

Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff Newsletter

Autumn 2026



Caerdydd sy'n Deall
Niwrowahaniaeth

Neurodivergent
Friendly Cardiff

Information, support and news for neurodivergent people in Cardiff



Young Carers



Young carers make an invaluable contribution to their families, but their experiences can sometimes go unseen.

We caught up with two amazing twin brothers, Jack and Riley, to share part of their story and help raise awareness of young carers experiences and here's what they had to say:



"Hi I'm Jack, I'm 14. I like gaming, watching TV, playing basketball and pool. I'm really proud of my sprite collection in Fortnite and Basketball skills. I'd like people to know that I'm different from other kids my age because I get highs and lows in my moods that can be really hard to manage.

Being a young carer was difficult at first because I didn't know what to do and had no one to talk to. In the beginning I was helping my mum to the toilet, getting dressed and feeding her. She was in bed all day and night it upset me a lot. Now I mainly help with my little sister when mum's having a seizure as my brother also helps my mum. I try and help with cleaning the house and anything mum struggles with but that's hard too.

I still find it hard to help because my ADHD means I see a pen and want to pick it up so I forget what I'm doing and where I am. I'd like my mum to be the way she used to be and be able to do things with me but I understand she can't.

I want people to know to never give up with whatever they are struggling with!"

Young Carers

"I'm Riley. I really like Lego and collectible figures which I'm most proud of. I wish people understood my neurodivergence. I'm very upfront, people don't get it and can take me the wrong way. I'd like people to know I still like the same things as other kids, I can sometimes just get bothered and agitated more easily by things that wouldn't bother them.

I've learned it's not easy being a carer. I've learned how to spot signs that my mum isn't feeling ok and needs to sit down. I know about medical conditions and medication I hadn't heard of before. Some people don't have anyone to look after them which must be hard! I can't always go out and do things that I used to because mum isn't well enough but I'm trying to learn how to do it by myself. It can be hard when I have ADHD and Autism because I can't focus so I get distracted a lot.

School is hard, I try to adapt to the environment. I have some support but it's not enough for me. If you have higher support needs, you get different treatment from the teachers and lots of help but if you're in the middle you're left to struggle and teachers just think you're naughty or don't want to work. Adults need to think like kids. They need to try to understand us if they want to help!"

"I'd tell other kids like me join the Young Carers Project it will change your life. You get help and support from them and you meet other people like you. Some are neurodivergent and some aren't but you find friends and do fun activities together."

The Young Carers Project provides young carers an opportunity to get some support with their caring role, make new friends, have some fun and have a break from their caring role!



To find out more or to make a referral
call **03000 133 133** or email **ContactFAS@cardiff.gov.uk**

Play For Every Child

This summer, Trelai Park Playing Fields came alive with activity as families from across Cardiff gathered to enjoy another successful National Playday celebration, with a fun-filled afternoon of free play, creativity and outdoor activities.



Held on Wednesday July 29, the event transformed the site on Vincent Road into a vibrant space for children and young people to play, explore and connect, with a wide range of activities on offer throughout the afternoon.

National Playday is celebrated across the UK each year, highlighting children's right to play and recognising the important role it plays in their development, wellbeing and happiness.

Cardiff is committed to providing fun, inclusive play opportunities for children all year round!

Cardiff Council inclusive play team offer play opportunities for children aged 5 to 11 with disabilities and additional needs.

The sessions aim to be accessible for a range of needs, recognising that some children and young people might need more tailored environments. The relaxed sessions have less people around and no music, and can be booked in advance.



If you would like more information on Cardiff's inclusive play services you can visit: cardiffchildrensplayservices.co.uk/play-sessions/disability-play-programme



Chinese Autism in Wales- Hazel's Story

From Stigma to Understanding - 从污名到理解

"When my eldest son was young, I knew he experienced the world differently. I struggled to find information and support that felt both accurate and culturally meaningful. Wanting to understand him better, I left my career in London and moved to Swansea to study for a Master's degree in Autism at Swansea University. My only goal was to become a better parent.

But that journey opened my eyes to the many Chinese families facing similar barriers. What began as a personal search for understanding grew into something much bigger: the creation of Chinese Autism CIC (CACIC), so families could feel understood and not alone."

"In Chinese culture, there is fierce stigma associated with autism. It is often viewed as a disease, a source of shame, or something that should not be openly discussed. Families can face misunderstanding, fear of judgement and isolation, making it difficult to seek help."



