

Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff Newsletter

Spring 2026



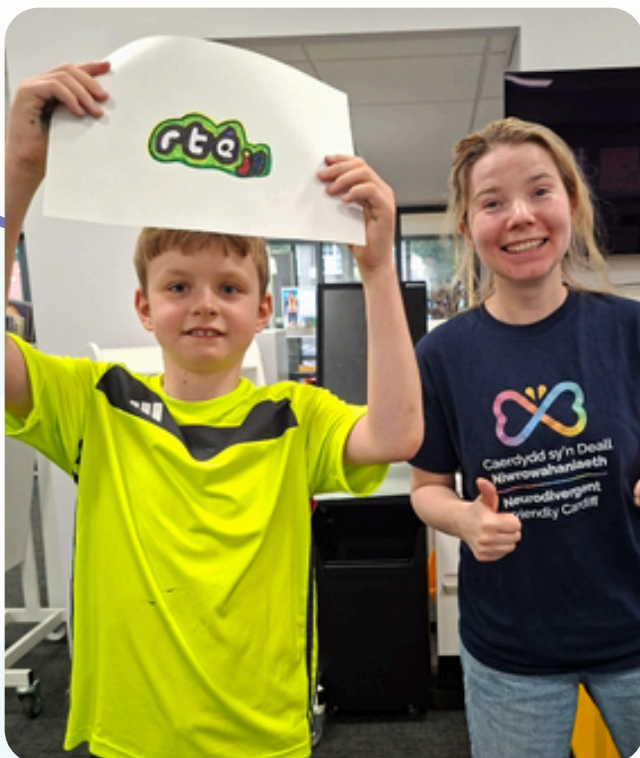
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Neurodivergent
Friendly Cardiff

Information, support and news for
neurodivergent people in Cardiff

 A safe
space
to explore

**“ These sessions give
neurodivergent children
the chance to explore
libraries in a safe, secure
and accepting space. ”**



Corrina Raessi, a parent of neurodivergent children and member of Thrive Cardiff, a parent-led charity supporting families with disabled children, teamed up with Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff and Cardiff Wellbeing Service to improve opportunities for children with additional needs.

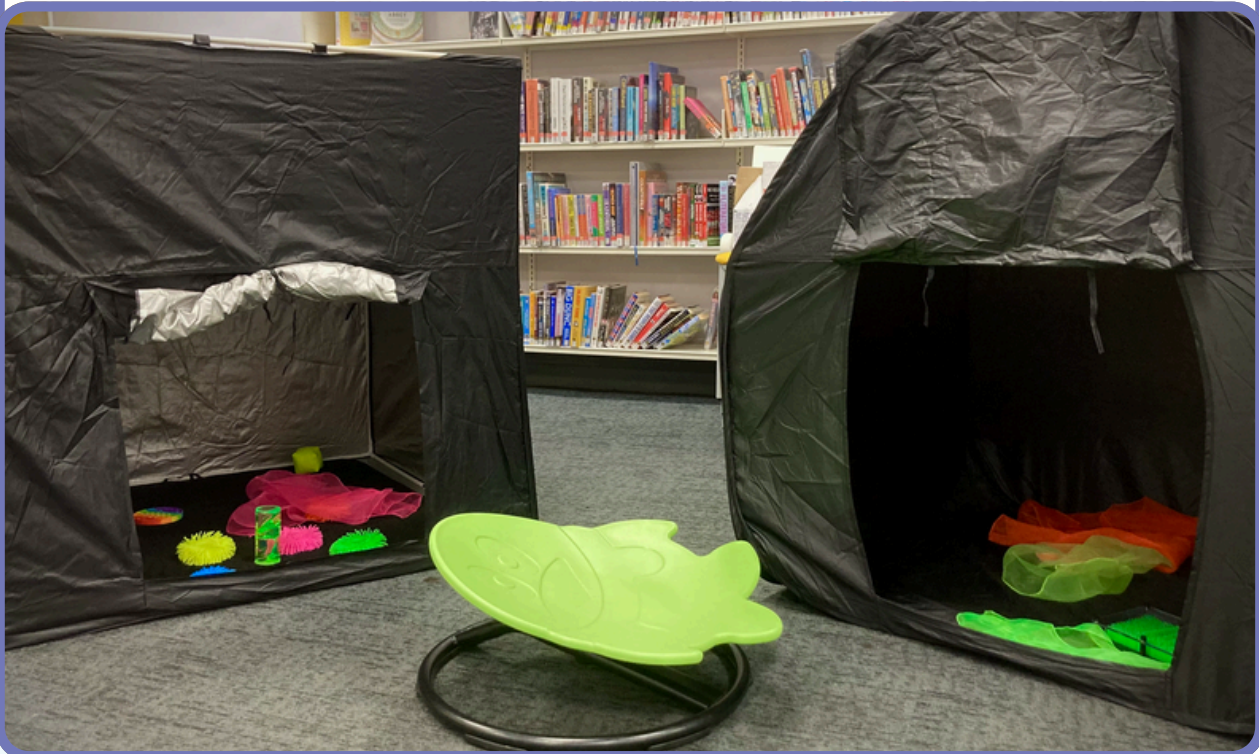
Corrina contacted her local hub to help develop better activities for neurodivergent children and to introduce closed-access family sessions. These quieter, more predictable sessions were something she had found valuable in the past.

