

## STORY OF CHANGE TEMPLATE

<b>Reporting Period</b>	Q4 April 23-March 2024
<b>Strategic Partnership</b>	<i>West Glamorgan Regional Partnership</i>
<b>Programme Name</b>	Neurodiverse Programme

### Programme Overview

The Neurodiverse Programme is one of the Population Programmes in the West Glamorgan region. It is a new Programme that has been established to ensure that people who are neurodiverse have access to the services and support they need to participate fully within their communities and live fulfilled lives, regardless of an assessment.

The draft aims of the Programme included in the West Glamorgan Action Plan are:

- Ensure groups are formed at a local level to support social interaction, deliver information and advice assistance.
- Reduce the number of people waiting for a diagnostic assessment.
- Develop and enhance the availability of preventative services that would enable autistic people in their daily lives.
- Provide appropriate and timely access to mental health and well-being services.
- Improve child to adult transition services.
- Further planning in terms of the requirements from the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNWA) around a fully inclusive education service needs to continue.
- Ensure a common understanding and consistency across the partners in the way the data is recorded and analysed.
- Engagement with people with autism and their carers to inform future developments for autism services.
- Better sharing of information between partner organisations and people, particularly in terms of the services that are available across the region.

### Strategy Development

Partners have commenced with initial planning steps to develop a co-produced Neurodiverse Strategy, which addresses the priorities in the West Glamorgan Action Plan.

The strategy development will take a needs-led, people centred approach to supporting people who are neurodiverse in our communities to live their best lives. This will include a system and culture shift towards building community resources and implementing an inclusive approach to neurodiversity, with focus on a needs led approach, which is not based on an assessment.

The strategy will align with the NYTH/NEST framework and the no wrong door approach which pulls services together to meet a person's needs, supporting them to navigate the system which includes various different agencies.

The strategy will drive a holistic partnership approach to implementation whereby there is shared common understanding among partners which improves communication, information and understanding of partner agencies pathways. This will include consistent messaging by all partners and providers and consistent language in order to avoid confusion for people with lived experience and their families and carers.

The Neurodiverse Programme will be the vehicle which supports joined up working to develop a more integrated approach to neurodevelopmental services across the region.

The end product will be the creation of a system of support for neurodivergent people which is based on need, not just whether they have a diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental condition.

We plan to engage with people with lived experience in coproducing a vision for the region and work towards defining a set of shared principles, standards, and outcomes to successfully transfer our ambitions into reality.

The following primary models of care will be developed for people with Neurodiversity through the development of the programme:

- **Community Based Care – Prevention and Community Coordination**
- **Community Based Care – Complex Care Closer to Home**
- **Promoting Good Health and Wellbeing**

There are links to accommodation solutions model of care and the capital plan given there are people with Learning Disabilities and/or complex needs who have a Neurodiversity diagnosis who require housing as they are unable to live alone in the community or with their family. The Neurodiverse Board endorsed the proposal to have a crosscutting Accommodation Solution Work Stream for Learning Disabilities and Neurodiversity.

There are also links to the other following programmes although specific actions around these cohorts may be delivered via the specific programmes:

- Wellbeing & Learning Disabilities Programme, given there are people with Neurodiversity and Learning Disabilities.
- West Glamorgan Carers Partnership Programme, supporting carers and families for people with Neurodiversity.
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Programme, in relation to Mental Health services for people with Neurodiversity.
- Children and Young People Programme, for children with complex needs and Neurodiversity including the transition process for children with Neurodiversity.

### **Communication strategy**

The development and implementation of a communication strategy for families and stakeholders will be focused on sharing and signposting to resources and support which exist within services and communities. Through joined up communication we will signpost effectively to resources and support offered at school, at home and in the community that can be accessed without assessment or diagnosis. We will build on our community of resources ensuring a common understanding of information, communication and language and work towards a better awareness and understanding of partner agencies pathways, services and available support as well as including third sector resources. Most importantly work towards achieving an inclusive approach.

Partners recognise the need for consistent messages and language across Health, Social Care, Education, and community organisations and will be a key element of the communication plan going forward.

### **Delivery Partners**

The programme brings together health services from Swansea Bay University Health Board, Swansea Council, Neath Port Talbot Council, Third Sector, and people representing the voices of people with lived experience and carers The Neurodiverse Population Programme Board is chaired by Head of Child and Family in Swansea Council and the vice chair is Group Director for Neath Port Talbot and Singleton, Swansea Bay University Health Board.

We have already drawn upon representation from Local Authorities which include Child and Family Social Services, Adult Social Service and Education including the Support for Learning manager, the Principal Educational Psychologist, and the Head of Vulnerable Learners.

Representation from health board include Integrated Autism Services, Neurodiversity Services (early years and 5-18, including the Clinical Lead, Neurodevelopmental Disorders service SBUHB

There are 2 Third sector RIF (Regional Integration Fund) projects:

**Gwaith Da Project** is delivered by **ASDES** (Autistic Spectrum Disorder Employment Support). Autistic participants facing hurdles in their employment can get immediate support through this project to help them identify, with their team and managers, reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to enable them to maintain their employment. As part of this process participants are supported to apply for long term Access to Work funding that continues the support that they need in employment. ASDES can signpost autistic participants to social based activities that it has running funded by other grants, these include weekly social groups around walking, board games, art-based activities and gardening. ASDES is able to support autistic participants into volunteering sessions in their local community that allow them to engage with others and develop an important routine to their week.

**Dynamic Divergent Project** delivered by **Anxiety Support Wales CIC** has been developed to provide families with neurodiverse young people (age 8 to 17 years) with additional needs. The project is run on a Friday and Saturday (depending on their education setting), offering parents and caregivers a 2 to 3-hour respite once a month. The project seeks to assist young people deal with anxiety and other mental health challenges while encouraging them to try new activities. Activities include, arts and crafts, farm visits, trampoline, bush craft, water activities etc.

