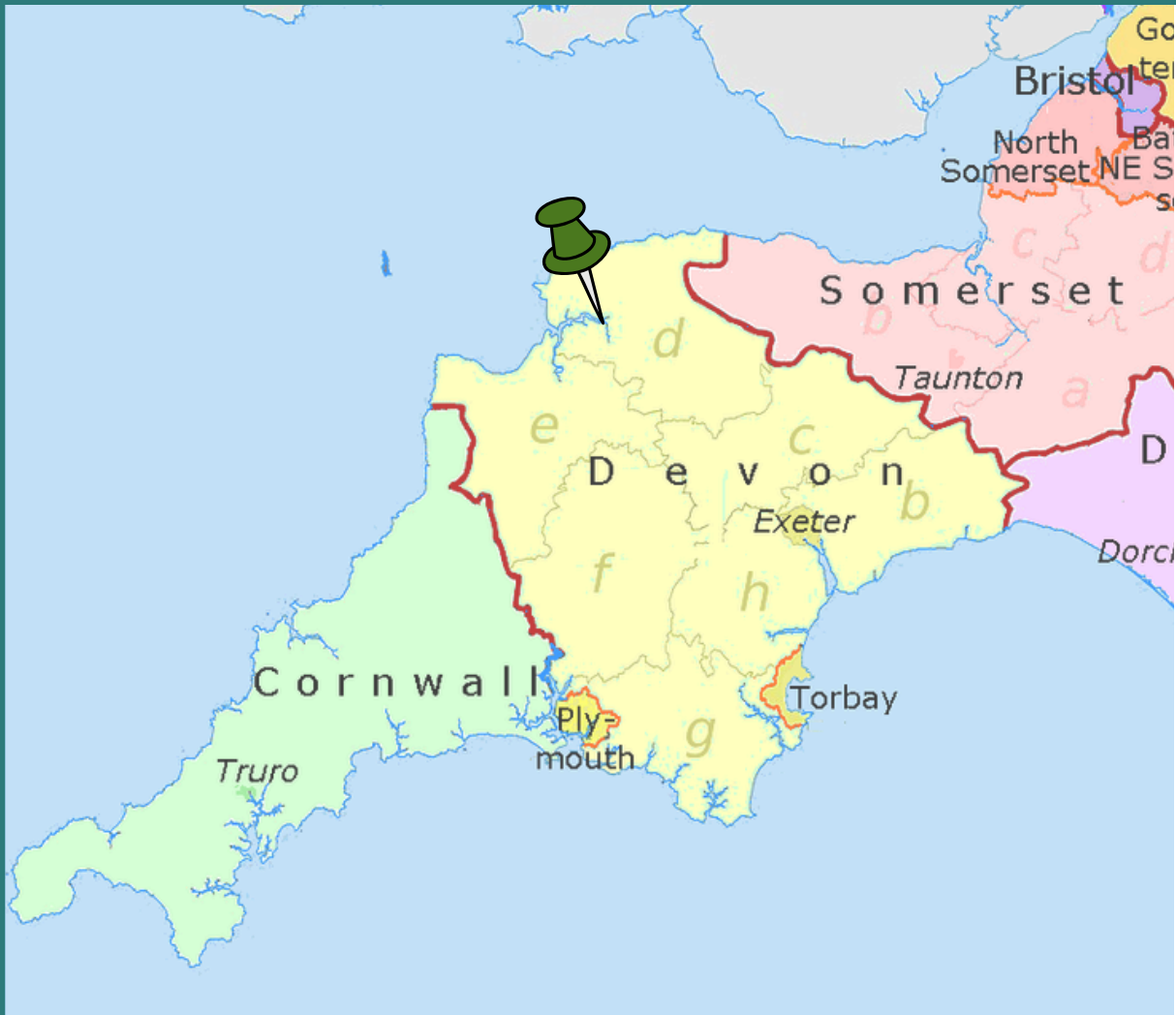


Northern Devon

PINN Forum

REPORT

autumn
2024



created by WayMakers
www.waymakers.co.uk

Event Summary

A snapshot of collaboration and driving change together

The most recent PINN Forum brought together 46 professionals from health, education, social services and other support areas to enhance inclusivity, care services and accessibility for our local neurodivergent community.

