

Gloucestershire's Autism (and Neurodivergence) Partnership Board Minutes

Tuesday 3rd June
10.00am to 12.00pm; Zoom

Name	Organisation
Andrew Cotterill (AC)	Lived Experience Co-chair
Noor Al-Koky (NA-K)	GCC/ICB Senior Commissioning Manager Autism
Tamsin Morgan (TM)	Co-Host / Parent Carer
Nadine Blewitt (NB)	GCC/ICB Commissioning Officer
Colleen Harris- Stinton (C H-S)	Parent
Nicole Hastie (NH)	Active Impact Development Manager / Parent Carer
Josh Jones (JJ)	Barnwood Trust
Sam James (SJ)	GCC
Marco Cetara (MC)	PEAK (Parenting Empowered Autistic Kids)
Lidia Bojczuk (LB)	Barnwood Trust
Julianna Friend (JF)	DWP
Ione Sime (IS)	Young Gloucestershire
Mel Brozakalik (MB)	National Star Transition Support Manager
Stuart Saxon (SS)	National Star
Zeb Nawaz (ZN)	HHPDA (Horses Helping People with Depression & Anxiety)
Aylisha Howard (AH)	Affinity Trust
Sam James (SJ)	GCC
Martin Doddimeade (MD)	NHS / Autism Liaison Officer (GRH)
Alice Brixey (AB)	Senior Project Manager: Learning Disabilities & ND
Mar Plowman (MP)	Active Impact / Neurodiversity Network Coordinator
Pippa Baker-Walsh (P B-W)	GRCC / CASA
Imran Atcha (IA)	GCC / Commissioning Officer
Ida Poschel (IP)	Active Gloucestershire / Senior Project Officer for Health & Disability
Chris Atkins (CA)	GCPA
Abbas Veshmia (AV)	GCC / Engagement & Participation Officer
Rachel Hall (RH)	Fine Artist / Lived Experience Researcher
Karen Julke (KJ)	Artlift / Programme Manager
Marco Cetara (MC)	PEAK (Parenting Empowered Autistic Kids) / Founder /
Jacky Martel (JM)	ANG member/advocate
Ethan Easton (EE)	SEND Coordinator / Beezee Maximus
Lorna Carter (LC)	People Plus Health Liaison / Glos Parent Carer
Sarah Price (SP)	ICB
Bill Singh (BS)	LCP/ / Mental Health Care Navigator
Karen Paul (KP)	Glos Dynamic Key Working Service Manager / 0-17 Dynamic Support Register
Leuan Edwards (LE)	Swindon & Gloucestershire Mind / Director
Sophie Ayre (SA)	NHS
Beth Foster (BF)	Healthwatch
Hayley Payne (HP)	NHS

Emily Loxley (EL)	Parent Carer
Mark Wilde (MW)	Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO)
Pamela Gallagher – Willis (P-GW)	GCC
Amber Murgatroyd (AM)	
Martha Kelsey (MK)	GCC
Nike Adegbamiye (NA)	GCC / SW
Danielle Vale (DV)	PoWER
Zaphira Cormack (ZC)	ADHD Hub
Lee Holder (LH)	The Music Works

No.	Item	Lead
1.	Welcome / Introductions – Todays meeting topic is focusing on children & young people	Andrew Cotterill
	Apologies for absence and any declarations of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologise from – Dr Marie O'Neill - Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Lead for The Wellbeing Line, Sharon Yelland – Talkwell, Phoebe Crook – University of Gloucestershire, Jane Gibney – CPS, Karl Gluck – Head of Integrated Commissioning – GCC, Sara Crofts – Senior Project Manager – GCC, Nikki Smith – GCC, Benjamin Rollins – Police (Not Read out) 	Disclosed to the Lead.
2.	Co-Host Tamsin Morgan – Parent Carer / Parent Carer Forum <p>Tamsin Morgan has been part of the Parent Carer Forum for three years and is a trained social worker. She is also a parent to a child with complex additional needs, which led her to this role.</p> <p>She began by introducing the Forum, noting that under the SEND Code of Practice, every local authority must have a parent carer forum or participation group to ensure the voices of parent carers are heard. These forums are recognised for their expert knowledge, which is vital in shaping services for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). In Gloucestershire, the Forum operates under a Memorandum of Understanding with the local authority, enabling strategic collaboration to bridge the gap between parent carer experiences and service provision. The Forum works to identify barriers to access and replicate successful practices across the county.</p> <p>The Forum is a small team of five part-time members, all with lived experience of caring for or working with children with a range of additional needs, including autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, and complex health conditions. Tamsin, in</p>	Tamsin Morgan