We plan to include people with lived experience in all levels of our governance as we believe their voices need to be integral to the work we deliver. We have also drawn upon what matters conversations delivered from partners and wider networks for example Swansea Engagement and Involvement team's autism services themes, trends and pattern and Neath Port Talbot Autism Hub engagement events focused on hub development.

## Assessment of Delivery

OBJECTIVE	METHOD OF DELIVERY	COMMENTS ON CURRENT PROGRESS
Neurodiverse Programme Strategy Development	Development of Vision, Aims, Principles and Outcomes	The programme board have drafted the initial Vision, Aims, Outcomes and Key Principles that will inform the Neurodiverse Strategy. Board members will utilise local and other ongoing engagement opportunities to engage with people with lived experience to co-produce the Vision, Aims, Principles and Outcomes, focussing on what 'good' looks like to them.
Accommodation Workstream	Decision to merge the Neurodiverse accommodation workstream with the Learning Disability accommodation workstream.	Neurodiverse Board members agreed that accommodation workstream for Neurodiversity should be merged with Learning Disability accommodation workstream, given the workstreams would include the same officers. This also aligns with the strategic capital plan approach which includes the same priorities for Learning Disabilities and Neurodiverse.

## Neurodiverse Improvement Funding

We are currently working with the funded projects to develop performance measures, the below table represents progress made to date.

There were 3 projects that had funding until March 2025 under the sustaining services theme all focussed on targeting the current waiting lists.

<p>Neurodiversity Improvement Programme: Sustainability Funding Funding until March 2025</p>	<p>Integrated Autism Service - Health Board</p>	<p><b>Overview of Project</b></p> <p>Additional resources to reduce waiting lists for assessment and to allow access to information, advice, and support for adults whilst on the waiting list.</p> <p>This additional resource enables an additional 8 people being assessed per month, aid in support service development, reviewing referral processes and diagnostic assessment processes and pathways.</p> <p>This will ensure services collaborate and develop to provide early help and early intervention that aims to prevent needs from escalating whilst people are awaiting diagnostic assessments and for those who do not meet diagnostic thresholds.</p> <p><b>Update:</b></p> <p>The Band 6 role commenced in December, enabling an additional 33 diagnostic assessments to be completed. There has been a significant amount of sickness absence in the team which has limited the number of completed assessments in total.</p> <p>The additional day from the Clinical lead has enabled the co-production of pathway development. Link with the University have also been established along with community-based interventions in partnership with Mental Health Charities such as Mind. The additional day has enabled the development of a Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation report proposing autism awareness transitions from optional to mandatory training for all Swansea Bay Health Board staff. The additional day has also sustained the existing services, in particular increasing access to and improving waiting times for diagnostic assessment.</p>
	<p>ND Early Years - Health Board</p>	<p><b>Overview of Project:</b></p> <p>Delivery of Waiting List Initiatives clinics.</p> <p>Additional resource to deal with the waiting lists initiative by offering additional clinics seeing 2 children per clinic. This includes development of an EYND coordinator role to support change process and provide admin support to the pathway management.</p> <p>This will provide early contact and support to families and some reduction of waiting time for children requiring an assessment.</p> <p><b>Update:</b></p>

	<p>Project has progressed well with the funding utilise to support the additional hours/sessions as per plan plus additional sessions as not yet recruited to Psychology post.</p> <p>There is however an issue with speech and language therapy capacity later along the pathway due to a vacancy and higher demand for appointments. Additional sessions have been secured to support whilst new staff member settles into their post. All sessions have been undertaken as additional work.</p> <p>There has been difficulty securing psychology hours but there are plans to revisit this in early 2024.</p> <p>EYND Co-ordinator post was filled as a secondment and has now been filled at risk on a permanent basis.</p> <p>Interim funding is the biggest barrier as unable to deliver the sustainable workforce required. Limited funding restricts services to deliver the required capacity.</p> <p>Utilising the RPB monies 38 clinics were undertaken plus associated admin time within EYND over the period Apr 2023 – Dec 2023. This activity targeted our longest waiting IDA patients and the completion of the assessment pathway for 17 children.</p> <p>The number of IDA patients waiting &gt;26 weeks was reduced from 79 as at the end of March 2023 to 53 as at the end of December 2023 with the longest wait reduced from 47 weeks to 44 weeks.</p> <p>At this point activity ceased due to no further funding available from RPB &amp; Vacancy monies; this combined with clinical staff absence has led to a position as at the end of March 2024 of 138 patients waiting longer than 26 weeks for an IDA and a longest wait of 46 weeks.</p> <p>EYND Coordinator role – the 2023 -24 period was very much a testing of the concept and identifying the key tasks of the role. The role is now embedded into the EYND pathway with a new post holder in place.</p> <p>A robust validation exercise is underway and is approx. 75% complete. The role is adding value and clarity for those families whilst waiting with the co-ordinator able to chase any updated information from schools and parents to support the assessment process and provide explanation and updates to families on where they are in the pathway. The co-ordinator is also providing a valuable link between the pathway and SaLT colleagues to ensure any reports are provided between services to ensure that no unnecessary assessment appointments are undertaken.</p>
<p>ND 5-18 Years - Health Board:</p>	<p><b>Overview of Project:</b></p> <p>Additional capacity to reduce waiting times to 104 weeks by March 2024.</p> <p>This will provide early contact and support to families and some reduction of waiting time for children requiring an assessment.</p>

