



Tîm Niwrowahaniaeth Cenedlaethol
National Neurodivergence Team

Annual Report 2024/25

"The Learning about Autism program has greatly increased understanding of autism in our school! It has equipped both staff and students with valuable insights into the experiences and needs of autistic individuals. This shared knowledge has fostered a more inclusive environment, encouraging empathy and effective communication. As a result, we're seeing improved interactions and support for all students, making our school community stronger and more connected."

"I attended this morning's event and it was simply superb! So practical, thought provoking and encouraging. Thank you."

"Thank you, the course supported my knowledge and understanding and really helped me come to terms with my own ADHD – great course!"

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Foreword by Wendy Thomas



This feels like a poignant foreword to write. After 7 years I retire(d) from the National Neurodivergence team in April 2025. As you will see from the report's contents 2024/25 has proved to be a very busy year.

The team continued to transition from the National Autism Team to the National Neurodivergence Team and the year marked some notable events and milestones:

- The relaunch event held at the Temple of Peace in October 2024. The event promoted the changes to the National team whilst celebrating, reflecting and showcasing the progress that has been made across the sector by all partners in the field of autism and ND in Wales.
- The successful movement from the Autism Wales website to the Neurodivergence Wales website.
- The development of coproduced parent carer and ND parent resources.
- The production of ADHD resources.
- The further development of the co-productive ethos of the team. Co-production continues to be at the heart of the work of the team and I want to thank everyone who has worked with and continues to work with the team. The resources, training and information would not be of such high quality and relevance without you.

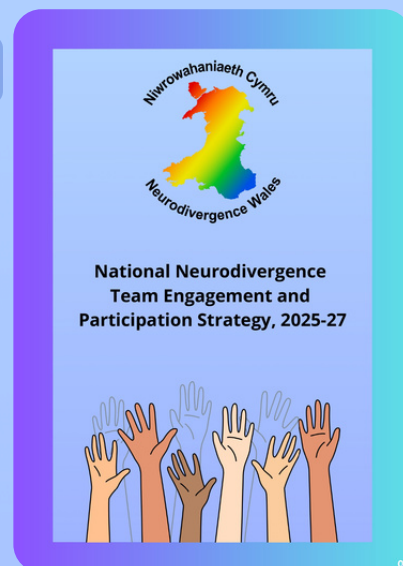
On a personal note, I want to also thank the team for their continued hard work and commitment, the WLGA for their support, advice and guidance and finally Welsh Government for their continued funding, commitment and faith in the work of the team.

Chapter 1: Collaborative Working



Working with the Neurodivergent Community

At the heart of the National Neurodivergence Team's mission to "help improve the lives of neurodivergent people in Wales" is a commitment to coproduction. Neurodivergent people play a central role in shaping all aspects of the Team's work from the development of resources and training to the design and delivery of events. Their lived experience, insight, and expertise are integral to ensuring that the Team's work is relevant, impactful, and inclusive.



In line with this commitment, the **Engagement & Participation Strategy** was updated this year to strengthen opportunities for stakeholders to actively influence decision-making. This approach supports more inclusive, effective, and sustainable outcomes.

[Click here to access the Engagement & Participation Strategy](#)

Understanding ADHD



The Team continues to work closely with advisory groups of neurodivergent people and professionals, acknowledging and valuing the time, energy, and dedication they bring to every project. To mark the Team's transition from a focus on Autism to a broader Neurodivergence remit, the

ADHD Advisory Group developed new ADHD-specific resources, including the **e-learning module Understanding ADHD**, featuring video contributions from members of the neurodivergent community.

[Click here to access the Understanding ADHD eLearning module](#)



Additionally, the Team coproduced **an ADHD film** that explores key topics such as types of ADHD, executive function and working memory, emotional regulation, rejection sensitivity dysphoria, and procrastination. The film blends professional insights with real-life experiences to illustrate how ADHD can affect daily life.

[Click here to view the 'What Is ADHD?' film](#)



In collaboration with the ND Parent & Carer Advisory Group, the Team also produced a series of audio discussions where neurodivergent parents and carers share perspectives on topics such as myth-busting and navigating diverse needs within neurodiverse families.

[Click here to access the ND Parents Discussions](#)

Professional Collaboration

Throughout 2024/25, the National Neurodivergence Team has continued to foster strong partnerships with a diverse range of professionals working in the field of neurodivergence, many of whom are neurodivergent themselves. These collaborations have been instrumental in promoting inclusive practice and enhancing understanding across sectors.



The Team has continued to deliver a series of virtual Community of Practice sessions, covering a broad spectrum of topics relevant to neurodivergence. These sessions have provided professionals across Wales with valuable insights and practical knowledge to inform their work.

[**Click here to view the Community of Practice sessions**](#)

In parallel, the Team has worked with neurodivergent people, third sector organisations, and other professionals to deliver the Parent & Carer Virtual Advice webinar series. These webinars offer tailored information on key topics and include interactive Q&A segments, creating a supportive space for parents and carers. All sessions are available to view on the Neurodivergence Wales website.

[**Click here to view the Parent & Carer Virtual Advice sessions**](#)

The Team has worked closely with Welsh Government to convey the principles of the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme through its work, supporting workstreams, workshops and events to explore needs-led approaches. The Team has aimed to convey the message that improving the lives of neurodivergent people requires a whole system approach, where people can access the right support at the right time regardless of diagnosis. Working with the National Autism Leads has been key to ensuring these messages are spread across Wales.

National Autism Leads Network

The Team has continued to work closely with National Autism Leads across all 22 Local Authorities in Wales. Quarterly National Autism Leads Network meetings have provided a platform for sharing best practices, disseminating key information from the National Neurodivergence Team, and informing national policy and guidance through local networks. These meetings remain a cornerstone of collaborative working and knowledge exchange across Wales.

Strategic and Steering Groups

This year, a core focus of the Team has been to raise awareness of its work and promote the resources available to support stakeholders across Health, Social Care, Education, and neurodivergent people and their families. Ensuring that the resources remain relevant, the Team has actively engaged with stakeholders to gather insights, identify emerging needs, and understand the challenges and barriers they face.

To strengthen this approach, the Team has maintained a strong collaborative presence across Wales, working in partnership with neurodivergent communities, Health Boards, Local Authorities, third sector organisations, Welsh Government and both public and private bodies.

The Team's involvement in a range of strategic and steering groups has enabled it to contribute to key discussions and influence decision-making at multiple levels, including policy.

Strategic and Steering Groups attended in 2024–2025 include:

- WG Cross Party Autism Group meetings
- The Team sits on the 7 ND Strategic Groups across each RPB area
- NIAG – National Implementation and Assurance Group, Adult Learning Disability
- Welsh Government Neurodivergence Ministerial Advisory Group
- National ND/MH Steering Group
- Various autism stakeholder groups across Wales
- NEST/NYTH Community of Practice
- Mental Health Strategic Group
- Welsh Government Neurodivergence Improvement Programme Workstream meetings
- Welsh Government Neurodivergence Improvement Programme Clinical Advisory Groups
- Welsh Government Neurodivergence Improvement Programme Board
- Neurodivergence Improvement Programme Accelerated Design Event to improve children's neurodevelopmental pathways

Working Together for Lasting Change

At the heart of the National Neurodivergence Team's approach is a deep commitment to working with people, not just for them. By centring lived experience and fostering meaningful collaboration across sectors, the Team continues to extend its reach, raising awareness, deepening understanding, and promoting a neuro inclusive approach throughout Wales.

This inclusive ethos not only strengthens the relevance and impact of the Team's work but also helps inform the cultural and attitudinal shifts needed to build a society where neurodivergent people are valued, supported, and better able to thrive.

Chapter 2: Communications



During this year the National Neurodivergence Team formally transitioned from the National Autism Team to the **National Neurodivergence Team**, aligning with Welsh Government's vision reflecting the move from autism to a broader scope.

The National Neurodivergence Team welcomed a new Communications, Research & Improvement Officer in April 2024. Rachel Hazlewood was formerly a member of the Team's Autism Advisory Group.

Website and User Stats



NeurodivergenceWales.org is managed by the National Neurodivergence Team and continues to form the main offer of the Team, housing a range of free, bilingual resources. 2024/25 marked the transition from **AutismWales.org** to **NeurodivergenceWales.org**.

The change reflected the broader remit of the Team and brought together a wider range of resources, including a 'What is ADHD?' video, new e-learning modules on ADHD and Tourette Syndrome, topic-based Parent and Carer resources, and dedicated education content.

The updated website reflects the need to offer a broader range of trusted, bilingual information and resources on neurodivergence to anyone who needs it and continues to be free to access.

[Click here to access the Neurodivergence Wales website](https://neurodivergencewales.org)

Some of the highlights of the updated website include:

- New parent/carers resources arranged in topics and including information and advice sheets and parent & carer virtual advice sessions
- ND Parents Audio Discussions covering a range of topics including myth busting and managing diverse need
- Website Task & Finish Group set up and meeting regularly to review and update content
- Feedback form created and promoted on the website and via social media
- ADHD Information Film and Understanding ADHD e-learning module added to the website
- News items sharing information about relevant events

During 2024/25, the website recorded **169,254 users** and a total of **427,128 page views**. Across the year, **11,353 e-learning module completions** were recorded through the website, further evidencing its role in helping people understand neurodivergent experiences.

Visitors to the website came from a broad international audience, with the **United Kingdom** accounting for **57.5%** of users, followed by notable engagement from the **United States (8.6%), Australia (5.8%), Ireland (5.2%),** and **Canada (4.9%),** alongside a spread of users across Europe and New Zealand.

The website's video resources also continued to grow in reach and impact. Across 2024/25, there were **28,600 video views in total**, with users watching a combined **4,507 hours of video**.

Relaunch Event



In October 2024, the **National Neurodivergence Team** proudly hosted a landmark in-person event to officially relaunch under its new name: the National Neurodivergence Team, transitioning from its previous identity as the National Autism Team. This pivotal moment marked not only a change in name but a broader, more inclusive vision, reflecting the Team's commitment to supporting a broader range of neurodivergent experiences across Wales.

The event was opened with a powerful and affirming message from Minister **Sarah Murphy**, who acknowledged the Team's transformative work and reinforced Welsh Government's dedication to neurodivergent communities. Her words set the tone for a day of reflection, celebration, and forward-looking ambition.

Attended by a wide range of stakeholders, including neurodivergent people, professionals from health, education, and social care, and representatives from third-sector organisations, the event embodied **the depth and breadth of collaboration** that defines the Team's approach. This gathering was a testament to the inclusive ethos at the heart of the National Neurodivergence Team's work.



A highlight of the event was the inspiring line-up of speakers, each offering unique insights into neurodivergence from both personal and professional perspectives. The speakers included:

- **Sian Lewis** – sharing Welsh Government perspective and progress through the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme
- **Professor Anita Thapar** – renowned for her research in neurodevelopmental conditions, most notably ADHD
- **Ewan Richards** – charting his journey as an autistic young man, his work with the National Autism Team and the difference his contributions are making to the lives of neurodivergent people in Wales
- **Dan Jones** – sharing his experience of neurodivergence, how his conditions overlap and interconnect, and how neurodivergence brings strengths as well as challenges
- **Lisa Heledd-Jones** – sharing her personal experience of a Welsh woman's discovery of having ADHD, her journey towards a diagnosis and how her life has changed since
- **Emma Durman** – speaking about her passion for the neurodivergence agenda and her journey with the Team

Their contributions reflected the richness and diversity of neurodivergent voices in Wales and underscored the importance of co-production and collaboration.

The event was chaired by **Keith Ingram**, Autism Lead for both Cardiff and Vale Councils, and also featured Head of Service, **Wendy Thomas**, who shared reflections on the journey of the Team and the progress made in Wales in the field of autism. Wendy also outlined the Team's widening neurodivergence remit, and Transitions Officer **Donna Sharland** introduced the new ADHD e-learning module and information film.



The event served as both an acknowledgement of the progress made in Wales in supporting neurodivergent people and a platform to outline future challenges and aspirations. From improved access to services to greater public understanding, the Team reaffirmed its commitment to driving systemic change and fostering a neuroinclusive society where neurodivergent people are understood, respected, and included.

As part of the event, participants and attendees were invited to share their **memories of the ND journey in Wales** as well as some of their **hopes for the future**. These comments were collected on a series of specially designed postcards. A selection of the comments can be seen here:

What are your memories of Wales' ND journey?