<p>her role as Autism and Learning Disabilities Supporter, engages directly with parent carers across the county. She offers a non-judgmental listening ear and signposts families to relevant support services.</p> <p>The Forum hosts popular “Listen to Me” coffee mornings during term time and maintains a strong social media presence with 1,800 members. Professionals are welcome to follow their public page for updates, and a private, moderated discussion group is available for parents to share experiences in a safe space.</p> <p>Tamsin works across health, social care, and education. She collaborates with dynamic key workers supporting children at risk of hospital admission due to autism or learning disabilities. She has contributed to revising Section 17 social care frameworks to include more sensitive language and reflect the emotional challenges faced by families in crisis. She also works with the Preparation for Adulthood team, advising parents on post-16 options, and supports schools and children’s centres.</p> <p>Her work includes direct support to school staff and families, and she often visits schools and early years settings. Drawing from her own experience as a parent, she understands the challenges of early childhood when children with additional needs are often misunderstood or judged.</p> <p>Tamsin also shares her lived experience of navigating education and society with her autistic son, offering valuable insight into the realities faced by many families.</p> <p>The speaker, a parent of three children aged 20, 15, and 14, focused on her middle child, who has complex needs. He has been diagnosed with ADHD, autism, sensory processing difficulties, anxiety, panic disorder, and a pathological demand avoidant (PDA) profile. His behaviour can be violent and challenging. He was not diagnosed until age 10, and the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted his education during Years 5 and 6, despite having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).</p> <p>Due to the pandemic, it became less clear that mainstream education would not suit him at secondary level. He entered a mainstream secondary school, but despite efforts and reasonable adjustments, he struggled significantly. In one year, he was suspended 15 times and placed in isolation 33 times. By the second week of Year 9, the school stated they could no longer accommodate him.</p> <p>Now approaching Year 11, he still does not have a school placement. The lack of suitable provision has contributed to his involvement with the criminal justice system, as he spends unsupervised time with other vulnerable boys in similar situations. The parent believes that if he were in education, he would not be out at 2 p.m. engaging in risky behaviours.</p> <p>She highlighted a significant gap in educational provision: while there is support for profoundly autistic children, those with physical or learning disabilities, and academically able autistic students, there is a large group of children with complex profiles who are not being adequately supported.</p>		
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Questions & Comments

P-GW expressed sympathy for the parent's experience, acknowledging the courage it took to share such a difficult story and appreciating their presence at the meeting.

DV (Gloucester Advocacy Manager) also thanked the parent for sharing, noting the distressing nature of the situation. She highlighted the need for greater advocacy support for parents and carers of young people in similar circumstances. DV emphasized that many schools, particularly mainstream settings, may not fully understand their legal responsibilities. She also pointed out the national shortage of specialist placements and the lack of support within the criminal justice system for vulnerable young people. DV committed to raising these concerns with commissioners.

TM responded by noting that her son is fortunate to have her as an advocate, as she is confident in navigating meetings and challenging systems. She shared that during her son's arrests, he often did not understand what was happening, despite appearing to have low support needs. TM stressed that many parents are left without advocacy support at crisis points. She acknowledged the stigma surrounding this aspect of autism and neurodiversity, which is often avoided in public discussions.

TM also highlighted the societal judgment she faces, with assumptions that she is simply a parent who cannot cope. She explained that her son has been out of education for two years, leading to feelings of rejection and low self-worth. This has contributed to risky behaviours and vulnerability to exploitation by older peers. TM emphasized the urgent need to address these gaps in support and understanding.