		<p><b>Update:</b></p> <p>The service currently has a number of vacancies which has reduced overall service capacity. Recruitment continues to be the biggest challenge due to difficulties to recruit.</p> <p>The Service has achieved a 50% reduction in the number of cases waiting &gt;103 weeks for an initial assessment. As at 31st March 2024, there are 136 cases waiting &gt;103 weeks for initial assessment.</p> <p>Band 4 Medical secretary appointed to support with the typing and processing of post-assessment reports</p>
<p>There are 5 ND funded projects under the transformation theme and are funded from July to March 2024:</p>		
<p>Neurodiversity Improvement Programme: Transformation Funding</p> <p>Funding until March 2024</p>	<p>ND 5-18 Years - Health Board</p>	<p><b>Overview of Project:</b></p> <p>To clear the backlog of patients waiting more than 26 weeks and manage demand and sustain the service, Additional resources to provide additional diagnostic and post diagnostic support which includes advanced practitioners, specialist nursing and speech and language therapy, for assessments.</p> <p><b>Update:</b></p> <p>Successfully appointed to the Advanced Practitioner post and tech equipment &amp; software procured to assist the ADHD assessment process.</p> <p>As well as providing additional clinical capacity at Advanced Practitioner level, the 8a post has also been key in providing advice via the established advice and consultation line for families and referrers seeking advice. The advice line has been received positively by users. Whilst the service has a duty to assess those already on the waiting list, it also has a universal duty to support health and wellbeing through advice and information for the population of 55,000 children and young people of school age living in SBUHB.</p> <p>Social Responsiveness Rating (SRS2) was procured. This software is a new standardised digital tool that provides quantitative evidence in the form of a questionnaire completed by parent/carers or teachers in 20 minutes for ASD assessments.</p> <p>The Service has achieved a 50% reduction in the number of cases waiting &gt;103 weeks for an initial assessment. At the time of the original proposal there were 274 cases waiting &gt;103 weeks for initial assessment. As at 31st March 2024, there are 136 cases waiting &gt;103 weeks for initial assessment.</p>

ADHD Service - Health Board	<p><b>Overview of Project</b></p> <p>Additional resource for a psychiatrist currently based within the Community Mental Health Team to undertake 2-3 assessments a day to address the waiting list of approximately 300 individuals.</p> <p>This will support individuals and their families to have access to timely information and advice which will improve their quality of life, pre, during and any time post diagnosis. It would also allow timely access to services for those individuals awaiting ADHD diagnostic assessments.</p> <p><b>Update:</b></p> <p>There has been a significant increase in the demand for ADHD assessments and diagnosis. SBUHB has been undertaking validation of the waiting lists for ADHD to identify the possible trajectory in the near future so that services can be adapted to ensure the needs of this cohort of individuals are met at the right time and in the right way.</p> <p>A medic was unable to be released from the CMHT and the decision was made to source a locum medic through Medacs (Medical Workforce Agency). This took longer than anticipated, due to needing to identify a medic with suitable skills and experience. However, a medic was sourced during the month of January and commenced clinics in the middle of February 2024.</p> <p>The band 6 nurse was not secured to lead on the outpatient clinics during this funding period as there was no capacity and no suitable individual identified. However, a prescribing pharmacist has now been identified within the service group who is trained in ADHD and would be able to provide sessions to future clinics.</p> <p>There were 361 patients on the list and the process of list validation, resulted in a 24.5% reduction (which left 261 patients to be seen)</p> <p>The fulfilled activity succeeded in reducing the list further by 32.1% (84 patients were assessed and diagnosed).</p> <p>The clinic was ceased earlier than planned due to unforeseen circumstances with the medic, resulting in cancellation of the last two weeks of activity.</p> <p>Due to the delay in beginning clinics, the proposal did not meet the original expectation of clearing the waiting list backlog. However, this has succeeded in reducing the overall list, with 177 patients remaining to be assessed and diagnosed.</p>	
Communication strategy for families about myth busting – Neath Port	<p><b>Overview of Project:</b></p> <p>Development and successful implementation of a communication strategy for families and stakeholders with a focus on sharing and signposting to resources and</p>	

Talbot and Swansea Council

approaches which exist within services / communities. It will include explaining to families and stakeholders that diagnosis is not critical to receive appropriate support at the right time. Key elements of the project include:

- Support families and stakeholders to understand and access pre diagnosis support and service with a particular focus on the education offer.
- Provision of timely information, advice and support for those families and individuals who do not reach diagnostic thresholds or who are either on waiting lists or waiting to be referred.
- Provide accessible information and resources pre diagnosis so families, children and young people feel listened to and have developed strategies to manage the challenges they experience in a timely manner regardless of diagnosis.

**Update:**

Communication strategy for families about myth busting – myth busting booklet created, signposting parents to useful links. English and Welsh booklets available for parents and schools.

Initial round of parental drop-ins have been held in the second half of the Spring Term.

NPT have facilitated parental drop-ins in the second half of the Spring Term with more planned. We have already received initial positive feedback from parents who attended the four separate drop-ins held across the county of NPT. This initial feedback, an essential precursor to the more comprehensive data collection and analysis planned after a further four drop-ins in the Summer term, is indicative of the project's early success in meeting its targeted outcomes.

A myth busting booklet has been created, signposting parents to useful links (English and Welsh booklets available for parents and schools). This has been shared widely to all partners. [Social Communication Booklet for Parents and Schools February 2024.pdf](#)

Swansea have created a video campaign which includes animation in English and Welsh language, have been developing testimonials representing different cohorts of people, telling their stories as well as creation of materials such as digital screen in Swansea bus Station. (Please refer to Case Studies section).

**Professional Feedback Highlights**

**Positive Parental Feedback:** Professionals reported encounters with parents who attended the drop-in sessions, sharing their high praise for the team's approachability and helpfulness. Parents specifically mentioned the usefulness of the strategies suggested during these sessions.

**Empowerment and Gratitude:** Feedback from parents to professionals indicated that attending the ND myth-busting



drop-in was an empowering experience, leaving them extremely positive, thankful, and feeling significantly helped by the session.