"The supportive and empowering e-learning materials – the Communication Module gave me permission and empowerment to communicate in my ND way."

"The opportunity to be involved and the support from the team, will hopefully remain a positive, even when I'm having a hard time existing and trying to work in systems not designed for me."

"Planning and working on the employment event for autistic people with the advisory group."

"I've been here since NWIAS was established. It has been a journey of learning and development for all and extremely memorable. Have loved being on The Bus!"

"Helping me to understand more about Autism through the e-learning modules"

"The evolution you have facilitated has already changed the lives of so many. It has already created so much opportunity that can continue to grow."

"The first national Autism Wales conference in Swansea! Being involved in the planning and prep for it alongside autistic people and their families!"



What are your hopes for the future of ND in Wales?

"Much greater emphasis on ND and the intersection with other protected characteristics. Being an autistic of colour is a different experience, Ditto disability, trans etc."

"Impact of hormonal changes on ND women & girls: puberty; menstrual cycle; perimenopause; menopause; pregnancy; perinatal"

"AuDHD and co-occurrence of needs, traits/conditions"

"Understanding knowledge and support for ND adults as parents and through parenthood journey (not NT approaches)"

'Cross-pollination of practice, policy and process between ND support and mental health support so that it is seen as co-existing. Please continue your work to strengthen this area so that children don't suffer as tomorrow's adults.'

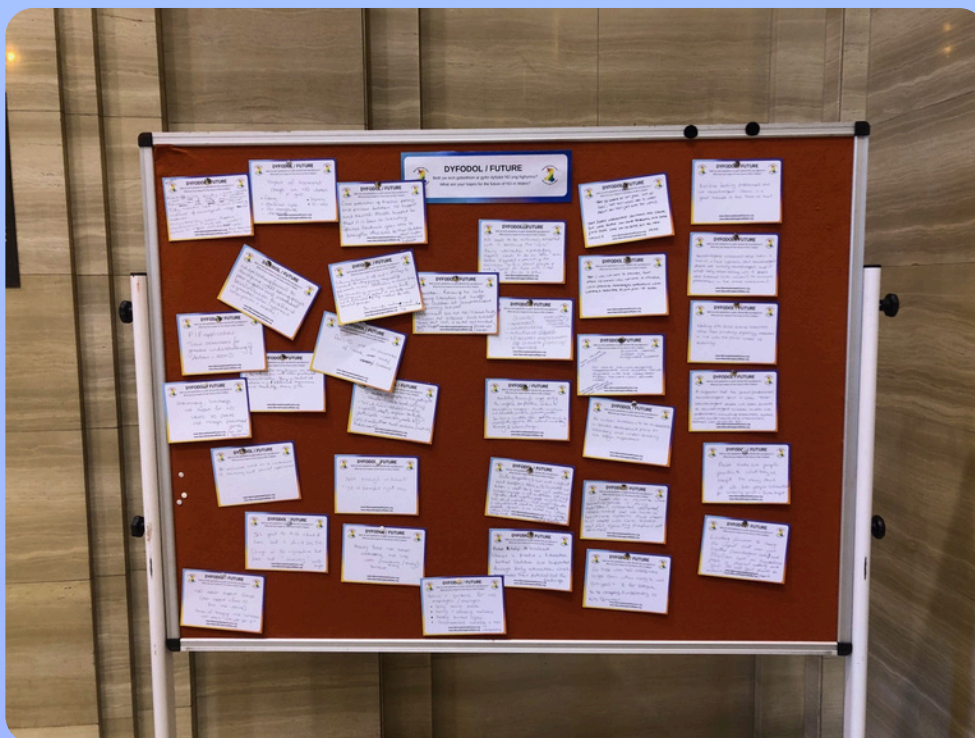
"Understanding, Acceptance & Inclusion"

"An inclusive world via a continuation of learning and shared experiences."

"A recognition that the parent/professional/neurodivergent split is often "false". Neurodivergent people are often parents of neurodivergent children and/or are professionals, including teachers, doctors, nurses, allied healthcare professionals, teachers, civil servants etc."

"That I will not have to struggle, that other ND humans will not have to struggle; with gaining meaningful employment, with living and thriving as our full ND selves."

"Mandatory training for every part of the workforce, from frontline workers to commissioning managers. Health social care and education/schools/voluntary sector. You have an incredible vision but this can only be successfully effective with national mandatory training to achieve change."



Social Media

The National Neurodivergence Team has continued to expand its presence on social media throughout 2024/25, **posting daily in both Welsh and English**. Facebook saw **an increase of 1,258 followers** (a **51.5% increase** from 2023/24) and a total of **6,625 interactions** on the platform. In November, the Team also transitioned its activity from X to Bluesky, **gaining 93 followers** over the remainder of 2024/25.

Across the year the Team's social media posts reflected the following:

- Marking relevant calendar awareness days to highlight neurodivergence and intersectionality, signposting to resources on the website and other trusted organisations
- Supporting and creating social media campaigns to share information at key times of year such as Tourettes Action, Tourettes Hurts Campaign; Tourettes Awareness Month; World Autism Awareness Day; World Autism Awareness Week; World Autism Acceptance Month; ADHD Awareness Month; Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Awareness Weeks; DLD Awareness Day; Neurodiversity Celebration Week; Welsh Government's Hate Hurts campaign
- Promoting upcoming Parent and Carer virtual advice sessions
- Signposting to newly developed resources including recordings of the Community of Practice sessions and Parent and Carer virtual advice sessions
- Sharing news items
- Reposting and sharing relevant posts offering useful information
- Promoting free events and accessible groups around Wales
- Highlighting and promoting events the Team is speaking or exhibiting at

External Communications

Over this year the National Neurodivergence Team has worked with a variety of media outlets to help promote the work of the Team to a wider audience. This has been instrumental in introducing the Team's resources to more people who can benefit.

Some examples of media collaboration include:

- Interviewed at The Welsh Business Show October 2024
- Featured on Radio Cardiff in January 2025

- Appeared on ITV Wales in January 2025
- Appeared on BBC Wales in February 2025
- Interviewed on Pure West Radio February 2025
- Interviewed on Radio Cymru February 2025
- Article in Perinatal MH newsletter
- BBC Wales website
- Kryon Media digital magazine for Health Professionals – first of a series of four articles featuring the Team's work. March 2025 focus on e-learning modules.

Welsh Healthcare Review

Public Engagement Events

The National Neurodivergence Team continues to value public engagement events as a vital component of its work to promote inclusion and collaborative progress across the whole system.

In 2024/25 the Team participated in several key events, including:



- End Youth Homelessness Launch Event – April 2024
- Chinese Autism Project Outreach, Senedd – April 2024
- The MH & Wellbeing Show, Cardiff – May 2024
- Senedd Insight, ND In The Workplace – May 2024
- Caerphilly/Torfaen Community of Enquiry – June and August 2024
- Discovery Summer School Graduation Fayre, Cardiff University – July 2024
- Media Cymru Accessible Futures Summit, Cardiff – September 2024
- The Autistic Minds Show, LIVE, Cardiff – September 2024
- The Welsh Business Show, Swansea – October 2024
- Neuroshow, Poland - October 2024
- NNDT Relaunch Event – October 2024
- ASD Family Help, Autism, ALN & ND Information Event, Pembroke Dock - November 2024
- Social Care Wales Early Years Conference, Cardiff – November 2024
- C&V IAS Autism Advice Hub – January 2025

- CTM ND/ LD Pathways to Work Event – January 2025
- ALN Marketplace, Swansea – January 2025
- CCC Education Dept - January 2025
- Careers Wales Inclusive Job Fair, Cardiff – January 2025
- Tristan Williams ALN Lead – Welsh Language Resources - March 2025
- Children's Commissioner for Wales ALN Event, St Asaph – March 2025
- West Wales Neurodivergence Support Event, Carmarthen – March 2025
- Caerphilly Breakfast Employment Event – March 2025

The Team has really enjoyed meeting so many people this year. These events provided essential opportunities to strengthen connections between stakeholders. By fostering informed participation and amplifying diverse perspectives, public engagement helps ensure that services and strategies are shaped by those with lived experience. It also supports innovation and drives positive change across sectors.

The Team hopes to attend many more events in 2025/26. Please get in touch if you have an event you would like the Team to attend.

Contact the National Neurodivergence Team at: autismwales@wlga.gov.uk

Chapter 3:

Code of Practice



Strategic Commitment and Legislative Framework

Building on Welsh Government's commitment to improving services for autistic people, a statutory **Code of Practice for Delivery of Autism Services** was introduced in September 2021. This Code was developed under the **Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014** and **NHS (Wales) Act 2006**. It outlines the duties placed upon both social services and health boards in delivering and improving consistent, equitable, and person-centred support.

The National Neurodivergence Team has played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of the Code since its inception, ensuring that its principles are embedded across services and that its impact is continually evaluated and refined.

<https://www.gov.wales/code-practice-delivery-autism-services>

Evaluation of the Autism Code of Practice

In partnership with People & Work, the National Neurodivergence Team has supported Welsh Government's ongoing evaluation of the Autism Code of Practice. This multi-phase evaluation aims to assess compliance, identify areas for improvement, and understand the lived experiences of autistic people and their families.

Key Milestones:

- **March 2024:** Formal commencement of the evaluation.
- **30 April 2024:** Publication of **Part 1**, focusing on auditing compliance from a practitioner perspective, including baseline assessments across regions.

- **2024–2025: Part 2** underway, revisiting recommendations from Part 1 and expanding the scope to include:
 - Experiences of autistic people, parents, and carers.
 - Perspectives of practitioners on compliance and impact.
 - Assessment of whether recommendations have been implemented.
 - Identification of challenges faced by service providers.
 - Exploration of Code requirements and compliance levels.
 - Analysis of practice changes attributable to the Code.
 - Evaluation of impact on autistic adults, children, and their families.

Data Collection Initiatives:

Co-developed and rolled out surveys targeting:

- **Parent carers and autistic people** to assess the Code's impact.
- **Workforce managers** to monitor compliance and resource use, such as completion of e-learning modules.

Partnership Working

Collaboration has been central to the Team's approach, ensuring that the Code is understood, implemented, and evaluated effectively across Wales.

Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) in Wales are statutory bodies established under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Their primary role is to drive strategic regional delivery of health and social care services, ensuring better integration and collaboration, aiming to provide more seamless, person-centred support.

The Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services places a duty on Local Health Boards and Local Authorities to develop Autism strategic groups under the RPB, to inform service development and oversee implementation of the Code.

The National Neurodivergence Team has worked closely with these **Regional Strategic Groups** to identify compliance areas and provide advice and support to address recommendations from the first phase of the evaluation.

Key principles in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act are access to information and advice and prevention and early intervention. Under the Act, every local authority in Wales is required to provide **Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Services** to support individuals – these services are the cornerstone of the Act’s preventative approach. The Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services places duties on these services to be accessible to the autistic community and to enable autistic people in their daily lives.

Throughout the past year the National Neurodivergence Team has been supporting IAA services to further understand and improve compliance with the Code. The Team has:

- Recognised **Information, Advice & Assistance (IAA) Teams** as critical to meeting Code duties.
- Delivered targeted webinars for Adult and Children’s IAA teams.
- Hosted a national in-person event in **Llandrindod Wells** (July 2024) in partnership with Welsh Government, with **20 out of 22 Local Authorities** represented. The event was well received and an opportunity for services to network, learn from one another and showcase best practice examples.

Broader Outreach:

- Extended engagement with ‘front door’ and preventative services such as Families First, Family Information Services (FIS), and Flying Start to raise awareness and provide tailored resources.
- Maintained ongoing communication with local stakeholder groups to share evaluation updates and gather feedback.

Audiology Collaboration:

- Contributed to a Welsh Government-led online Audiology workshop, identifying neurodivergence as a priority area for review.
- Supported the formation of a task & finish group to develop resources on reasonable adjustments for neurodivergent patients.

This pilot will inform future developments across other service areas.

Workforce Development

Supporting workforce readiness and compliance has remained a key focus throughout the year. The Team has engaged in a range of activities to support this work, including:

- Continued rollout of **e-learning and training resources** aligned with the Code.
- Supported workforce managers by:
 - Collating and analysing compliance data.
 - Updating them with new resources.
 - Assisting with online learning platform integration.
- Promoting completion of **team certificates** to evidence learning.

