

NEURODIVERSITY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Summer 2023



News and updates from your local Autism Partnership Board



Welcome to your new newsletter!

As the co-chairs of the Gloucestershire Autism Partnership Board, we would like to welcome you to *Neurodiversity in Gloucestershire*. We have created this newsletter to make it easier for all our board members to find, share, and use up-to-date information about autism and neurodiversity, and for our wider community to learn about and get involved with the board's work.

We will be publishing a new issue each quarter following our regular board meeting. You can find more about our upcoming meetings on the next page, including when they are taking place and how to attend or contribute.

We hope you enjoy it, and please remember it's YOUR newsletter, so tell us what you would like to see in it! Email us at neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

Liz Bell and Andrew Cotterill

Co-Chairs of Gloucestershire Autism Partnership Board

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Making Gloucestershire a better place for neurodivergent young people

Inclusion Gloucestershire has published a new report summarising views from Gloucestershire's Neurodiverse Youth Forum, a monthly discussion group for 14–19-year-olds, about how to make Gloucestershire better for young autistic people.

The report highlights themes identified by the young people as being particularly important, including: *Understanding/explaining autism and neurodiversity; Knowing my rights and speaking up for myself; and Coming out as LGBTQ+ and discussing gender and sexuality.*

Feedback on each of these themes is outlined in more detail in the report, along with some recommendations by the researchers for how this feedback can be incorporated by commissioners, schools, healthcare professionals and community groups into the design and delivery of services for young autistic people.

For more information about the Neurodiverse Youth Forum, including how to join as a member, get in touch via email with Emily at Inclusion Gloucestershire on: emilyl@inclusion-glos.org.



Autistic experiences of the criminal justice system

At our recent Lived Experience group, we discussed support for autistic and neurodivergent people within the criminal and youth justice systems, with a view to informing the development of the multi-agency workstream for *Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Neurodiversity and Autism: Reducing Reoffending & Supporting Rehabilitation.*

We discussed the over-representation of neurodivergent people in the prison population, as well as the importance of extending appropriate support to neurodivergent witnesses and victims. We would like to hear more from autistic people in Gloucestershire who have been inappropriately criminalised, so we are calling for people with lived experience in this area to get in touch and share their views. Please email neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk to find out more.

New web pages published on Local Offer for Children and Young People

New pages have been added to the Glos Families Directory outlining the support available through the Local Offer for children and young people with autism or ADHD in Gloucestershire.

The pages include information about how to get an NHS assessment, as well as details about the education services and accessible activities that have been commissioned across the county for autistic and neurodivergent young people.

Vicky Townsend, Senior Commissioning Manager in the Children and Families hub at GCC, said: "These pages are still very much in development, but we are really pleased to finally have a separate section for this information and we hope it will be useful for families."

Find out more about the local offer online at www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk (Support for families with SEND: Gloucestershire's Local Offer).

Neurodiversity resources

Advice sheets for autistic adults

Autism Wales has co-produced a series of advice sheets with adults from a variety of backgrounds and ages across the autistic community in Wales. They include introductions to some common topics such as masking and situational non-speaking, as well as some interesting quotes about how it feels to get confirmation that you are autistic.

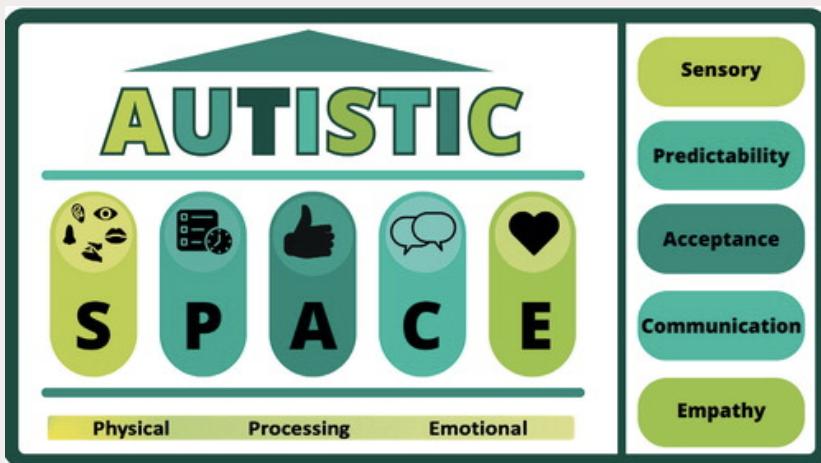
You can download all the resources at: www.autismwales.org