### **Participant Feedback via QR Code Questionnaire**

**Diverse Concerns Addressed:** Participants came with various concerns, including speech development, behaviour, supporting their children's transitions between schools, general anxiety, and coping behaviours. This diversity underscores the wide applicability and necessity of the project's services.

**High Value of Professional Guidance:** The majority found the sessions very helpful, with specific appreciation for the opportunity to discuss their concerns with professionals, gaining insights into different approaches, and discovering available services.

**Actionable Outcomes:** All respondents confirmed that the session enabled them to identify clear next steps to address their concerns, with 100% expressing high confidence in implementing these steps.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** While feedback was overwhelmingly positive, participants suggested minor improvements such as offering phone options for sessions and extending session lengths.

#### **1. Development of a Resource / Guidance.**

The project has led to the development of a resource kit that has been shared with parents at the drop ins and will be distributed to schools in the Summer term. This resource, a tangible outcome of the project, has been shaped by specialist teachers and senior educational psychologist. This resource aims to provide comprehensive information on various aspects of support services and intervention strategies, effectively bridging the knowledge gap identified in preliminary discussions.

#### **2. Enhanced Information and Understanding about Diagnosis**

One of the primary goals of the project was to ensure that individuals and their families feel more informed about the need, or otherwise, for diagnosis. The positive feedback received thus far suggests that the project is on the right path. Parents have reported a better understanding of the diagnostic process, the potential benefits and limitations of obtaining a diagnosis, and what steps to take irrespective of whether they pursue a diagnosis. This increased awareness and knowledge empower parents to make more informed decisions regarding their child's needs and the best ways to support them.

#### **3. Improved Quality of Life through Timely Information and Advice**

		<p>The feedback underscores the project's effectiveness in providing timely information and advice that has positively impacted families' quality of life, particularly in the pre-diagnosis phase. By offering guidance and support during this often uncertain period, the project has helped reduce anxiety and stress among parents and children alike. The focus on early help and intervention strategies has equipped families with the tools and knowledge to address their children's needs proactively, fostering a more supportive and understanding environment that can significantly enhance their quality of life.</p> <p><b>4. Accessibility of Early Help and Intervention Services</b></p> <p>A critical aspect of the project's success, as highlighted by the initial feedback, is the improved accessibility of services offering early help and early intervention. Parents have expressed appreciation for the increased awareness and ease of access to these services, which are crucial for preventing needs from escalating. By making these services more visible and accessible, the project has played a vital role in ensuring that families receive the advice they need at the earliest possible stage. This early discussion can be pivotal in setting children on a positive trajectory, potentially mitigating more significant challenges down the line.</p>
<p>Additional support for challenging behaviour – Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Council</p>		<p><b>Overview of Project:</b></p> <p>Qualified behavioural advice and guidance at the earliest possible stage to a larger demographic of young people.</p> <p>Parent/carers will have a better understanding of why their child may challenge them and help them understand how to create a better environment around their child that will support them to be able to reach their full potential. It will also support the child/young person at the earliest point to understand why they use behaviours that challenge. The intention would then be to reduce the impact that this is having on the child/young person at the earliest point. This may in turn lead to greater social opportunities, a more stable home life and greater engagement with education.</p> <p><b>Update:</b></p> <p>Within the existing Swansea Academy Team a small behavioural POD has now been set up to include both the behavioural specialist post funded and an existing Social Worker.</p> <p>In NPT the post sits in the Children with Disability Team. A referral will be made to capture the same data. The behavioural worker will work alongside the social workers in the team.</p> <p>The system in place now allows a joined up approach in offering behavioural support:</p>

- A consultation function for social workers and family support officers for existing children and young people and families on their case loads, both at the point of referral and at crisis points for the family
- Training for staff around recognising challenging behaviour.
- Direct support provided to families where there are behaviours that challenge connected to Neuro developmental conditions.

Behavioural specialists have been appointed in both Swansea and NPT and are undertaking relevant qualifications as to ensure an established model of behavioural work, allowing use of the same approach, methods and to develop a common language around how we support with behaviours that challenge.

On a procedural level we have also established criterion around the service in order to make sure it supports the families at most need of the support. This has taken into consideration the existing support services available such as Facing The Challenge, allowing us to focus on the families that cannot access this kind of support. This has been done in partnership with Facing The Challenge, understanding their limitations around only supporting young people with assessed Learning Disabilities.

Work has commenced with parent/carers for them to have a better understanding of why their child may challenge them. To help them understand how to create a better environment around their child that will support them to be able to reach their full potential.

Children and young people have been identified at an earlier point to understand why they use behaviours that challenge. The intention would then be to reduce the impact that this is having on the child/young person at the earliest point. This may in turn lead to greater social opportunities, a more stable home life and greater engagement with education.

School Based 'Summer Camp' for complex ND children – Neath Port Talbot Council  
NPT School delivered a two week summer camp for complex disabled children who

16 CYP attended the school summer camp. NPT Children's Services led the identification of young people and liaised with Ysgol Maes Y Coed regarding the final list of young people identified.

