing challenges independently without formal documentation.



### The Choice:

An individual might have many different aspects affecting their choice as to whether to go for a diagnosis or not. A good first stop in Gloucestershire is always to discuss with your GP! There are also drop in groups (such as with CASA) where it's possible to explore with others with lived experience about neurodivergent conditions and about the diagnosis process!



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!



Purple Ella is diagnosed autistic, ADHD, dyspraxic (Developmental coordination disorder) and connective tissue disorder (hypermobile Ehlers-danlos syndrome). She comes from a family of autistic people.

Before Covid, Purple Ella came to Gloucestershire and presented to people from the Partnership Board.

Her videos cover many neurodivergent topics. and can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@PurpleElla/videos>

A specific video she has on developmental coordination disorder can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tr6jKTN-CQ>

### Theme based resources of the issue!

[Disability Hate Crime: Speak up, Report it - James' Story \(Victim\)](#)

[Disability Hate Crime: Speak up, Report it - Josie's Story \(Victim\)](#)

[Disability Hate Crime: Speak up, Report it - Emma's Story \(Victim\)](#)

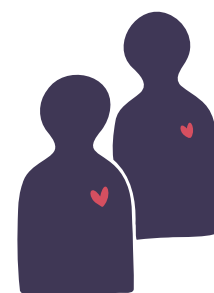
[Disability Hate Crime: Speak up, Report it - Amanda's Story \(Victim\)](#)

[What is a Hate Crime?](#)

[What is a Hate Incident?](#)

[Why Report hate Crime?](#)

[What will happen when I report a hate Crime?](#)



You can report a hate crime online, on the phone or you can even visit your local police station. But remember, if someone is in immediate danger, you should always ring 999.

For more information visit the Gloucestershire Constabulary:

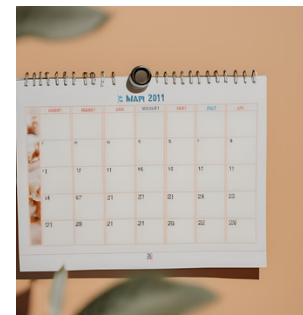
<https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk>





# 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**

Various locations - for more details visit <https://www.grcc.org.uk/what-we-do/community-autism-support-advice-casa> or email [info@grcc.org.uk](mailto:info@grcc.org.uk).

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

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

## **Your next Autism (and Neurodivergence) Partnership Board**

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

### **Main Topics:**

Sensory Processing & Differences  
Autism Liaison Officer  
Coproduction priority update

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

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

Tuesday 3 June 2025 | 10.00am to 1.00pm  
Venue: Hybrid [TBC]

Tuesday 9 September 2025 | 10.00am to 12.30pm  
Venue: Zoom [Online]

## **WANT TO JOIN?**

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

## **MORE INFORMATION**

TO FIND OUT MORE, AS WELL AS READ PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS, VISIT: [HTTPS://GLOUCESTERSHIRE.GOV.UK/HEALTH-AND-SOCIAL-CARE/DISABILITIES/AUTISM-PARTNERSHIP-BOARD/](https://gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/disabilities/autism-partnership-board/)





### From your Co-Chairs:

Wendy Wall and Jan Marriott

Since the last newsletter, the LDPB have met in person and online. Both meetings were well attended, with lots of people with lived experience joining us at the face to face meeting.



### ***Wendy's reflection on planning and running the last meeting***

*" We had more people with lived experience at our last meetings. This will help to increase the voice of the Learning Disability community in Gloucestershire. One of our new priorities is relationships and friendships. When we were planning our October meeting, I suggested inviting Hope House, to tell more people about the sexual health support that is in Gloucestershire. Helen and Andrea were very good at making everyone feel comfortable, which helped others share their thoughts and experiences.*

You can find out more about the Hope House Sexual Health clinic by visiting their website: <https://www.hopehouse.nhs.uk/> People can order home testing kits through the website.

If a person has a professional supporting them, the professional can ask Hope House for any reasonable adjustments, such as a longer appointment. For those people who do not have a professional supporting them, the person can call Hope House and ask for a nurse to call them back to discuss what they might need.

