

Autumn 2025 edition



**Email response service,
for parent carers in
Midlands**

Reach out for support with:

- “How do I help my child regulate their emotions?”
- “Where can I go for support for toileting?”
- “What extra help can my child access at school?”
- “Where can I build my knowledge around autism?”
- “How can we support our siblings relationship?”
- “What support can my young adult access at university?”
- “Where can I learn about executive functioning?”
- And more.



Contact is a trading name of Contact a Family. Charity registered in England and Wales (284912) and Scotland (SC039169).

121 AUTISM PEER EDUCATOR CALLS AND EMAIL RESPONSE SERVICE

Autism Central Support for Parents and Carers of Autistic People

Autism Hub Midlands, which facilitates the Autism Central co-produced programme, supports parents, carers and family members of autistic people through a 30-minute 121-telephone call service or email response service.

Our Peer Educators are here to provide information and signposting about autism, whether you're on the autism pathway or you have a diagnosis. Key challenges which you may wish to gain information or signposting to local and national services might include:

- Resources (filter by life stage, topic)
- Understanding Autism
- Health and Wellbeing (mental health, sleep, eating, friendships, etc.)
- Navigating Education (getting help at school, transition, attendance, etc.)
- Navigating Support (social care, healthcare, peer support, etc.)
- 1 : 1 support for parents / carers
- Events (by region, event type, topic, life stage)

Book in your FREE 1 to 1 call on this website: bit.ly/Midlands-121

Prefer an email response? Book an email response here: bit.ly/midlands-email



PAEDIATRIC AUTISM COMMUNICATION THERAPY (PACT) PILOT RECEIVES POSITIVE RESPONSE IN WARWICKSHIRE

What is PACT?

PACT is a therapy that celebrates diversity, strengthens the connection between children and their parents/carers, and supports communication. We have 5 PACT trained therapists in Warwickshire. We use video feedback techniques, working with parents to recognise, respond to and further develop their child's communication.

How does PACT work?

PACT sessions are delivered online. In each one, parents and therapists review a short video of everyday playtime. Together, they identify moments of connection, explore **what's helping communication, and find simple ways to build on it.**

Why PACT?

PACT is based on research within the NHS and is focused on adapting the environment to meet the child's needs. PACT supports neurodiverse-accepting interaction and relationships by helping autistic children communicate, be accepted, understood and celebrated for who they are and advocate for themselves. Parents feel empowered, with improved well-being and family resilience.

What are Warwickshire parents saying?

“Through the PACT Programme I have learnt so many valuable skills that have improved my confidence as a parent and helped me to interact and communicate.”

“PACT has taught me a lot about how the simplest changes can change an entire interaction.”

What's next?

PACT has been introduced on a small scale within Warwickshire for a small group of pre-school children. We are exploring ways that we can widen access to this neurodiversity affirming evidence-based approach for more families across the county.

To find out more, please contact the South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust Speech and Language Therapy team: linktr.ee/swft_slt

And more information can be found on the PACT website: www.pacttraining.co.uk



EXPERIENCES OF NEURODIVERGENT PARENT CARERS WITH CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

How do neurodivergent parent carers experience services when supporting their children in Coventry and Warwickshire?

An article by Gemma Cartwright, Consultant Practitioner in Neurodiversity, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust (CWPT)

With the high prevalence of neurodivergence across generations, it is fair to assume many parent carers supporting their children are also neurodivergent, whether identified / diagnosed or not. There are often many expectations placed on parent carers to be their child's care coordinator, advocate, and therapist, as well as their parent carer. Many neurodivergent children and young people are also known to multiple agencies and professionals and often have neurodivergent siblings, thus creating a complex system for families to navigate. Despite this, professionals may not routinely consider the needs of parent carers when accessing and navigating services to support their children.

To gather insights from neurodivergent parent carers in Coventry and Warwickshire, in regards to their experience of services when supporting their children, a survey was co-created with local parent carers and shared using multiple information streams including social media and parent carer groups.

63 responses were received in total:

- 54% of respondents were formally diagnosed as autistic and/or having ADHD,
- 21% self identified as autistic and/or having ADHD,
- 19% were either diagnosed or self identified being otherwise neurodivergent, including for example dyslexia.

From the results there is initial evidence to suggest that local neurodivergent parent carers experience difficulties with services when supporting their child. They find communication with professionals challenging, feeling misunderstood by professionals and over half of the respondents have been accused of exaggerating their child's difficulties. Two thirds of parent carers who responded to the survey have felt that their ability to parent their child has been questioned by a professional and sadly, only 25% feel able to share with professionals that they are themselves neurodivergent.