Neurodivergence (ND) Code of Practice

In parallel with the Autism Code, the National Neurodivergence Team has actively contributed to the early development of a broader, draft **Neurodivergence Code of Practice**, ensuring continuity and alignment across frameworks. The Team has collaborated with the Workforce Working Group to expand the training framework to include neurodivergence. The Team has worked closely with Welsh Government in:

- Designing and rolling out the **initial consultation survey**.
- Reviewing survey results and aligning outcomes with existing Autism Code themes.
- Beginning to draft the **new ND Code document**.

Chapter 4: Training and Workforce Development



This has been yet another busy year for the National Neurodivergence Team delivering awareness raising, promoting understanding and upskilling the workforce across the whole system.

Developing a **capable, competent and confident workforce** is a key duty within the Code and a priority within the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme. The Team's role is to support the wider workforce, as well as health, social care and education staff to become neuroinclusive.

Communities of Practice

The National Neurodivergence Team's **Community of Practice** sessions are aimed at supporting professionals to have a greater understanding of neurodivergence and how they can adapt their practice to better understand and support neurodivergent people

The key message of many of this year's Community of Practice sessions was thinking about neurodivergence through life stages and how these impact people, for example - menopause. Recognising that, at different life stages, people can present to services such as primary and secondary services, both general and mental health, and co-occurring conditions can make it more difficult to identify neurodivergence.

Emma Woodhouse is a Forensic Psychologist – she delivered a useful session targeted towards Clinicians on the **Autism/ADHD overlap**.

"As it was a large number of us, I genuinely appreciated that our mics and cameras were off. Contribution was welcomed massively, and yet it still allowed for the session to run smoothly with no overlap of others speaking etc. Overall, brilliant"

"It was such an enjoyable session, thank you for arranging the session"

"Particularly enjoyed the practical considerations in assessing ASD & ADHD and the importance of highlighting support needs"



The Team worked with **Pippa Cottrell** from the Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists in Wales alongside **Ceri Reed** from Parent Voices – to get both a professional and lived experience perspective of **Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)**.

"I attended this morning's event and it was simply superb! So practical, thought provoking and encouraging. Thank you"

"A great Community of Practice event. It was all well worth attending"

[Click here to view the Developmental Language Disorder Community of Practice session](#)

Dr Rachel Moseley and **Eunhee Kim** delivered a session looking at the co-occurrence of **ND and Menopause**. Supporting women to be understood by professionals as they experience menopause – highlighting the risk factors.



"Thank you so much for yesterday's Community of Practice. I found the training very helpful and learnt a bit more about neurodivergence and menopause and feel there is so much more to learn"

"Thank you for covering such an important topic"

[Click here to view the ND and Menopause Community of Practice session](#)

Workforce Training

The National Neurodivergence Team was really pleased to work with several substance misuse services this year. The Team worked with **Barod Cymru** to deliver a series of training sessions to their staff:

- Understanding Neurodiversity with a focus on Autism
- Understanding Neurodiversity with a focus on ADHD

As a prerequisite of attending the course **Barod** staff had to complete the e-learning modules. The sessions focussed on helping practitioners understand why neurodivergent people may use alcohol and substances and how practitioners can adapt their practice accordingly, with a particular focus on Autism & ADHD.

"The training sessions on Autism & ADHD have been really informative and given me lots of ideas to explore. Thank you!"

"This was excellent training, the trainers clearly had so much knowledge and passion, I really appreciated the link to neuroscience and Porges window of tolerance – more of this please, as I believe this kind of work is vital to support clients with psychoeducation. With waitlists for assessment for ND pathways being 3+ years I feel that more is falling on generic support services, so any training that supports us to adapt 'containment/ wellbeing' skills to the ND community is very welcome"

"Wonderful training – couldn't recommend it enough! I thought the structure of the training was really good in having 20-minute break slots. It improved my engagement and my concentration and it's something I intend to take away into my own facilitation in meetings and trainings. Both trainers were extremely credible, and the sharing of lived experience really reinforced the really important messages that came to life as a result"

"Great graphics, incredible speaker knowledge, liked the polls and Executive Functioning Activity"

The Team also delivered these sessions for **Cardiff & Vale Drug and Alcohol Service (CaVDAS)**.

The National Neurodivergence Team has engaged well with **Aberystwyth University**. Over the year the Team has delivered:

- A training session for the Certificate in Healthcare Education Level 4. This provided these students who are already working in the field of Health and Social Care, with awareness and information about neurodivergence.
- Understanding ND training for BSE Nursing Degree students at Aberystwyth University.
- Understanding ND training for PGCE Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Teaching Qualification).

Importantly, the Team has continued to support **Capita**, raising awareness and understanding with their workforce. In April, the Team delivered an Autism training session as part of a continued series of training sessions provided to Capita by the National Neurodivergence Team. The Capita workforce also undertook the Autism e-learning modules 1 & 2.

Housing is another key area where the Team is able to provide advice, resources and training. The Team delivered a series of training sessions to **Clwyd Alun Housing** in North Wales on Understanding Neurodiversity for Housing Professionals. This enabled housing practitioners to adapt their practice to meet the needs of neurodivergent people.

"Thank you so much for yesterday's training. I found the training very helpful and learnt a bit more about neurodiversity and feel there is so much more to learn. The slides will be useful as well as the videos."

*"I really enjoyed the training session from a professional and personal perspective"
"Would have liked more discussion on 'pathological demand avoidance' and ways of reducing the triggers associated with it."*

The Team also delivered pilot sessions in **Caerphilly** for the **housing department**.

"Trainer had personal and professional experience of ND and was able to show examples to aid our learning"

"The training was most interesting and certainly provided a good insight to the subject matter"

"Wonderful course, highlighted the needs that are not always visible, raised my awareness and empathy"

"Course exceeded my expectations on a very complex subject"

The Team delivered a series of Understanding Autism sessions to **Probation Professionals**. This is part of a rolling programme where the National Neurodivergence Team will be delivering training twice yearly to newly qualified probation officers.

"The trainer was really helpful and knowledgeable and I found the course really useful"

Training was also delivered for **Adferiad Appropriate Adults (AA)**. Adferiad Understanding Neurodiversity Training for AA's (Appropriate Adults) supported Appropriate Adults to recognise, understand and better support neurodivergent people in custody.

Feedback from all attendees was overwhelmingly positive and participants reported a significant increase in knowledge and confidence in supporting neurodivergent people.

It is important to ensure services are understanding of neurodivergence from a very young age and throughout childhood. The Team had the opportunity to deliver two twilight sessions for **Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years in Wales**:

1. Understanding Neurodiversity – Effective Environments
2. Understanding Neurodiversity – Enabling Adults

"Thank you for a really interesting and engaging twilight session"

"Thanks again for such an inspirational session"

The Team also attended **PACEY Cymru's Celebration Event** in October.

"Thank you very much for your session at our celebration event on Saturday. It was so inspirational and very well received by all of us in attendance"

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for speaking at our event on Saturday. I know that everyone found it extremely thought provoking and learnt a lot from it. Someone said to me that you were the best guest speaker they had heard"

The Team provided Understanding ND Training for **Powys Detached Youthwork Team** – which will be part of an ongoing piece of work collaborating with the Workforce Development Officer for Education Training Standards for Youth Work and Play Work (Welsh Local Government Agency). This is a pilot project which will be extended to Newport Youth Services exploring the possibility of a national approach.

GPs play a critical role in identifying neurodivergence and understanding the impact of a range of co-occurring physical and mental conditions. It was an honour for the National Neurodivergence Team to attend the **Royal College of GPs Study Day at University Wales Hospital** to raise the profile of and explore co-occurring physical health conditions and neurodivergence with them. The Team also worked with GPs in Hywel Dda University Health Board delivering Understanding Neurodiversity training.

"Thank you so much for your contribution to the GP Study Day. It really made the day a more comprehensive educational session! We gained many new insights into your work at the National Neurodivergence Team. We certainly needed to become more aware of the breadth of free services available to patients and their care givers. GP trainee feedback will reflect the same."

The Team delivered an information session on understanding neurodivergence to the registrations department of **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**.

"Thank you so much for coming! There was such a lot of positive feedback after your session regarding the content and your skills as an engaging speaker – you are just one of those people who have it! The resources are very much appreciated."

The Team has delivered a series of sessions for **Social Care Wales** including a workshop on Qualifications and Standards in relation to Neurodiversity, an Understanding Neurodiversity session on Supporting ND SCW learners, Supporting ND Learners to Access Social Care Qualifications, and an ND Workshop for Learning Providers, plus a session on Supporting ND Social Workers.

"Thank you, the course supported my knowledge and understanding and really helped me come to terms with my own ADHD – great course!"

"I just wanted to say thanks for organising and delivering the session. I have already passed on details of the NNDT to some colleagues in some LAs and to a fostering organisation. It was a really positive area of learning for me so thanks for the way it was delivered. As someone who delivers training, facilitation, coaching it was really nice to enjoy and get so much from training."

The Team is sometimes asked to deliver bespoke training for different organisations, and this year delivered Understanding Neurodiversity sessions for the **Arts Council Wales**.

With all bespoke sessions, the organisations are required to undertake the e-learning modules – Autism modules 1 and 2, the ADHD e-learning module, and the Tourettes & Tics e-learning module – ahead of the bespoke training. This ensures all participants have a broad understanding to maximise the learning opportunity of a bespoke session.

"Thank you both and congratulations on excellent training. It was hugely positive, informative, understanding and kind, and full of incredibly useful resources. But, most importantly, you were both so sensitive and open. I can't tell you what it means to me to know that this training is being shared across Wales."

"I feel it gave me confidence that the way I am approaching my interactions with individuals is the right one, but that also there's an ongoing learning and adaptation to go through, as no single individual has the same requirements and needs."

ALNCo Forums

Support for ALNCo has continued this year and has been well received. The Team attended **ALNCo forums throughout Wales** to raise awareness of neurodivergence and promote greater understanding of neurodivergence. These forums were also an opportunity to showcase the work of the Team and available resources. The Team attended ALNCo forums in Ceredigion, Bridgend, Merthyr, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Powys.

Events

The National Neurodivergence Team was pleased to attend the following events to share knowledge of the Team and its resources. Thanks go to organisers who provided the opportunity to speak at some of these events.

- **October 2024** – Canopi Conference (organisation that supports MH) [Canopi](#)
- **October 2024** – Foster Care Wales – delivered workshop on Understanding Neurodiversity & Executive Functioning
- **October 2024** – Delivered workshop on Understanding Neurodiversity & Executive Functioning at End Youth Homelessness Cymru Conference in Llandrindod Wells
- **January 2025** – ALNCO Conference in Cardiff – sharing resources/information
- **February 2025** – Foster Wales Conference in Pembrokeshire – sharing resources/information

Chapter 5: Integrated Autism Service



This chapter provides key high-level data from all Integrated Autism Services (IAS) across Wales, reflecting the breadth of their work and the dedication of staff operating within constrained resources.

As with previous years, 2024/25 has continued to challenge all seven Integrated Autism Services in terms of demand and capacity, as can be demonstrated by the [Review of the Demand, Capacity and Design of Neurodevelopmental Services](#) report commissioned by the Welsh Government.

Key Data Headlines from 2024/25:

- **7,094** referrals to the service were made
- **62%** of these were self-referrals
- **72%** of referrals requesting autism diagnostic assessments
- **28%** were requesting support
- **1,703** adults received a diagnostic assessment
- **1,215** adults received a positive diagnosis of autism
 - Equating to **71%** of those assessed receiving a positive diagnosis of autism
- **542** referrals to the service were made for parents/carers with **95%** of these self-referrals
- **97%** of referrals were for parents/carers of autistic adults and **3%** were for parents/carers of autistic children
- **6,587** interactions were made with professionals
- **3,263** new contacts with professionals
 - **53%** of contacts were from health professionals, **30%** were professionals from local authorities and **3%** were professionals from the voluntary sector

The IAS provide post-diagnostic information and support, including time-limited individual support. The **Outcomes Star** is an outcomes measurement tool that is used by the IASs when working with people on a one-to-one basis. In 2024/25:

- 98% of individuals demonstrated improved outcomes in at least one area
- 90% demonstrated improved outcomes in at least two areas
- 83% demonstrated improved outcomes in at least three areas

The IAS successfully deliver a range of **post-diagnostic group** work to support autistic people. In 2024/25, **1,548** people attended group sessions.

"Very lovely people. Always answer questions and very patient. Explaining things, topics, emotions in a good way, a way I can understand. Quite thorough and rigorous etc. Great people and made me feel heard."

For the full 2024/25 IAS Data Report, please refer to **Appendix 1**.