**CHINESE
AUTISM**
英国华人自闭症基金会



“Today, CACIC empowers Chinese-speaking neurodivergent people and their families, including wider East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) communities. We bring together lived experience, knowledge of neurodiversity and cultural understanding to advocate for families. We help people access information, build confidence and feel valued.”

“We also work with health services, schools, businesses and voluntary organisations to help them better engage with Chinese neurodivergent communities. Through neuro-affirming training, culturally sensitive translation, community engagement and co-production, we help organisations remove barriers, build trust and create more inclusive services.”



“Our vision is simple: no one should miss out on support because of language, culture or stigma. Every neurodivergent person deserves to be understood, respected and accepted for who they are.”



“A neuro-affirming approach with cultural competency is the way forward.”

To learn more about their work or explore opportunities to work together, visit <https://chineseautism.org.uk/> or follow @ChineseAutismUK



What's on?

Hynt Card

Do you love going to the theatre?
Did you know about the Hynt Scheme?

Hynt is a national scheme that works with theatres and arts centres across Wales to make things clear and consistent. It's also a resource for anyone who needs specific access information to plan a trip to the theatre.

Hynt cardholders are entitled to a free ticket for a personal assistant or carer at all the theatres and arts centres participating in the scheme.



For more information visit: www.hynt.co.uk/en/about/what-is/



Global ADHD Conference 2026

Interested in learning more about ADHD and hearing from people with different experiences from around the world?

The free Global ADHD Conference returns on **1–2 October 2026**, bringing together experts, charities, speakers and people with lived experience to share information, ideas and practical support.

It is free to attend, and recordings will be available afterwards.

For more information or to contact the organisers, visit:
<https://globaladhd.com/global-conference-contact-us/>



Register now to receive the schedule, speaker updates and reminders: globaladhd.com/global-conference-registration/





Pedal Power - Inclusive activities in Cardiff

Inclusive activities in Cardiff can make a real difference to families. We caught up with Pedal Power to speak to a family who use their service about what inclusive groups in Cardiff they find helpful. Here's what they told us:

"Ava attends Cardiff Chameleons swimming club, Rubicon Dance and Shadows Badminton Club on a weekly basis as well as Pedal Power for a number of sessions per year. It can be difficult finding activities suitable for her but she is very happy at these places."



"Ava lacks a lot of self confidence especially in anything new. The patience and understanding shown by staff at Pedal Power is remarkable. She started off on a 3 wheel trike but soon progressed onto a 2 wheel bike. She now has lessons with Robyn using her own bike and is slowly building confidence."

"We are extremely grateful for the amount of patience Rob shows her time and time again. I would highly recommend Pedal Power as it is fully inclusive, a safe environment and highly professional."



If you would like to find out more information about Pedal Power you can contact **029 2039 0713** or visit: **<https://cardiffpedalpower.org/>**



Cllr Norma Mackie: Championing Inclusion



Cllr Mackie: Chairing the Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff Forum

"I am so pleased that I was able to Chair my first Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff forum which took place this July. It was brilliant to meet members of the community and hear first-hand their views on the direction of services in Cardiff."

"The attendees talked about what changes they would like to see included in the plans to make Cardiff more inclusive for people with physical disabilities and sensory loss. We also heard from partners on key developments including how Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff has helped to shape Cardiff Council Regeneration Strategy."



"The feedback gathered will be used to help shape a physical disability and sensory loss strategy, with further engagement planned to ensure the priorities identified lead to lasting improvements across Cardiff."

"I am thrilled to be able to champion this initiative and the voices of neurodivergent individuals and families in Cardiff. I would like to thank everyone who came along and took part. I look forward to building on this momentum, building forum membership further to reflect more diverse voices."





Understanding Neurodivergence

Cardiff and Vale Recovery and Wellbeing College is the first NHS peer-led service in Wales. It supports adults to understand physical and mental health, recovery, and wellbeing through free activities and courses.

Cardiff & Vale Recovery College offer a free course on 'Understanding Neurodivergence'.



This course gives you the opportunity to explore the meaning of neurodivergence and the emotional and social experiences of living as a neurodivergent person.

Georgia Howard, Deputy Manager, says: "Our classes are co-designed and co-facilitated by health professionals and peer trainers with lived experience who truly get it"

Last year, Georgia Howard and Rachel Kelly worked together to deliver Understanding Neurodivergence for 18 staff and volunteers from Cardiff Council services. Participants represented a range of areas, including benefits and advice, education, school nursing, heritage, youth work, dementia, and health care.