DV shared her personal connection, noting her 14-year-old autistic stepson, and expressed understanding of the challenges discussed. She highlighted how peer exploitation can add complexity for autistic children and reiterated the importance of advocacy support for families.

SP thanked Tamsin for sharing her experience and acknowledged the support the Parent Carer Forum has provided her as a parent of a child with autism. She noted her child presents differently, internalising rather than externalising but expressed deep appreciation for the Forum's work and the inspiration drawn from Tamsin's story.

TM thanked attendees for their support and emphasised the importance of peer connection through the Forum. She acknowledged the emotional toll of parenting a neurodivergent child, describing the constant low-level anxiety even during stable periods. She stressed the importance of modelling resilience and work ethic for her children, despite the challenges.

AC echoed the concern about ongoing anxiety and its impact on the whole family.

	<p>TM added that her son currently attends an alternative provision for only 15 hours per week. Despite having an EHCP, no suitable specialist placement has been found in or out of county. The EHCP has been circulated multiple times without success. The current provision is not DfE-funded, so no transport is provided, placing additional strain on the family. She noted that her son's most consistent engagement is with youth justice services, which recently declined to extend involvement, stating they cannot criminalise him further just to provide support.</p> <p>AC expressed concern that youth justice is offering more consistent support than education and highlighted the broader issue of EHCP access. He noted that although EHCPs should be based on need rather than diagnosis, many families still struggle to secure support.</p> <p>TM agreed, stating that support should be needs-based and not dependent on a formal diagnosis.</p> <p>Multiple attendees expressed thanks to Tamsin via the chat for sharing her personal story. Many highlighted the value of hearing first-hand experiences from families of neurodivergent children in Gloucestershire, noting the clear gaps in current support systems and the urgent need for improved provision.</p>	
3.	<p>THEME 2 (improving access to education & transition to adulthood) STRATEGY UPDATE – FUTURE ME</p> <p>Martha Kelsey – SEND Engagement & Information Development Officer</p> <p>Agenda Item 3 – Theme 2 (improving access to education & transition to adulthood) Strategy Update – Future Me Presented by Martha Kelsey – SEND Engagement & Information Development Officer.</p> <p>MK thanked attendees and Tamsin for the opportunity to speak and acknowledged Tamsin's valuable contribution to the Parent Carer Forum. MK was invited to do a general introduction to Future Me and the Quality and Engagement team at GCC.</p> <p>She leads on <i>Future Me Gloucestershire</i>, a young person-led initiative developed five years ago to ensure children and young people with additional needs have a voice in shaping services. The platform, known as the <i>Young Person's Local Offer</i>, provides accessible information, advice, and guidance co-produced with young people. Content is delivered through various formats including audio, video, and printed materials, and feedback is gathered through surveys, focus groups, and outreach in schools and youth settings.</p> <p>MK referenced the <i>Glosfamilies directory</i>, a statutory platform offering information for families and young people up to age 25 with SEND. A new</p>	Martha Kelsey

	<p>section on friendships and relationships, co-produced with young people, will be launched soon in response to identified needs. The team is also working to improve content related to preparing for adulthood.</p> <p>MK shared links to the <i>Glosfamilies directory</i>, the SEND Local Offer, and the <i>Families in Partnership</i> newsletter, which is co-produced with the Parent Carer Forum. She encouraged attendees to explore the resources and reach out with questions.</p> <p>Glosfamilies Directory</p> <p>Glosfamilies Directory Support for Families with SEND - Gloucestershire's Local Offer for Parent & Carers</p> <p>Families in Partnership newsletters Gloucestershire County Council</p> <p>Martha Kelsey's email address: martha.kelsey@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>AC queried whether the slide presentation was progressing.</p> <p>MC apologised and confirmed the slides would be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p>MK added that the team is small and works closely with colleagues such as Kate Morgan. She reiterated the statutory requirement for local authorities to maintain a Local Offer and highlighted ongoing efforts to ensure the information is relevant, accessible, and up to date.</p> <p>AC asked about service engagement volumes.</p> <p>MK estimated they engage with around 200 young people annually, with varying levels of interaction. Website traffic is in the thousands per month, often accessed via schools and careers leads.</p> <p>AC also asked about transition support between children's and adult services.</p> <p>MK explained that transitions are complex and vary by service (e.g., health transitions at 18, education up to 25 with an EHCP). The team uses the <i>Preparing for Adulthood</i> framework and hosts a bi-monthly practitioners forum to coordinate efforts. Recent developments include appointing a Preparing for Adulthood Outcomes Lead and restructuring the EHCP team to better support post-Year 9 transitions.</p>	
4.	<p>THEME 4 (Tackling health & care inequalities) STRATEGY UPDATE - Children's Autism and ADHA Assessment Service (CAAAS) Overview –</p> <p>SCAAS > Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Dr Victoria Thurston – Clinical Psychologist and Service Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current position & Referral Routes • What has changed and what can be developed <p>The agenda item regarding the above was not discussed. Dr Victoria Thurston has kindly agreed to present at the next partnership board meeting.</p>	