The summer camp provided the following outcomes:

- Enabling CYP to integrate with others they wouldn't usually see around the school due to age, ability
- Support for their mental health and wellbeing
- Provision of emergency respite for a young person whose family had reached crisis at home during the Summer holidays

	struggle to manage the disruption to their routine during the school holiday.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support for families who struggle over the Summer holidays due to the CYP being unsettled and behaviours escalating</li><li>• Continued learning on communication skills to avoid loss of skills over holiday period</li></ul>
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## Update on Programme Delivery – For RIF projects only

Theme	Quantitative Measures	Qualitative Indicators
<p><b>Theme 1: Prevention &amp; Community Co-ordination</b></p>	<p>Currently there is <b>1</b> project sitting under this model of care. <b>Error! Reference source not found.</b></p> <p>Gwaith Da Project is delivered regionally by ASDES (Autistic Spectrum Disorder Employment Support) and has funding of <b>£12,569.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>86</b> young people have been supported through this project this year.</li> <li>• <b>20</b> new people accessing the service</li> <li>• <b>65</b> are receiving Early help</li> <li>• <b>334</b> contacts to the service</li> </ul> <p>A survey was circulated to the service users after they had received support from ASDES.</p> <p>Of the 17 surveys completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>15</b> - People Reporting They Are Less Isolated</li> <li>• <b>17</b> - People Maintaining Improving Emotional Health</li> <li>• <b>16</b> - People Feel Influenced Decisions Affect Them</li> <li>• <b>17</b> - Number individuals independence improved remained same</li> <li>• <b>12</b> - People Feeling Confident Accessing Services</li> <li>• <b>17</b> - People Achieving Personal Outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>In the Population Needs Assessment it was noted “Around half of disabled people aged 16 to 64 years (52.1%) in the UK were in employment compared with around 8 in 10 (81.3%) for non-disabled people (July to September 2020); disabled people with autism were among those disabled people with the lowest employment rate.” Source: <a href="https://ons.gov.uk/peopleandwork/employmentandhrm/autism">Outcomes for disabled people in the UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)</a> “The Disability Employment Gap is still too wide, with around half of disabled people in work, compared to over 80% of non-disabled people. But the autism employment gap is even wider, with just 22% autistic people reported in paid work. We are really worried that out of all disabled people, autistic people seem to have the worst employment rate. While not all autistic people can work, we know most want to. The Government must improve the support and understanding autistic people get to find and keep work.” Source: <a href="#">New shocking data highlights the autism employment gap</a> Autistic participants facing hurdles in their employment are able to get immediate support through this project to help them identify, with their team and managers, reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to enable them to maintain their employment. As part of this process participants are supported to apply for long term Access to Work funding that continues the support that they need in employment.</p> <p>ASDES are supporting participants to explore employment opportunities to avoid crisis intervention. One individual has recently been supported to undertake some freelance work in the creative industry. Another participant has transitioned to longer-term Access to Work funding, a third participant has secured part-time work with ASDES support.</p> <p>The ASDES Manager explained that receiving the funding has allowed the service.</p>

		<p><b><i>‘To get in at the right time to support individuals maintain their current employment’.</i></b></p> <p>Judith expressed the relief from some members after receiving support to prepare for job interviews quoting.</p> <p><b><i>‘Wow! I really feel so much more confident about interviews now!’</i></b></p> <p>A mother of an individual who was supported by ASDES expressed.</p> <p><b><i>‘ASDES support kept his mental health together to function enough to go to work’.</i></b></p> <p>The ASDES full digital story is available to view embedded in the Case Study section below.</p>
<p><b>Programme Contribution to Model of Care and exploration of what is different</b></p>		<p><b>What have we learned about things that went well? What have we learned from any challenges that occurred?</b></p>
	<p>Local prevention and early intervention solutions support people to avoid escalation and crisis interventions.</p> <p>ASDES explore and maintain meaningful job opportunities for autistic and/or neurodivergent individuals. This project not only addresses employment needs but only promotes social engagement, skills development, and overall wellbeing for people with Neurodiversity.</p> <p>This community project helps ensure that individuals well-being is improved through accessing wide range of holistic support.</p> <p>Engaging in group activities fosters social connections, reduces isolation, and enhances overall well-being.</p> <p>This project supports these individuals to build their resilience</p>	<p><b>Successes:</b></p> <p>Alternative employment opportunities are being explored by individuals with their support workers. This is helping some identify that they can move jobs rather than just leave the current one that they no longer wish to attend, this is avoiding crisis intervention if the individual gets to a point of no income.</p> <p>The new support worker is addressing sensitive issues like hoarding and financial management. Connections with the local area coordinator have been established to facilitate access to community activities.</p> <p>ASDES is a small Community Interest Company with no capital assets, all funding received goes into direct support with individuals. As support workers we feel this is a very cost-effective service for the specialist support that individuals receive, and the support is tailored to individual needs.</p>

