



BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM

BAAPB Update Issue 39

July | 2025

Prof. Ashok Roy – Chair

Welcome to the 39th issue of the Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board newsletter. I hope you are all enjoying the sunny weather and keeping cool on the very warm summer days. To those of you off on your summer holidays, I hope you have a restful break.

This issue is a positive one, highlighting the great work going on in the community to support autistic people and people with ADHD. We discuss lived experience learning around employment and share some information about supported internship and independent travel training opportunities. We are also happy to announce the 2025 Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit – stay tuned for more information in the coming months.

As always, if you have any news for sharing with other members of the BAAPB or would like to comment on any of the items in this newsletter, please reach out by email.

Ashok

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Wishing everyone a brilliant summer. Stay cool and sun-safe!



Working in partnership together



Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit 2025

BAAPB



We are pleased to announce the Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit 2025 is in development!

After the success of last year's Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit, the partnership board is in the process of securing a venue for the 2025 Summit in Autumn 2025. Please save the tentative date in your diaries: **Thursday 6th November 2025**. Confirmation of the Summit date and venue will follow in due course, along with an Eventbrite link to book tickets.

The Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit will be an opportunity for citizens, families, carers and professionals to come together, to listen, learn, discuss, and commit to transforming practices and services for Autistic people and/or people with ADHD.

The focus of this year's Summit will be:

'Aspirations, Opportunities and Employment'

The event will have a variety of speakers, the majority with lived experience of Autism and/or ADHD, with a focus on sharing lived experience voices to champion change. The agenda for the Summit will be co-produced with board members and citizens with lived experience as equal partners. Alongside the speaker agenda, stalls will be present to share information on training and employment, coproduction, education, and person-centred planning.

We will be reaching out to a variety of people with lived experience of autism and/or ADHD to take part as speaker on the day to share their experiences with employment, underemployment or unemployment, as well their aspirations for the future. We hope the day will be a learning opportunity for professionals, citizens and employers to find out how they can better support autistic people and people with ADHD with their employment journey.

We look forward to welcoming you all on the day. Please keep an eye out for future emails from BAAPB with confirmed details about the Summit.





Credit: Birmingham Beach

Building Inclusive Employment: Supporting Neurodivergent Individuals in Recruitment

Rachel Sadler, Quality Champions Team Facilitator



Learning from lived experience

Earlier this year, we worked with a variety of autistic and/or ADHD adults and young people to gather their experiences of employment and suggestions for how we can improve employment outcomes for autistic people and people with ADHD of all ages. This article explores key themes around improving the recruitment process (job applications and interviews) that were shared by our lived experience partners.

Rethinking the application process

Our lived experience partners shared that many neurodivergent applicants face significant barriers before they even reach the interview stage. They shared that overly complex forms and information-heavy adverts are difficult to navigate, and many job descriptions have unrealistic expectations for qualifications or experience. AI-driven CV screening may unfairly exclude neurodivergent people who tend to have non-traditional career paths or career gaps. Vague language like “good communication skills” can be challenging to interpret. As one citizen shared: ‘Good communication skills is subjective – an autistic person may feel they have good communication skills, but it might not line up with what others think’.

The citizens with lived experience shared many suggestions for adjustments that would make the job application process easier for them:

- Simplify adverts and application forms.
- Offer multiple application formats (e.g. video, paper, online).
- Provide clear, specific criteria and avoid vague phrases like “good communication skills.”
- Include neurodivergent mentors on the interview panel and support people through the recruitment process.
- Ensure job coaches and disability advisors understand neurodiversity.
- Offer feedback even for unsuccessful applications.
- Avoid phrases like “any other duties as required” as people need clarity on what they job will entail.

