

DISABILITY, NEURODIVERGENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE



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



Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of Disability, Neurodivergence, and Mental Health in Gloucestershire.

It's hard to believe how quickly the year is flying by – Summer is almost here! It's also great to see such a wide range of news in this season's newsletter. Many thanks to all who have contributed. Looking ahead, here are some key events coming up shortly that you may want to note:

Carers Week: 9th–15th June

- A national week recognising and celebrating the UK's approximately six million unpaid carers. For details of events and activities across Gloucestershire, check out the Carers News section [here](#).

Big Health Day – Friday 13th June

- A fantastic day full of information, activities, and opportunities to connect. Don't forget to mark your calendar! A flyer with full details is included [here](#).

Mental Health and Neurodivergence Network Event – Monday 1st July

- This in-person event at Shire Hall will highlight initiatives and activities that bring together support for both mental health and neurodivergence. More information [here](#).

Andrew Cotterill
Chair of the Autism / Neurodivergence Partnership Board

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The NHS is making big changes to how local healthcare is managed. NHS England (NHSE) has announced reforms to improve efficiency and focus resources on frontline services.

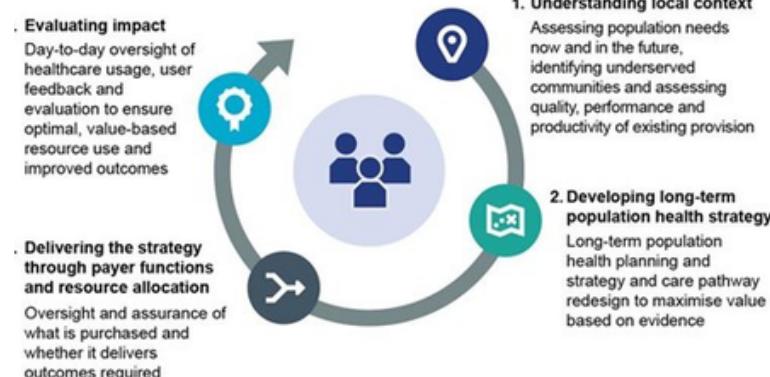
Background: ICBs were set up in 2022 to manage healthcare planning and funding at a regional level. They bring together hospitals, GP surgeries, and other health services to improve coordination and patient care. However, there have been concerns about inconsistencies in how ICBs operate and the need for clearer responsibilities.

Current Situation: NHSE has introduced a new Model ICB Blueprint. This shifts the focus of ICBs to strategic commissioning rather than direct service management. ICBs will now concentrate on long-term planning, improving population health, and reducing inequalities. Many operational functions will be transferred to regional teams or healthcare providers. ICBs must also reduce their running costs by 50%, which will likely lead to mergers between some Boards and a reduction in administrative staff. These cost-saving measures aim to direct more funding towards patient care. The provisional view is that Gloucestershire will cluster with Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board. This provides the basis for discussions with ICB staff, ICB Board and with you, community partners.

Next Steps: Transition to the new model will happen over coming months. Key changes include:

- Merging ICBs in some regions to streamline operations.
- Reducing administrative costs to meet new financial targets.
- Transferring responsibilities for workforce planning, digital leadership, and service oversight to other NHS bodies.
- Developing new commissioning strategies to improve healthcare access and outcomes.

Model ICB - System leadership for improved population health



The priority is to deliver the best possible outcomes for our population and for the dedicated staff and teams working in Gloucestershire. At the same time, the ICB are also focused on delivering operational plan priorities for this year, including bringing down waiting lists, improving access and delivering high-quality patient care for the local population, with as much funding as possible invested into frontline services.

For more detail - visit: [Future of the NHS Operating Model](#) - this is evolving at pace, so please make sure you're looking at the latest documents. For local news, visit [the ICB website](#).

Gloucestershire has a long history of working together to provide health and care services for vulnerable adults and older people. The Integrated Commissioning Team, which includes staff from both Gloucestershire County Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB), currently manages a wide range of services.

The team has grown over the years and handles many different priorities. In April 2025, the decision was made to start the process towards separate aligned commissioning teams within GCC and ICB, whilst maintaining close collaboration. For GCC commissioning, the functions will include:

- **System Leadership:** Working across different groups and organisations to bring about positive changes, even when there are conflicting priorities.
- **Collaboration and Strategy:** Planning for the long term with input from individuals, professionals, and providers.
- **Contract and Commercial:** Managing contracts and supply chains with a focus on commercial aspects. This includes handling contract and commercial tasks for the ICB.
- **Market and Provider Support:** Helping providers deliver services, grow their businesses, and offer high-quality care. This involves shaping the market to meet the needs of the entire population.
- **Quality and Practice:** Ensuring the quality of adult social care across different providers.
- **Brokerage and Flow:** Connecting people with the care they need and managing the flow of services through block provision.

Further details will follow in a future issue. Despite all of these changes, the commitment to work closely with partners remains strong, ensuring the best outcomes for Gloucestershire.

New Leader of the Council

Cllr Lisa Spivey has been elected as the Leader of Gloucestershire County Council. Lisa, who has served as a county councillor since 2021 and on Cotswold District Council since 2019, becomes the first female to lead the authority in its 136-year history. As part of her acceptance speech, she announced the following priorities:

- **Children** – doubling down on support for the most vulnerable in our county.
- **Highways** - dedicated team to clear up signs, barriers and cones from verges.
- **Speed reduction** – making towns and villages safer and more pleasant places to walk and cycle.



Gloucestershire County Council is working with NHS Gloucestershire and the county's housing partners to introduce an Accessible Housing Register (AHR) to help people with disabilities find social housing which meets their needs. The Accessible Housing Register displays how accessible the available properties are, helping home seekers to find the best options for their needs. It also enables housing providers to better match available homes with people who require specialist adaptations or features, such as wider doorways, level access, or ground-floor living spaces. Each home on the register is assigned a category from A (most accessible) to G (not yet assessed), indicating the level of accessibility. These categories will be displayed alongside property adverts on Home Seeker Plus, Gloucestershire's housing allocation service. The council has worked with several health and housing organisations to introduce the register which will be launched by Gloucester City Homes in the coming months, followed by Stroud District Council, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Two Rivers and The Guinness Partnership.