	<p>and confidence, Participants can acquire new skills (such as communication, teamwork, and time management) through these activities.</p> <p>Being part of social events creates a sense of community and belonging, which positively impacts mental health.</p> <p>Volunteering exposes participants to diverse tasks, allowing them to develop practical skills and gain experience.</p> <p>Contributing to community initiatives boosts self-esteem and confidence.</p> <p>ASDES is also able to support autistic participants into volunteering sessions in their local community that allow them to engage with others and develop an important routine to their week. Volunteering provides opportunities to interact with others, fostering social integration and a sense of purpose.</p>	<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <p>ASDES will continue to seek funding for the work that it carries out through a variety of local and national funding streams.</p> <p>If funding was not available it is likely that the mental and physical well-being of individuals would deteriorate, there would be increased demand on General Practice Surgeries, mental health, and care services. Without this funding individuals would become unemployed having a greater cost impact on Government finances.</p>
<p><b>Theme</b></p>	<p><b>Quantitative Measures</b></p>	<p><b>Qualitative Indicators</b></p>
<p><b>Theme 2: Promoting Good Emotional Health &amp; Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>Currently there is 1 project sitting under this model of care <b>Error! Reference source not found.</b></p> <p>Dynamic Divergent Project delivered by Anxiety Support Wales Community Interest Company and has funding of <b>£7,216.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>96</b> young people supported</li> <li>• <b>44</b> Activities were provided</li> <li>• <b>151</b> contacts made to the service.</li> <li>• <b>68</b> New People Accessing Service</li> <li>• <b>96</b> Receiving Early Help</li> </ul> <p>The services users were asked to complete a survey following their activities. Of the 51 surveys completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>51</b> - People Reporting They Are Less Isolated</li> <li>• <b>51</b> - People Maintaining Improving Emotional Health</li> <li>• <b>51</b> - People Feel Influenced Decisions Affect Them</li> </ul>	<p>The project has been developed to provide families with neurodiverse young people (age 8 to 17 years) with additional needs. The project is run on a Friday and Saturday (depending on their education setting), offering parents and caregivers a 2 to 3-hour respite once a month. The project seeks to assist young people deal with anxiety and other mental health challenges while encouraging them to try new activities. Activities include, arts and crafts, farm visits, trampoline, bush craft, water activities etc. The Dynamic Divergent Project has positively impacted the well-being of young participants by organising activities that foster connections and understanding among them, particularly related to their struggles with ASD or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. For instance, one participant, CYP H, initially struggled with anxiety when attending activities without his mother. However, with support from youth workers and gradual exposure, he gained confidence and now attends the project independently.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>50</b> - Number individuals independence improved remained same</li> <li>• <b>50</b>- People Feeling Confident Accessing Services</li> <li>• <b>51</b> - People Prevented Escalating Level Need</li> <li>• <b>51</b> - People Achieving Personal Outcomes</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Programme Contribution to Model of Care and exploration of what is different</b></p>	<p><b>What have we learned about things that went well? What have we learned from any challenges that occurred?</b></p>
<p>The aim of the project was for the young people who are supported to have a choice and a voice and be able to help make decisions with the group in the activities they would participate in.</p> <p>The Dynamic Divergents project empowers young people by promoting autonomy, personalised support, and access to external resources. It allows participants to choose activities during outings, fostering independence and decision-making. Personalised support addresses individual needs like anxiety and neurodiversity challenges, respecting autonomy. The project connects youth with external organisations for additional assistance, enabling them to take control of their lives and prioritise their well-being.</p> <p>The project also contributes to the Prevention &amp; Community Co-ordination Model of care. It provides support and opportunities for young people, particularly those struggling with autism spectrum disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, to build a small community. This community fosters understanding and connection among its members. It organizes weekly outings over a six-week period, offering these individuals a choice in their activities, trained staff are present during these outings to provide guidance, manage anxiety, and promote well-being. This approach ensures that the participants are supported in their mental health needs. The project also serves as a bridge, connecting</p>	<p>The Dynamic Divergents project excels in collaboration, empowerment, providing inclusive experiences for young people with neurodiversity. Through strategic partnerships, empowerment initiatives, and increased financial support, the project positively impacts participants' lives and the community.</p> <p>The project's collaboration with other organizations has expanded its activity offerings for young people while reducing costs.</p> <p>The project's core success lies in empowering young people to voice their interests and preferences. By valuing their choices, it creates a space where participants feel heard, respected, and empowered to shape their experiences.</p> <p>The project plans to collaborate with Anxiety Support Wales and utilise their Hub for activities. The Hub will serve as a central location for organising diverse experiences for the young people supported by the project. There are intentions to increase expenditure to expand capacity and cater to more young people. By investing in scaling up efforts, the aiming to have a broader positive impact and create meaningful experiences for a larger group of young people with neurodiversity.</p>



	<p>young people with third-sector organizations. This ensures they receive additional support and assistance with their neurodiversity and overall well-being.</p> <p>Overall, the project appears to be a comprehensive initiative aimed at supporting neurodiverse youth, promoting their mental health, and fostering a sense of community and understanding among them. It leverages both internal resources (trained staff, organized outings) and external resources (third-sector organizations) to provide a holistic support system for these individuals reducing need for more specialist services.</p>	<p>There are plans to diversify funding sources by exploring grants, local business partnerships, and community fundraising. This strategy reduces reliance on a single funding stream, establishing a more stable financial foundation.</p> <p>The project aims to create sustainable plans for long-term revenue generation and expense reduction to ensure project operation beyond initial funding. These plans will involve generating income through fee-based services, partnerships, and other activities outlined in detailed sustainability strategies.</p>
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## System Constraints

**Improving Access:** to Neurodevelopmental services in Wales have been identified as a key Welsh Government priority. A recent independent review of all-age Neurodiversity provision identified significant gaps in services and very long waiting times for assessment and support.

There are significant waiting lists for diagnosis of Neurodiversity conditions both for Children and Young People and Adults in the Neurodiverse Early Years, Neurodiverse 5-18 years' service, and Integrated Autism Service. Growing rates of referrals for diagnosis seen over the last 2 years. There are challenges around the short-term nature of the Neurodiversity funding.

Partners recognise a whole system partnership approach is needed to tackle these waiting lists, as outlined in the overview of the strategy.

**Consistency and clarity:** Partners recognise that there is a lack of clarity around pathways into services and services available in the community, both pre and post assessment. There is a need to reinforce the message to people who are neurodiverse and their families and carers that assessment is not critical to receive appropriate support at the right time. Partners are planning to work together to ensure that all future signposting and information sharing is consistent and accurate.

**Dynamic Divergent reported the following system constraints:**

**Increasing Waiting Lists:** The project is facing a significant barrier in the form of increasing waiting lists. This is primarily due to positive word of mouth and growing awareness of the project within the community. The challenge lies in managing this high demand while ensuring timely support and services for all individuals.

**Rising Costs:** Another key challenge is the escalating costs associated with staffing and activities. As the project expands and the scope of services grows, there is a need for additional staff members and resources. Balancing these rising costs while maintaining the project's integrity and effectiveness poses a financial challenge.

**Referrals Outside Target Demographic:** The project is also challenged by referrals of young people who do not fall within the neurodiverse population that the project is designed to support. This can strain resources and impact the tailored support and services provided to the target population. The project faces the complex task of addressing the needs of these individuals while maintaining a focus on the unique challenges faced by neurodiverse individuals.