Developing inclusive interviews

Our lived experience partners shared their experiences of challenges they have faced during the interview process. They shared that the interview setup can be overwhelming: Large rooms, too many people, and formal settings can be intimidating. Anxiety can be exacerbated by common communication barriers such as questions that are too vague or complex, with no processing time for answering them or literal interpretations leading to misunderstandings. As one citizen explained: *‘In an interview situation I may come across as hesitant as I’m not sure what is important or not. It’s a bit like chess - I could do many different moves, but which one is the one they want? I’m trying to think through the implications of each answer and what’s behind what they’re asking.’*





Credit: Birmingham Beach

Building Inclusive Employment: Supporting Neurodivergent Individuals in Recruitment and the Workplace (continued)

Rachel Sadler, Quality Champions Team Facilitator



There are other sensory and social stressors that can impact on interviews for autistic/ADHD citizens. An unfamiliar environment may have sensory triggers. Eye contact, handshakes, and formal clothing typically expected for interviews can be uncomfortable or distracting. Citizens shared that they were often worried about being judged on appearance, body language, or social skills rather than their ability to do the job.

The autistic/ADHD people we spoke with shared many suggestions for adjustments that would make job interviews more accessible for them:

- Allow people to properly prepare by offering pre-visits or virtual tours of the interview location.
- Let candidates know what to expect and when they'll hear back.
- Offer flexible interview slots delivered in a way that works for applicants (e.g. a choice of video, in-person) to accommodate individual needs and allow individuals to better manage their sensory environment.
- Allow breaks during interviews.
- Provide interview questions in advance.
- Use clear, specific questions, explaining further, giving examples or rewording where necessary to facilitate understanding.
- Allow time to process and respond.
- Include someone who understands neurodiversity on the panel.

Making the application and interview process inclusive and accessible is a win not just autistic and/or ADHD citizens, but a win for everyone. As one young person shared: *'I think a lot of autistic people have skills that can make companies money or save them money. Every autistic person will have different skills and different challenges we can bring... problem-solving, thinking outside the box, open and childlike approach, curiosity, and learning from mistakes...'*

However, the good work doesn't stop with the recruitment process. Supporting autistic and ADHD citizens in the workplace is key to facilitating meaningful and long-term employment opportunities. Please keep an eye out for the next issue of the BAAPB newsletter to learn from lived experience feedback on creating an inclusive workplace and supporting autistic and ADHD citizens in the workplace.





Credit: Birmingham Beach

Yardley Neighbourhood Network Scheme – Supporting the community

Eliza Choudhury, Yardley NNS – Senior
Community Development Worker



Yardley Neighbourhood Network Scheme shared great news from some of the community group organisers and facilitators they support: The Sheldon Fundraising Collective, Nifty Needles, and Bakeman House Coffee Morning.

Our group organisers and facilitators have all shared how they welcome anyone and everyone to their group. They have specifically spoken about neurodiverse citizens in the community who they have supported and continue to support in any way that they can - which goes beyond what their group is set up for - because they truly, genuinely and deeply care for people. I am going to share specifically how each of these groups have supported neurodiverse individuals without naming which group it was.

Group 1: The lead facilitator informs that they welcome children, younger adults and older adults regardless of their circumstances. At this group there are autistic children and young adults attending on a regular basis. One youngster started attending the group as a preschooler! They celebrate this youngster's birthday each and every year, and they have become an integral part of the group. The younger adults in the group who are neurodiverse enjoy supporting the group facilitator in delivering the session – they have been allocated specific responsibilities that these individuals take great pride in. It is beautiful to see everyone in this space working together respectfully, with great care, consideration and joy. A great example of focusing on individuals' strengths!

Group 2: The lead facilitator shared there are different people attending the group and it is open for all. Recently, there was a younger adult who attended the group who has learning disabilities and possibly neurodivergent (not confirmed). The younger adult who attended for the first time was made to feel welcome in the space and they joined in with the activities. The lead facilitator quickly realised that the younger adult was struggling with maintaining personal hygiene but didn't want to say anything outright as they were concerned that the individual would feel uncomfortable. The lead facilitator was concerned and felt they needed to support the individual so they wrote a note, very respectfully advising about the situation and offering support should the individual need it. Thereafter, the individual attended the next session, and the lead facilitator noted a marked improvement and felt relieved that the individual firstly hadn't taken offence and secondly had taken on board the advice in the note. Since then, this individual has attended the sessions regularly and all has been well.

Group 3: The lead facilitator of the group shared that there has been more and more interest from neurodiverse younger and older adults alike in the recent months in attending the sessions. The double celebratory reason is that along with the younger adults their carers have also attended sessions!! The lead facilitator has proudly said that they feel the space is welcoming and encourages others to attend too. They have also gone beyond this to accommodate those with other disabilities too!