5.	<p>THEME 5 (Building the right support in the community) STRATEGY UPDATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glos Youth Forum – Sammy Roberts on behalf of Bee Barker • ND Hub Glos – Zaphira Cormack <p>Glos Youth Forum - Sammy Roberts</p> <p>Sammy works with Inclusion Gloucestershire and leads the Your Voice Network and serves as the project worker for the Youth Forum and self-advocacy initiatives. Alongside a colleague, Bee, they visit secondary schools and colleges across Gloucestershire to promote self-help and advocacy skills among neurodiverse young people.</p> <p>Sammy and Bee's work now includes in-person sessions rather than just online meetings, as many young people found virtual formats challenging. The program is delivered in two-hour sessions over two weeks.</p> <p>The first session focuses on understanding rights under the Equality Act, including discussions about school life and common challenges faced by neurodiverse students, such as sensory sensitivities and executive functioning difficulties. It also introduces the concept of reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>The second session encourages students to consider forming their own self-advocacy or peer support groups. These groups aim to foster a sense of community and shared experience, helping students recognise commonalities and advocate for their needs.</p> <p>Feedback from school staff has been positive, noting significant changes in students' confidence and engagement. The presence of neurodiverse adults like Sammy and Bee has also had a meaningful impact, offering relatable role models and lived experience.</p> <p>Questions & Comments</p> <p>AC raised a question about the effectiveness of encouraging young people to engage in self-advocacy if schools are not open or willing to listen.</p> <p>SR acknowledged the importance of this point and explained that when Bee contacts schools, the intention is clearly communicated: to help establish a group that the school can continue supporting. In some cases, schools are already considering such initiatives. For example, at Hartpury, a student was enthusiastic about starting a neurodiverse social group and drop-in. While the hope is that schools will support these efforts, the level of engagement varies.</p> <p>AC suggested that it might be beneficial for these groups to have a way to connect with each other or access shared resources.</p> <p>SR agreed and mentioned they would speak with Bee about the possibility of sharing her email for contact purposes. SR also offered to send Bee relevant materials and meeting notes for wider distribution.</p> <p>N A-K contributed a link to a newsletter that includes contact information for the Youth Forum for Autistic & Neurodivergent Youth:</p>
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	<p>Newsletter Link https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/media/aafljiw5/issue-5-disability-neurodivergence-and-mental-health-in-goucestershire.pdf - Page 9</p> <p>N A-K also expressed appreciation for the impactful work Sammy and Bee are doing in schools.</p> <p>AC asked what areas of the county have you worked in so far?</p> <p>SR responded that most of the work has taken place in Gloucester, with additional sessions at Stroud College and Hartpury. Although the project is intended to be county-wide, expanding into more schools has been challenging. Bee is responsible for outreach.</p> <p>AC noted that using networks, such as those present in the meeting, could help raise awareness and expand the project's reach.</p> <p>SR welcomed this suggestion and encouraged attendees to connect them with SENCOs or TAs focused on neurodiversity who might be interested in hosting the sessions.</p> <p>AC asked whether the groups are inclusive of all types of neurodivergence.</p> <p>SR confirmed that while the focus is often on autism and ADHD, the groups are open to all forms of neurodiversity.</p> <p>HP recommended connecting with <i>Gloucestershire Healthy Living & Learning</i>, which could assist with school access. HP also suggested reaching out to headteacher networks.</p> <p>N A-K added that a newsletter is distributed to headteachers and proposed reconnecting with Martha, who had presented earlier in the meeting, as she may be able to support this effort.</p> <p>ZN praised Bee's podcast <i>Life in the Mind</i>, describing it as highly relatable, especially for individuals diagnosed later in life. Zeb put the following Life in the Mind Pod casts in the chat.</p> <p>Life in the MiND podcast - a Neurodivergent podcast for neurodivergent people</p> <p>Season 2, episode 16- Meet Bea https://youtu.be/SJW8I9w-2mw?si=yp0HlwczBple2Jaz</p> <p>Season 2, episode 17— Growing MiND https://youtu.be/xKIUcWD48kw?si=zFmZGeKNM0HsjWQ3</p> <p>SR thanked Zeb and shared that both they and Bee are diagnosed. They often speak with young people who are either going through or considering the diagnosis process. Sharing their lived experiences helps young people feel understood and supported.</p> <p>ZN emphasized the importance of hearing from people with similar experiences and recalled seeing Sammy and Bee at the '<i>Active Impact</i>' conference. Zeb reiterated that their voices are vital, as many young people are navigating similar challenges.</p>
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Zaphira Cormac – ND Hub Gloucestershire – Update