Practice Exchanges

Practice Exchanges remain a cornerstone of collaborative learning and peer support across the seven IAS teams. These sessions foster a unified approach to service delivery and provide a platform for sharing strengths, addressing challenges, and promoting innovation. The National Neurodivergence Team has continued to facilitate these exchanges, actively gathering feedback from IAS teams to shape areas of focus.

Practice Exchanges Held in 2024/25:

- Autistic Burnout: Exploring recognition, prevention, and support strategies.
- Motivational Interviewing: Enhancing communication and engagement techniques.

These exchanges have strengthened inter-team relationships and contributed to a more cohesive national strategy for autism services.

Training

The National Neurodivergence Team continues to prioritise **workforce development**, ensuring that IAS staff have access to relevant and high-quality training opportunities. In 2024/25, several key training initiatives were commissioned and delivered to enhance skills and support consistency across Wales.

Training Highlights:

- **Diagnostic Training – ADOS and ACIA:** Delivered in collaboration with Newcastle University. The ACIA tool is being translated into Welsh, marking a significant milestone as the **first bilingual adult diagnostic tool**.
- **MindSparks Executive Functioning Coaching Training:** A six-week pilot course launched in March 2025, aimed at Support Workers. This initiative was developed in response to identified training gaps and will be evaluated in 2025/26.

Quarterly IAS Managers Meetings

Quarterly Leads' Meetings, coordinated and facilitated by the National Neurodivergence Team, have continued to play a vital role in maintaining operational consistency and strategic alignment across all IAS teams. These meetings provide a forum for business planning, sharing best practices, and addressing emerging challenges collaboratively.

The meetings have supported:

- Consistent delivery of services across Wales
- Strategic planning and problem-solving
- Strengthening communication between teams and the National Neurodivergence Team

The work of the Integrated Autism Services in 2024/25 reflects a deep commitment to improving outcomes for autistic adults in Wales. Despite significant pressures, the IAS teams have demonstrated resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to supporting autistic people across Wales.

Chapter 6: Education



Learning about Autism



Whilst the National Neurodivergence Team is updating its offer, the Team has continued to promote the Learning About Autism Programme for education providers from early years settings across to secondary schools. As part of the accreditation process, this year an additional **4,197 pupils** across primary and secondary schools have engaged with the **Autism Superheroes book**.

[Click here to view the Autism Superheroes book](#)



[Find out more about the Early Years scheme here](#)

2,084 teaching and learning support staff from primary schools have engaged with the programmes, with **3,141** teaching and learning support staff from secondary schools engaging with the **Learning About Autism programme**.

Here's what some of them told us:

"Implementing autism training for all staff and pupils has significantly enhanced support for students on the spectrum. It fosters a more inclusive environment where everyone understands and appreciates diverse learning needs."

"the Learning about Autism program has greatly increased understanding of autism in our school! It has equipped both staff and students with valuable insights into the experiences and needs of autistic individuals. This shared knowledge has fostered a more inclusive environment, encouraging empathy and effective communication. As a result, we're seeing improved interactions and support for all students, making our school community stronger and more connected."

"The autism training program has had a positive impact on our pupils. It has not only increased awareness and understanding among students, but it has also fostered a greater sense of acceptance and support within the school community. We've noticed improved interactions, increased empathy, and a more inclusive environment where all students feel valued. This has enhanced the overall well-being and engagement of our autistic pupils, allowing them to thrive both socially and academically."

"We recommend that all parents refer to your website when querying ASD and for advice and guidance. Staff have made changes to their classroom environment and feel they have a far greater understanding of ASD and how to support. All pupils with ASD have a one page profile outlining support strategies for supply staff."

"Since staff have undertaken the training and programme as ALNCO I have received more emails asking about signs they have picked up on. When these signs are recognised, we will ask for early intervention from the ASD team and get the pupil the extra support that is needed. We are developing a sensory corner within our student enrichment centre so pupils have a quiet area they can access when feeling overwhelmed."

"we have created a more inclusive universal provision in classrooms for the whole class, without singling out children. We have visual timetables in all classes, we did a lot of now and next work, and we have some movement breaks for children during class time."

"staff are much more aware, and also children can help each other and look out for signs if some peers are finding things difficult."

"the Learning about Autism programme has provided staff with a deeper understanding of the diverse ways autism can present in pupils, enhancing their ability to identify signs and respond effectively. Staff now have a greater appreciation for the challenges faced by autistic pupils and are more proactive in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment tailored to their needs."

The training and resources on the website has equipped staff with practical tools and strategies, such as using visual aids, managing sensory sensitivities, and fostering clear communication, which are being implemented across the school to benefit autistic pupils".

"We have put together sensory rooms, quiet corners/eating areas, visual timetables, fidgets, headphones if and when required. In collaboration with all members of staff, we feel that the needs of our children identified are met to a high standard. Daily communication with parents has also proved valuable."

"the adults and children alike, have all become more aware of the signs to look out for, how we can help and support where needed."

The National Neurodivergence Team has established an **Education Working Group** to review and update the education resources available on the website. The group includes representatives from Welsh Government ALN and neurodivergence policy teams, Primary and Secondary School Teaching Staff, Autism Leads, Education and Child Psychologists, ALNCos, ALN Performance Specialists, Speech, Language and Communication Specialist Teachers, and people with lived experience.

Improving access to education resources in the **Welsh language** has been an important area of work this year. The Team worked with **Trystan Williams, ALN National Implementation Lead (Welsh Language) from Welsh Government**, who is overseeing specific work on the Welsh language offer for ALN. Members of the Team worked with Trystan producing podcasts, updating resources and attending conferences in Llandudno and Cardiff in March 2025.

[**A link to the podcast can be found here**](#)

The Team has continued to attend **Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) forums** across Wales. There has been good engagement from staff present at these forums, and they are proving an excellent opportunity to network, share information about the Team's resources, and understand what else might be helpful for the sector.

The education-focused **Community of Practice sessions** from **Catrina Lowri** and **Marjorie Thomas** remain popular. These are hosted on the National Neurodivergence Team's website and can be accessed by professionals and parents and carers. They include topics such as:

- Supporting Neurodiversity in the Classroom
- Autism and 'the Dyses'
- Supporting Learners with Dyslexia
- Pervasive Demand for Autonomy
- Exclusion Prevention and Neurodivergence
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance

The parent and carer advice sessions also provided **education-based advice for parents and carers** this year. This was in response to the needs and concerns identified by parents and carers in relation to the importance of education and ensuring that the provision of education meets the specific needs of their children and young people.



Catrina Lowri, Neuroteachers, presented a session on 'What support can your neurodivergent child expect in school'.

[Click here to view 'What support can your neurodivergent child expect in school'](#)

Ceri Reed, Parents Voices in Wales, also presented a session 'Advocating for your child or young person'.

[Click here to view 'Advocating for your child or young person'](#)



Chapter 7: Family Support



There has been a continued increase in public awareness and recognition of neurodivergence, leading to a significant rise in referrals for diagnostic assessment across services.

With lengthy waiting times, and families often reporting difficulties in accessing information and support whilst waiting for diagnostic assessment, there is a risk of escalation in need. To address these challenges, the National Neurodivergence Team works within the principles of the **Welsh Government Neurodivergence Improvement Programme**. The Team remains committed to a **needs-led approach**, ensuring that support is not contingent on diagnostic labels.

The National Neurodivergence Team has continued to prioritise **accessibility and inclusivity** by offering high-quality information, resources, and guidance to anyone who may benefit, whether or not they have a formal diagnosis. All resources are free to access for everyone.

This year, the National Neurodivergence Team has played a pivotal role in shaping and delivering a wide range of **family-focused initiatives**, working in close collaboration with parents, carers and professionals.

Parent & Carer Advisory Group

Advisory Groups, facilitated and supported by the National Neurodivergence Team, have been instrumental in driving forward key initiatives. These groups embody a coproduction ethos, bringing together neurodivergent families and professionals to co-create impactful resources. Thanks are extended to the 60+ parents and carers who have participated in the Parent & Carer Advisory Groups this year. The resulting materials promote deeper understanding and offer **practical strategies** for supporting neurodivergent children in everyday contexts.

Between July and December 2024, the National Neurodivergence Team undertook a process of reviewing existing Parents & Carers resources, continuing the ongoing process of neurodivergence transformation. Following recommendations from the advisory group, the Team redesigned and reorganised the resources into topic areas on the website. A series of eight smaller groups was held for each topic. This process resulted in a series of new **Top Tips sheets** on a range of topics, to complement the larger **Advice Sheets**. Links to the recordings of the Parents & Carers Virtual Advice Sessions were also added to each of the topic pages.

This **website enhancement**, where information is organised into clearly defined topics, greatly improves accessibility and user experience. Parents and carers can now more easily navigate the site and locate the information they need. The full range of topics are:

- Supporting Siblings
- Sleep
- Food, Diet & Eating
- Assessment
- Toileting
- School
- Challenging/Distress Behaviour
- Planning & Prioritising

[Click here to access the list of topics.](#)

Virtual Advice Sessions for Parents & Carers

The diverse programme of **virtual advice sessions** has continued, covering a wide range of topics relevant to parents and carers of neurodivergent children. These sessions have featured renowned experts and practitioners, blending professional insight with parent-focused perspectives. The sessions are recorded and hosted on the National Neurodivergence Team's website following the live session.

[Click here to access the Virtual Advice Sessions for Parents & Carers.](#)

Session Highlights:

April 2024 **Autistic Burnout & Energy Accounting: A Guide for Parents** - Professor Tony Attwood

April 2024 **Advocating For Your Child** - Ceri Reed

May 2024 **Supporting Siblings** - Emma Durman

June 2024 **Anxiety Management** - Melissa Hutchings

July 2024 **Managing Meltdowns** - Behaviour Support Hub

September 2024 **Support Your ND Child at School** - Catrina Lowri

November 2024 **Staying Safe Online** - Emma Durman

December 2024 **PDA A guide for Parents** - Catrina Lowri & Lucy Johnson

February 2025 **An ND Parents' Story** - Lisa Davies

March 2025 **Sensory Processing** - Helping Kids Shine

Each session was well received, with participants valuing the blend of expert advice and relatable, parent-led insights. The National Neurodivergence Team continues to gather feedback to inform future sessions and ensure ongoing relevance to the needs of families.

"The session was a brilliant insight – very useful and helpful."

"It was really valuable – I learnt a lot and wanted it to continue."

"Brilliant! And the fact that we get a recording to go through at our leisure is very helpful."

"It was very informative and a friendly environment."

"It covered everything I need to know."

"The lived experiences were invaluable."

"It was the perfect balance of information, a break, then Q & A."

ND Parent Audio Discussions

One of the year's standout developments has been the launch of **Neurodivergent Parent audio discussions**. These discussions provide a powerful platform for neurodivergent parents to share their insights and lived experiences, covering a range of topics including myth busting and managing diverse needs. By amplifying these voices, the sessions offer a unique lens into family dynamics, fostering empathy and enhancing support strategies.

[Click here to access the ND Parents Discussions.](#)

Working with 'Front Door' Services

One of the principles embedded in the Social Services & Wellbeing Act, the Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services and the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme, is the duty to enable people to access **timely information, advice and assistance and early intervention**.

'Front door' operational services that act as the first point of contact for families are key to meeting needs as they arise. This year, the National Neurodivergence Team has worked closely with a range of these services to upskill key staff who provide frontline support to families on a daily basis, promoting the vision of a **neuroinclusive workforce**, competent and confident in supporting neurodivergent families.

In **July 2024**, the Team facilitated a national workshop with local authority **Information, Advice and Assistance Services** from across Wales, sharing good practice, exploring their duties and showcasing how the Team's resources can support their work.

In **September 2024**, the Team attended the **Foster Wales Conference** in Cardiff and delivered a presentation highlighting the work of the National Neurodivergence Team.

In **November 2024**, the Team presented the work of the National Neurodivergence Team at a series of **Powys Pathfinder** events.

In **January 2025**, the National Neurodivergence Team embarked on a project delivering information sessions to **Families First & Flying Start** teams in all local authorities around Wales. The purpose of this project was threefold: to highlight relevant resources on the Neurodivergence Wales website which family-facing professionals might find helpful when supporting families; to outline some of the duties under the Code of Practice for the Delivery of Autism Services; and to identify the e-learning modules that can help services meet those duties.