Cardiff Wellbeing Support Service staff and volunteers created Storytime and craft activities inspired by The Summer Reading Challenge. Families also had access to sensory resources and play activities designed to support children with additional needs.

Sessions ran during the summer and autumn school holidays on days when Rhydypennau Hub was closed to the public.

“A calm space like this helps them feel comfortable and able to join in. It also gives parents an opportunity to meet others who may be going through similar experiences”

Feedback from families has been extremely positive. Children enjoyed Storytime, Rhyme Time and arts and crafts in a setting tailored to their needs in a quieter and calmer environment.



Liam's First Game!



We recently caught up with Rob, who has a 7 year-old son Liam, who is neurodivergent, and asked them about their trip to watch Cardiff City vs Exeter City on Boxing Day...

Here's what he had to say!

"I really wanted to take Liam to his first ever Cardiff City game but was a bit nervous about it. I knew the club had a sensory room and had been working hard to accommodate neurodivergent people and thought we should give it a go".

“ Liam really enjoyed it and we will come back. Thanks to everyone at Cardiff City for a great first game and the three points topped it off! ”



"I called the Box Office, and they explained what gate we would need to go in, how to get to the seats and what I could expect. It was really good value for money too as my ticket was free as Liam's carer. This is important because if Liam had a bad day, then we would probably have had to leave early so it feels less of a 'gamble' than if I was paying full price".

"On the day I didn't know if we would have to cut Liam's first game short or how he would react. All the staff were friendly and introduced themselves, they showed us around and made us feel welcome. Liam was ok with the noise and crowds this time -although we did use the sensory room at half time and enjoyed splatting the balloons on the interactive projector!"

Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff Hubs & Libraries



Did you know that changes have been made to make **Cardiff Hubs and Libraries more accessible and friendly environments** for neurodivergent people and families?



Sensory Resources

To help visitors with sensory needs make the most of their visit we have introduced sensory resource packs that include:

- Ear defenders
- Fidget toys
- Fans
- Colour overlays
- Times, and more!

Thanks to Scope Community Youth Collective and NeuroRoots youth club in helping us create these resource packs!

Do you have young children?

There are now blue backpacks filled with sensory items for younger children to use during their visit.

Make sure to ask a member of staff for sensory resources to support your visit!

Virtual Tours

Did you know you can explore our hubs and libraries before you even step inside?

We've created Virtual Tours for 20 of our hubs and libraries, giving you a digital walkthrough of each space as if you were visiting in person.

The tours have been a real hit, with over 10,000 views every month since they launched last July!

You can explore them on a laptop, tablet or mobile phone by visiting



CardiffHubs.co.uk





Sensory Pods

Keep an eye out for a sensory pod in your local hub or library!