Background

ND Hub Gloucestershire, originally established as ADHD Hub Gloucestershire three years ago, has since changed its name to reflect a broader and more inclusive mission. At the time of its founding, terms like “neurodivergent” and the acronym “ND” were not widely recognised. The original name helped the organisation gain visibility and access to essential spaces. Despite the name change, ND Hub continues to support individuals with a wide range of neurodevelopmental conditions.

Current Initiatives

Agricultural Curriculum Development

ND Hub is developing a Level 1–3 curriculum in mixed agriculture, tailored for individuals with learning disabilities and neurodevelopmental conditions. This initiative builds on the success of their farm-based project, which has proven effective in fostering peer support and self-understanding in a non-clinical, outdoor environment.

Youth Engagement and Transitions

The farm project has attracted young people aged 19–23, many of whom have struggled with traditional education. The new curriculum is designed to accommodate diverse learning needs, including those with low IQ or alternative learning styles.

Youth Mentor Programme

Lex, the Youth Development Lead, is piloting a youth mentor programme led by neurodivergent adults for neurodivergent young people. This initiative is in the early stages of becoming an alternative provision. Currently, six young people across Gloucestershire are participating, each with unique needs, most of whom have formal diagnoses.

Questions and Answers/Discussion

AC Could you talk about the full range of activities at ND Hub

ZC ND Hub operates on a peer-led model, with all staff identifying as neurodivergent—including individuals with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, Tourette’s, and co-occurring conditions such as epilepsy. Peer support groups are shaped by community feedback and take many forms. While some involve traditional group discussions, many are activity-based, such as family adventure walks, rowing, and other outdoor events that naturally encourage conversation and connection.

ND Hub has also partnered with the Wilson Gallery and Museum, providing space to explore creative self-understanding. Additionally, the organisation is involved in research to address the significant lack of studies into neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism.

ZC added that ND Hub is working with the Gloucestershire Youth Neurodivergent Project and is in the process of forming a Youth Council in