**ASDES reported the following system constraints:**

**Managing demand for support:** has had to provide extensive support to some individuals who have completed the first cycle of support. These individuals tend to be isolated and find it difficult to move onto other projects. Some individuals manage for a few months then return for input to manage other issues that may have arisen.

**Workforce retention:** Workforce Issues remain a major challenge for the sector for both projects. Recruitment and retention of staff is proving challenging in both statutory and third sector. When teams are not fully resourced, have significant workloads and long waiting lists, this can affect the morale and wellbeing of existing staff.

These challenges highlight the importance of strategic planning, resource allocation, and effective communication. By proactively addressing these issues and implementing targeted solutions, both projects can enhance its ability to support young people with neurodiversity and create a more inclusive and sustainable programme.

## Lessons Learned

### Dynamic Divergent Project:

**Connections within our community.** Dynamic Divergent will continue to build and strengthen relationships with the local community, stakeholders and supporters to gather ongoing support for the project. By engaging with community members, raising awareness about the projects impact, and fostering collaborations with local organisations, the project is able to create a network of support that sustains the project.

**Proactive planning, flexibility, and collaboration** are essential to address these challenges and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all participants. These barriers and challenges highlight the importance of strategic planning, resource allocation, and effective communication. By addressing these challenges proactively and implementing targeted solutions, the project can enhance its ability to support young people with neurodiversity and create a more inclusive and sustainable programme.

Dynamic Divergent aims to maximise the use of funds through cost-effective practices and efficient resource management. This involves careful budgeting, prioritizing essential expenses, and exploring opportunities for in-kind donations or discounted services to minimize costs.

With increased financial resources, the projects offer specialised assistance and activities, ensuring individual needs are met. This commitment to inclusivity reflects the project's dedication to fostering an environment where all participants can thrive. Additionally, securing more funding enables the project to reach a greater number of young people in need and expand its community impact.

### Gwaith Da Project:

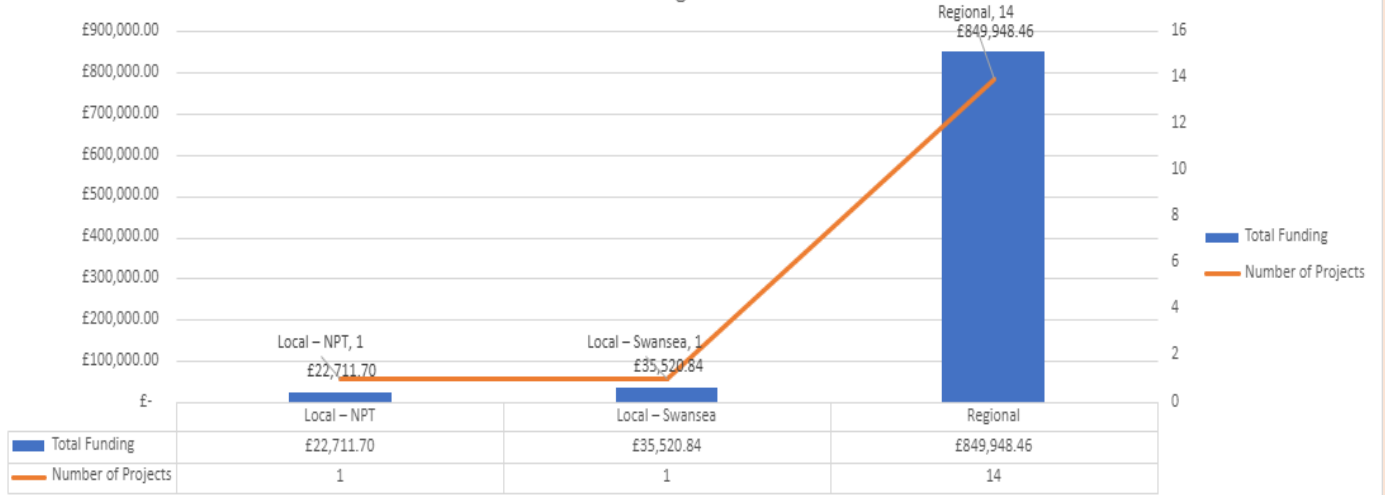
Autistic participants who were unable to continue in their employment were supported to have a positive exit strategy with their managers to enable them to move onto financial benefits that prevent them from hitting financial crisis. The project has since started to seek alternative employment opportunities for individuals who are unable to continue their current roles, helping to avoid crisis intervention.

## Funding Utilisation

The total allocation for the Neurodiverse Programme for 23/24 is £908,181. There are only 2 third sector organisations provided with RIF funding in 2023-24, both are regional schemes.