To support visitors who benefit from calming or sensory friendly spaces, we've installed sensory pods in 11 of our hubs.

These pods offer a quiet, enclosed space where people can relax, unwind, or 'self regulate' during their visit.

We've also created a brand-new quiet space on Floor 4 of Central Library Hub. This peaceful area is designed to offer a calm, soothing environment where you can study, read, or simply enjoy a moment of quiet while looking out over the bustling city centre below.

For more information on which hubs have sensory pods:

- Email **NeurodivergentFriendly@cardiff.gov.uk**
- Call **02920 871083**

The Coffee Spot!

Fancy a brew? Why not take a visit to a thriving weekly neurodivergent mixer for the community that takes place every Thursday from 10am at the Coffee Spot - **6 Barrack Lane, Cardiff, CF10 2FR.**

The coffee morning is open to all ages and is proving popular with the community. This could be down to the amazing coffee or the fantastic company! It's a great opportunity to meet with people, make new friends and enjoy a welcoming space where everyone can simply be themselves!



What's On?

Wales Millennium Centre

Did you know Wales Millennium Centre offer relaxed performances designed to create an inclusive and comfortable environment for all audiences, including those with sensory sensitivities? You could get tickets to the relaxed performance of 'Bluey's Big Play' on Friday, 8th May.



For more information and for other accessible screenings visit:
wmc.org.uk/en/whats-on/seasons/accessible-performances



The National Neurodiversity Show

The National Neurodiversity Show is coming to Cardiff for a second year on **30th April at Cardiff City Stadium.** Visit stalls with organisations offering advice, support and services and sign up to seminars on topics that interest you.

For more information go to
NationalNeurodiversityShows.com/wales/



The Orange Wallet

The Orange Wallet is for anyone who may find it difficult to communicate their needs when travelling on public transport and who would like support to communicate with staff when travelling by bus or train. It can be used by anyone with a hidden disability who may like to communicate with staff non-verbally.

The Orange Wallet has plastic pockets where you can add words and pictures to explain your needs. Show it to station staff and conductors when you're travelling or buying a ticket. They're retrained to recognise the wallet and provide appropriate help!



It's recommended that you have contact details in your Orange Wallet of the person you'd like to call in an emergency. Just show your wallet to a member of staff to indicate that you need help.

- Pick up an Orange Wallet from your local Cardiff Hub/Library.
- Alternatively, phone Transport for Wales on **03333 211 202** and request for one to be posted to your home address.

Accessible shopping

St David's Dewi Sant Shopping Centre is proud to partner with Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff to make shopping more accessible for everyone!

We have recently collaborated to develop new sensory bags, designed to support both adults and children during their visit.

These new sensory resources include ear defenders, hand-held fans, mindfulness activities and a range of sensory and fidget items. These along with a neurodivergent friendly centre guide and hidden disability lanyard are available to borrow from the Guest Experience Desk on the second level by Bershka!



For more information contact Guest Services on: **029 2036 7660** or visit **StDavidsCardiff.com**



Championing Neurodivergent Colleagues



Emma Jo McDonald

Emma Jo McDonald is a Supported Living Coordinator, has lived experience of ADHD and Dyslexia, is a parent of an autistic teen and a founding member of the Neurodivergent Employee Community for Cardiff Council.

In 2022 Emma Jo was invited to talk to the Disability Network about her lived experience of ADHD and Dyslexia to help raise awareness of neurodivergence at work. Emma Jo says that...

“My experience of being a neurodivergent person in my team has always been pretty positive and has only got better since I started being more open about my needs and advocating more for the rights of neurodivergent and disabled colleagues”.

“ We meet regularly as a group and bring in expert speakers which any Council staff can attend. We have supported with interviews, training, and policy development. ”

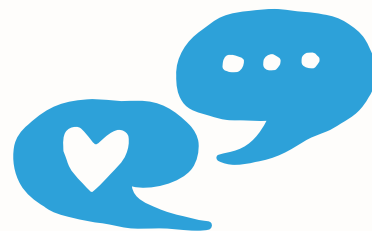
In 2023 Emma Jo was part of small group of colleagues from different service areas who developed a steering group to explore how to create a network or community for neurodivergent staff, and a few months later their hard work was celebrated with the launch of the Neurodivergent Employee Community.

