

Salford CVS Annual Conference – Note Takers Template

Justice for Disabled People: The Role of the VCSE Sector in Salford

Name of workshop	Embracing Neurodiversity
Facilitator	Hannah Flint, Salford CVS
Panel members	Dr Tony Lloyd, ADHD Foundation Janet Taylor, Salford Disability Forum Chris Dabbs, Unlimited Potential
Panel speaker notes	<p>Dr Tony Lloyd</p> <p>There needs to be a different model when looking at neurodiversity, as people with what are classified as ‘disabilities’ are <i>actually</i> people with naturally occurring differences that make them more proficient at certain tasks.</p> <p>Standardised testing for children is not a beneficial model to society, as it doesn’t allow children with neurological differences to be able to thrive and find what they could be good at. The curriculum in this country only tests a certain skill – information retention and repetition. If we keep classifying neurodiverse children as having intellectual disabilities, then we are predestining them towards needing care in order to fit the norm, rather than supporting them in utilising their ‘differences’ to discover their ability.</p> <p>Janet Taylor</p> <p>Each person’s experience of dyspraxia/DCD is different and will be affected by a person’s age, the opportunities they have had to learn skills, environmental demands and the support/understanding shown by people around them</p> <p>Dyspraxic Adults may avoid activities that show their difficulties. E.g., sports, dancing, cooking (masking)</p> <p>Having dyspraxia highlights the extent of how the world is disabling, rather than the person.</p> <p>Chris Dabbs</p> <p>Everyone has strengths that are needed to produce solutions. All types of power must be shared, and unequal power addressed. Good relationships are crucial. They need time, respect and trust. Diversity of people is important for high quality thinking. There are different types of knowledge. Lived experience is valuable.</p> <p>It is important to test new ideas. There is no failure, just learning. Organisations and recruiters need to understand that the ability to pass / do well in a classic interview format is not always the right way of</p>

	<p>finding the best person for the role. Classic interviews will often remove candidates that are neurodiverse due to their necessity to have interpersonal skills, even if the role does not demand them. Diverse mind-sets are capable of unlocking complex challenges that we face as organisations,</p>
<p>Q&A</p>	<p>Q. Undiagnosed SEND children are often treated within mainstream schools as having behavioural problems from an early age, which can set them on a negative path. How can we upskill teachers to understand the signs earlier?</p> <p>A. Fundamentally, the problem suffers greatly from the diagnostic pathway within our healthcare system, as many children take so long to achieve a diagnosis, that they have missed out on a lot of schooling. Our schools need to be better prepared for SEND Children, especially with the increases in children presenting with neurodiverse conditions post-covid.</p> <p>Q. Can the panel comment on how historically, women have been less likely to be diagnosed with neurodiverse conditions?</p> <p>A. Yes, this has been a very interesting trend, as historically women either have been better at masking a neurodiverse condition, or have been labelled ‘shy’ or with other pejorative words around their mental health etc. It does look like that the long-standing academically agreed statistics that have men as being significantly more likely to have neurodiverse conditions is wrong.</p>
<p>Practical actions (2-3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Salford VCSE Forum dedicated to neurodiversity – in particular what can be done to influence educational policy to upskill and train teachers and schools to be able to deal with undiagnosed SEND children. • Promote the Unlimited Potential guide for autistic people to find meaningful employment – <i>Fulfilling Your Potential</i> – to help neurodiverse people to understand the recruitment process. • Promote the Unlimited Potential guide for employers to understand how to benefit from recruiting and retaining autistic people – <i>Untapped Potential</i>