Travel Training Project

Inclusion Gloucestershire is launching an exciting project to support disabled adults (18+) across the county in gaining the skills, knowledge, and confidence to travel independently or with support. We're inviting referrals from individuals who could benefit from:

- **1:1 Travel Training** – Personalised support to learn specific journeys with a travel trainer who will accompany the person on public transport until they are confident to travel alone.
- **Companion Journeys** – Support people who don't think they want to travel independently but could travel with companion support to appointments, events, or social outings.
- **Workshops** – Group sessions (8+ people) offering practical skills and confidence-building.
- **Paid Travel Trainer Roles** – A fantastic opportunity for disabled individuals who already travel confidently to support others and earn as they train.

This project is open to Gloucestershire residents aged 18+ who identify as disabled or experience barriers due to a health condition. For referrals or more information, get in touch with the Coordinator - oliviae@inclusion-glos.org

On Monday 12 May at Pittville Pump Room our wonderful colleague Brenda Booker was awarded the Medal of Honour for her outstanding voluntary work with the Cheltenham Mental Health Carers Support Group. She is seen with her daughter Karen who plays a big role with MHELO (Mental Health Experience Led Opportunities)

The event was expertly facilitated by members of the Improvement Community Team, ensuring a productive and insightful session.



Introducing the Families in Partnership Newsletter



Families in Partnership newsletter April-May 2025

If you haven't already discovered, please note the existence of this bi-monthly newsletter. It aims to provide children and young people with SEND, and those who support them, with the latest developments in Gloucestershire.

You can either subscribe and have them sent to you or read them online below.

<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/families-in-partnership-newsletters/>. The next addition will be released in June.

Short Breaks Project Funding

Barnwood Trust, Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire VCSE Alliance have awarded four organisations two years of funding through their partnership to enhance Short Breaks provision in Gloucester, Tewkesbury, and North Cotswold.

This initiative follows a “test and learn” approach, aiming to improve access to high-quality, inclusive short breaks for families of disabled children and young people across Gloucestershire, while also informing how services will be commissioned going forward.

For more information - <https://www.barnwoodtrust.org/news/short-breaks-project-funding-2/>

Healthwatch Gloucestershire would like to thank everyone that took part in our engagement focussing on accessing community pharmacy services in Gloucestershire. Using your feedback, they have produced a report with recommendations for NHS Gloucestershire who have also provided a response to the findings.

You can find the report here: [Community Pharmacy Access Experiences](#)

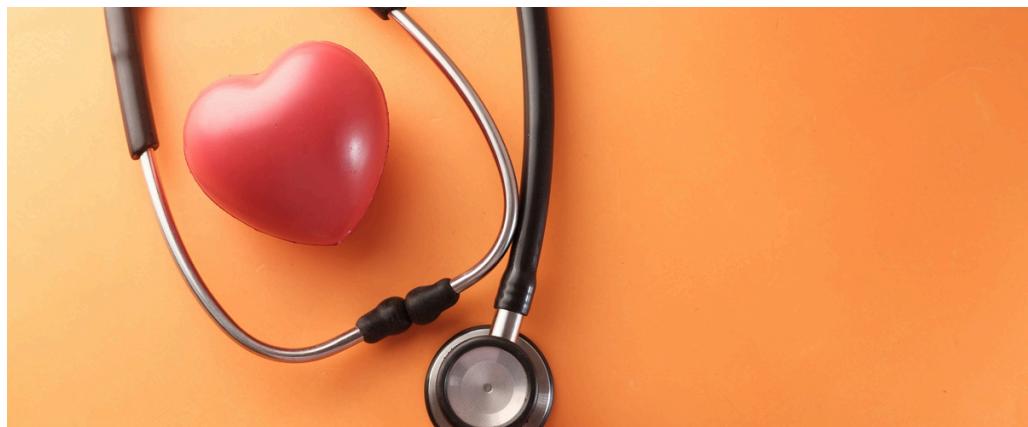
They would welcome any comments on the findings/ recommendations or the stakeholder response to support them to ensure they are holding services accountable for meeting the needs of Gloucestershire residents.

You can also tell them about any other health and care experience using their contact details:

Via webform: <https://www.healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk/share-your-views>

Email: info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk

Phone: 0800 652 5193



About Healthwatch.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's health and social care champion. They are there to listen to your experiences of using local health and care services and to hear about the issues that really matter to you.

They are entirely independent and impartial, and anything you share with them is confidential. They 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, they 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 the website for more information and published reports: [here.](#)

WHAT'S ON FOR ALL

Big Health Day 2025



Scan me!



An inclusive event to promote health and wellbeing

Big Health Day

Friday 13 June 2025
9.30am-2.30pm

**Oxstalls Sports Park, Plock Court,
Tewkesbury Road, Gloucester, GL2 9DW**

An annual event for people with a physical or learning disability, sensory loss or mental health needs

More
than 120
stalls



Be active
and have
fun



Help our event use less plastic - please bring a water bottle to refill

Big Health Day is organised by Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust

Email: Bighealth25@ghc.nhs.uk

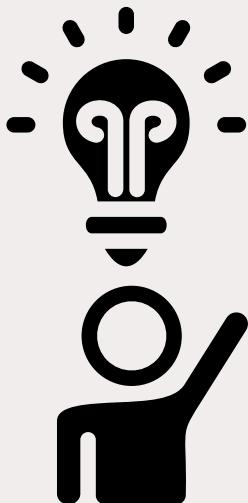


Gloucestershire's Autism Partnership Board brings together people with lived and professional experience of autism and neurodivergence to oversee the implementation of the local Autism strategy. Our local priorities reflect the six overarching themes of the National Autism Strategy. Some of this quarter's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

Theme 1 Highlights

Improve understanding and acceptance

- Neurodiversity Celebration Week began on Monday, 17th March this year, marked by a meeting of the Neurodiversity Network at Shire Hall. BBC Radio Gloucestershire covered the event with an interview and news reports. You can read more in the article [here](#).
- Minchinhampton's Patient Participation Group (PPG) began its Annual General Meeting (AGM) with a Neurodivergence awareness talk.