Emma Jo believes her role in the Learning Disability team is a good match for her skills and abilities and provides a very supportive environment but knows this is has not been the experience of others. Emma Jo says...

“I have seen some staff come and go from the Council and I am left wondering whether improved understanding of neurodivergence and of how to support them might have helped them be retained and really thrive in the workforce”.

Gemma Astley

Gemma Astley is an Inclusion Teacher and contacted Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff to share her experiences as a neurodivergent employee...



Gemma joined the Neurodivergent Employee Community Steering Group shortly after starting at the Council and was immediately welcomed into a supportive, passionate and forward-thinking community. Being part of this network has provided a powerful sense of connection, as well as opportunities to contribute to staff feedback, shape conversations and influence positive change across the organisation.



“One of the most impactful aspects of my experience at Cardiff Council has been the representation and understanding from my line manager, who is also neurodivergent.

Having a manager who truly understands neurodivergence through lived experience has been incredibly affirming. This understanding has fostered a working environment where I feel supported, empowered and able to thrive, rather than simply ‘cope’.”

“ The strength of the network lies not only in advocacy, but in the shared understanding and lived experience that underpin it. ”



Cymuned Cyflogwyr **NIWROWAHANOL**
NEURODIVERGENT Employee Community

Looking for your perfect career?



Gyrfa Cymru
Careers Wales

Did you know that Careers Wales now provide visual aids including images of the team, images of the environment and instructions on what to do when you arrive to help you prepare for your appointment?



Bethan Williams, a Careers Advisor, had the idea for this project to help neurodivergent people attending know what to expect before their appointment.

This initiative along with hosting their second successful 'Inclusive Jobs Fair' in November last year shows the positive difference organisations across Cardiff are making!

“ They've been useful to alleviate anxieties for people who are visiting the office for the first time. ”



For more information call **0800 028 48 44** or visit **CareersWales.gov.wales**



KJ's Story

KJ was referred to the Into Work Local Supported Employment Programme through the Job Club and worked closely with a Community Employment Mentor to explore her interests, including her ambition to work in a small coffee shop.

As an autistic person with anxiety, new environments and meeting new people can be challenging but with one-to-one support KJ attended a week-long Barista Training course, achieving Food Safety Level 2 and Customer Service Level 2.



Her employer recently shared with us:

“ Everything is going great with KJ, she’s absolutely brilliant as always. ”

After training, KJ began volunteering at Coffee Spot, a small independent coffee shop in the city. Her confidence grew, her hours increased, and when a paid position became available, she successfully secured the job. She has now been working for several months and is thriving.

Since launching the ‘Into Work Local Supported Employment Programme’, 173 individuals have been supported to find work!



For more information visit:

[IntoWorkCardiff.co.uk/local-supported-employment/](https://intoworkcardiff.co.uk/local-supported-employment/)
or call **029 2087 1071**.



Making Travel more Familiar: Accessibility Tours at Cardiff Airport



We were so excited to be invited to Cardiff Airport, alongside members of their Accessibility Forum, to learn more about the Airport's accessibility facilities and take part in an accessibility-focused familiarisation tour!

We learned how Cardiff Airport supports passengers with hidden needs, recognising that busy, unfamiliar environments can be overwhelming and that everyone's needs are different.

One way they help reduce these challenges is through **pre-arranged familiarisation tours**, which allow passengers to visit the Airport at a quiet time, meet the Special Assistance Team, and experience the journey at a calm pace.

Although tours do not include aircraft access, they can make a meaningful difference in helping passengers feel confident, prepared, and supported before they travel.

Tours are subject to availability so make sure to enquire in advance.

- To book a visit, contact the Special Assistance Team on **01446 729329** or **PRMDesk@cwl.aero**

Have Your Say: Help Shape Speech and Language Support in Wales

The Welsh Government wants to hear from you!