This work will continue into next year as the Team learns from this engagement and reshapes resources into useful toolkits, which operational staff can use in their day-to-day practice. The Team will initially pilot these resources in one local authority area before rolling them out across Wales.

Resource Development for Professionals

In **March 2025**, in collaboration with neurodivergent parents and carers, the National Neurodivergence Team has been leading the development of a suite of resources tailored for professionals working with neurodivergent families. The aim of these resources is to support professionals to improve their understanding of neurodivergent parents. These resources will reflect a parent-led approach, ensuring that guidance is rooted in real-life experiences and offering actionable strategies for inclusive practice.

Chapter 8: Transition to National Neurodivergence Team



A Pivotal Year: 2024–2025

2024/25 was a pivotal year for the National Neurodivergence Team, marking **a formal transition from the National Autism Team, aligning with the Welsh Government agenda and the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme**. This shift reflects a broader and more inclusive approach to neurodivergence, encompassing not only autism but also ADHD, Tourette's and tic conditions, and other neurodivergent profiles.

The National Neurodivergence Team worked hard to begin to develop a range of resources and training covering this broader understanding of neurodivergence to expand knowledge across sectors.

Relaunch Event: Celebrating Progress, Embracing Change

On **31st October 2024**, the National Neurodivergence Team hosted a landmark Relaunch Event to celebrate this transition and showcase the journey from autism-specific work to a wider neurodivergence agenda. The event brought together neurodivergent people, professionals, and third-sector organisations from across Wales.

Highlights included:

- A powerful opening message from **Minister Sarah Murphy**
- Inspiring talks by **Professor Anita Thapar, Sian Lewis, Ewan Richards, Dan Jones, Emma Durman, and Lisa Heledd-Jones**
- A fully neurodiverse programme chaired by Cardiff & Vale Autism Lead, **Keith Ingram**, with contributions from **Wendy Thomas**, Head of Service, and **Donna Sharland**, Transitions Officer within the National Neurodivergence Team
- Representation from Health, Social Care, Education, and Emergency Services

The event was not only an acknowledgement of progress but also a commitment to inclusive **collaboration and co-production** with neurodivergent communities and wider stakeholders moving forward.



Website Launch: NeurodivergenceWales.org

As part of the move from the National Autism Team to the National Neurodivergence Team, the new website NeurodivergenceWales.org was launched in October 2024. The website reflects the move towards a broader neurodivergence scope and has been reformatted for easier use.

[*Click here to access the Neurodivergence Wales website.*](#)

Some new additions to the relaunched website included an ADHD e-learning module and an ADHD Information Film, both of which reflect a commitment to broaden information and resources beyond autism.

[*Click here to access the Understanding ADHD module.*](#)

[*Click here to access the 'What is ADHD?' film.*](#)

Advisory Groups: Co-Production in Action

The National Neurodivergence Team's advisory groups have been restructured to better reflect the broader neurodivergence agenda. Each group has played a vital role in shaping resources, informing policy, supporting the delivery of the Welsh Government Neurodivergence Improvement Programme, and amplifying lived experience.

Individual Support Task & Finish Group

- Formed by merging the ADHD Professional Advisory Group and Autism Advisory Group
- Met twice to explore support needs pre- and post-diagnosis
- Identified key demographics (e.g., majority of referrals aged 18–30)
- Emphasised the need for resources for all neurodivergent people, regardless of diagnosis

ADHD Clinical Advisory Group

- Continued regular meetings with a focus on diagnostic pathway parameters
- Responded to Welsh Government requests for basic data sets
- Reviewed Adult ADHD Assessment Quality Standards recently produced by UK Adult ADHD Network (UKAAN)
- Clinicians co-produced psychoeducation resources and reviewed ADHD guides

Lived Experience Advisory Group

- Merged previous groups into a unified voice for neurodivergent lived experience
- Co-produced:
 - New Autism Advisory Sheets
 - Digital stories
- Shared their experiences on what has worked well for them, which will be used to develop further resources in 2025/26
- Played a central role in designing and appearing in the ADHD e-learning module and film

ND Parents Advisory Group

- Launch of [*Neurodivergent Parent Audio Discussions*](#)
- Provides a platform for neurodivergent parents to share lived experiences and insights
- Covers key topics such as myth busting and managing diverse needs
- Offers a unique lens into family dynamics from a neurodivergent perspective

Looking Ahead

The transition to the National Neurodivergence Team marks not just a change in name, but **a renewed commitment to inclusivity, co-production, and innovation**. Moving forward, the National Neurodivergence Team remains guided by the voices of neurodivergent people and the communities that support them, building **a truly neuroinclusive society in Wales**.

Integrated Autism Service 2024/25 Data Report

1. Executive Summary

This report provides key high-level data from all Integrated Autism Service (IAS) across Wales, reflecting the hard work and dedication of staff.

As with previous years, 2024/25 has continued to challenge all seven IAS in terms of demand and capacity, as can be demonstrated by the [Review of the Demand, Capacity and Design of Neurodevelopmental Services](#) report commissioned by the Welsh Government.

The following data headlines were observed.

- **7,094** referrals to the service were made for adults
- **62%** of these were self-referrals
- **72%** of referrals requesting autism diagnostic assessments and **28%** were requesting support
- **1,703** adults received a diagnostic assessment
- **1,215** adults received a positive diagnosis of autism
- Equating to **71%** of those assessed receiving a positive diagnosis of autism.
- **542** referrals to the service were made for parents/ carers with **95%** of these self-referrals
- **97%** of referrals were for parent/ carers of autistic adults and **3%** were for parent/ carers of autistic children
- **6,587** interactions were made with professionals
- **3,263** new contacts with professionals
- **53%** of contacts were from health professionals, **30%** were professionals from local authorities and **3%** were professionals from the voluntary sector

The IAS provide post diagnostic information and support, including time-limited individual support. The Outcomes Star is an outcomes measurement tool that is used by the IASs when working with people on a one-to-one basis. In 24/25

- 98% of individuals demonstrated improved outcomes in at least one area
- 90% demonstrated improved outcomes in at least two areas
- 83% demonstrated improved outcomes in at least three areas.

The IAS successfully deliver a range of post diagnostic group work to support individuals. In 24/25 1,548 individuals attended group sessions

“Very lovely people. Always answer questions and very patient. Explaining things, topics, emotions in a good way, a way I can understand. Quite thorough and rigorous etc. Great people and made me feel heard.”

2. Introduction

There are seven Integrated Autism Services (IASs) across Wales, all funded by Welsh Government as part of its commitment to the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for ASD ([Autistic Spectrum Disorder- Updated Delivery Plan 2018-21](#)). The first one launched in July 2017 and the last one to be operational came on stream in April 2019.

The IAS provides diagnostic assessment and post diagnostic support for autistic adults who are unable to access statutory services due to eligibility exclusion.

The National Neurodivergence Team which is hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association has been committed from the outset, together with the IAS Leads to ensure that the impact of the Integrated Autism Service be measured.

The data presented in this report is captured through a database managed by Data Cymru. Data is inputted by all IASs on a quarterly basis and sent through Emyr, Data Cymru's secure file exchange site, based on three categories Adult Data, Parent Carer Data and Professional Data. To enrich the data, further data is capture through the Outcomes Star an outcomes measurement tool and qualitative data through case studies.

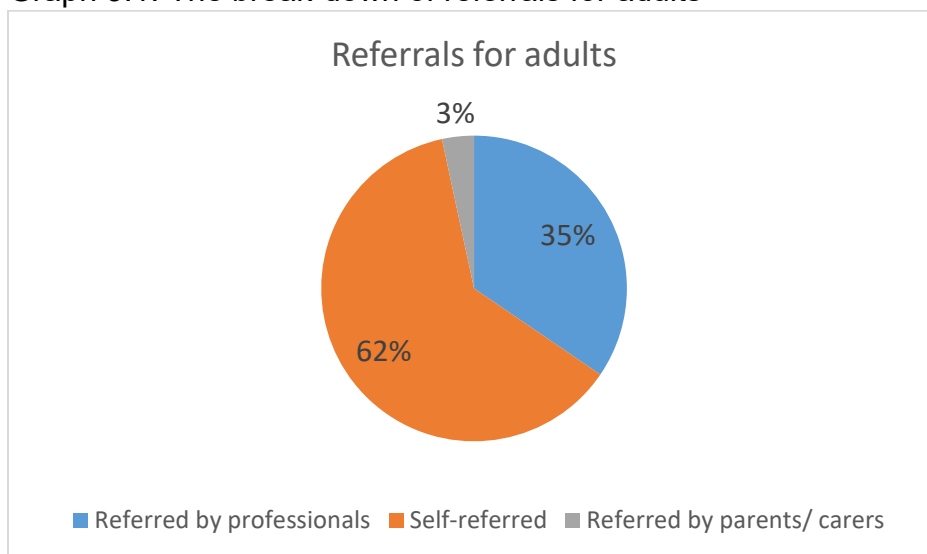
3. Adult Data

Below are the number of referrals relating to adults. Referrals refer to formal requests for services from the IAS.

Table 3.1: The number of referrals for adults to the IASs

Referrals for adults	7,094
Referred by professionals	2,449
Self-referred	4,406
Referred by parents/ carers	239

Graph 3.1: The break-down of referrals for adults

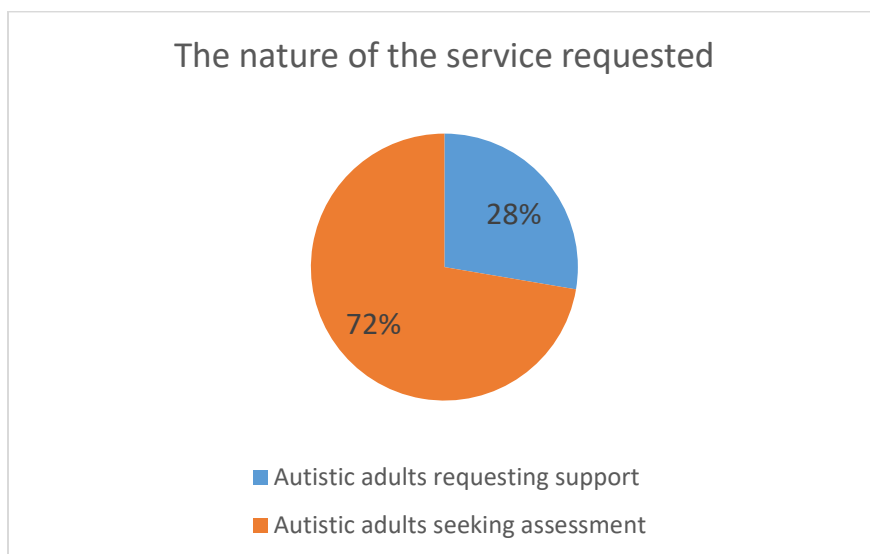


Referral requests can be split into two categories, individuals already with a diagnosis of autism but seeking support and adults seeking a diagnostic assessment. Below is a table and graph showing the nature of the referrals to the IASs.

Table 3.2: The nature of referrals for adults

Service Users		
	Autistic adults requesting support	1,990
	Autistic adults seeking diagnosis	5,071

Graph 3.2: The nature of services requested for adults

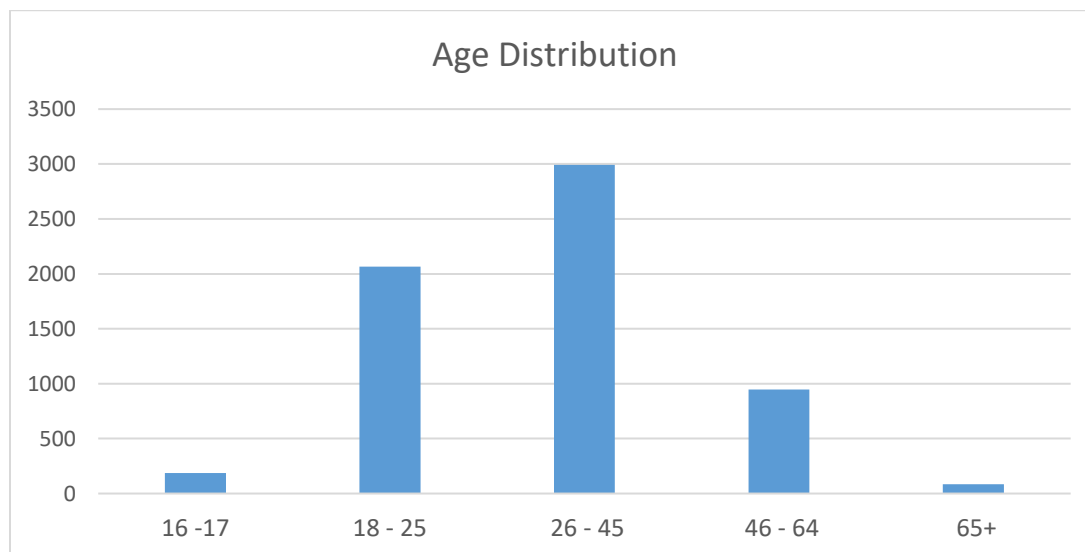


The age distribution of adults accessing the service is depicted in the following table and graph. The 'prefer not to say' option represents those for whom it would not be appropriate to automatically collect this data. This may include people seen in drop-in sessions or enquiry referrals.