Parent carers were asked a series of open-ended questions for them to provide more detailed insights and ideas / suggestions.

- What would you want professionals to know in regard to working with neurodivergent parent carers?
- What would you want professionals to do differently when working with you to support your neurodivergent child?
- What ideas do you have for resources that could be developed to help you or others? (e.g leaflets, guidance, training)

The themes that came from these questions were as follows:

- Communication – “*Unexpected phone calls are stressful so might prefer text asking if I can call or email.*”

- Blaming and shaming - “*Every time you question my parenting and blame me for my child's issues makes me lose confidence in my ability to parent.*”
- Person and family centred approach – “*Collaborating with parent carers can increase effectiveness and efficiency.*”
- Process – “*We need less repetitive paperwork.*”
- Place – “*Waiting rooms are overwhelming.*”
- Resources – “*Leaflets and videos to simplify complexities of neurodiversity.*”

From the very powerful and insightful feedback provided by the parent carers it was clear that there were limited adjustments being made by services in how they communicate with neurodivergent parent carers. There was a distinct lack of updated knowledge of how neurodivergent adults present and the changes in terminology and understanding of neurodivergence.

There was a clear theme that reflected current research regarding parents experiencing ‘blame’ for their children’s difficulties, parent carers not being believed or perceived to be exaggerating the needs of their child. Also reported were feelings of not being treated with compassion and respect.

Again, a theme reflected in research was reported by numerous respondents in terms of the families knowing their child best and the need to work in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for the child. The importance of recognising lived experience and the insight this can bring when considering support needs for their children, could be seen as an asset rather than a threat or challenge. The processes which are in place in services are creating barriers to neurodivergent parent carers including, navigating support, services not joining up, filling in paperwork, attending meetings and lack of flexibility of services.

The solutions suggested by the respondents appear to be simple, in terms of training, advocacy, practical guidance regarding services, emotional support, resource kits and neurodivergent profiles. Having neurodivergent parent carers involved in creating solutions is essential, both at a child and system level.

So did we listen?

To those who participated in the survey, please accept our sincere thanks. Your words were very powerful, and we were very humbled to hear your personal experiences. We appreciate that this is a very emotive topic, and we want to ensure that your experiences and insights will contribute to change.

So far we have....

- Met with multiple professional groups including Early Help, the SEND leadership, parent support services, members of the Autism Partnership Board, professional within CWPT, schools within the ‘Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project’, and Parent Carer Forums.
- One page profiles and reasonable guides are now available for people to access and use on the ICB webpages:
<https://www.happyhealthylives.uk> search ‘neurodivergence’
- The Dimensions tool is nearly ready to go live with its updated version which has been created with our parent carers and neurodivergent communities to support navigating support and services as well as developing a neurodiversity affirming profile of strengths and support needs for both children and their neurodivergent parents.

We plan to....

- Create a webinar for professionals delivered by neurodivergent parent carers and professionals to help improve the understanding of neurodivergence in adults and the reasonable adjustments that could support families as a whole.
- A ‘grandparent’ guide or similar, to help people to understand how we now understand neurodivergence, why there are more people accessing a diagnosis and the importance of acceptance and support for family members.
- Ensure professionals from all sectors have access to the finding of the survey and the resources being developed.

Information for neurodivergent people and their families ebooklet

Bringing together the different local information and support offers across.

Introduction	Support	Information
What is neurodivergence? Sharing links to some of the current understanding.	Local authority, education, work and health services, Community and peer support.	Frequently asked questions and useful information to help answer those questions.

www.happyhealthylives.uk/neurodiversity-autism

CASS
Community Autism Support Service

Local pre assessment and post diagnostic support for children, young people and adults.

Navigation	Community Outreach	Peer Mentoring	Autism awareness
Provision of information, advice and signposting by phone or email. 024 7601 2333	Accessible and personalised support.	Offering role modelling, guidance, motivation and low level emotional support.	Helping you to understand autism and support with self awareness

The webpage includes education and family resources, training toolboxes and pre-recorded webinars casspartnership.org.uk

Dimensions of Health and Wellbeing

A free, accessible online tool providing a personalised profile and local information to support adults, children and young people.

Rate the Dimensions	Dimensions profile	Information flyers	Further support
Choose the rating that is the best fit as experienced in the last two weeks.	Highlights areas of strength or areas where support may be of benefit.	Trusted information about local and national support and other resources.	It may be helpful to discuss any concerns with a professional or someone who can provide support.

dimensions.covarkpt.nhs.uk

OFFICIAL

Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System
Neurodiversity and Autism Webpages

The place to find the information and updates on the local autism strategy and the co-created resources.