	<p>collaboration with Jane Roberts. A free train-the-trainer workshop is also being offered this year for those working with young people.</p> <p>AC Can you summarise your current projects, their aims, and direction?</p> <p>ZC The overarching aim is to make Gloucestershire the best place to grow up neurodivergent. The Youth Council is being formed with two age groups: 11–16 and 17–25. One information session has already taken place, with more planned across the county some are planned in the Forest of Dean, Bourton-on-the-Water, and Gloucester. Currently, there are three members in the older group and two in the younger.</p> <p>Initially, autistic young people expressed a need for a clear strategy before joining. While the intention was for the strategy to be co-created, the ADHD group was supported to develop one, which is now being shared to help others understand what to expect. This strategy will evolve as the council begins its projects and campaigns.</p> <p>ZC also noted that ND Hub is mapping all neurodivergent-friendly and affirming youth groups across Gloucestershire. The organisation supports these groups in various ways, including assistance with voluntary DBS checks and safeguarding training.</p> <p>AC How does ND Hub support transitions for young people aged 18–25 into adult services or peer groups?</p> <p>ZC ND Hub offers adult peer groups for individuals aged 18 and over. Youth-friendly peer groups are also available, though not explicitly labelled as such to encourage participation. These include gaming sessions and rowing groups, which provide relaxed peer support environments.</p> <p>In schools, ND Hub delivers training and helps establish peer groups. These groups, often activity-based, allow students to connect with others who are autistic, ADHD, or have Tourette's, and to discuss their school experiences in a supportive setting.</p> <p>ZC acknowledged that many adults also prefer activity-based discussions over traditional sit-down formats. They noted that while the first few minutes of a session may feel awkward, conversations soon become lively and engaging.</p> <p>AC Is all this currently happening at ND Hub, and how can people find out more?</p> <p>ZC replied that, all initiatives are currently active. ND Hub is preparing an information pack for distribution. In the meantime, services can be accessed via the organisation's website or by email.</p> <p>Email: info@adhdhubglos.org</p> <p>Website: https://www.adhdhubglos.org/</p>	
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Nicole Hastie & Mar Plowman - Active Impact

Introduction

Nicole introduced herself and invited Mar to provide an overview of the Neurodiversity Network before presenting their main ideas. The aim was to introduce the network, share details about the upcoming conference, and highlight their current focus on asset mapping. Nicole explained that the session would also be used to learn about attendees and their offerings.

Overview of the Neurodiversity Network

Mar, coordinator of the Neurodiversity Network, explained that the network connects activity providers in Gloucestershire with neurodivergent communities to make leisure, social, well-being, and arts activities more inclusive for all ages. The project includes hosting events and developing an asset map of inclusive activities across the county.

Padlet and Contributions

Nicole introduced a Padlet for attendees to share what they offer or know about neurodivergent-inclusive opportunities in the county. While the focus is on social, leisure, and well-being activities, core health or social care services are also welcome.

Padlet Link

<https://padlet.com/nicole2003/what-neurodivergent-inclusive-opportunities-do-you-offer-or--b77gaty1i6agso4o>

Welcome Website

Nicole demonstrated the Your Welcome Gloucestershire website, a directory of around 200 providers offering social, leisure, and well-being activities. The site allows organisations to list their services and indicate accessibility features. The team is working to expand how neurodivergent-friendly provisions are displayed, integrating the asset map into the platform. This will help promote and connect initiatives like Glos Youth Forum and the ND Youth Project through Zaphira's ND Hub. Please click on the link below to access the website.

[You're Welcome Gloucestershire](#)

Filtering and Categorisation

NH confirmed that users can filter listings by criteria such as neurodivergent-friendly or physical disability-friendly. She demonstrated how to navigate the site, search events by area, and view listings by district, age group, or activity type (e.g., mentoring, social). The team is categorising offerings to better capture and promote inclusive services.

Filtering for Neurodiversity

Mar added that current filters include "autism-friendly" and "quiet space," with plans to update terminology to "neurodivergent" and expand condition-specific filters.

