



Neurodivergence Wales Relaunch Event

Thursday, 31st of October 2024

Speaker Biographies



Emma Durman

Emma Durman is co-director of Outside Education & Training, a company based in South Wales that specialises in Autism and related conditions. Outside provides a range of training to families and professionals focussed on supporting neurodivergent needs. Emma is a late diagnosed autistic woman who also has ADHD and multiple co-existing conditions. She is also mum to an Autistic teenager who also has ADHD. Emma has a MSc in Autism and related conditions and is co-author of the recently published book 'Supporting Autistic people through pregnancy and childbirth'.



Keith Ingram

Keith has been Autism Lead Officer for Cardiff and The Vale of Glamorgan since 2010 and is also Chair of the National Autism Leads group in Wales. Keith chairs the Regional Strategic Autism board for Cardiff and the Vale, and represents Autism Leads on the ND Ministerial advisory group. Formerly autism employment ambassador for Wales Keith also spent 10 years as chair of governors at Ashgrove special school in Penarth. Most importantly Keith is proud father of a 32-year-old autistic son who inspires and amazes him every day.



Daniel M Jones

Daniel M. Jones is an international best-selling author of Autism For Adults / video influencer with an award winning YouTube channel called The Aspie World. The Aspie World is the biggest YouTube channel dedicated to autism from an autistic person in the world. The channel is dedicated to Autism awareness and understanding from an autistic person's point of view. Creating engagement with real people to create real change in a positive and uplifting way. And also helps raise money for charities like The National Autistic Society. Daniel Has a diagnosis of Autism, OCD, ADHD and Dyslexia and uses his influence to help educate people about Autism using his skills of video and social media influence. Daniel has also created the first ever neurodiverse panel talking about ADHD and Autism at VidCon US which is the largest video convention in the world.



Sian Delyth Lewis

Sian is leading the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme in Welsh Government as part of the Neurodivergence and Learning Disabilities Policy Team. Sian is on secondment into Welsh Government from Monmouthshire County Council. Her substantive role is Service Manager of Gwent Integrated Autism Service. Sian established Gwent Integrated Autism Service in September 2017.. Prior to this Sian managed Blaenau Gwent Community Learning Disability Social Work Team for 10 years. Sian was the first Adult Safeguarding Officer in Blaenau Gwent Social Services overseeing the implementation of new adult safeguarding policy and procedures in the mid 2000's. By background Sian is a qualified social worker practising in the field of learning disabilities for many years



Sarah Murphy MS

Prior to being elected, Sarah graduated from the School of Journalism, Media & Communication at Cardiff University with an MA Distinction in Digital Media & Society. Between 2019 and 2021, she researched UK and international governments use of big data and algorithmic-design for public services – with a focus on identifying potential data harms and discrimination against children and families. In 2024, her research with the Data Justice Lab into trade unions and AI in the workplace was published in peer-reviewed *Transfer: European Journal of Labour and Research*. In May 2022, Sarah made a speech in the Senedd Chamber about her own experience with an eating disorder when she was a teenager and has been a big supporter of championing and amplifying the voice of those with lived experience to improve services. Sarah was also a Trustee for a Welsh Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Centre up until her election. Before being appointed to Welsh Government, Sarah was a member of the Senedd Health and Social Care Committee conducting the inquiry into gynaecological cancer care and mental health inequalities in Wales. On 11 September 2024, Sarah was appointed Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing.



Ewan Richards

Following a premature birth, I faced many critical health conditions but being a determined person as I am, I battled through and continued to make progress. I was very fortunate to have fantastic one-to-one support throughout my schooling and was officially diagnosed with autism at the age of 11, even though it was obvious that I was autistic since day 1! Throughout my years in education, due to my needs and autism diagnosis, I received a lot of support from professionals such as speech therapists, one-to-one learning support assistance, physiotherapists and other medical professionals. During my time at college and university, I was fully supported by a Study Assistant, Specialist Mentor and very understanding lecturers! Along with hard work and determination, this led to my current employment at the University.



Donna Sharland

Donna is the ND Transformation Project Manager for the National Neurodivergence Team. Over the last year, Donna's role has focused on the transformation of ND services in Wales and, overseeing the team's development to cover ADHD and Tic's & Tourettes. Working closely with Welsh Government, sitting on the Ministerial Advisory Group for Neurodivergence and working with key Stakeholders in Wales to improve the lives of neurodivergent people in Wales.



Professor Anita Thapar

Anita is a clinician and scientist. She heads the academic Child & Adolescent Psychiatry section at Cardiff University. Our research focuses mainly on ADHD, neurodivergence and also adolescent depression. Anita trained in Medicine and Psychiatry in Cardiff/ South Wales. She was Senior Lecturer at the University of Manchester returning as Professor in Wales in 1999. She is a scientist, teaches/ trains students and health professionals and remains a practicing clinician.



Wendy Thomas

Wendy Thomas is Head of Wales Neurodivergence Service and manages the National Neurodivergence team. Wendy has been in this role for more than 6 years. Previously she worked in the voluntary sector and Social Services in Wales for over 27 years in a variety of roles and, whilst being Commissioning Manager in Children's Services in Carmarthenshire, she was also Autism Lead. Whilst Autism Lead Wendy developed a range of initiatives and projects, many of which ended up as national models. Wendy feels extremely privileged to have met and worked with so many amazing people on this ND journey. She remains passionate about helping to improve the lives of neurodivergent people and their families in Wales.