Theme 2 Highlights

Improve access to education & support positive transitions into adulthood

- Autism-only project for children, young people and adults, to understand gaps and the needs in support for autistic people in the community reaching crisis underway.
- Continue to see an increase of children, young people and adults registered on Gloucestershire's Dynamic Support Register who are autism-only (with absence of a learning disability)

Theme 3 Highlights

Support more people into employment

- The steering group met in April to explore strategies for encouraging more employers to recruit individuals with autism. These discussions will be continued in collaboration with the wider team.
- The Employment and Skills Hub had 184 referrals where Autism was declared, and we supported 28 individuals into paid employment and 13 into work experience or voluntary placements.



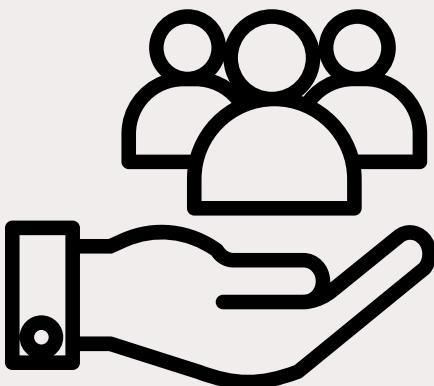


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Theme 4 Highlights

Tackle health & care inequalities

- A Waiting Well initiative has been given the go ahead for the next 3 years. This will be all age and coproduced with those with lived experience. A project group will be set up in due course.
- Continue to work closely the Autism Liaison Officer to embed learning within the acute hospital pathway and building an accessible hospital passport for autistic children, young people and adults.



Theme 5 Highlights

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

- The Autism Housing Group met in April to discuss the action plan and aspirations for the next 12 months.
- Additional Health & Social Care Providers who have autism as a specialism have been added to the Frameworks in its latest round.
- The Autism Partnership Board presented updates of the Strategy and its activities to Adult Social Care Social Workers.

Theme 6 Highlights

Improve support within criminal & youth justice systems

- Gloucestershire Constabulary have worked hard to ensure custody is more neurodivergent friendly. More detail can be found in this newsletter.
- Police HQ held a series of activities during Neurodiversity celebration week, to increase awareness amongst staff. They invited the Board's chair, Inclusion Glos and CASA to support!
- Early planning of a follow on Hate Crime event with South West CPS underway to explore Mental Health & Neurodivergence.





Inclusion Gloucestershire have been running a Peer Mentoring scheme for Neurodivergent Adults in Gloucestershire for the last 2 years. This has been funded by the Barnwood Trust.

The team had the happy news this month, that this work will continue for a further 2 years, and this work will be funded by the Julia Rausing Trust.

Please do get in touch with the team if you would be interested in becoming a mentor, or being mentored. You can contact them via email: zigzagpeermentoring@inclusion-glos.org or by calling the office (01452 234003) and asking to speak to the project coordinator, Jackie Rowe.

Inclusivity Works Podcast

During Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Inclusivity Works spoke with Sarah and Ryan about inclusive recruitment and support for neurodiverse individuals. You can listen to that here - [Inclusive recruitment | Inclusivity Works](#)



Youth Council – Get Involved!

ND Hub Glos offers diverse peer support across Gloucestershire for neurodivergent people of all ages. From game-based youth sessions to adventure walks for families, creative meetups at the Wilson Gallery, and farm-based connections, every gathering is shaped by the community. Adults can join Project Progress for co-working, parent groups for shared experiences, or regular discussions on strategies and support. Peer support thrives because it fosters understanding, connection, and growth without judgment. At ND Hub Glos, being ourselves is celebrated, and thriving together is the goal.

“Nothing about us without us”

That's the strapline for Gloucestershire's two new Neurodivergent Youth Councils. The Youth ND Project are forming an 11-16 and a 17-25 youth council who will work to make Gloucestershire a better, kinder and more accessible place for all. They will be campaigning, challenging stereotypes and influencing services and systems across the county. It's open to all who identify as ND and live in Gloucestershire. Interested to find out more? – please fill in the [‘Contact Us’](#) page and the team'll get back to you.

On Monday 17th March 2025, the Neurodiversity Network (ran by Active Impact) kicked off Neurodiversity Celebration Week with Reception at Shire Hall in Gloucester. The Network is a user-led initiative that brings together activity providers, neurodivergent people and families to share insights and create more inclusive activities across the county. We were thrilled to welcome organisations across Gloucestershire for a celebration of the inclusive practice happening across the county, and to take a look at how we can build on this for the future.



We heard from:

- **Jane Roberts about Gloucestershire Youth Neurodiversity Project**, sharing next steps for this important local initiative.
- **James Beecher & Anna Reeves, from Creative Sustainability**, speaking about Access Bike and 3rd Space.
- **Tamsin Morgan, from Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum**, explaining how their forum provides support to parents while giving them a voice to feed back to the County Council.
- **Selina Hamilton, from The Wellbeing Line**, who run regular 'Let's Talk About Neurodiversity' sessions online for people who work in health and social care.
- **Zaphira Cormack, from ADHD Hub**, who announced next steps for their project, which will now have a broader scope and be titled the ND Hub!
- **Bonnie Lloyd, from The Isbourne Centre**, who talked about the wellbeing activities offered and described the deepening of their inclusive practice over the past year.
- **Harriet West, from Art Shape**, who displayed artwork and talked about the joy of working with neurodivergent creativity.