I think the main takeaway from the above three stories is that there are gems that exist in the community who did not set out to facilitate or support neurodiverse individuals, but they have been able to do so anyway. They are so loving, respectful and open that it is truly heartwarming to hear such rewarding accomplishments and progress.





Introducing the Independent Travel Training (ITT) team

Anna Constantinou, Independent Travel Training (ITT) team

Thank you for supporting our *new* permanent Independent Travel Training (ITT) team.

At Birmingham City Council, we now have a team of twelve Independent Travel Trainers and an Independent Travel Training Lead, to support our young people to learn how travel independently in our city of Birmingham to and from home, to school, college, place of work or a place of leisure.

The Independent Travel Training team travel train young people aged 11-25 years old to learn how to travel independently, safely, and confidently in our community, using public transport.

The team also offer bespoke road and personal safety workshops either one to one in some groups up to eight, to support with confidence travelling out in the community.

To find out more, please watch our video by clicking below:



[Independent Travel Training Video](#) - YouTube

Before making an application to the Independent Travel Training Team, please can I ask that you carefully read our ITT criteria on our website and when you are ready, please feel free to make a referral to us here:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50052/school_travel/893/independent_travel_training_itt/3



Website:
www.birmingham.gov.uk



Contact:
07703 373 674

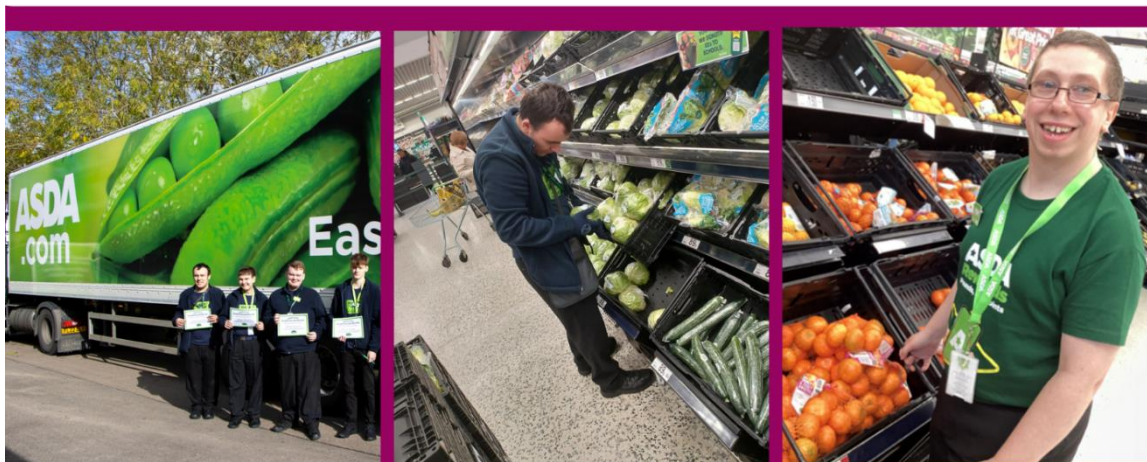


Email address:
AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk



Supported Internship Information and Recruitment Event

Midland Mencap



Supported Internship Information and Recruitment Event

Asda are hosting a new Supported Internship for people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) aged 18-24 in partnership with Mencap Training Academy and DFN Project Search.

Join our information and recruitment event at Asda Perry Barr to:

- see the store and meet the team
- get a sense of the roles available and take part in some tasks
- understand the skills and behaviours you could develop

Have any questions? Email them to mia.smith@mencap.org.uk



10.00 am to 1:00 pm
Thursday, 7th August
Thursday 11th September



Asda Perry Barr Superstore, Walsall Road, Birmingham, B42 1AB

Scan the QR code to sign up!



Website:
www.birmingham.gov.uk



Contact:
07703 373 674



Email address:
AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk

Ladywood Neighbourhood Network Scheme – Supporting the community

Sanjeev Singh, Ladywood Community Lead (NNS)

Ladywood NNS shared some good news stories of the work they are doing to support autistic and ADHD people in the community.