	<p>Upcoming Neurodiversity Network Conference</p> <p>Save the date: Wednesday 22nd October at Churchdown Community Centre</p> <p>Comments and Questions</p> <p>P G-W lives in Ross-on-Wye and asked if Herefordshire listings are acceptable. Nicole confirmed all locations are welcome and can be added if not already listed.</p> <p>AC: Appreciated the inclusion of bordering counties and noted that those unable to access the Padlet can contact Nicole or Mar at: info@activeimpact.org.uk</p> <p>SP: Shared details of an inclusive football team (Barnwood United AFC PAM Disability Football) for neurodiverse children, especially under-12s, with teams for older age groups as well. Nicole welcomed this as a valuable addition to the asset map.</p> <p>AM: Suggested including tools like JAM cards and sunflower lanyards. Nicole agreed and proposed adding a section on the Get Support page for communication tools and aids, such as Disability UK ID cards.</p>	
6.	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>Olivia – Inclusion Gloucestershire – Travel Training Project</p> <p>Olivia introduced herself as the new coordinator for the Travel Training Project, a newly launched initiative aimed at supporting disabled adults (18+) across Gloucestershire. The project has three main components and is staffed by three project workers, including Sammy. Its goal is to promote independence and improve quality of life by enabling access to public transport for health appointments, events, education, and social activities.</p> <p>The project offers:</p> <p>One-to-one travel training: Participants are paired with a travel trainer (who also has a disability) to learn specific routes via bus or train. Training continues until the participant feels confident to travel independently. Initial and final journeys are observed by Olivia or a project worker to ensure readiness.</p> <p>Companion journeys: For individuals who may never travel independently or want a taster experience, a companion can accompany them on a one-off journey.</p> <p>Travel trainer employment: Paid roles are available for individuals with lived experience of disability. The recruitment process is designed to be accessible and supportive, offering experience in employment and income generation. The project is county-wide and open to anyone with a physical, mental, neurodiverse, or learning disability. While primarily focused on Gloucestershire,</p>	

	<p>support for travel to nearby areas (e.g., Bristol) may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Long-distance travel (e.g., London or Cornwall) is not currently within scope but skill-building for future independent travel is encouraged.</p> <p>The project will be featured at the upcoming Big Health Day and is expected to be live on the website within the next few weeks. A newsletter entry includes a summary and Olivia's contact details, which she offered to share in the chat.</p> <p>Questions & Comments</p> <p>AC asked about the project duration.</p> <p>Olivia confirmed it is funded for three years from March 2025.</p> <p>Julie (Job Centre Plus, DWP) invited Olivia to attend a team meeting on June 16 at Cedar House, Gloucester, to introduce the project to Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs). Julie also offered to help promote job opportunities.</p> <p>Olivia agreed enthusiastically, noting her previous experience at the Job Centre and willingness to collaborate. She will share her email for further coordination.</p> <p>AC asked if the project is county-wide.</p> <p>Olivia confirmed it covers all of Gloucestershire, with flexibility for nearby areas depending on transport feasibility.</p> <p>Noor raised a question about supporting individuals post-hospital discharge who aim to travel independently, including long-distance trips.</p> <p>Olivia clarified that while the project focuses on skill-building within Gloucestershire and nearby counties, the training can equip individuals with the confidence and ability to travel further independently.</p> <p>Olivia reiterated that the project is in early stages, with more developments to come, and expressed appreciation for the support and interest.</p> <p>Noor added the link from the newsletter – Travel Training – Page 4 https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/media/yy1fspvn/issue-7-disability-neurodivergence-and-mental-health-in-goucestershire.pdf</p> <p>Olivia's email: oliviae@inclusion-glos.org</p>	
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Big Health Day Update – Sophie Ayre

Sophie Ayre provided an update on the Big Health Day, which took place on 13th June 2025 at Oxtalls Sports Park, Plock Court, Tewkesbury Road, Longford, Gloucester, GL2 9DW.

The event, now in its 17th year, has grown significantly from an initial 50 attendees to over 1,000 participants. It is open to people of all ages and abilities, including those with disabilities or mental health concerns.

Highlights included:

- Over 130 organisations represented across various stands.
- A wide range of inclusive sports and activities.
- Health checks available throughout the day.
- Support from numerous volunteers from Hartpury College and University.
- Food options available for purchase or attendees could bring a packed lunch.
- A dedicated quiet area for those needing a calm space.
- A water bowser on site for free refills (attendees were encouraged to bring reusable bottles).

The event continues to grow in popularity and impact, showcasing the breadth of inclusive health and wellbeing opportunities available across Gloucestershire.

Attendees were asked to save the date for the third **Neurodiversity Network Conference**, scheduled for Wednesday, 22nd October 2025 at Churchdown Community Centre, Parton Road, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2JH.