Objective:

The PINN (Practitioners in Meeting Neurodivergent Needs) Forum is a co-action space for helping professionals working in Northern Devon, whose services cater for neurodivergent teens or adults.

This unique space facilitates collaboration, resource sharing, and the development of innovative strategies to enhance the support available for neurodivergent individuals.

The long-term aim is to provide a collaborative environment where helping professionals can exchange ideas and co-design solutions to better meet the needs of neurodivergent service users.

Why This Matters:

Neurodivergent individuals often face systemic barriers and fragmented support systems, which leave needs unmet and outcomes unequal.

Key Outcomes:

Feedback from attendees revealed that:

88%

left having formed new professional relationships.

71%

rated the event as highly useful for their roles.

76%

left with a better understanding of neurodivergence.

Discussions explored themes of inclusive co-design and late identified neurodivergence.

By working together to create better-connected local services, we can foster inclusivity, streamline access to resources, and promote a more coordinated approach to care.

In doing so, we build stronger, more cohesive systems in Northern Devon, and support our neurodivergent community members to thrive.

The Big Picture

Cross-sector co-action and collaboration

The Challenge:

Neurodiversity refers to the natural variation in our wiring, yet society often upholds neuronormative standards.

At least 20% of the UK population are thought to be neurodivergent, with figures likely to be much higher given the extent of unidentified differences. Neurodivergence often impacts quality of life and access to opportunities, due to:

Social Isolation & Stigma: negative stereotypes and misunderstandings and can lead to exclusion, making it harder for neurodivergent individuals to form social connections.

Sensory Overload & Communication Barriers: bright lights, loud noises, or crowded spaces can be overwhelming, while differences in communication styles may lead to frustration or misinterpretation.

Employment & Accessibility Issues: application processes, rigid work structures and unconscious bias make it harder for neurodivergent individuals to enter and retain jobs. There are often additional obstacles accessing essential services and transport.

Vulnerability & Independence: Neurodivergent people are often at greater risk of exploitation and face challenges with daily independence due to societal barriers and insufficient support systems.

Key Statistics:

8x the UK unemployment rate for autistic adults compared to non-disabled individuals

20 years the most conservative estimate of difference in life expectancy for autistic individuals in the UK.

up to half the proportion of UK adult prison inmates thought to be neurodivergent.

9x the estimated increase in suicide risk for autistic adults.

80% proportion of autistic adults facing mental health challenges.

2.5 million approximately number of adults in the UK believed to be neurodivergent, but without a diagnosis.

These figures highlight just some of the systemic challenges facing neurodivergent individuals, and emphasise the need for coordinated action among service providers.

A well-connected and streamlined local service network strengthens our social fabric, leaving us better able to support these vulnerable individuals, leading to better outcomes and ensuring more equitable access to services.

Key Metrics

An overview of our members and reach

The driving force behind the PINN Forum is an incredible network of professionals from local organisations, businesses, and community groups, who between them, bring a diverse range of expertise and fresh perspectives.

Our Network at a Glance:

We are immensely proud that participation in the PINN initiative has been embraced by so many local professionals.

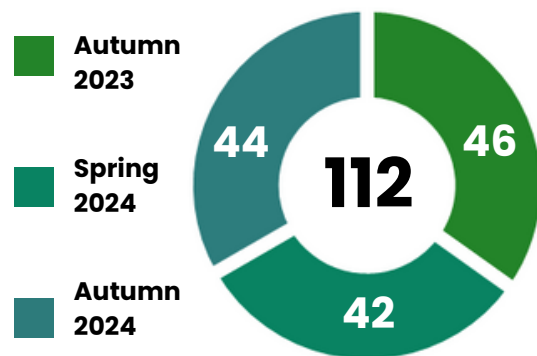
Here's a snapshot of just some of the organisations who have so far been represented:

- **Barnstaple Alliance Primary Care Network**
- **Barnstaple Town Council**
- **Clarity North Devon**
- **Devon County Council**
- **Devon Mental Health Alliance**
- **Devon Partnership NHS Trust**
- **DWP/JobCentre Plus**
- **Libraries Unlimited**
- **North Devon Council**
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere**
- **North Devon Voluntary Services**
- **Pilton Community College**
- **SeetecPluss**
- **Sunrise Diversity CIC**

As the PINN Forum continues to grow, we hope to increase this reach even further by welcoming new voices and insights to our dynamic mix of collaborators.

Participation Metrics:

A total of 112 professionals representing 58 different local organisations have so far attended one or more PINN forum.



Our mailing list currently goes out to 121 individuals from over 65 local organisations, businesses and groups.

112
individual attendees

121
mailing list recipients

58
attending organisations

65
organisations on mailing list

Key Metrics

An overview of our members and reach

The People Behind PINN:

The strength of the PINN Forum lies not just in the organisations represented, but in the incredible diversity of roles held by attendees.

Our members bring a wealth of expertise from across various sectors, each contributing unique perspectives and skills to the conversation.

Here's a look at some of the many roles represented at the forum:

- **Activities/Groups Coordinators**
- **Charity/CIC Representatives**
- **Clinical Team Leaders**
- **Community Development Advisors**
- **Council Team Members**
- **Crisis Support/Intervention Workers**
- **Employment Advisors**
- **Family/Youth Support Workers**
- **Housing Support Workers**
- **Mental Health Practitioners**
- **Neurodiversity Coaches**
- **Occupational Therapists**
- **Primary Care Network Workers**
- **SEND Teacher/Managers**
- **Specialist Consultants**
- **Specialist Support Workers**
- **Specialist Tutors/Assessors**

Through such a wide-ranging mix of collaborators, we can continue to drive innovation, improve support systems, and create more inclusive spaces for neurodivergent people.

Participation Metrics:

Feedback from attendees to the April 2024 event revealed that:

92%

rated the session and content as being useful or very useful.

76%

left with significantly improved knowledge of neurodivergent issues.

100%

rated the event enjoyable or highly enjoyable.

Participant Feedback:

“

The forum was all very enjoyable—thank you!

”

“

All very positive—thank you!

”

“

The event was really well structured and I appreciated the amount of breaks we had.

”

“

I found everything great!

”

“

A worthwhile event — I look forward to more.

”

The Northern Devon PINN Forum is designed and run by WayMakers Devon CIC

If you or your organisation are interested in joining the mailing list or directory of members, find out more by contacting:

email: katie@waymakers.co.uk

website: [WayMakers PINN Forum](https://www.waymakers.co.uk/pinn-forum)

Event Highlights

Exploring key takeaways, insights and networking wins

Reflections and Feedback:

Several key facts and insights were frequently cited in our feedback.

These resonated deeply with attendee, not only capturing their attention but also providing actionable learning to inform their work.

Major Insights:

- Learning that neurodivergent individuals often process information differently: e.g. autistic people's brains process 42% more information than non-autistic brains in a resting state.
- How co-design processes foster inclusivity and lead to better outcomes for diverse communities.
- The importance of considering intersectionality: e.g. ADHD and menopause, or LGBTQ+ and neurodivergence.

Practical Takeaways:

Strategies to support ADHD, such as cortisol awareness and coaching. Resources like the ethnically diverse communities' booklet and "Access to Work" funding.

Participant Feedback:

“

Gained some useful knowledge about signposting to coaching and other organisations.

”

“

The discussion on co-design concepts has already influenced my project planning.

”

“

I left with improved recognition and understanding of ADHD.

”

“

I have a new understanding of the importance of co-creation and the need to embed it in my projects.

”

“

This will help us recognise presentations from our clients and how to be 'available' for them.

”

“

The discussion around co-design was very interesting for my work.