Strategy	Resources	News and Events
Outlines the Coventry and Warwickshire all-age autism strategy 2021-2026.	Promotes resources and available support – locally, regionally, and nationally.	Links to news and events in Coventry and Warwickshire to support autistic people.

www.happyhealthylives.uk/neurodiversity-autism

FIND SUPPORT FOR NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE IN COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE

Take a look at this one page overview of where you can find support for neurodivergent people in Coventry and Warwickshire.

[Download the overview now.](#)

The language we use is important: Improving Communication around Neurodivergence



IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AROUND NEURODIVERGENCE USING LANGUAGE

Neurodivergence is a word used to describe the natural differences in the way people's brains work, think and process information. If someone is neurodivergent, it means that their brain is built significantly differently from most others. Neurodivergent conditions and differences include ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, Tourette's syndrome, dysgraphia, amongst others.

We can use our words to work together to create more neuro-inclusive and welcoming communities.

As part of the Coventry and Warwickshire All-Age Autism Strategy, we have been exploring language and encouraging people to think about the words they use when talking about neurodivergence. Our aim has been to support people to feel more comfortable and confident choosing and using language.

Remie Colledge, Project Co-Lead and Experience by Experience tells us more:

“When I received my autism diagnosis and began to connect with the neurodivergent community, I remember how daunting it felt suddenly being surrounded by so many new words. Not only was I trying to figure out how to think, feel, make sense of and describe my own experiences, I was also feeling anxious about offending others by using the ‘wrong’ words.

Over time, the more conversations I had and the more I learnt, that anxiety lessened. I realised there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to talk about neurodivergence, because we are all unique. We will describe our experiences in different ways, and that’s okay.

So, why is this important? The words we use to talk about neurodivergence can help people to feel heard, seen and validated. Subtle shifts in words and language can help us move away from talking ‘about people’ in ways that don’t necessarily match up with their experiences, to being able to develop shared understanding, and building trust and connection in the process.

This co-production project has been a huge team effort, with lots of learning along the way. The outputs of the project may have been different to our initial goals, but that is the joy of co-production, being flexible, creative and guided by the process.

We are grateful to everyone who has already got involved by sharing their experiences and who have worked together to shape these new resources. We also appreciate your curiosity and taking the time to read about and explore the resource. We hope that you find the resources helpful.”

Take a look at the [new page of resources](#) including:

- explore the new neurodivergent language graphics
- download the resources
- create your own infographics by downloading blank versions.

Championing Dads: Step Into Fatherhood Coventry

Fatherhood is a journey filled with joy, challenges, and transformation—and every dad deserves support along the way. Step Into Fatherhood Coventry is a vibrant initiative dedicated to empowering fathers across the city, offering a welcoming space to connect, learn, and grow.

Step Into Fatherhood Coventry offer support to all dads, including neurodivergent dads and dads of neurodivergent children.

Whether you're an expecting or a new dad, or an experienced parent seeking peer support, Step Into Fatherhood provides a wide range of resources and activities tailored to your needs. From Dads Connect Zoom sessions and five-a-side kickabouts, to walks in War Memorial Park and first aid workshops, there's something for every father looking to build confidence and camaraderie.

The initiative also offers professional support through one to one, drop in or group support on topics like mental health, building confidence, linking in with other dads and signposting to services such as ICON Cope, DadPad, and Family Hubs Coventry. It's a space where dads are not just welcomed—they're celebrated.

Join the movement, share your story, and discover the strength of fatherhood together. Visit [**Step Into Fatherhood Coventry**](#) to find out more.

Autism Education for Professionals

Learning about autism helps us all to build confidence and capacity, improves our understanding and provides practical support for daily living.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Community Autism Support Service (CASS) offers a choice of workshops and sessions for families/ carers, autistic people and professionals to join.

Connections workshops

Connections one-day workshop for professionals working with young children, including teachers, SENCos, TAs, social workers, family support workers, nurses, doctors, HCPs, etc. Ideal for anyone wanting to better understand and support an autistic child in their school, care or service.

Awareness training for professionals supporting the autism community, covering topics including:

- Understanding autism from a social and historical context
- Exploring the spectrum
- Sensory integration
- Your part in building relationships
- Case studies and group discussion
- Exploring best practice
- Hearing from experts within the autistic community
- Taking reasonable adjustments from the practical to the personal
- Introducing a clear time practice and the 3 C Pathway

This session is delivered by two qualified Act for Autism trainers, professionally trained and with lived experience of autism.