Autistic SPACE: A new tool for clinicians

A new tool has been developed by a group of neurodivergent doctors and researchers, to help healthcare providers meet the needs of their autistic patients and service users. The Autistic SPACE tool encourages doctors to focus on the following priorities when interacting with autistic people:

- Sensory needs
- Predictability
- Acceptance
- Communication
- Empathy

The research behind the development of the tool, which was published in the British Journal of Hospital Medicine, is available online at: [www.doi.org/10.12968/hmed.2023.0006](https://doi.org/10.12968/hmed.2023.0006)



Neurodiversity Definitions

The language around how people's brains process and respond to information can be confusing. Here are a few definitions that may help explain what they mean.



Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the fact that not all brains think or feel in the same way and that these are natural human differences. Neurodiversity refers to everyone.

Neurotypes

We all have individual differences in the way that our brains work. However, there are also groups of people that process information in a similar way to each other and are referred to as having the same neurotype. This means that there can be big differences between different neurotypes.

Neurotypical

The biggest of these neurotypes is referred to as neurotypical. This is the most common neurotype. As neurotypical people are in the majority they tend to thrive as the environment is often constructed by other neurotypical people which means that their specific needs are met.

Neurodivergent

Minority neurotypes can include conditions such as autism, dyscalculia, dyslexia and Developmental Coordination Disorders. They can also be described as neurodevelopmental conditions. Collectively, with minority neurotypes are referred to as neurodivergent.

AutismBwthCymru.org
AutismWales.org

Creating sensory-friendly mental health wards



Illustration by Sam Chown-Ahern

The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI) has a useful report about how to adapt mental health inpatient environments to better support autistic service users. The report is based on the experiences of children and young people with experience of CAMHS inpatient environments and is available at: www.ndti.org.uk/resources/publication/its-not-rocket-science

Events and opportunities



Online Information Group

This group is for autistic adults including those that are self diagnosed or on the waiting list for diagnosis.

Relationships Series:

Family - 14th June 2023

Friendships - 12th July 2023

Romantic & Emotional - 9th August 2023

LGBT+ - 20th September 2023

Sessions will be conducted **Online via Zoom** from **1-2:30pm** with links and set up details sent the day before. The session is divided into the info section (40minutes) and the discussion section (approx 30 minutes) with a 5-10 minute break inbetween.

For Facebook, Instagram and YouTube find us via our handle: @CASAGloucestershire



INCLUSION GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BIGGER DREAMS ▶ BETTER LIVES ▶ BRIGHTER FUTURES

Project staff wanted for late-identified neurodivergent peer mentoring project

Inclusion Gloucestershire is seeking a Project Manager and a Project Coordinator to oversee and support the delivery and evaluation of a new peer mentoring programme for late-identified neurodivergent adults. Over the course of two years, this programme will offer empathetic support to people who have recently discovered their own neurodivergence, by matching them with trained neurodivergent mentors who can provide semi-structured, non-hierarchical, ND-affirming support.

The deadline for applications is Friday 9 July 2023.

For more information about these roles, including how to apply, visit www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/jobs

About Gloucestershire Autism Partnership Board

The Gloucestershire Autism Partnership Board brings together organisations and 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:

- 1. Improve understanding and acceptance of Autism**
- 2. Improve Autistic children and young people's access to education and support positive transitions into adulthood**
- 3. Support more Autistic people into employment**
- 4. Tackle health and care inequalities for Autistic people**
- 5. Build the right support in the community and support people in inpatient care**
- 6. Improve support within the criminal and youth justice systems**

Want to join us?

The board meets online once per quarter. If you would like to come along to our next meeting, please send a request via email to:

neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk

You can find more about what happens at our meetings, and view minutes of previous meetings, at:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/disabilities/autism-partnership-board