Thank you to the speakers, our hosts and all attendees who made the event successful. We also spoke to BBC Gloucestershire who aired a short radio piece explaining the meaning behind the week. If you'd like to find out more about the Neurodiversity Network, including how to take part, visit the [website](#). The next event for the Neurodiversity Network will be our next conference which is on [Wednesday 22nd October 2025](#) at Churchdown Community Centre. Please [save the date!](#)



My name is Andy Miller, I am one of the Custody Inspectors at Gloucestershire Constabulary's Compass House Custody Suite in Quedgeley, Gloucester. Compass House is a 50 cell custody block which was built just over 10 years ago, it is the only custody suite we have in Gloucestershire, and therefore it can be a very busy and stressful place, especially if you live with a Neurodivergent trait.

When the suite was built there had been little research into how the custody environment can affect people, whether it be staff or detainees. I myself have struggled at times with the unique environment and the stresses it can bring.

But why is it important to look at neurodiversity in the custody environment? Well, it has been reported that almost half of the UK's prison population are Neurodivergent, and the vast majority of them have been through Police custody prior to arriving in prison. People react differently to being arrested, some become stressed and violent while others break down, therefore it is important for us to identify the reasons for this. We also have staff who live with Neurodivergence and it is important that they are looked after and comfortable at work.

I have recently started looking at how I can improve our facilities for Neurodivergent individuals, whether they are detainees or our members of staff, and this led to me speaking to Noor Al-Koky (GCC/ICB) who introduced me to the fantastic work she has been doing on the Gloucestershire Autism Strategy. Since that first meeting, we have started working closely together to introduce a number of measures into the custody environment, these are designed to support individuals within the criminal justice system. These measures range from extra training for the custody staff, so they have greater knowledge of Neurodiversity, to the introduction of toolkits to assist detainees – as well as a number of other things.

With the help of ICB funding, along with other money raised, we will be able to improve the custody environment and the support provisions we can offer. The toolkits will include items such as ear plugs, stress balls, weighted blankets, fidget toys/sensory items, ADHD/Autism communication cards, coloured overlays for reading as well as a selection of books and mindful colouring. These items will be offered to individuals throughout their time with us. We are also introducing a photographic guidebook which explains the custody process and details each area they will visit. These books have been designed to allow people to familiarise themselves with the different areas, the processes, and also the different staff members they will encounter, to reduce stress as much as possible.



Gloucestershire
Constabulary



I have been contacted by the Immigration Office who wish to use this guide for their detainees, which is really positive, and shows that this work is already being recognised by other agencies as best practice. We also have a number of support services in the building, including the NHS liaison and diversion team and social workers, who we are working with to launch a 'custody passports' scheme.

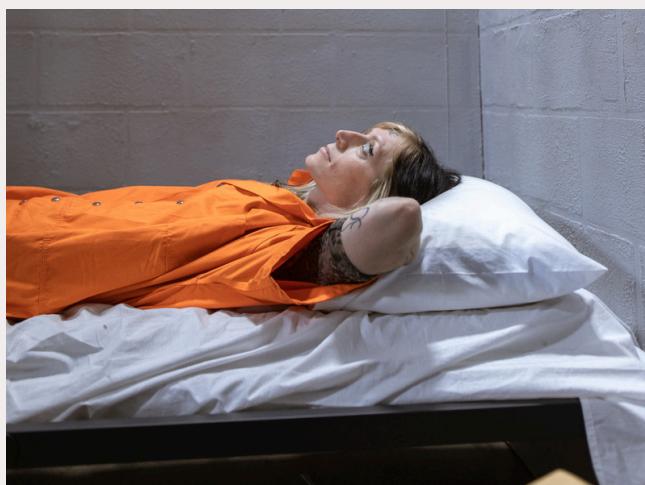
These passports will be specific for each individual and will detail any Neurodivergent needs they have, who their support workers are, what their triggers are and what methods they use to calm themselves when needed. The custody staff will have access to this information and will be able to access it to assist the detainee, even if they are not able to communicate at that time. These passports have been used to great success in other areas of the country and will help to reduce the need to repeat triggers and ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) whilst they are in our care.

I am also working closely with our Estates Department to implement some changes to the custody building. These will be introduced in a separate cell area which can be utilised for Neurodivergent individuals when needed. This area already exists, and is located away from the noisier areas, therefore making it a calmer space.

This area already has its own entrance, custody desk and yard so will minimise the stress of having to walk through areas that could be overwhelming.

The yard area is due to be refurbished as part of these plans, to make it more calming with the introduction of colours and distraction items.

These plans are in their infancy, but I hope to be able to report back with a further update soon.



**Here's an update from CASA, From Emma and Pippa**

CASA provides support for autistic adults across the whole of Gloucestershire, through drop-ins, one-to-one support, peer support, plus information, resources and guides. We also offer support to friends and families of autistic adults.

**DROP-INS UPDATE**

We currently have face-to-face weekly or fortnightly drop-in groups at Cheltenham, Gloucester, Cinderford, and Tewkesbury, and an online drop-in on Zoom. We also run a monthly online drop-in for Friends and Families of Autistic Adults.

Drop-ins are a place for fun activities (e.g. quizzes, games, or art), discussion about issues around autism, and mutual support, socializing and making friends. Each drop-in usually has a theme or topic for discussion and information sharing. Recent topics have included Autism Terminology, Strengths and Challenges, Managing Stress, Burnout, and Avoiding Scams.

Topics coming up in the next few months include: Executive Functioning, Volunteering, Interoception (Adjusting to Changing Seasons), Managing Emotions, and Reasonable Adjustments (at work and in therapy settings).