Table 3.3: The age distribution of adults accessing services

Age Distribution	
16 -17	187
18 - 25	2,066
26 - 45	2,993
46 - 64	948
65+	85
Prefer not to say	815

Graph 3.3: The age distribution of adults accessing services

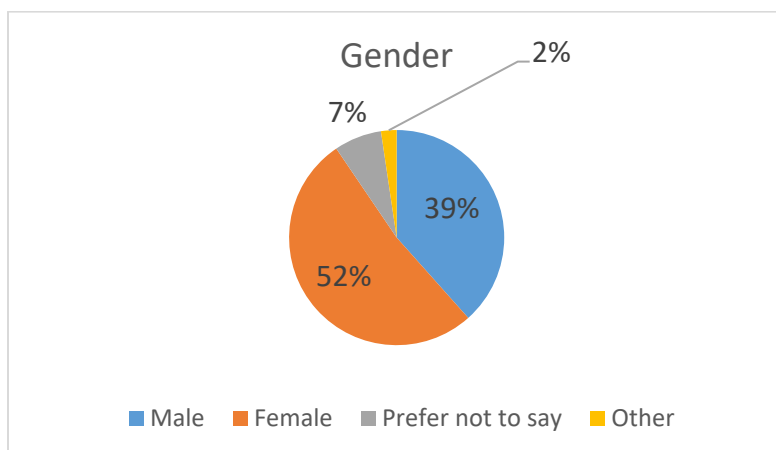


The gender of adults accessing the service is depicted in the following table and graph. The 'Other' section includes people who identify as alternative genders or for whom the data was not easily collated or identify.

Table 3.4: The gender of adults accessing services

Gender	
Male	2,725
Female	3,696
Prefer not to say	507
Other	166

Graph 3.4: The gender of adults accessing services

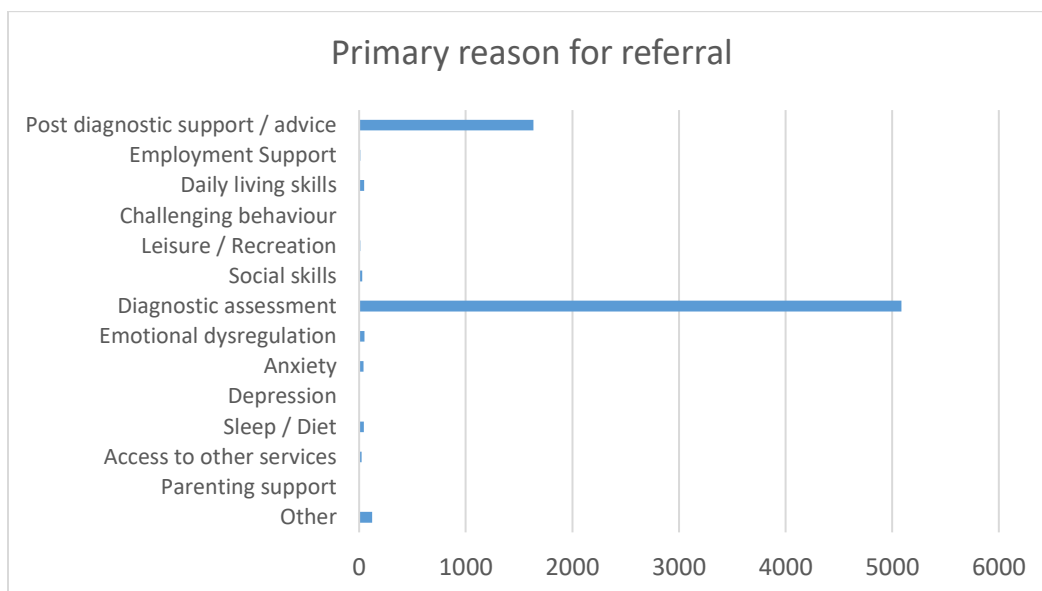


The table and graph below depict the primary reason that adults are referred into the service. This may change through initial discussions with the service but gives an idea of some of the difficulties that are identified by adults accessing the service.

Table 3.5: The initial primary reason for referral into the service

Primary reason for referral	
Post diagnostic support / advice	1,636
Employment support	10
Daily living skills	46
Challenging behaviour	4
Leisure / recreation	12
Social skills	30
Diagnostic assessment	5,087
Emotional dysregulation	51
Anxiety	42
Depression	4
Sleep / diet	44
Access to other services	22
Parenting support	8
Other	123

Graph 3.5: The primary reason for referral into the service

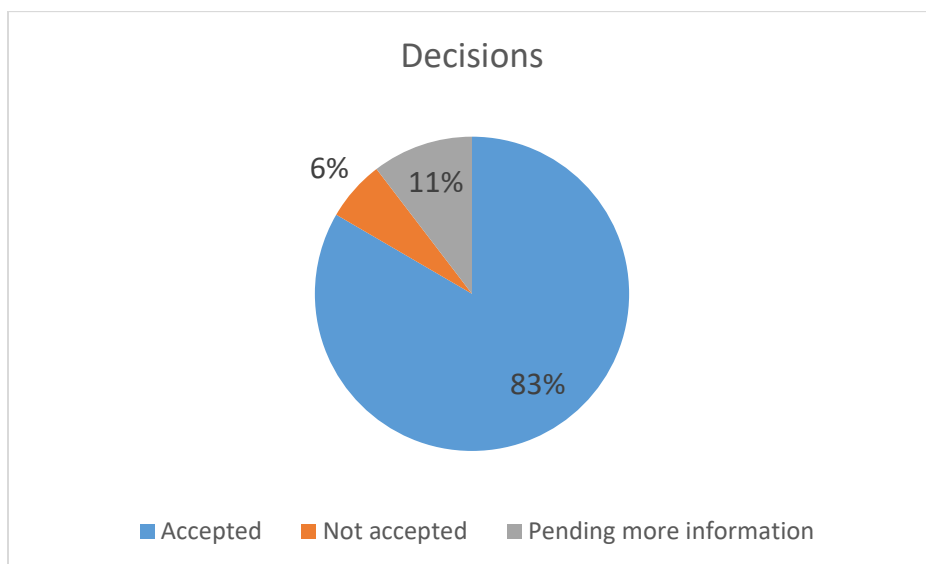


Below is the outcome of referrals into the service. This information helps the services identify patterns in referrals that cannot be accepted and those needing further information.

Table 3.6: The outcome of referrals into the service

Referral Outcomes	
Decisions	
Accepted	5,791
Not accepted	431
Pending more information	722

Graph 3.6: The outcome of referrals into the service

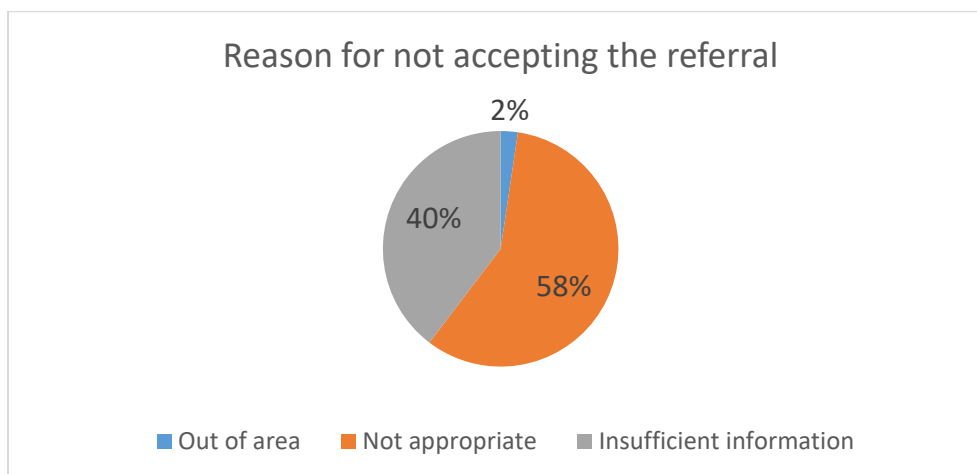


Below is the breakdown of referrals not accepted into services. There are several reasons that referrals may not be appropriate, including someone who is receiving support from other services such as learning disability services or mental health services, or not appropriate due to age or incorrect geographical area.

Table 3.7: The reasons for not accepting referrals into the service

Reason for not accepting the referral	
Out of area	11
Not appropriate	272
Insufficient information	186

Graph 3.7: The reasons for not accepting referrals into the service

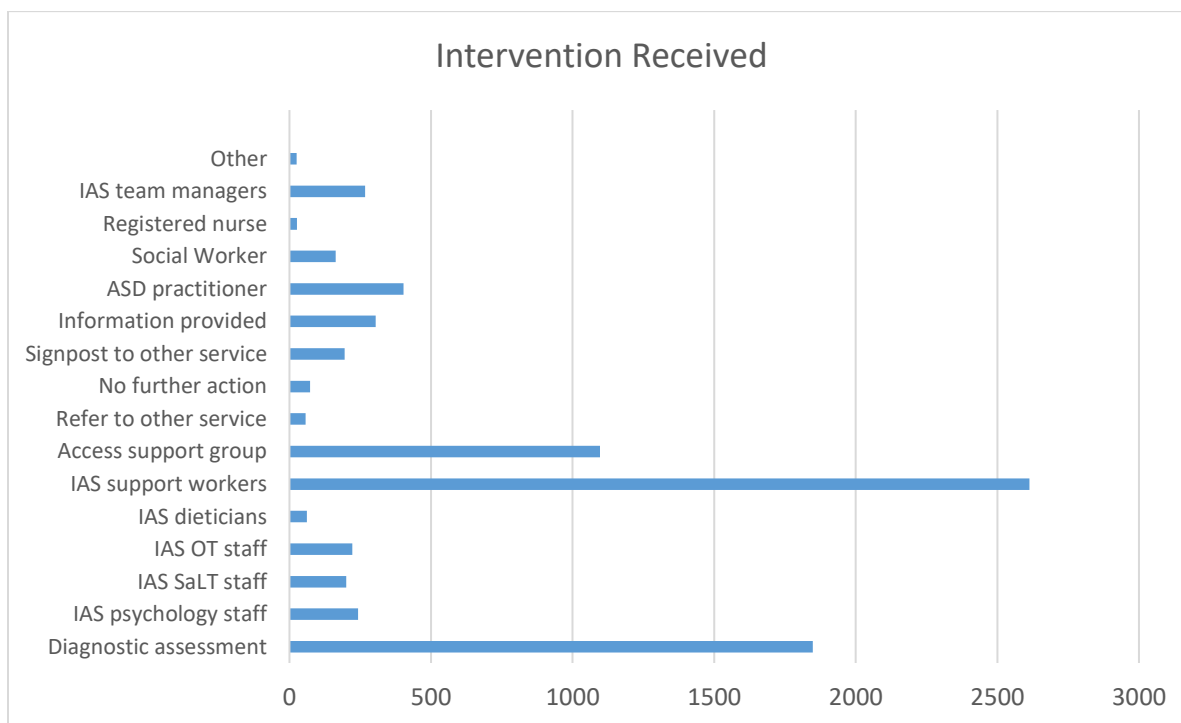


The table and graph below depict the interventions received by adults accessing the service. This gives an idea of what kind of services autistic adults need.

Table 3.8: The interventions received by adults within the service

Intervention Received	
Diagnostic assessment	1,848
IAS psychology staff	242
IAS Speech and Language Therapy staff	201
IAS Occupational Therapy staff	222
IAS dieticians	62
IAS support workers	2,613
Access support group	1,097
Refer to other service	57
No further action	73
Signpost to other service	195
Information provided	304
Autism practitioner	403
Social Worker	163
Registered nurse	26
IAS team managers	267
Other	25

Graph 3.8: The interventions received by adults within the service



The timeliness of support and diagnostic assessment are shown in weeks in the table below. The data is based on quarter 4 of 2024/25 only as it shows a more accurate picture of the current situation.