Midlands Sailing Club:

“We recently attended a session at the Midlands Sailing Club, a project funded by LNNS and designed to support individuals with additional needs through accessible water sports. During our visit, Jan kindly took the time to explain how the project was progressing and demonstrated how the boats operate. It was particularly insightful to learn how different types of boats are adapted to cater to a range of abilities, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their needs, can safely and confidently take part.

While there, I had the pleasure of speaking with a young regular attendee named Jay. Jay is currently in college and also engages in other community activities. He shared that his true passion is paddleboarding—“only paddleboarding,” he said with a smile. For him, it’s more than just a sport; it’s a key part of his life. Since joining the club, paddleboarding has become a continuous hobby that he looks forward to and takes pride in.

Jay’s carer also spoke with me and shared how much of a positive impact the club has had on both of them. Not only has it provided Jay with meaningful engagement and a sense of belonging, but it has also eased some of the pressure on his carer. Jay has made a few new friends through the project, which has helped him grow in confidence and enjoy more social interaction. Another notable benefit is the improvement in Jay’s physical health—he has lost weight since joining, which has been a big achievement considering how selective he can be about activities he enjoys.

This story isn’t unique to Jay; similar positive outcomes have been observed across other participants. The club is clearly providing a vital, inclusive space where people with additional needs can thrive—socially, emotionally, and physically.”



Ladywood Neighbourhood Network Scheme – Supporting the community (continued)

Sanjeev Singh, Ladywood Community Lead (NNS)

BID community sessions:

“I recently visited the BID Community Sessions, which take place every Friday. Kimberly, who organises and manages the sessions, has created a vibrant and inclusive space offering a wide range of activities including arts and crafts, sewing, exercise, face painting, sensory massage, theatre work, and recycling awareness.

Approximately 35 people attend these sessions regularly, and attendance has been steadily increasing—particularly among the hard of hearing community. Previously, there were noticeable gaps in engagement due to

language barriers. However, these sessions have helped bridge those gaps by enhancing participants’ knowledge of sign language and providing vital information on accessing appropriate support—especially for individuals who do not use BSL interpreters.

Kimberly also leads breastfeeding awareness sessions tailored for deaf mothers especially for those with autism/ADHD. Many have expressed that they previously lacked accessible information on the topic, and they found her sessions far more helpful than the advice received from midwives. As a result, there has been growing demand from deaf mothers for more sessions in this area.

When speaking to individuals who take part in the project, it’s clear there is a strong desire for the sessions to continue. Participants shared that the experience has significantly boosted their confidence, and although the community support the deaf community, the individuals also feel that the community accepts their neurodivergence too as most of the deaf participants also have a neurodivergence. One person with autism who is not verbal, has picked up BSL from observing and used it to communicate, the individual has never attempted to communicate in general, which shows the impact the project is having especially for those who are deaf and neurodivergence.

The project gives them an opportunity to get out into the community, socialise, and meet others who use—or are learning to use—BSL, which is especially meaningful as many of their own family members do not use sign language. The sessions offer a sense of belonging and connection that many feel is otherwise missing in their daily lives.”





Capturing Change Project new theme - Dementia

Midland Mencap



Capturing Change focuses on listening to adults with learning disabilities and/or autism to better understand and improve their healthcare experiences.

The goal is to identify what's working well and what needs to change. The project also aims to assess the effectiveness of the LeDeR (Learning from Lives and Deaths – people with learning disabilities and autistic people) strategic plan in Birmingham and Solihull. It is run in partnership with EbE Solihull, Solihull Action Through Advocacy, Midland Mencap, and NHS Birmingham and Solihull.

We want to hear from people with a learning disability and/or autism, as well as their carers—through phone calls, in-person conversations, or focus groups.

The project runs until 28th March 2026 with rotating themes being explored throughout the project. We've now moved on to our next topic: **dementia**. We're particularly looking to hear from adults with a learning disability and/or autism who are also living with dementia, as well as from their carers and family members but we are happy to chat with people about their healthcare experiences outside of this topic.

Below is link to the online survey for the project—please feel free to share it with anyone who may be interested.

Capturing Change Online Survey: <https://forms.gle/wJ3JkVKskgs27H786>

Capturing Change

Help shape the future of health services for people with a learning disability and autistic people.