NEW FRIENDSHIP GROUP FOR AUTISTIC YOUNG ADULTS

Our new Autistic Young Adults Friendship Group, just for autistic people aged from 18 to 25, is starting on 28th May. This will be held at Abbeydale Community Centre, GL4 4BL, from 6.45pm to 8.15pm, fortnightly on Wednesday evenings.

OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN BLACKSMITHING!

Thanks to grant funding from The Worshipful Company of Ironmongers, we have organised a blacksmithing course for autistic young people aged 16-25. Sessions will be 11am-1pm or 2pm to 4pm, weekly for 8 weeks starting 4th September, at a blacksmithing teaching forge in Cranham. The workshops will focus on hands-on forging, with the aim of nurturing creative thinking, confidence, and problem solving as well as practical skills and artistic expression. Help with transport from central Gloucester will be available if needed.

The course is linked to the “Earth, Fire, Iron” exhibition at Stroud’s Museum in the Park 6th September to 2nd November, which commemorates the life and work of the nationally-renowned Gloucestershire Artist-Blacksmith Alan Evans who died in 2023.



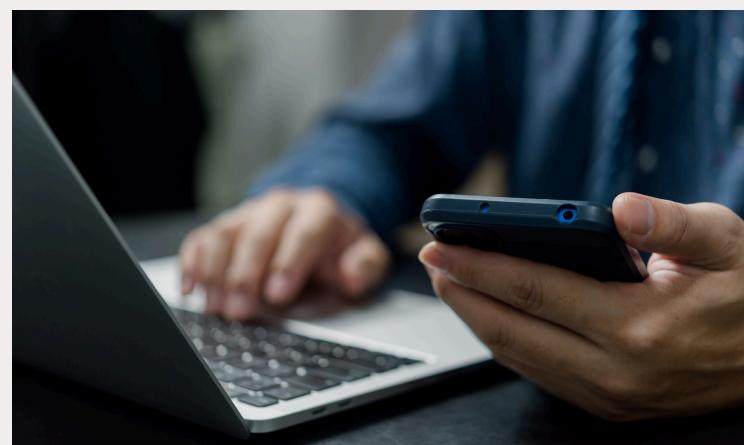


RISE (Remote Independence Support and Empowerment)

This is a new scheme that we're running, offering bookable one-hour, one-off, one-to-one support sessions for those with an autism diagnosis and not currently receiving our one-to-one support. These sessions can take place in person, or by phone or online, and can help with practical tasks and challenges. Examples of things you can do in a CASA RISE session include (but are not limited to):

- Making important phone calls
- Understanding letters and correspondence
- Help with creating routines
- Communication support
- Advice on Reasonable Adjustments
- Signposting to services
- Help to use digital devices and online services

The CASA RISE service is for adults over the age of 18 with an autism diagnosis, resident in Gloucestershire or registered with a Gloucestershire GP. You can book a session using the RISE booking system at www.cal.com/casarise or for more information contact us via 01452 317460 or infocasa@grcc.org.uk



CONTACTS

We're available by email on infocasa@grcc.org.uk and by phone on 01452 317460 (Monday to Friday 9am – 4.30pm).

For more information about CASA, and links to our leaflets and resources such as our "Guide to Useful Autism Apps and Websites", our "Autism Passport" and "Employment Passport", go to <https://www.grcc.org.uk/casa-community-autism-support-and-advice>

For weekly updates about our Drop-in Groups and full details of drop-in venues and times, see our pages on Instagram and Facebook:

<https://www.instagram.com/casagloucestershire/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CASAGloucestershire>



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!!

What Is Stimming?

Stimming (short for self-stimulatory behavior) refers to repetitive actions that a person does to help regulate their body, thoughts, or emotions. These might include:

- Moving the body (rocking, pacing, flapping)
- Repeating sounds or words
- Using objects in a rhythmic or sensory way (e.g. tapping, spinning, squeezing) - Fidget tools
- Focusing on certain sensations (e.g. staring at light, touching soft textures)

and many others!

Stimming is common in neurodivergent people — especially autistic individuals — but most people stim in some form to some degree at times (think of foot tapping, humming, or doodling).

Why Do People Stim?

Stimming helps with regulation, and it can serve many positive purposes, including:

- Self-soothing in overwhelming or stressful situations, reducing anxiety and calming themselves
- Focusing attention or staying grounded when distracted
- Expressing frustration, especially if they have trouble communicating
- Releasing energy or excess emotion
- Processing sensory input (or creating it when under-stimulated)
- Expressing joy, excitement, or enthusiasm
- As an avoidance for certain activities or expectations.

For many, it's not a behaviour to be "fixed" — it's part of how to stay balanced, engaged, or calm.

When Might Stimming Be Misunderstood?

Stimming is often visible — especially movements like rocking, flapping, or vocal repetition — and this can lead to misunderstanding, stigma, or judgement, especially when:

- People wrongly assume it's disruptive or inappropriate
- Others try to stop it without understanding what it's doing for the person
- Supporters sometimes mistake it for distress when it's actually helping prevent distress



Rocking!



Stimming can sometimes cause physical harm (e.g. head-banging, skin-picking).

This, however, often still has a key regulatory function. Skin picking for me is one way I release tension or cope with uncomfortable internal states but does cause me harm. Sadly I often don't even notice I have been doing it until I spot my fingers covered in blood - so for me it's a harmful behaviour. I know if I have been very stressed for a while by the level of skin injuries I have. Sometimes it's taken some self injuries months to clear up. Some of my other stimming behaviours are fortunately less harmful. One such for me to mention (and slightly less obvious hence mentioning it) is a different form of regulation, that of listening to the same piece of music over and over (many hundreds of times) continuing to do so over a period of weeks of the same track. Though I have eclectic music tastes, I tend to replay certain vocal or choral tracks, I don't really listen to the words. It's more the sound-scape that I find de-stressing in a way I can't put into words. However, I tend to do this when alone or when wearing my earphones.



Finger Tapping

Supporting Stimming Respectfully

Here are some inclusive principles:

- **Accept** stimming as a valid part of someone's regulation, not just a "quirk"
- **Support** safe stimming by allowing fidgets, movement breaks, or quiet sounds
- **Avoid** forcing someone to stop unless the behaviour is unsafe — and even then, explore why it's happening
- **Ask** the person what the stim means for them — some want privacy; others want to be understood.

Summary

Stimming is a natural and often essential part of self-regulation — particularly for neurodivergent people. The range of reasons for stimming is very wide and can be key to someone's regulation. It can be calming, expressive, joyful, or grounding. Supporting stimming, rather than suppressing it, is one way to promote inclusion, autonomy, and emotional wellbeing.

Topics for the future?

If you have any topics that should be covered here, email: neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk.



SELECTED RESOURCES

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



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

YouTuber of the issue!



Morgan Foley

In Morgan's words "Hey guys! My name is Morgan. I am a 23 year old autistic human being who likes to share my life on social media. I like to talk about autism, mental health, arts and crafts, and travel. "

Here's Morgan's Youtube Channel: [Videos](#)

Example: [Autistic Day in the Life ...](#)

Theme based resources of the issue!

Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia is a complex neurological condition, which affects muscle co-ordination and perception. [The Brain Charity](#) gives a bit more information.

Here is a link to [Dyspraxia UK](#) which is a national organisation. They have a wide range of information and resources for individuals and families.

There's also [Dyspraxia Magazine](#) which has further support and awareness.



[What Is It Like Having Dyspraxia? Zarah's Story](#)



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.

Neurodivergence Lived Experience Group

Meets online, usually once a month on a Monday from 14:00-15:30. Contact 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 or cashmir.martin@nhs.net.

The Youth Forum

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 in Gloucestershire. Held as a monthly Zoom group it meets on a Tuesday evening between 5.30pm and 6.30pm. It is a chance to meet other autistic and neurodiverse young people and support each other. 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.

Your next Autism (and Neurodivergence) Partnership Board

Tuesday 3rd June 2025
10.00am to 12.30pm
Venue: Zoom [Online]

Main Topics:
Children & Young People

Future Partnership Board Dates:
Tuesday 9 September 2025
10.00am to 12.30pm
Venue: [In Person]
Tuesday 2 December 2025
10.00am to 12.30pm
Venue: [Online]

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.

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

Various locations - for more information visit www.glosparentcarerforum.org.uk.

WANT TO JOIN THE PARTNERSHIP BOARD?

WE MEET ONCE PER QUARTER. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO COME TO OUR NEXT MEETING, EMAIL: NEURODIVERSITY@GLOUCESTERSHIRE.GOV.UK.

MORE INFORMATION

TO FIND OUT MORE, AS WELL AS READ

PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS, VISIT:

<https://www.glos.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/disabilities-autism-partnership-board/>





From your Co-Chairs:

Wendy Wall and Jan Marriott

Our February meeting – topic: Hate Crime and Staying Safe

Some people can find this topic difficult to talk about. Lewis from SkillZone came to talk about knife crime and county lines. He also said that they have built a new 'alley' at SkillZone, which is used when talking to young people about grooming.

Lewis told the group that some people think carrying a knife keeps them safe. This is not true. It makes it more likely people will get hurt and could go to prison.

Steph, from Gloucestershire Police, also came to talk to the group about hate crime. She said lots of people don't report it. Steph explained how reporting it can help the police to know what is going on and where or how they can help. People can report Hate Crime to the police or make an anonymous report to Fearless, which is part of Crimestoppers.



Our April meeting – topic: Advocacy

We showed some coproduced videos to explain a bit more about Advocacy and hear directly from people with lived experience. Our co-chair Wendy told the group about her positive experience of having an advocate.

Jacky Martel, from Access Social Care, and Simon Thomason, from GCC, came to talk to the group about different types of advocacy and support available. There is an informal advocacy working group, looking to map advocacy support across Gloucestershire. This group met in May.

The plan for our next meeting - Monday 16th June

- The topic for the meeting is changing attitudes.
- We have some students coming from National Star Collage to talk about what changing attitudes means to them and what National Star College do to change attitudes.
- We also have Building Circles coming to talk to us about changing attitudes.

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 or call Inclusion Gloucestershire on **01452 234003**





Annual Health Checks:

If you are over the age of 14 and on the learning disability register with your local GP Practice, you can have a FREE annual health check. Having a health check can help find out if you have any health problems and a good time to talk about anything that might be worrying you. The Team have updated the documents to support a learning disability annual health check.

- **My Health Check Pre Assessment Questionnaire** – is an Easy Read document for GP Practices to send out before an annual health check to enable any reasonable adjustments to be put into place.
- **My Health Check Health Check Action Plan** – is an Easy Read document GP Practices can issue after a learning disability annual health check.

To find out what to expect at a learning disability annual health check – [the dedicated webpage](#).

My Health Passport:

This is an easy read 'grab sheet' that could accompany a person who requires reasonable adjustments to their health care when they go into hospital (or to any health appointment), whether the admission is: an emergency admission, or a planned admission. The primary purpose of the form is to provide specific and essential information to hospital staff with three types of information:

- **Essential (RED)**
- **Important (AMBER)**
- **Preferable (GREEN)**,

Learning Disability Screening Nurse

NHS screening is a way of finding out if you have an increased risk of a health problem. There are five screening programmes: Diabetic eye screening, Cervical screening, Breast screening, Bowel cancer screening, and abdominal aortic aneurysm screening. You can read about the different types of health screening [here](#). The Screening Nurse can provide information and training to raise awareness of the screening programmes to people with a learning disability, their carers/families and support care providers with practical guidance. For an Easy Read leaflet about the team, contact ldscreening@ghc.nhs.uk.

Personalised care 'What matters to me':

The Team have been working on a 'personalised care' project. The 'What Matters To Me' is an orange folder to host personalised care and support plans. The folder has three wallets to hold documents. If you have a learning disability the ideal documents to store in the orange folder would be:

- Easy Read My Health Passport
- Easy Read Health Check Action Plan
- ReSPECT form. [Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment].

There is also a 'learning disability support and planning' section on the One Gloucestershire webpage - [Planning Ahead – personalised care and support planning](#).





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

At the Partnership Board on 1st May, we had the following:

- A presentation from MIND on Alexandra House since it changed from a residential service to a day service. It continues to focus on supporting people to avoid crisis and is producing some good outcomes and feedback.
- Information about a supported housing regulation consultation [Supported Housing regulation: consultation - GOV.UK](#) and what is happening locally to improve the regulation and quality of supported housing for people with mental health problems
- An update on the work Citizens Advice Bureau is doing with Barnwood Trust in supporting communities
- Information about a new Joint Community of Practice for Lived Experience/Peer Practitioners which is being facilitated by Simon Price. If people are interested in joining this exciting new development, they can contact him on simon@fvaf.org.uk.

Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) Network

Gloucestershire has recently been accepted onto the MEAM Network 2024-2026. MEAM provides a framework to enable local areas to design and deliver better coordinated services for people experiencing multiple disadvantage and exclusions and the impact of trauma, including homelessness, substance misuse and contact with the criminal justice system.

A MEAM Coordinator has recently been recruited to, to model and share best practice in working with people experiencing multiple disadvantage to bring about system change across Gloucestershire, co-producing this approach in partnership with people with lived experience.

Further details will be shared at a future Partnership Board.

Joining the Mental Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board.

If anyone is interested in the joining the Board or Network meetings please email:
DisabilitiesCommissioning@gloucestershire.gov.uk.





MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING NEWS

Next Mental Health Networking Event

We are pleased to announce our next networking event, which will be a combined event between the Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board and the Autism (and Neurodivergence) Partnership Board. The event will focus on celebrating safe spaces from around Gloucestershire which support mental health and neurodivergence. We will share learning and information for individuals with lived experience of mental health and/or neurodivergence and organisations supporting them.

The event is open to all, and representation from people with lived experience is welcomed and as always, highly valued.

The event will be held on Tuesday 1st July, from 10.30am - 3.00pm. The event will open with networking space and stalls from 10.30am and then be opened at 11.00am, with presenters from Inclusion Gloucestershire, Community Autism Support & Advice (CASA) Service, Creative Sustainability and Gloucestershire Youth Neurodiversity Project. Each section will then be followed by a Question-and-Answer session. There will also be time following the event for further networking opportunities.

This event intends to create opportunities to network, collaborate and explore ways in which we can work together to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people in Gloucestershire. We look forward to seeing you at the event, and if you have any questions in the meantime then please get in touch. Please share this email with your networks. Please note that the event will be recorded on Microsoft Teams and shared after the event. Light refreshments will be served throughout the day (tea, coffee, soft drinks and snacks, lunch will not be provided).

If you require any reasonable adjustments to enable you to access the venue and event, please contact either Jo or Nadine on disabilitiescommissioning@gloucestershire.gov.uk

To book a place at the event, please click on the links below:

- In Person Event - (please note these tickets are limited)
<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/gcc-adult-services/mental-health-and-neurodivergence-networking-event/2025-07-01/10:30/t-noakkmg>
- Online - <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/gcc-adult-services/mental-health-and-neurodivergence-networking-event-online/2025-07-01/10:50/t-qjlvvyj> - A Microsoft Teams link will be sent nearer the time of the event – please book a ticket to receive the link.





Urgent Mental Health

You can seek urgent mental health support in Gloucestershire 24/7 by ringing 0800 169 0398. A mental health worker will provide initial telephone advice, support and triage. This could lead on to further telephone support or onward referral/signposting to mental health services or another organisation, such as voluntary services.

You may also be referred to the Crisis and Home Treatment Team.

Crisis and Home Treatment Team – what do they provide?

- A face to face assessment of your mental health and needs
- Advice, support, signposting or referral into appropriate mental health services
- A period of home treatment which **MAY** include a review of current treatment, starting new treatment, short term psychological work, education on improving your mental health, supporting families and carers facilitating admission and early discharge from the Mental Health Hospitals and social inclusion.

What the Crisis and Home Treatment Team cannot provide:

- An immediate blue light emergency response
- Attend situations that require an emergency response eg Physical health needs, high levels of violence, immediate risk to life | Emergency accommodation/housing needs
- Access to emergency funds
- Removing someone from a place or property
- Medication issues for people not under the care of the Crisis and Home Treatment Team
- Face to face assessment for people where the **primary presenting problem** is that of dementia, brain injury, learning disability, acute intoxication with drugs and alcohol, and those aged 10 years or younger.

For more information - <https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/crisis/>

working together | always improving | respectful and kind | making a difference





From your Co-Chairs: Katie Peacock and Jan Marriott

UNLOCKING ACCESS - Gloucestershire's Push for Inclusion

The latest Partnership Board have brought powerful conversations, fresh insights, and real commitments to action. Across highways, transport, health, and culture, one theme keeps emerging - design with people in mind!

SPOTLIGHT ON ACCESS

Christian Drewitt from Accessible Gloucestershire kicked us off on February meeting with findings from their latest access audits. Their work continues to uncover everyday barriers in community spaces, from confusing signage and anxiety inducing lift lighting to accessible toilets that are not fit for purpose.

What is the big takeaway message? Accessibility isn't something to retrofit. It must be built in from the beginning.

HIGHWAYS & PLANNING: COPRODUCTION FROM THE GROUND UP

In our May meeting, Jenny Goodson from Gloucestershire Highways gave a comprehensive presentation about ongoing improvements to roads, pavements, and pathways, alongside a map of local highway managers. Board members highlighted a key point: coproduction should begin at design stage, working alongside people with lived experience to prevent problems and costly redesigns further down the line.