Table 3.9: The timeliness of support and diagnostic assessment as well as positive diagnosis data for adults

Timeliness of support	
Average weeks from point of referral received to accepted	2.1
Average weeks from referral accepted to start of intervention	8.4
Timeliness of diagnostic assessment	
Average weeks from point of referral received to accepted	3.7
Average weeks from referral accepted to start of intervention	115.4
Average weeks from initial appointment to diagnosis / outcome	4.9

The table below shows the number of diagnostic assessments carried out by the IASs and the number that led to a positive diagnosis.

Table 3.10: Diagnostic assessments

Diagnostic Assessment	
Number of autistic individuals who received an assessment	1,703
Number of assessments that lead to a positive diagnosis	1,215
Number of adults on the waiting list for diagnostic assessment at the end of the quarter	8,617

The table below notes additional information about the services, including the number of group sessions held, formal complaints and compliments received.

Table 3.11: Additional information about the services

Additional Information	
Number of support group sessions held	496
Number of people who attended group sessions	1,548
Number of formal complaints received	21
Number of compliments received	293

4. Parent/ Carer Data

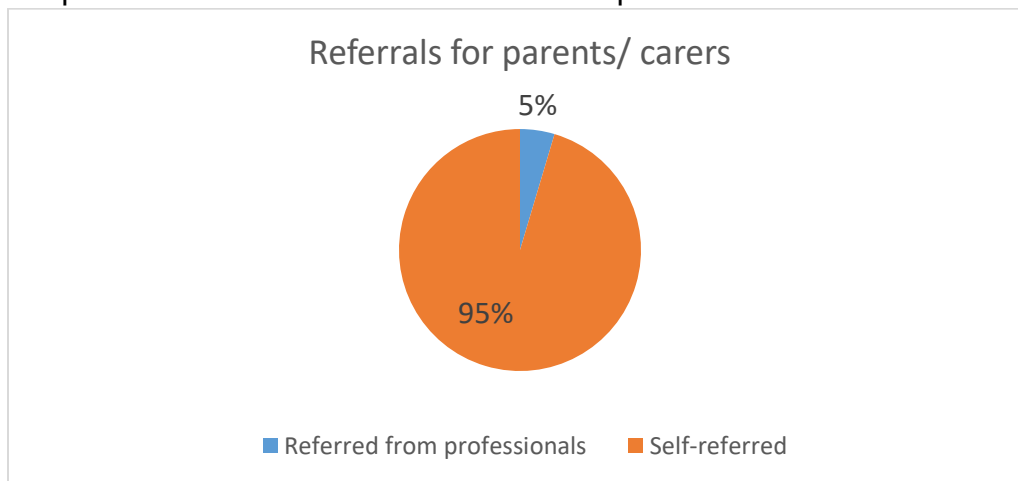
Whilst not working directly with children and young people, the service works in partnership with other organisations to support parents and carers. Below is data related to this provided by the IASs in 2024/25.

Below are the number of interactions and referrals relating to parents and carers. Interactions can include informal discussions through e-mail, phone calls or face to face. These may or may not result in a formal referral to the service and may include signposting to other more suitable services. Referrals refer to formal requests for services from the IAS.

Table 4.1: The number of interactions and referrals for parents and carers to the IASs

Interactions with parents/ carers	2,073
Referrals for parents/ carers	542
Referred from professionals	25
Self-referred	517

Graph 4.1: The break-down of referrals for parents and carers

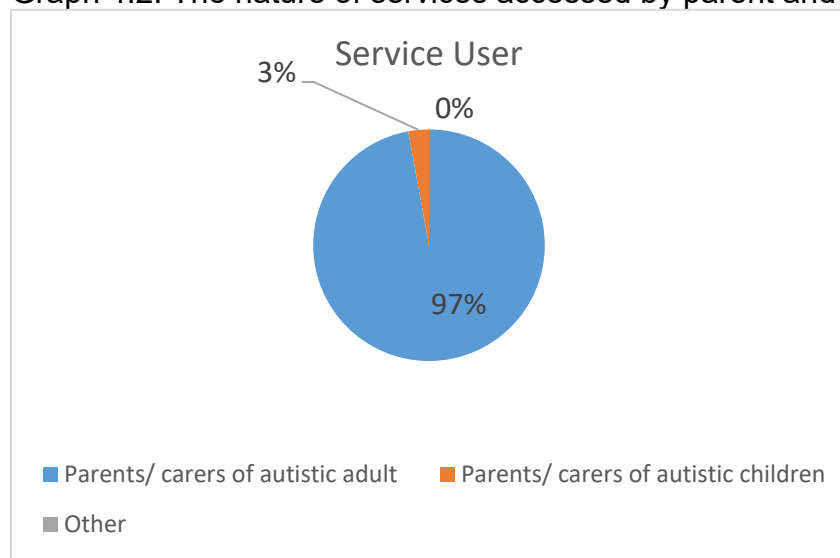


The table and graph below show whether service users are parents and carers of autistic adults or children. The 'other' category includes parents/carers who care for both those over and under 18 and instances where the data was unavailable.

Table 4.2: The nature of services accessed by parent and carers

Service User	
Parents/ carers of autistic adult	169
Parents/ carers of autistic children	5
Other	0

Graph 4.2: The nature of services accessed by parent and carers

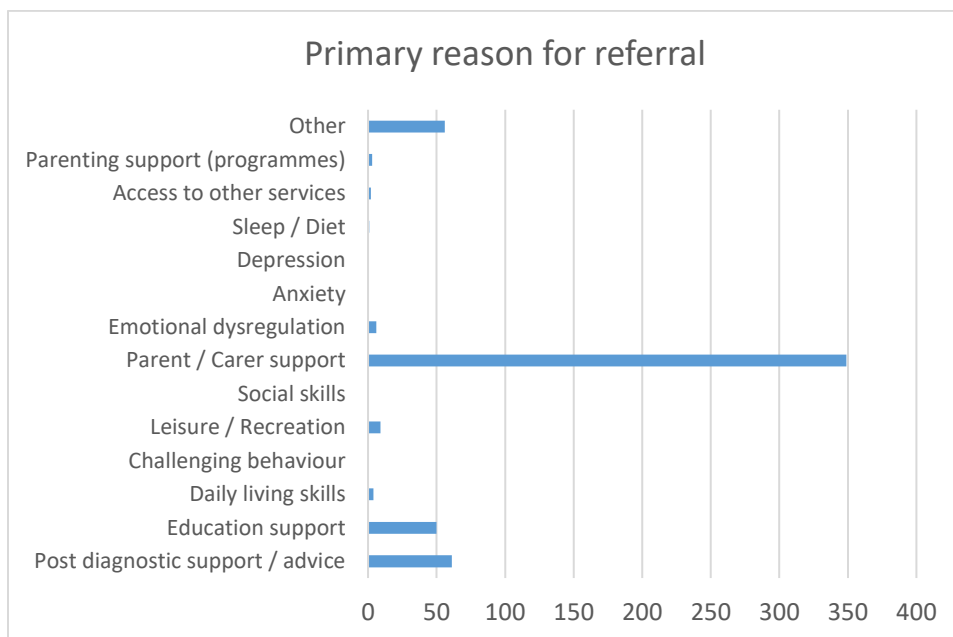


The table and graph below depict the primary reason that parent/ carers are referred into the service. This may change through initial discussions with the service but gives an idea of the support that parent/ carers are seeking.

Table 4.3: The initial primary reason for referral into the service

Primary Reason for referral	
Post diagnostic support / advice	61
Education support	50
Daily living skills	4
Challenging behaviour	0
Leisure / Recreation	9
Social skills	0
Parent / Carer support	349
Emotional dysregulation	6
Anxiety	0
Depression	0
Sleep / Diet	1
Access to other services	2
Parenting support (programmes)	3
Other	56

Table 4.3: The initial primary reason for referral into the service

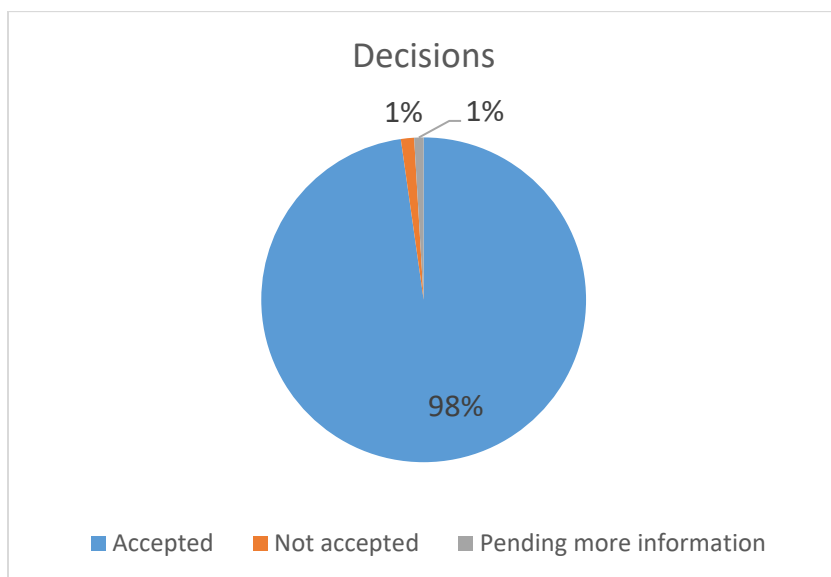


Below is the outcome of referrals into the service. This information helps the services identify patterns in referrals that cannot be accepted and those needing further information.

Table 4.4: The outcome of referrals into the service

Referral Outcomes		
Decisions		
	Accepted	521
	Not accepted	7
	Pending more information	5

Graph 4.4: The outcome of referrals into the service

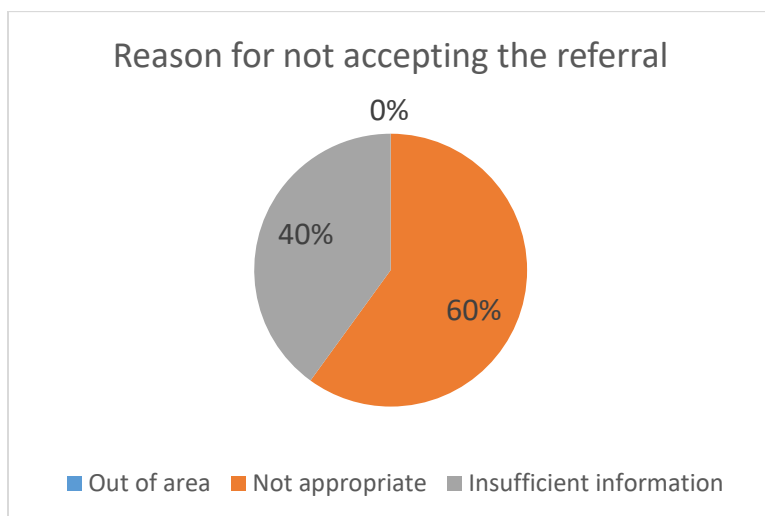


Below is the breakdown of referrals not accepted into services. There are several reasons that referrals may not be appropriate, including those who are receiving support from other services.

Table 4.5: The reasons for not accepting referrals into the service

Reason for not accepting the referral	
Out of area	0
Not appropriate	6
Insufficient information	4

Graph 4.5: The reasons for not accepting referrals into the service

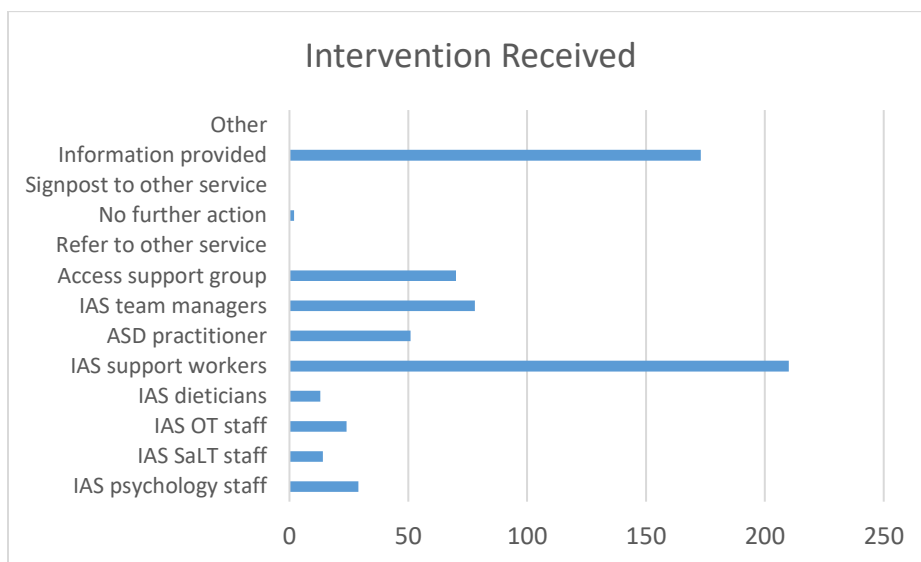


The table and graph below depict the interventions received by parent/ carers accessing the service. This gives an idea of what kind of services parent/ carers need.