What is the Capturing Change project?

- We listen to the voices of people with learning disabilities and/or autistic individuals, as well as their carers, to understand and improve healthcare experiences and ensure inclusivity.



The Capturing Change project needs your help

- We are looking for ways to improve healthcare for people who have a learning disability and/or autism and are also experiencing dementia.
- Tell us what needs changing and what is currently working well.



Why are we focussing on dementia?

- The plan recognises that people with learning disabilities and/or autistic individuals who experience dementia may need specific support.
- The NHS want to make sure the correct support is available.
- Your stories are vital to promote positive change.

What does Capturing Change need your help with?

- A new plan, developed by people with lived experience, aims to ensure that healthcare services are appropriate and timely.
- The Capturing Change project is seeking feedback on how well this plan supports the healthcare you receive.

How to get involved:

- Join a focus group to talk about your experiences
- Scan the QR code to complete the survey or visit: bit.ly/Capturingchange
- Talk to us on the phone or face-to-face



For more information and to get involved contact us at:

- Call: 0121 442 2944
- Email: capturingchangebirmingham@midlandmencap.org.uk

In partnership with



Website:
www.birmingham.gov.uk



Contact:
07703 373 674



Email address:
AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk



The Community Network Support Service: Strengthening Birmingham's Communities Together

CNSO Team

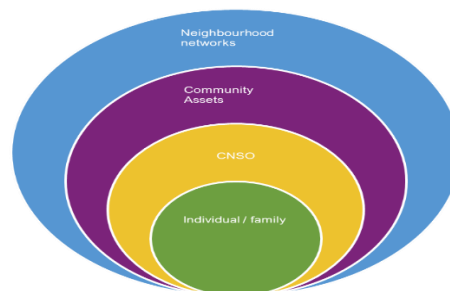


The Community Network Support Service is here for all citizens in Birmingham aged 18 and over, with a strong focus on supporting those who have fallen through the gaps for support. The team aim is to be the link between individuals and communities, and the support available to them from local, community and council services – so that people find the support they need to stay independent in their own homes and communities. Our team works in local neighbourhoods to reduce loneliness and help people feel more confident, learn new skills, and feel more connected.

We believe in safety, dignity, and respect. We create safe and inclusive spaces where people can thrive and feel supported. By building strong networks across Birmingham's diverse communities, we can make sure everyone feels valued, connected, and empowered to live their best lives.

The Community Network Support team work with:

- Local community groups
- Grassroots organisations (small, local groups)
- Statutory services (like the council or NHS)
- Non-statutory services (like charities or support groups)
- Present at local and citywide networking events, local social events



We work in close partnership with:

- Adult Social Care Teams and Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS) Teams. We attend regular partnership, steering group meetings where we can share the needs of the community, identify gaps and work together to fill what is missing.

Drop-In Services in the Community

We have **42 drop-in** services across Birmingham. We work with small local groups to run daily drop-in sessions.

This means people can come in any day to talk to us face to face and share their needs and experiences

Because our team is out and about in local neighbourhoods, we can:

- Help people find local activities
- Connect them to groups and events
- Offer practical support

By being there every day, we have:

- Built trust
- Made positive relationships with people, families, and communities
- Supported **4,500+ Citizens**
- Delivered **8,000+ interventions**
- Provided support across 68 out of 69 wards, covering all 10 constituencies.





The Community Network Support Service: Strengthening Birmingham's Communities Together (continued)

CNSO Team

Story of difference:

Citizen 'A' attended the Edgbaston CNSO drop in hub. They had recently moved to the area and discussed their current health needs and need for regular prescriptions, 'A' was supported by the local CNSO to register with a local GP. In addition, 'A' received help in completing an older adults bus pass application. The CNSO and 'A' had an in-depth discussion around alcohol consumption and what help and support is available via Change, Grow, Live (CGL), as well as details given for a local Alcohol Anonymous group that 'A' can attend. They were also connected to a weekly community lunch, where they will have the opportunity to have a hot meal and conversation.

For any further information regarding our service, please do not hesitate to contact the team on:

CNSOTeam@birmingham.gov.uk

[CNSO drop-in hubs](#)

For more information on the location and operating times of the Community Drop In Service,

Please use QR code:

