



BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM

BAAPB Update
Issue 43
July | 2026

Chris Barber – Vice-Chair

Welcome to this summer edition of the Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership newsletter.

First, my heartfelt thanks to our outgoing Chair Ashok Roy for steering the Board over the past 15 years or so. Ashok Roy stood down as the Chair of the Partnership board at the last Board meeting but will remain an active member of the Board going forward. Secondly, after a competitive appointment process, a worthy replacement has been found in the shape of Darren German. So, welcome Darren and I hope that your tenure with us will be a long, happy and productive one.

Happy autism pride! As many of us celebrated autism pride during July, it must be remembered that there is still much work to be done to ensure that all-age autism support services (from pre-diagnosis to death) are fit for purpose. So, have a great holiday season and see you all at the next meeting suitably refreshed and raring to go!

Chris

Contents

Thank you, Ashok!
Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

Hello from Darren – New chair of the Board
Darren German, Chair of the Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit 2026 – Understanding the experiences of neurodivergent women and girls
Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

Celebrating National Recognition at the LGC Awards
Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

COLLAGE Study: Help improve mental health support for care-experienced young people
COLLAGE Study – University of Birmingham

Help us develop the new Birmingham Autism Strategy
Complex Care Team, Birmingham City Council

A message from ADD-vantage specialist ADHD support
Menopause Workplace Forum, Birmingham City Council



Have a lovely summer to all our Board members – we look forward to seeing you all in the Autumn!

Birmingham Autism ADHD Partnership Board

Working in partnership together

Birmingham City Council Adult Social Care
RESET RESHAPE RESTART



Thank you, Ashok!

Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

After many years of supporting and leading the Board, Professor Ashok Roy stepped down from his chair role in July 2026.

Ashok has tirelessly supported the Birmingham Autism and ADHD Board for the last decade, leading the charge for building a better Birmingham for autistic people, people with ADHD and their families. Ashok will be continuing on as a board member.

We would like to share a few messages from the Board team (both past and present) to thank Ashok for his hard work and dedication.

I had the pleasure and challenge of working closely with Ashok for a few years, supporting the Autism and ADHD Board and explaining to him why we had to do things in a structured way. Ashok's enthusiasm and passion for ensuring this group of well-deserved people received better services was amazing and relentless, which is what was very needed. We had a clear strategy and action plan. His drive to ensure the citizen voice was front and centre of the Board was inspiring and ensured we all clearly understood what was needed and why. We worked on some amazing projects, providing a citizen mission statement, which provided great clarity on actions and why. We procured an Autism and ADHD service jointly with Health and citizens from the Board, writing the spec and ensuring their involvement with procurement and then service delivery, this service was ahead of its time and achieved some great successes. We attended various discussions/workshops but especially around why we should interview in a totally different way as we were not recruiting some really talented people. I really enjoyed working alongside you and would like to wish you the very best as you move away and leave the Board in a much stronger position 😊

Julie Harrison

I would like to pay tribute to a colleague who is passionate about autism: Professor Ashok Roy as he stands down from his position as Chair of the Partnership Board. I have known Ashok for over thirty years and first met him when I was a humble staff nurse at what was then Chelmsley Hospital (now Brooklands). Ashok has been a tower of strength and has been a great ally to many who are autistic, myself included. I certainly have gained considerably from his unstinting and untiring guidance and support as Board Chair over the years and it has been a real pleasure to have known and worked with Ashok. I, along with the rest of the Partnership Board, wish you well as you explore new adventures and new possibilities. Thank you, Ashok!

Chris Barber

Ashok, thank you for everything you have done for the Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board.
You've always been great to work with, keeping us informed about new and emerging research in autism, ADHD and neurodivergence to make sure the board is constantly developing and improving. We wouldn't have been able to contribute to the House of Lords Autism Act Enquiry with the views of autistic people in Birmingham without you bringing it to the Board – one of many successes you have directly supported the Board with over the years. You will be missed!

Sumyra, Steve, Rachel & the BAAPB team



Hello from Darren – New chair of the Board

Darren Germa, Chair of Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

Introduction of Our New Chair of the Partnership Board

Dear Partners and Colleagues,

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Partnership Board, stepping into this role after the remarkable leadership of Professor Ashok Roy, who has guided the board for over a decade. While the responsibility feels daunting, I also view this transition as an exciting opportunity to engage with each of you and strengthen our collective mission.

As a late-diagnosed Autistic and Dyslexic individual, I bring both lived experience and professional insight to the board. My journey has equipped me with a unique perspective on the challenges and hidden pressures that many neurodivergent individuals face. Until a few years ago, I often felt the need to mask my identity to succeed in professional and social settings. Now, I am committed to leveraging these insights to enhance our understanding of neurodiversity and foster genuine inclusion.

My primary motivations for joining the board are to improve opportunities for fellow neurodivergent individuals and to advocate for meaningful changes in our practices. I am passionate about supporting initiatives that:

- Increase meaningful inclusion,

- Improve accessibility across services,

- Create more neurodivergent-friendly workplaces,

- Encourage genuine co-production, and

- Ensure that Autistic and ADHD voices are actively involved in decisions that affect them.