Got a highways issue to report?

Use the **Fix My Street** portal: <https://fixmystreet.goucestershire.gov.uk>

TAXIS, TRANSPORT & LIVING WELL

Katie Peacock and Jan Marriott shared updates from a promising meeting with taxi licensing representatives. Local councils are engaged and open to working collaboratively, an important first step in resolving long-standing transport challenges.

In our February meeting, Karl Gluck came to talk about the Living Well Strategy 2025–2035, focused on bridging the gaps in care for working age adults and supporting people living longer with complex health conditions. This long-term approach recognises the importance of sustainable, inclusive services.

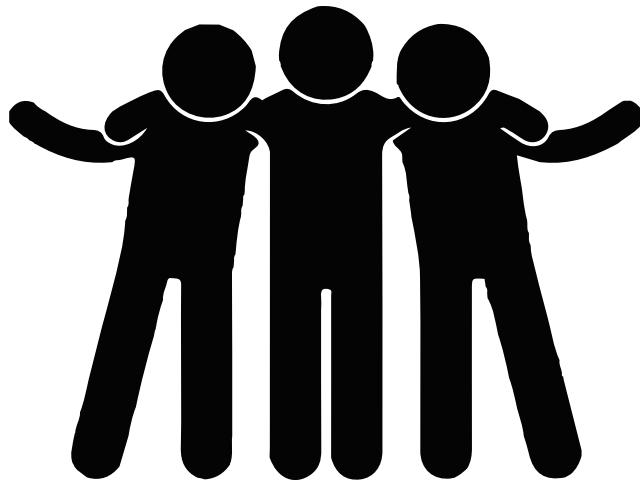


From your Co-Chairs: Katie Peacock and Jan Marriott

TRANSPORT & ISOLATION: A CRITICAL ISSUE

Dan Jacques from Barnwood Trust presented startling figures from national and local research: a significant number of disabled people are missing both social and medical appointments due to inadequate public or personal transport.

This led to renewed calls for a dedicated Transport Task Group to tackle this wide-reaching issue, which affects people with physical, sensory, learning disabilities, and mental health challenges.



TRAVEL TRAINING IN ACTION

One standout response to this challenge is now in motion: Inclusion Gloucestershire's Travel Training project, shared by Debbie, will run for three years. The initiative employs mentors with lived experience to deliver 1:1 training and support, helping others build confidence and skills to plan and complete journeys independently.

CULTURE FOR EVERYONE

Maddy Richards from Cheltenham Festivals gave an inspiring presentation on inclusive practices already transforming the region's cultural life.

Initiatives include:

- Sensory backpacks
- BSL interpreters
- Quiet hours
- Community-led access reviews



"Inclusivity isn't just a checkbox," she said. ***"It's a culture shift, led by the people it serves"***



From your Co-Chairs: Katie Peacock and Jan Marriott

[Audiobook launch 'From Stigma to Support: A new approach to ME/CFS treatment in the UK'](#)

The ME Association has jointly produced an audio podcast with Caroline Kingdon and colleagues, using the outreach audiobook on the science communication channel, SciPod. The UK registered charity supports people with ME/CFS (myalgic encephalomyelitis or encephalopathy, also known as chronic fatigue syndrome) and the newly published audiobook is entitled: 'From Stigma to Support: a new approach to ME/CFS treatment in the UK.'

Find out more, watch or read the transcript on ME association website: [From Stigma to Support](#)

ONE TO WATCH: RAISING THE BAR FOR ADVOCACY

Work is underway on a countywide advocacy mapping exercise, aiming to produce a quality-standard toolkit for anyone supporting others, formally or informally.

This resource will champion peer support, lived experience, and clarity of role, helping raise standards and share best practice across sectors.

The date of the **next Board meeting** is Tuesday 15th July from 11.00am via Zoom.

We are also planning a face to face meeting in July – watch this space for more details!

All welcome! Whether you're a professional, family member, advocate, or someone with lived experience, your voice matters.



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
- **Neurology Subgroup:** disabilitiescommissiong@gloucestershire.gov.uk

This year Carers Week runs from 9th to 15th June 2025. Gloucestershire Carers Hub event will connect Carers with organisations who may be able to support them and those for whom they care. Carers Week is an annual campaign which shines a spotlight on the millions of unpaid Carers in the UK, who dedicate themselves to supporting family members, friends or neighbours who are ill, disabled, have a mental health condition, or addiction.

The theme for this year is 'Caring About Equality'. This highlights the inequalities facing unpaid Carers in the UK today and the steps needed to create a fairer society for them.

A Time for Support and Recognition

Throughout Carers Week, Gloucestershire Carers Hub will be in many locations around Gloucestershire, speaking to members of the public, Carers and other organisations about our services and what we offer.

Gloucestershire Carers Hub Event: 9th June 2025

Join Gloucestershire Carers Hub and other organisations at Dowty's Sports and Social Club on Monday, 9th June 2025 between 10.00am – 4.00pm

This event is designed to:

- Provide a supportive environment
- Offer information on services

What to Expect:

- Opportunities to connect and share experiences
- Information on available support services
- Talks outlining a variety of services which are available within the county



Carers Week Event

Come and join us for our exciting drop-in information event for you and the person you support on:

Monday 9th June 2025 | 10.00am - 4.00pm

(There will be a quiet hour between 10.00am - 11.00am)

Dowty's Sports and Leisure Club,
Down Hatherley Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9QH

Join us and meet members of our team, along with representatives from various local services from across the county.

There will be guest speakers on the day.



The Gloucestershire Carers Hub

If you are a carer in Gloucestershire and aren't receiving support, do visit the Gloucestershire Carers Hub website to find out more about what's available.

<https://gloucestershirecarershul.co.uk/>