In addition to Hope House, we also had Building Circles and Kingfisher Treasure Seekers come to talk to the board in October. Helen Kay from Building Circles explained they have been asked to give training about abuse awareness, self-advocacy and enablement. Maïke, the Training Coordinator, showed the group a training video. You can find out more about their training here: <https://www.buildingcircles.org.uk/training>

Kingfishers also told the Board about their new course on relationships and friendships, which is starting in January 2025. To find out more, see here: <https://kftseekers.org.uk/courses-and-training/>





Some months ago the board helped to design a communication card. The card explains the law and allows people to say how they want people to communicate with them. The cards are 8 pages and in a concertina form. Three example pages are shown here.



### When communicating with me you must:



Give me time to process ☐



Use easy words ☐



Write things down ☐



Something else \_\_\_\_\_

### The best way to contact me is:



Text ☐



Easy Read letter ☐



Phone call ☐



Email ☐



Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact Inclusion Gloucestershire via email if you would like them to send you some communication cards to give to people. By email: [partnershipboards@inclusion-glos.org](mailto:partnershipboards@inclusion-glos.org)

### Our next Partnership board meeting:

Monday 16th December 2024 - 11am – 1pm  
at Kingfisher Treasure Seekers Hub, Gloucester

Our next meeting will include presentations from Brandon Trust (on supported living) and Healthy Lifestyles (presenting about their new service in Gloucestershire).

See you there!

### 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**



**From your Chair:** Jan Marriott  
**And the Mental Health Partnership Board Team:**

We held our most recent Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board meeting on 10th October – World Mental Health Day. The theme for World Mental Health Day this year was 'Is it time to prioritise mental health in the workplace'.



As usual, the meeting was well attended with an abundance of new faces, and this is thanks to the recent Big Health Day which was held back in June at Oxstalls Sports Park in Gloucester. At this event Jan Marriott, Andrew Cotterill, and colleagues signed up lots of new stakeholders to attend the various the Partnership Board meetings. It was good to see more people with lived experience.

At the meeting we had presentations about the following:

- The **Patient & Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF)** - (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/advancing-mental-health-equalities/pcref/>)
- **VIA** - the new drug & alcohol service - (<https://www.viaorg.uk/services/gloucestershire/>)
- **Right Care Right Person** - Karl Gluck the Head of Commissioning gave an update
- The **Mental Health Support & Advice Service** (<https://www.rethink.org/help-in-your-area/services/community-support/gloucestershire-mental-health-support-and-advice/>) & **CandO Mental Wellbeing Line** (<https://gloucestershirecando.org>) provided by Rethink
- Alex Monks from Rethink gave a vision of the proposed structure to support **Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs)** integrated working with the voluntary sector and experts by experience
- The review of the Intensive & Assertive Community Mental Health Services
- Caroline Lucas-Mouat closed the meeting with her presentation about Housing Partnerships Co-production Charter & their Role.





On 16th October we held our first Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board Networking Event at Shire Hall. Events of this nature were held before COVID and they were great for people from various organisations and backgrounds to come together and share information about what is going on Gloucestershire in relation to Mental Health and Wellbeing. People really appreciate the opportunity to network and explore ways to collaborate and connect.

We decided to embrace technology for this event and held the meeting both in person and online. (A special thanks goes to Noor Al-Koky who is our residential tech guru at this point, she got over a glitch in the matrix with ease). This enabled us to record the session so that people that attended can watch the event again at their leisure and share the information with their networks. At this event, we focused mainly on presentations and services provided by the voluntary sector with several from organisations set up by people with lived experience. Gloucestershire is fortunate to have such a rich range of such services.

Last but by no means least we want to talk about Dan Beale Cocks, the wonderful Co-Chair of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board who sadly died on 21st August after a long illness. For many years as an expert by experience, Dan made a fantastic contribution to improving mental health and co-production in Gloucestershire and he will be greatly missed.

In the final weeks of his life, Karl Gluck, Head of Integrated Commissioning, proposed creating an annual Co-production award in Dan's name to honour his efforts in promoting Co-production in Gloucestershire. Dan and his family have embraced this idea, and his sister plans to attend the first award ceremony. The award will be established countywide next year, aiming to celebrate best practices in Co-production and ensure Dan's legacy endures.



### **Joining the Mental Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board.**

If anyone is interested in the joining the Board or network meetings please email:

**[DisabilitiesCommissi@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:DisabilitiesCommissi@gloucestershire.gov.uk)** or [Nadine.Blewitt@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Nadine.Blewitt@gloucestershire.gov.uk).