Book a place now - [Connections Workshops by Community Autism Support Service \(CASS\) | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/autism-support-service-cass-11111111)

To find out more and to book onto any of these please click here:
<https://casspartnership.org.uk/training-and-education>

A **new autism awareness video** resource has been developed to help anyone interested in finding out more about autism, and how to support someone autistic, by Act for Autism. You can find the video on this website:

[Resources - Happy Healthy Lives](#)

Support for Parents and Carers

If you are a parent or carer of an autistic person and you would like to find out about training or peer support available to you or your family member from the CASS service, you can visit the CASS Partnership website:

[Parents - Community Autism Support Service CASS](#)

Or you can contact CASS Navigation service – by phone **(024) 7601 2333** or by email at navigation@casspartnership.org.uk , to have a chat with someone about what support is available.

Peer Support Groups

If you are looking for peer support groups that are available in your local area, you can find their details in the **Information for Neurodivergent People and their Families** electronic booklet, which can be accessed on this website, click here:

[Dimensions - News](#)

Here are the details of some of the groups:



Coventry Action For Autism Group
2.4K likes • 2.6K followers

Coventry Action For Autism Group (CAFAG) is a support group run by parents for parents.

[Coventry Information Directory | Action for Autism Group \(C.A.F.A.G\)](#)

Coventry Parent Carer Forum

An independent, non-profit organisation working to improve services for children and young people aged 0-25 yrs with special educational needs and disabilities and/or health needs.

[Coventry Parent Carer Forum | participation and coproduction](#)

Warwick

Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice (WPCV) is a parent carer led organisation working to ensure that every parent carer in Warwickshire feels that their views and experiences matter, and gets their voice heard to develop and improve services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability. They work with those who provide SEND services to highlight where services are working well, or challenge when changes and improvements need to be made. Any parent carer who lives in Warwickshire, and has a child/young person aged 0-25, can join the forum: [Home - Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice](#)

Autism and ADHD One on One offer support in a Facebook group and hold monthly meetings on a Wednesday in Kenilworth. [Autism & ADHD One on One | Facebook](#)

Stratford

Autistic Girls Network - a local charity working to support, educate, and share resources about autism. They also deliver groups support [Welcome to the | Autistic Girls Network](#)

Rugby

Rugby Autism Network supports parents of autistic children through Facebook support group, local events and autism friendly activities: [Rugby Autism Network - Supporting Families to Enjoy Quality Time](#)

Nuneaton

Little Pegs Autism Support Group offer support to autistic people and their families and related conditions. They hold monthly Family Support Groups in Nuneaton. [Little Pegs | Facebook](#)

Quirky Kids is a support group run by a group of parents and carers who are passionate to provide fun for kids with disabilities. They are based in Nuneaton. [Quirky Kids Disability Groups and Support | Facebook](#)

Roots to Branches Autism Network is a support group for autistic people and their families who hold meetings in Bedworth and Exhall [roots2branches.co.uk](#)

North Warwickshire

Embrace Special Needs provides friendship and support to families and carers of adults or children with special needs. Your child does not need to have a full diagnosis. Meetings are held in Coleshill on the first Friday of the month [Embrace Special Needs](#)

Countywide support

- Grove offer online support for autistic young people [GROVE | Neurodivergent Mentoring & Education](#)
- Entrust Care Partnership - offer a range of services for children, young people and adults with a disability, including pathway to employment support, friendship groups, sports groups, life skills group training and a range of other workshops. You can find out more by visiting this website: [Entrust Care Partnership](#)

To find information about local services and support available across education, health and social care for families with children and young people aged 0 to 25, you can click on the following websites:

Warwickshire SEND Local Offer website – click here: [SEND Local Offer – Warwickshire County Council](#)

Coventry SEND Local Offer website – click here: [SEND Home](#)

Peer facilitated community support groups

Warwickshire

- CASS Adults Autism Social groups - running fortnightly, all ages welcome unless specified
- CASS Children and Young People Social groups (Youth groups) - running weekly in term-time only

Coventry

- CASS Adults Autism Social groups - running fortnightly, all ages welcome unless specified
- CASS Children and Young People Social groups (Youth groups) - running weekly in term-time only

Find out more on this website: [Community outreach - Community Autism Support Service CASS](#)

Vibes Youth Clubs

Provided by Coventry, Warwickshire and Worcestershire MIND

Find out more on this website: [ASC social clubs - CWWMind](#)

Supporting Mental Health in Our Community: Discover NHS Talking Therapies

Are you feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or low in mood? You're not alone—and help is closer than you think.