There is a new **public consultation** about speech, language and communication support for children and young people in Wales, called “Talk with Me – Phase 2”.

The plan looks at how children can get better help to understand, talk, listen and communicate, especially as they grow. It also includes ideas to extend support to children aged 5 to 11, not just younger children.

They want to know:

- What is working well now
- What needs to improve
- What support children and families really need

The consultation is open to parents, unpaid carers, young people, families, and anyone who cares about children’s wellbeing.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The consultation closes on 30 April 2026.

Take part here by visiting gov.wales/talk-me-phase-2-speech-language-and-communication-slc-delivery-plan-2026-2030-html-0

Your views can help shape future services across Wales so please get involved and share your thoughts!



Join our Forum!



Want to stay connected and help shape a more Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff?

Sign up to the Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff Forum which will be held 4 times a year!

Alternating between in-person and online. It's a chance to stay updated, share lived experience and have your say on neurodivergent-friendly work across the city.



If you are interested in taking part email NeurodivergentFriendly@cardiff.gov.uk or call 02920 871083.



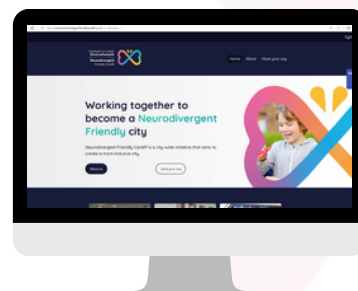
Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff Website

Finding the right support starts with knowing where to look!

We are developing a Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff website with the goal of helping people find helpful information about local services, activities and support across Cardiff.

Have your say and let us know what information you think it would be helpful for us to include on the new website by filling out the response form at:

Do you want to find more helpful information online?



NeuroDivergentFriendlyCardiff.co.uk/have-your-say
or call 02920 871083.

Supporting Inclusion Across Cardiff

Cardiff Wellbeing Support Service

The Cardiff Wellbeing Support Service helps people improve their health and wellbeing by offering short-term, one-to-one mentoring and support to get involved in local activities and community groups. The service also recruits volunteers who help run a wide range of social and wellbeing groups across Cardiff's Hubs and Libraries as well as in the community.



Neurodivergent Social Groups

After speaking with neurodivergent residents and unpaid carers, the team have helped shape new activity groups, including:

- neurodivergent friendly walking group
- board games group
- evening social meetup!



In 2025, a new **adult ADHD community group** was launched in partnership with the Neuronetwork, offering a supportive space to connect and try new activities. The service is also developing sessions for older neurodivergent people, including a neurodivergent friendly Art Group for older adults now meeting at Penylan Library and Community Centre.

Volunteering Opportunity

We are looking for volunteers to help us set up a Neurodivergent Community Group for Adults 50+.

If this is something you might be interested in please get in touch. Contact details below!



For more information or to get involved, visit CardiffHubs.co.uk or email WellbeingActivities@cardiff.gov.uk



Umbrella Allies Youth Group

Umbrella Allies is a safe space for LGBTQIA+ young people aged 13 to 19. The project is specifically designed to meet the needs of young people in the LGBTQIA+ community by offering activities and services that promote inclusion, well-being and empowerment.

Umbrella Allies includes young people who also identify as neurodivergent and have found safety and comfort in the project. **Wednesdays 18:15-20:30 @ Eastmoors Youth Centre.**



Cardiff Youth Service offer multiple different inclusive groups across different localities in Cardiff! For more information on Cardiff Youth Service Inclusive groups visit **CardiffYouthServices.Wales** or call **02920 615260**



Your Feedback

This is our first Neurodivergent Friendly Newsletter

We are always looking to improve information, share helpful insights and positive stories about neurodivergent people in Cardiff. We know there are some incredible stories out there that we would like to feature in this newsletter.

If you have any feedback on the Newsletter or any stories you would like to share get in touch with us:

Email: NeurodivergentFriendly@cardiff.gov.uk

Post: Units 1B/1C Dominions Way, Off Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 1RF

Phone: 02920 87108

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg



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