**From your Co-Chairs:** Katie Peacock and Jan Marriott  
And Emily Luckham (Inclusion Gloucestershire)

As the year ends, we take this opportunity to reflect on the impactful work of the Physical and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board (PDSI PB) and the Neurology Subgroup. Together, they advocate for, amplify, and elevate the voices of individuals and organisations, creating authentic coproduction and emphasising disability leadership in collaboration with Social Care and NHS. Many topics were covered at PDSI PB, many which have been lifted into the overall news for all.

**Health and social care, new Living Well Strategy**

Karl Gluck introduced that a new Living Well Strategy (working title) is in production, emphasising the importance of coproduction. This strategy will ensure all Partnership Boards have an opportunity to shape future initiatives.

**Charcot Therapy Centre**

Rachael Evans from the Charcot Therapy Centre shared a compelling presentation on the therapies and support services currently offered. Excitingly, the centre plans to expand its reach, creating localized hubs potentially in places like Gloucestershire House and Headway Gloucester, connecting more disabled individuals with vital resources.

**Barriers Facing the Deaf Community**

Danielle Neale delivered an eye-opening introduction to the challenges faced by the Deaf community in accessing health and social care. Examples included a lack of awareness of BSL as a first language, resulting in inaccessible communication methods such as phone calls or letters.

Reminder: Free Deaf Awareness training sessions are available for the public, and local organisations are encouraged to invest in web for in person training, where possible.



**ME/CFS NICE Guidelines Implementation**

Myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) is a serious, long-term illness that affects the nervous and immune systems. It can cause severe fatigue, pain, and difficulty with thinking, and can make it hard to do normal activities.

John Lane shared an inspiring update on the ME/CFS project group, established to implement the NICE Guidelines.

Key achievements include:

- Development of an ME/CFS-specific care and support plan, tailored to the condition’s unique symptoms.
- Adoption of a flexible framework for support, offering both essential and optional services—a major shift enabled by the ICS.
- Personal advocacy stories that highlight the importance of lived experiences in driving positive change.

**Looking Ahead to 2025**



This year has been one of growth and collaboration. As we celebrate the strides made in disability leadership and coproduction, we also recognize the work ahead to ensure no voice goes unheard.

We wish you a joyful holiday season and look forward to continuing this journey together in 2025!

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)



**Chair:** Joanna Davies

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

On Thursday, 21st November it was Carers Rights Day. Gloucestershire Carers Hub, our commissioned provider of support for adult carers aged 18+, hosted an event at Shurdington Community Centre to mark the day. Many other local organisations were represented including The Care Advice Line, Your Circle, POhWER (for advocacy services) and Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum, providing unpaid carers with the opportunity to find out about the local support to support them and their cared for. You can find out more about Gloucestershire Carers Hub services for both professionals and carers here - [Home - Gloucestershire Carers Hub](#)

Carers in Gloucestershire are the focus of Gloucestershire Carers Partnership Board (CPB). The CPB is made up of a range of organisations within health and social care and the voluntary sector with the aim of improving services for carers in Gloucestershire and making sure carers needs are met as identified through engagement with carers.

Carers want to...

- Be heard
- Be recognised
- Be informed
- Be prepared
- Be connected
- Be reached

The last meeting was held in person at the Friendship Café on 7th November. The aim of the day was to review with partner organisations, how are meeting carers needs and what we could do further. If you have feedback on carers services in Gloucestershire, please either contact: [Nina.Verle@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Nina.Verle@gloucestershire.gov.uk) or [Kim.George@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Kim.George@gloucestershire.gov.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)**



## Are you supporting someone?

This could be a family member, including a child with additional needs or a friend. You are a Carer if you provide support to someone, this could be due to a long term health condition, illness, frailty, poor mental health or addiction.

The following organisations can help you:

### Are you over 18?

For free information and support contact the Gloucestershire Carers Hub.

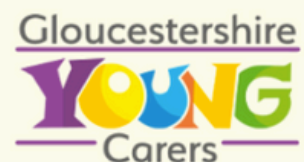
**0300 111 9000** [careraware@peopleplus.co.uk](mailto:careraware@peopleplus.co.uk)  
<https://gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk/>



### Are you 8 - 24 years old?

For free information and support contact Gloucestershire Young Carers

**01452 733060** [mail@glosyoungcarers.org.uk](mailto:mail@glosyoungcarers.org.uk)  
<https://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk/>



### Are you supporting a child with additional needs?

If you are a parent or Carer of a child, Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum can offer free support.

[info@glosparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:info@glosparentcarerforum.org.uk)  
<https://glosparentcarerforum.org.uk/>