NHS Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull Talking Therapies is a free and confidential service designed to support individuals aged 16 and over who are experiencing common mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, low mood and panic attacks. Whether you're facing emotional difficulties or struggling with the psychological impact of long-term physical health conditions, this service is here to help.

What Is NHS Talking Therapies?

Formerly known as IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies), the service has recently undergone a national rebrand to become NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression. This change reflects a commitment to making mental health support more accessible and understandable for everyone

Delivered in partnership by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust and Coventry and Warwickshire Mind, the service – which is also delivered in Solihull – offers a range of evidence-based psychological therapies, including:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Guided self-help
- Online therapy via SilverCloud
- Group and individual therapy sessions
- Couple therapy for depression
- Support for neurodivergent individuals
- Specialist care for older adults, perinatal mental health (from birth until the child is two years old) and those experiencing menopause

How to Access Support?

Getting help is simple and flexible. You can access the service in several ways:

- Self-referral via or digital referral assistant (chatbot) (both on the [self-referral page](#))
- Phone referral by calling 02476 671 090 (Monday to Friday, 9am–4:30pm)
- Referral by a [healthcare professional online](#)

Once referred, someone will contact you to talk to you about what support you might need.

Why It Matters?

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Whether you're dealing with a recent diagnosis, navigating life changes, or simply feeling stuck, NHS Talking Therapies provides compassionate, professional support tailored to your situation.

If you or someone you know could benefit from Talking Therapies, don't wait. Visit www.talkingtherapies.covwarkpt.nhs.uk to learn more and take the first step toward better mental wellbeing.

Self Harm and Mental Health Crisis support

If you have physically harmed yourself, or if you are at immediate risk of harm, call 999 or go to A&E.

If someone is having a mental health crisis, but their life is not at immediate risk, call 111 and selecting 'mental health option'. It can also be accessed online via <https://111.nhs.uk/>.

For people who are deaf or have hearing loss, use the following link to be connected to local crisis service – <https://signvideo.co.uk/nhs111/>.

Anyone can call for themselves or someone else can call for them. NHS 111 is for all ages, including children and young people and those with neurodevelopmental needs.

The **Recovery and Wellbeing Academy** is a website designed to support adults in Coventry and Warwickshire in improving their mental health and overall wellbeing. It provides information on a range of free courses and workshops concerning mental health and wellbeing.

To find out more please click on this link:

<https://www.recoveryandwellbeing.co.uk/>

Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity (PINS) Project enters year 2 of delivery!

PINS is a pioneering initiative aimed at transforming the educational experience for neurodivergent children and their families across Warwickshire.

Led by Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (ICB), Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council, in collaboration with Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice (WPCV) and Coventry Parent Carer Forum, the PINS project is focused on embedding inclusive practices across whole school communities.

A total of 33 schools are participating in this year's programme, 20 in Warwickshire and 13 in Coventry. Over the next seven months, participating schools will receive face to face and online training and tailored support to deepen their understanding of neurodivergence and to improve outcomes for all learners.

Funded through the government's Shared Outcomes Fund, the project prioritises early intervention, inclusive teaching, and stronger partnerships with families. By working collaboratively with schools, health professionals, and parent carers, PINS aims to create more supportive and equitable learning environments.

In addition, parent engagement sessions will be held in each participating school every half term. Families interested in getting involved are encouraged to take part.

Please visit Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice pages: [PINS Project - Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice](#)

And

Coventry Parent Carer Forum pages: [PINS Project | Coventry Parent Carer Forum](#)

To find out more.

Farewell to Helen – A True Champion for Children with Autism

Last month, after many years of dedicated service, Helen Harban will be leaving her role as Lead for the Autism Team, (SWFT Children's Speech and Language Therapy) – and with it, a legacy across the whole system for children with autism. Helen has been a driving force for change, known for her deep expertise, tireless commitment, and ability to connect with children, families, and colleagues alike. Her influence has reached far beyond her own team, shaping practice, building partnerships, and inspiring others to see and nurture the unique strengths of every child.

While Helen will be greatly missed, she leaves behind a strong and passionate team, ready to carry forward the vision and values she has championed. Her work has set a high standard – one grounded in compassion, collaboration, and the belief that with the right support, every child can thrive. The foundations she has built will ensure that children, families, and professionals continue to benefit from her influence for years to come.

We wish Helen every success and happiness in her next chapter – whether on her travels, as a newly fledged Samaritan or as she steps into the role of proud grandmother. Thank you, Helen, for everything you've given to our community.

If you would like to suggest articles for a future Newsletter, please get in touch by emailing:

IntegratedLDACCommissioningTeam@warwickshire.gov.uk