I firmly believe that neurodivergent individuals should not only be represented as service users but also within leadership, governance, and decision-making spaces. Together, we can work towards a more inclusive environment that values diversity at every level.

I look forward to collaborating with all of you as we continue to build a partnership that embraces the richness of our diverse experiences and perspectives.

Warm regards,

Darren

Darren German

Chair, Partnership Board



Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit 2026 – Understanding the experiences of neurodivergent women and girls

Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

The Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit 2026 on 15th July 2026 brought together professionals, autistic and ADHD individuals, family members, carers and community organisations for a day of learning, reflection and connection.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to increase understanding of neurodiversity through expert speakers, practical information and, most importantly, the voices of people with lived experience.



A variety of lived experience presenters shared powerful personal stories that explored a range of topics including myth-busting neurodivergent women and girls, masking and late diagnosis, puberty and relationships, neurodivergence and menopause, neurodivergence and eating disorders, Neurodivergence, pregnancy and parenting. By hearing directly from autistic and ADHD people gave attendees the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of the challenges, strengths and experiences of neurodivergent women and girls.



Attendees praised the quality and variety of presentations, and many attendees said they gained practical knowledge that they could use within their professional roles. Others spoke about how the Summit helped them better understand their own experiences, family members or people they support. One attendee said that attending the Summit helped them to realise **"*I'm not alone in feeling different*"**.

Feedback described the event as a place where people felt heard, understood and able to discuss neurodivergent experiences openly, and where they could discuss an area often overlooked in wider autism and ADHD discussions.

Website:
www.birmingham.gov.uk

Contact:
07703 373 674

Email address:
AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk



Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit 2026 – Understanding the experiences of neurodivergent women and girls (cont.)

Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

Participants left the Summit with increased awareness, greater confidence and practical strategies they could apply in their personal and professional lives. Learning included understanding the impact of masking, recognising the experiences of neurodivergent women and girls, improving support for young people, identifying local services, and appreciating the value of autism and ADHD-informed approaches.

"It's incredible to have an event focused on ND women/girls. Incredibly grateful to attend."

"Great to be in place where it was ok to talk about women and girls' experiences and not be ignored or dismissed."

"Lived experience speakers who were passionate and engaging, accessible and inclusive allowed me to consider different perspectives

Many attendees described the lived experience presentations as the most memorable and impactful aspect of the day, with several noting that these sessions challenged assumptions, busted myths and helped them see neurodiversity from new perspectives.



Through meaningful conversations, expert insights and authentic lived experience, the event strengthened understanding of neurodiversity, empowered attendees with new knowledge and reinforced the importance of creating inclusive spaces where autistic and ADHD voices can be heard, valued and celebrated.



We would like to thank all our speakers who kindly donated their time for the Summit. Thank you, Rebecca, Cathy, Mari, Joy, Jainn-Ann, Ellie, Megan and Sara!

We would also like to thank the Board members who supported us (both with planning and on the day). Thank you, Lisa, Henry, Faye, Kelly, Jainn-Ann, Ellie, Meg, Jacqui, Chris, Charlotte and Sarah!

We could not have delivered the Summit without your help!

Website:
www.birmingham.gov.uk

Contact:
07703 373 674

Email address:
AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk



Celebrating National Recognition at the LGC Awards

Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

The Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board and Quality Champions Team recently received national recognition after being shortlisted for the prestigious Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Diversity and Inclusion Award.

The LGC Awards are widely regarded as one of the most respected events celebrating innovation and excellence in local government. This year's awards ceremony took place in London and brought together more than 1,000 representatives from local authorities across the UK.



The team was shortlisted in the top 10 nationally from a large field of applicants, a significant achievement that highlights the impact of the board's commitment to co-production, inclusion and engagement with citizens with lived experience.



The Diversity and Inclusion Award recognises councils that demonstrate outstanding work in developing and embedding a diverse and inclusive culture within their workforce and across their local communities. Representing the team at the ceremony were Prof. Ashok Roy, Rachel Sadler and an Expert by Experience.

While the application was successful in reaching the final shortlist, judges suggested that future submissions could be strengthened by including more evidence and quantitative data to demonstrate the impact of co-production work. In response, the Board team will be focusing on gathering more measurable outcomes over the coming year. This will help support future award applications and further demonstrate the value and effectiveness of the board's work.

Despite not winning, being a finalist in a nationally recognised LGC Award serves as an endorsement of the board's ongoing commitment to co-production, diversity, inclusion and improving outcomes for autistic people and people with ADHD.

Thank you to all Board members (and members of the Quality Champion Team) who donate their time to build a better Birmingham for autistic people, people with ADHD and their families – we could not have been shortlisted for this award without you!

Website:
www.birmingham.gov.uk

Contact:
07703 373 674

Email address:
AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk



COLLAGE Study: Help improve mental health support for care-experienced young people

COLLAGE Study – University of Birmingham

Help improve mental health support for care-experienced young people

The COLLAGE Study are recruiting care-experienced young people aged 16–25 in England (with experience of foster care, kinship care, or residential care) to talk about how they seek help for mental health difficulties.