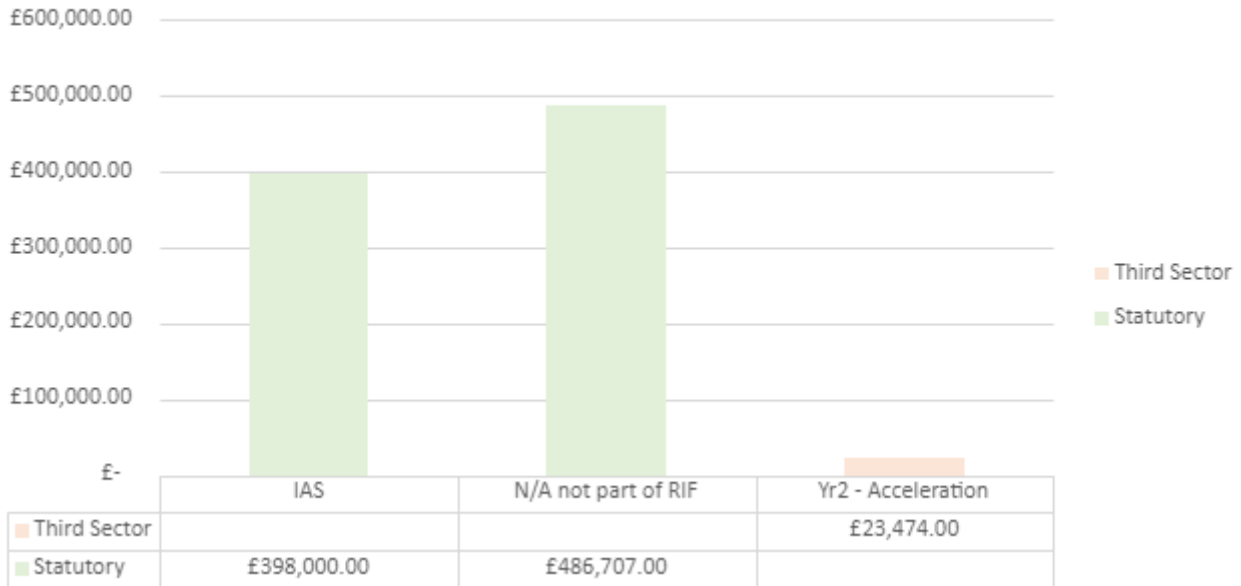
There are 8 schemes funded by the National Improvement Fund, 3 in sustaining services (Integrated Autism Service, ND Early Years and ND 5-18 Years) and 5 in transformation funding (ADHD Service, ND 5-18 Years, Communication strategy for families about myth busting, Additional support for challenging behaviour, School Based 'Summer Camp' for complex ND children).

### ND Programme

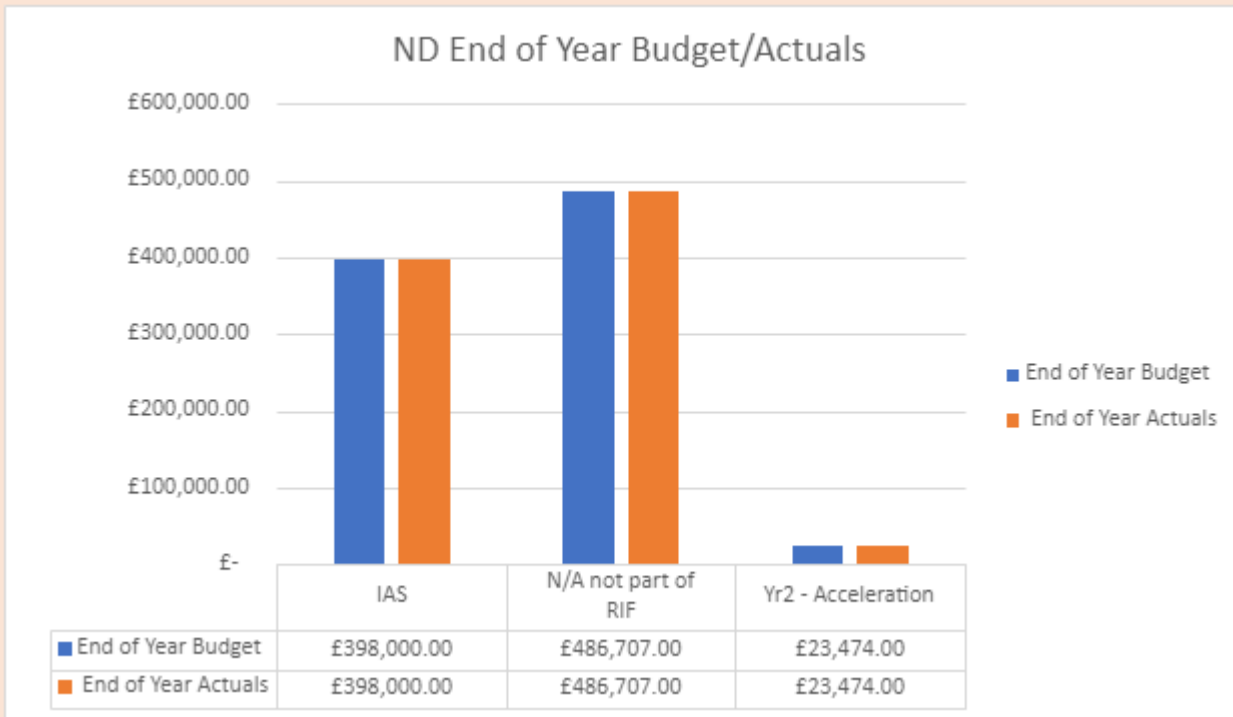


### ND RIF Allocations 23-24

#### ND



## RIF Budget/Spend Position at end of year



### A summary of the Neurodiverse funding is as follows:

Integrated Autism Service (Regional Integrated Fund)	1 Regional service	£398,000
Regional Integrated Fund Funded Schemes	2 Regional projects	£16,096
Project Manager (Regional Integrated Fund)		£49,977
Neurodiverse Funded Schemes	8 Regional projects	£490,396
<b>Total</b>		<b>£954,469</b>

### Financial and Economic Data

There are currently only 2 RIF funded projects which exclusively support people with ND.

There will however be other projects for people with MH, LD and CYP that also support people with ND. Further analysis is needed around these projects.

Further work is required around the return on investment for the more preventative type schemes in order to calculate any cost avoidance figures attributable to schemes.

## Programme Case Studies

### Communication Skills Resource

[Social Communication Booklet for Parents and Schools February 2024.pdf](#)



Social  
Communication Boc

### NPT Parent Carer Drop in Session Flyer



NPT ND Drop in  
Session .docx

### Myth Busting Advertisement



Myth Busting  
Advertisement .docx

Myth Busting animation: [Autistic Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\) support - Swansea](#)

ASDES Digital Story: [ASDES - Gwaith Da Project - RIF on Vimeo](#)

Anxiety Support Wales Digital Story: [Anxiety Support Wales on Vimeo](#)