Further details are available in the newsletter (page 11).

<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/media/yy1fspvn/issue-7-disability-neurodivergence-and-mental-health-in-goucestershire.pdf>

Mental Health & Neurodivergence Networking Event – Online Only Places Available.

Date: Tuesday 1st July

Time: 10:30am – 3:00pm

This hybrid event will celebrate safe spaces across Gloucestershire that support mental health and neurodivergence. It will feature speakers from Inclusion Gloucestershire, CASA Service, Creative Sustainability, and the Gloucestershire Youth Neurodiversity Project, followed by Q&A sessions.

Hosted by: Andrew Cotterill & *Life in the MiND*, a multimedia project raising awareness of neurodivergent experiences, who will also record a podcast-style conversation during the event.

Open to all, with a special welcome to those with lived experience of mental health and/or neurodivergence.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event will be recorded and shared post-event. <p>The main Carers Week event was held on 9th June 2025 at Dowty Sports and Leisure Club, Down Hatherley. Guest speakers included Rebecca Farr (Patient Carer Experience Manager, NHS), Kathy Newman (Gloucestershire Health and Care), and representatives from the Care Advice Line. More information is available via the Gloucestershire Carers Hub.</p> <p><u>Carers Week 2025 - Gloucestershire Carers Hub</u> has further details about the event mentioned by Lorna.</p> <p><u>June Be Connected - Gloucestershire Carers Hub</u></p> <p>Zeb announced a neurodivergent-friendly retreat in Hereford, co-led with an ADHD coach. The venue, a former RDA (Riding for the Disabled Association) site, offers an inclusive and therapeutic environment. The retreat is limited to 8 participants and is open nationally.</p> <p>Contact: <u>zeb@hhpda.co.uk</u></p> <p>The latest edition of the GCC Neurodiversity and Mental Health Newsletter has been published and is available on the GCC website. It features highlights from the Neurodiversity Network Reception (March), coverage on BBC Gloucestershire, updates from the ND Hub, and stories from Carers Week. Personal contributions such as Ollie's Random Acts of Kindness were also included. If you would like to share your experience, please get in touch.</p> <p>Disability, Neurodivergence and Mental Health in Gloucestershire Newsletter link</p> <p><u>https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/media/yy1fspvn/issue-7-disability-neurodivergence-and-mental-health-in-goucestershire.pdf</u></p> <p>Contributions for the next edition (due September 2025) are welcome. Articles, case studies, and relevant resources can be submitted via <u>neurodiversity@goucestershire.gov.uk</u></p> <p>The newsletter is open to all and aims to showcase positive work across Gloucestershire. Please share the newsletter with your networks.</p>	
7.	<p>Meeting Closes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Meeting: 9th September 10am – 12.30pm 	

Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Notes
Share relevant information between Children's and Adults' services to address overlapping challenges.	Partnership Board Members	Ongoing	Ensure better collaboration and sharing of resources across age groups.
Include transitional support and Care Act Assessments in future discussions.	Principal Social Worker and Children's Team	Future Partnership Board Meeting	Explore opportunities for collaboration and practical resources for transitions.
Share resources related to sensory needs beyond diagnoses in the newsletter.	All Partnership Board Members	Before next newsletter publication	Focus on inclusivity by addressing sensory needs for all individuals, diagnosed or not.
Submit items and feedback for the next newsletter.	All Partnership Board Members	Before the next publication	Provide relevant content and comments to improve the newsletter's reach and quality.
Explore opportunities to connect Principal Social Worker Jo Sutherland with key stakeholders.	Autism Partnership Board Chair/Relevant Members	Ongoing	Facilitate discussions on topics like transitions, assessments, and support services.
Gather and share feedback from the Neurodiversity Network Reception.	Active Impact & Organisers of the Diversity Network Conference	After the conference	Use feedback to shape future events and initiatives.
Create/update a good standard passport to include guidance.	Chair Pippa Baker-Walsh Nicole Hastie Dr Mala Ubhi	Ongoing	Need to improve and update usage within the system

*Please note that for transparency and accountability information held on behalf of a public authority should be treated as information held by that public authority and may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act.