”

“

I'll use this to become even more person-centred in my work.

”

Event Highlights

Exploring key takeaways, insights and networking wins

More Useful Insights:

The true value of the PINN Forum lies in the experiences and reflections of its attendees. By bringing together professionals from diverse sectors, the forum sparks moments of collaboration, innovation, and deep learning.

Participants shared how the event expanded their understanding about the unique challenges and strengths of neurodivergent individuals, and many expressed a renewed commitment to empathy and adaptability in their roles.

Collaborative Success:

Networking was a key goal for many attendees, and the forum provided a valuable space to build meaningful connections across sectors.

Participants felt that meeting colleagues from different disciplines deepened their understanding of shared challenges and opportunities, leading to new ideas and practical solutions.

Strengthening these professional networks fosters a culture of ongoing support, knowledge sharing, and innovation, ultimately improving service delivery and outcomes for those who need it most.

Participant Feedback:

“

The importance of empathy, not judging, making assumptions, appreciating differences and not being led by neuro-types.

”

“

I made several great new connections—people to talk to and services I found out about.

”

“

Some great discussions about potential collaborations.

”

“

Met some new professionals and gained some additional insight into partnership working.

”

“

Networking with key providers was my main goal today and this was achieved: 5/5 for usefulness.

”

“

I made a link which will help with a personal issue I need support with.

”

“

It was wonderful to walk in and not know over half the people—so many new connections!

”

Looking Ahead

Shaping what's next: the future of the PINN forum

The PINN initiative is intended to be dynamic and evolving – shaped by the voices of its attendees. Feedback, ideas and suggestions shape planned improvements, innovative features and key themes for future events and are the foundation for our continued growth and impact.

Wishes and Suggestions:

A valued aspect of the forum is the opportunity to connect with like-minded professionals. To support ongoing collaboration, attendees will receive a networking directory to help them reconnect with peers after the event.

In terms of event format, attendees expressed a strong preference for a balanced mix of guest speakers and workshops, with space for structured peer-to-peer learning and extended networking sessions.

Several practical improvements were also suggested, including the use of dyslexia-friendly materials such as tinted paper and low-light slides, as well as offering hybrid options for those who wish to attend remotely.

Attendees also shared their ideas for future themes, highlighting key topics they would like to explore in more depth and 3 top themes emerged.

With these insights in mind, we are excited to shape the next forum into an even more inclusive, engaging, and valuable experience for all.

Neurodivergence and Mental Health:

Exploring the complex interplay between neurodivergence and mental health: overlapping challenges, addressing stigma and developing tailored strategies for emotional well-being.

Life Transitions and Independence:

Recognising that life transitions can be especially challenging for neurodivergent individuals: looking at the knowledge and tools to provide meaningful support during these pivotal moments.

Intersectionality in Neurodiversity:

Unpacking how overlapping identities and experiences shape our lives: the intersection of neurodivergence and gender, sexuality, ethnicity and culture; and the unique challenges and strengths that come with this.



Inclusive, Independent, Invaluable

Thank You!

Acknowledgments and Special Mentions

Everyone:

To all attendees, facilitators, and contributors – thank you for your help in making the event a success.

Guest Contributors:

A special thank you to Sarah, Tom and Stefan for taking part and running some fantastic and informative presentations.

Venue:

Thanks to Barnstaple Library and Libraries Unlimited for providing a brilliant venue and for their support in arranging the room set-up.

Funding:

This event was only possible thanks to funding received from Barnstaple Town Council, which was gratefully received.

We also thank everyone who attended for making a small contribution to help cover the costs of refreshments and materials on the day.

And of course, a HUGE thank you to WayMakers own Alex Kelly for coming up with the concept for the PINN initiative and for running and hosting the event. Thank you, Alex!

Thank you all for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to building the PINN forum and improving services and outcomes for neurodivergent service-users in Northern Devon.

WayMakers deliver bespoke learning opportunities to the corporate sector, education, health and social care, and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE).

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Instagram: @waymakers_uk

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