"One of the most rewarding moments for me was seeing how participants reacted when they realised this was a space for open, honest sharing and not just a lecture. It was inspiring to see that transition and watch people truly connect" - Georgia Howard

"This course has over succeeded my expectations. One of the best courses I have ever attended. It has resonated with me personally and on a professional level. It is something I feel should be offered to every human being." - Student

For more information on Cardiff and Vale Recovery college and to sign up, visit: <https://cavuhb.nhs.wales/our-services/welcome-to-the-cardiff-and-vale-recovery-wellbeing-college/> or call 02921 832616





Cardiff Hubs & Libraries Neurodivergent Champion

**“Hello Everyone, I am David
(call me Dave)”**

I work in Cathays Branch and Heritage Library and am a Neurodivergent Friendly Champion. This means that I have had neurodivergence awareness training to be able to better support customers”



“ I had heard of neurodiversity in passing but had not researched deeply into it. The chance to have training on a topic dear to my heart was too good to miss so I signed up straight away. The course was excellent! The passion that each neurodivergent speaker had was infectious. The community has a wonderful curiosity to promote change for the better for everyone. To own the change. This was new territory. This was not being afraid to fail. This was learning by doing. Importantly this was sharing all the successes that had been made”

“Soon after, I curated a book display and poster (using accessible font, colour choices and inclusive language) to celebrate some of the neurodivergent champions that had literally changed the world. The story of their struggles, especially with mental health, made me want to try to make things a little bit better for everyone.”



“I was fortunate enough to attend the Neurodivergent training workshop in Glamorgan archives. It was a great blend of people, students, activists, librarians and staff. Everyone had a story to tell of little changes that had made a massive difference to neurodivergent people’s lives. It was there I learnt more about helpful sensory resources and making things more accessible. For example, the simple changing of the font we use that can make a huge difference to people with dyslexia or ensuring that the walkways are not obstructed to remove barriers for those with dyspraxia.”

“On the Hubs and Libraries website, you can visit virtual tours of all the hubs and libraries, and see different parts of the library, how to attend the building by public transport and a handy map. These little things can help those with anxiety about visiting completely new environments for the first time!”



“Some of the specialist furniture and materials we have introduced to the library to make it more inclusive are very popular with the children. The spinning chairs are a favourite. The always popular colouring sheets and crayons really do make a difference – I have seen friendships form from it. Fidget toys help to improve focus, concentration, and reduce anxiety by self-soothing. It helps to make the area a safe space both mentally and physically.”

“I have been fortunate enough to have grown up with amazingly gifted neurodivergent people that have enriched my life. The future is exciting as this area of research is constantly evolving with the needs of the individual at the centre. As Saint David once said “Do the little things; small acts of kindness and service that can have a profound impact on people’s life and community”.

ASC Cymru are excited to be expanding their social programme with several new Monday groups, including Coffee Morning, Book Club, Movie Mates, Cosy Crafters and Mindful Miles Groups from September. They are also introducing new groups throughout the week, such as Cosy Pixel Corner gaming sessions, Jigsaw Club and The Quiet Lounge from October.

Alongside these new opportunities, they will continue to offer many of their popular regular groups, including Creative Writing, The Hangout, Arts & Crafts, Board Games, Social Stroll & Snack and Dungeons & Dragons.



All of the groups are relaxed, flexible and designed with autistic adults in mind, creating welcoming, low-pressure environments where individuals can be themselves and participate in ways that work for them. There's no pressure to talk, participate or stay for the entire session – you are welcome to join in whatever way feels comfortable for you.



Fancy Getting Involved?

ASC Cymru are looking for volunteers to help support groups, share their hobbies and interests, welcome new attendees and help them develop exciting new activities. Whether you are interested in gaming, crafting, creative projects, community events or simply helping others feel welcome, they would love to hear from you!



Interested in joining a group or becoming a volunteer?
Email: info@asc-cymru.org Phone: **02920 228794**
Website: <https://asc-cymru.org/>





Carers Advice Line

Looking after a friend or family member in Cardiff?

Many people don't realise they're unpaid carers, but recognising your role means you can access support.

The Cardiff Carers Advice Line offers a listening ear, advice & signposting to services, and help understanding your rights.



The Cardiff Carers Advice Line (02920 234 234 – Option 2) is the new name for the city's existing telephone support service for unpaid carers. It continues to provide advice, information and signposting to the help and support available. The new name was chosen in discussion with unpaid carers to ensure it reflects their needs and experiences.