We are particularly interested in hearing from young people who are LGBTQ+, from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, and/or are disabled or neurodivergent.

Taking part involves a 1-hour interview with a researcher and a care-experienced co-researcher. Participants receive a £25 e-gift voucher and may bring a trusted adult or supporter if they wish.



Find out more or take part:

- Email: collagestudy@contacts.bham.ac.uk
- Or visit: https://linktr.ee/COLLAGEresearchstudy



Help us develop the new Birmingham Autism Strategy

Complex Care Team

We are looking for people with lived experience to be involved in shaping Birmingham's future vision for autistic people.

Your knowledge, experience, and insights will play an important role in helping us develop a strategy that reflects the needs, aspirations, and priorities of autistic people, their families, carers, and the wider community.

The new strategy will build on the foundations of our current work and will focus on creating a city where autistic people are supported to live healthy, safe, fulfilling lives as equal citizens. Through co-production and collaboration, we want to ensure that autistic voices are at the heart of everything we do as we develop our priorities and ambitions for the next five years.



Website: www.birmingham.gov.uk

Contact: 07703 373 674

Email address: AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk



A message from ADD-vantage specialist ADHD support

Menopause Workplace Forum, Birmingham City Council

A first-of-its-kind study by Queen Mary University and King's College London is investigating whether the menstrual cycle affects ADHD symptoms and medication effectiveness in women - about time, right?

50 women with ADHD, all on medication, are tracking their menstrual cycles alongside daily symptoms, including anxiety, depression, impulsivity, via an electronic diary to identify any correlating patterns.

A first-of-its-kind study by Queen Mary University and King's College, London is investigating the impact of the fluctuating hormones of the menstrual cycle on ADHD symtoms and daily functioning.

We know that when estrogen drops before menstruation, this impacts dopamine levels, intensifying ADHD symptoms and increasing impulsive or risky behaviours (e.g., overeating, overspending, skipping contraception). The study participants described feeling "disabled" by symptoms at certain points in their cycle, but that taking part in the study helped some feel less alone and less self-critical.

Women are interested in learning about the effect the menopause and peri-menopause - major hormonal transitions - have on their ADHD, questions for which Dr Agnew-Blais says her study - which is not fully completed yet - would be a good "starting point".

It's not about a "need to change who you are," she noted. "It can help just fit ADHD into your life a little bit better."

Layla, one of the participants, says she has always given herself a hard time for not "coming up to scratch" but that taking part in the research project has felt "validating and freeing".

"Understanding that this is something that a lot of women are going through every month for most of their life. It's good to have kind of community and feel like that it's okay, this isn't just me."

You can read more in a BBC news article by Vicki Loader 'How my period is supercharging my ADHD': ADHD and periods: Are my hormones making my symptoms worse? - BBC News

Find more on ADD-vantage support services for women and girls: The ADD-vantage Specialist ADHD support services – Great minds think alike; brilliant minds think differently

Always talk to your GP or another health care professional if you are concerned about wellbeing changes or symptoms.



Share your voice with the Board

Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board

Do you have any good news or successes to share?

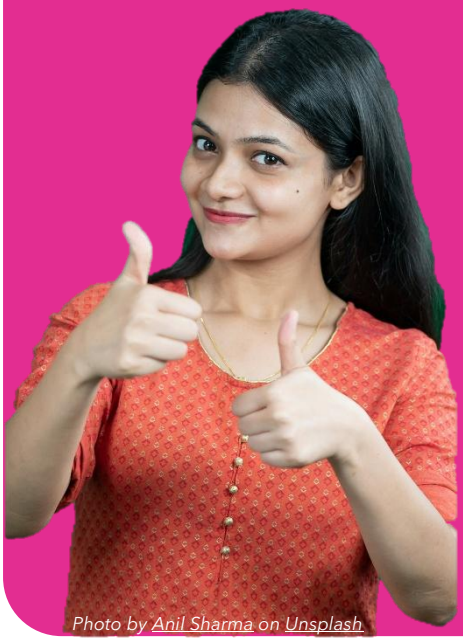


Photo by Anil Sharma on Unsplash

The Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board are keen to share good new stories from individual and organisations across Birmingham. We want to highlight support and activities that are enriching the lives of autistic people and people with ADHD in Birmingham.

If you have any good news stories or stories of success you would like including in a future issue of the newsletter, please send us an email at AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk

Call for Citizen Voice

The Birmingham Autism and ADHD Partnership Board are adding a citizen voice agenda slot to every board meeting going forward. This agenda slot is an opportunity for citizens to share any thoughts or raise any concerns they would like to bring to the board.

If you have any items to raise for the citizen voice slot, please send us an email at AutismADHD@birmingham.gov.uk

A member of the team will be in contact to discuss your citizen voice topic and let you know which board meeting your item will be raised at.



Photo by SincerelyMedia on Unsplash

Share Your News about Autism and ADHD: 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 email the details to: autismadhd@birmingham.gov.uk