Table 4.6: The interventions received by parents and carers from the service

Intervention Received	
IAS psychology staff	29
IAS SaLT staff	14
IAS OT staff	24
IAS dieticians	13
IAS support workers	210
Autism practitioner	51
IAS team managers	78
Access support group	70
Refer to other service	0
No further action	2
Signpost to other service	0
Information provided	173
Other	0

Graph 4.6: The interventions received by parents and carers from the service



The timeliness of support for parent/ carers is shown in weeks in the table below. The data is based on quarter 4 of 2024/25 only as it shows a more accurate picture of the current situation. The table also includes additional information of the number of group sessions held and the number of formal complaints and compliments received over the 2024/25 year.

Table 4.5: Additional information for parents and carers

Additional Information	
Number of support group sessions held	121
Number of formal complaints received	3
Number of compliments received	27

5. Professionals Data

An important aspect of the IASs role is to work with and upskill professionals from a variety of different services in order to better support autistic people and their families. There is an identified training need among professionals and in particular health and social care staff and the IAS provides an element of this. The data below is related to the work carried with professionals by the IASs in 2024/25.

Below are the number of interactions and new contacts by professionals to the service. Interactions can include informal discussions through e-mail, phone calls or face to face. These may or may not result in a formal referral to work with the service and may include signposting to other more suitable services. Contacts with professionals refer to more formal work with the service.

Table 5.1: The number of interactions and new contacts with professionals

Interactions with professionals	6,587
New contact with professionals	3,263

The table and graph below depict the primary reason that professionals contact the service.

Table 5.2: The initial primary reason for contact with the service

Primary reason for contact	
Request joint work/ consultation for a client	1,089
Request for training	305
Other general enquiry	1,869

Graph 5.2: The primary reason for contact with the service

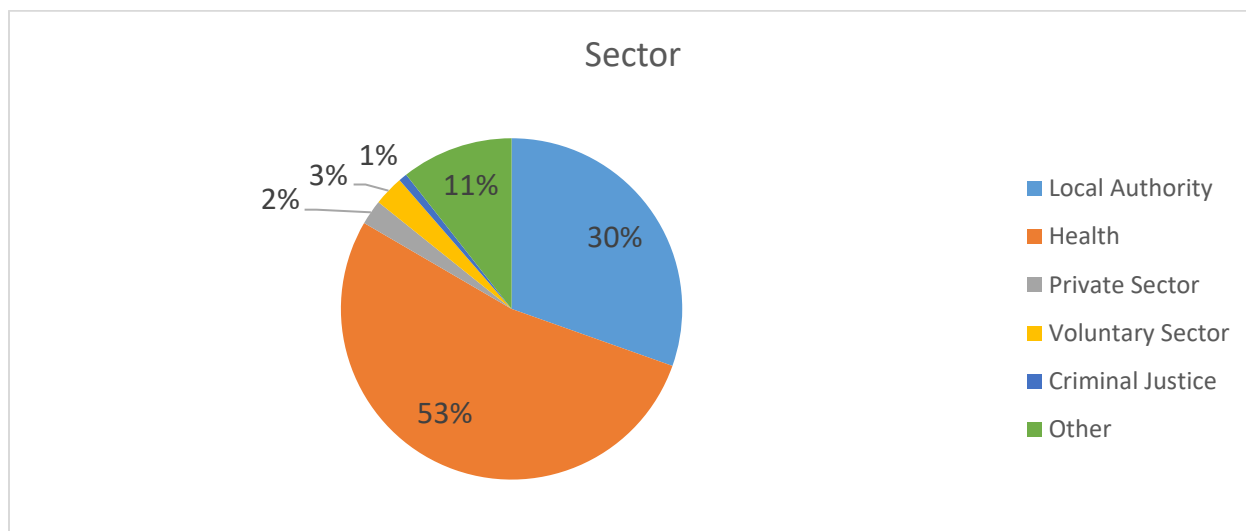


The following table and graph show the sector which professionals contacting the services are from. The 'other' category may include professionals working in the civil services such as DWP employees or the information may not be available to include.

Table 5.3: The sector professionals contacting the service are from

Sector	
Local Authority	993
Health	1,729
Private Sector	77
Voluntary / Third Sector	93
Criminal Justice	26
Other	346

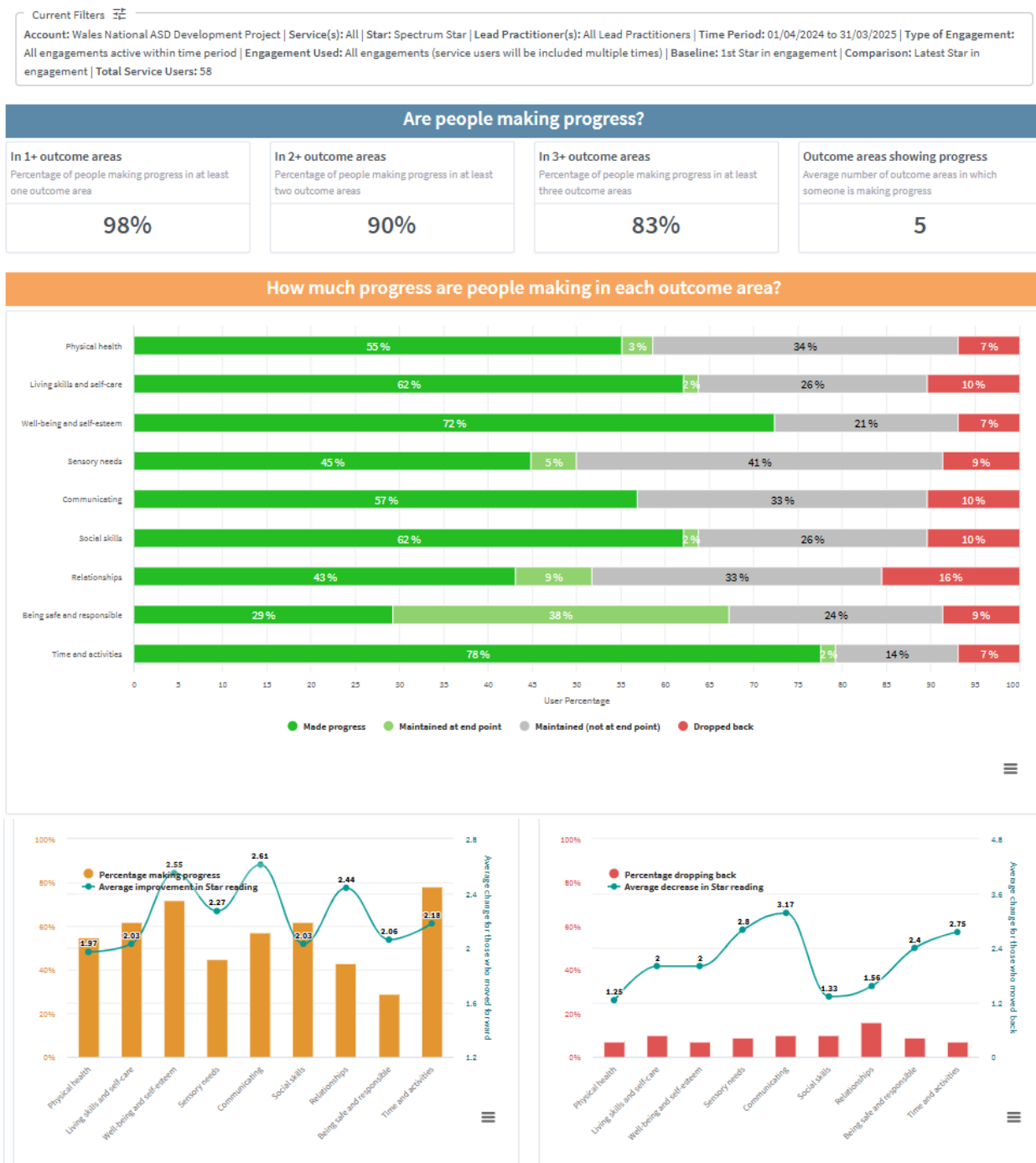
Graph 5.3: The sector professionals contacting the service are from



6. Outcomes Star and Additional Information

The Outcomes Star is an outcomes measurement tool that is used by the IASs when working with people on a one-to-one basis. The Outcomes Star can show the distanced travelled by people on identified outcome areas and is evaluated jointly by the person themselves and the worker supporting them. The IASs mainly use the Spectrum Star of which there are nine outcome areas.

Below is the IAS Distanced Travelled Report for the Spectrum Star 2024/25 period.



The report shows that every person made progress in at least one outcome area, with 83% of people making progress in three or more outcome areas.

Further information that can be used to demonstrate the work carried out by the IASs are feedback from people using the service and group evaluations. Here are some examples of feedback received by the IASs in 2024/25.

“Our experience here has been very positive. The assessment leads heard me, they were empathetic, knowledgeable and their words were very supportive.”

“Very lovely people. Always answer questions and very patient. Explaining things, topics, emotions in a good way, a way I can understand. Quite thorough and rigorous etc. Great people and made me feel heard.”

“I felt seen and heard, the advanced info and information during the session was excellent. Thank you also for calling to check if I would attend the appointment.”

Cardiff and Vale IAS

Here is some information from groups held by some of the IASs.

Cardiff and Vale IAS ‘Introduction to autism’ workshop

100% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the information presented and 100% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the information that they received. One participant noted that “Several experiences of the attendees/attendees’ children, were very insightful as I could see similarities/parallels with my own son”

7. Conclusion

The data demonstrates that the demand on the IASs continue to grow with the services receiving a high number of referrals and working with an increasing number of people.

For services provided to adults 62% of referrals were self-referrals from adults themselves. Seventy two percent of the referrals were for diagnostic assessment and 28% for support. Most of the age distribution of autistic adults accessing the service is between 18-45.

The most frequently accessed interventions were working with IAS support workers, diagnostic assessment, accessing support groups and working with an autism practitioner.

It can also be noted that there was slight decrease of 5.6% in referrals to the service for adults in 2024/25 in comparison with 2023/24 figures. However, there was a 25.6% increase in diagnostic assessments undertaken in 2024/25 in comparison to 2023/24. This is due to additional capacity temporarily funded through the Neurodivergence

Improvement Programme. This funding ceased in March 2025, the Minister for Mental Health and Well Being published a Written Statement¹ on 27 June 2025 announcing a re-orientation of the funding to address significant challenges in accessing children's neurodevelopmental diagnostic assessments. It can be anticipated that the number of diagnostic assessments completed by the IAS in 25/26 will significantly decrease.

For services provided to parent/ carers 97% of referrals were self-referrals. Ninety five percent of the referrals were from parent and carers of adults and 5% were from parent and carers of children. The primary reason for referrals was for parent/ carer support, post diagnostic support/ advice and education support.

The most frequently accessed interventions were support from IAS support workers, providing information, support from IAS team managers and accessing support groups. It can also be noted that there was a 16% increase in referrals to the service from parent/ carers in 2024/25 in comparison with 2023/24 figures.

The data shows that a significant part of the services' work is engaging with professionals. The primary reason for referrals were general enquiries at 57% and request joint work/ consultation with client at 33%. In addition, 53% were professionals from the health board, 30% were from local authorities and 3% from the voluntary sector. It can also be noted that there was an 39% increase in contacts with the service from professionals in 2024/25 in comparison with 2023/24 figures.

Outcomes evaluation through the Outcomes Star and service feedback shows that the IASs have had a positive impact on people's lives in 2024/25.

¹ [Written Statement: Transforming Neurodivergence Services \(27 June 2025\) | GOV.WALES](#)