For information and advice call **02920 234 234** – Option 2



Cardiff University Research - Unmasking

Are you a young person (18–25 years) with ADHD who would like to take part in a study to share your experiences of masking your ADHD?

What does taking part involve?

- You will be invited to complete a short (10 minutes) online survey asking about your experiences of masking your ADHD symptoms.
- At the end of the survey, you can also express an interest in taking part in a 1:1 meeting (30–60 minutes) to chat more about your experiences.
- If you are willing, some will be invited to take part in a 1:1 meeting online (Teams) or in person at Cardiff University.

To complete the online survey, please scan this QR code or visit **<https://redcap.link/maskingsurvey>**



Inclusive Youth Services

Cardiff Youth Service has set out an ambitious new five-year strategy for Youth Work, reinforcing the commitment to supporting young people both in schools and within local communities across the city. Youth work plays a vital role in helping young people feel safe, supported and able to thrive.

At the core of the strategy is a locality-based approach, ensuring that every part of Cardiff benefits from consistent, high-quality youth work.



Cardiff Youth Service want all young people in Cardiff to have access to qualified, registered Youth Workers who provide consistent, high-quality support. Youth Work should be accessible and inclusive, ensuring every young person, regardless of background or circumstance can benefit from the opportunities it offers.



There are six key priorities as part of this Youth Work Strategy which includes Participation and inclusion. Cardiff Youth Service offers inclusive youth clubs across the city, providing a safe space to meet the needs of everyone involved.

To find out more about this Youth Work strategy, scan the QR code



Are you looking for an inclusive youth groups in Cardiff?



Cathays Inclusive Youth Club is open to all young people aged 11–25, including those with additional learning needs, disabilities or impairments. The club supports socialising with friends, interactive games, pool, arts and crafts, sports, music studios and life skills e.g. shopping on a budget, cooking and serving food. **The club is meet on Fridays 18:15–20:30pm at Cathays Community Centre.**



Neuro Roots is a group for young people aged 14–25 years who are neurodivergent. Come and socialise and meet like-minded people. Activities include gaming, arts and crafts and more! No need to book, just turn up and get involved. **This group is on Thursdays 17:00–20:00 @ grassroots in Cardiff City Centre.**

The Young Carers Youth Club is an established youth club for young people, aged 11–25, who have a caring responsibility at home. Led by the Cardiff South team, **The club operates from 10:15am to 12.45pm every 1st Saturday of the month at Eastmoors Youth Centre.**



“Roots remains the only place I have been where all the other people are like me and was the only place other than home where what control I did have wasn’t taken away from me. My point is, I was allowed to be me. Nobody lives in the shadow of anyone else at ASC Roots and, as cliché as it sounds, everyone is equal.”

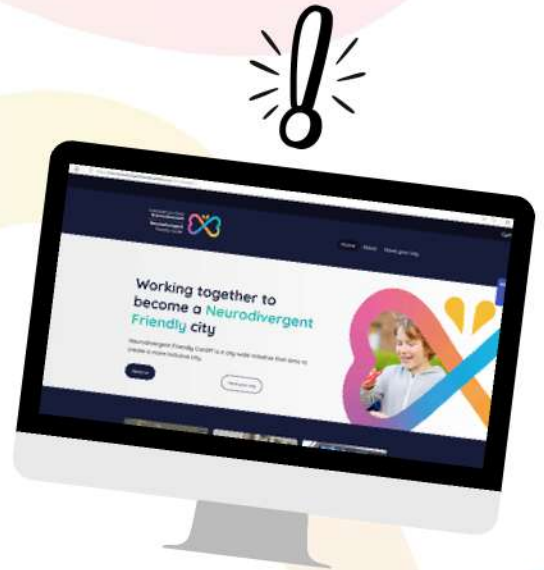
To find out more about inclusive youth groups available visit:
www.cardiffyouthservices.wales or call 029 2061 5260



Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff website

Finding the right support starts with knowing where to look! We are developing a Neurodivergent Friendly Cardiff website with the goal of helping people find helpful information about local services, activities and support across Cardiff.

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



NeurodivergentFriendlycardiff.co.uk/have-your-say/ or call 029 2087 1083



Have your say

We are always looking to improve information, share helpful insights and positive stories about neurodivergent people in Cardiff.

We know there are some incredible stories out there that we would like to feature in this newsletter.

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



www.NeurodivergentFriendlyCardiff.co.uk



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NeurodivergentCardiff



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