

## MORE EMPATHY - MORE INCLUSION - MORE CELEBRATION

Dear schools and settings across Shropshire,

Firstly, we would just thank to thank the staff within the pilot schools across Shropshire for the warm and enthusiastic reception that the Neurodiversity Practitioners (NDPs) have received. With their support and commitment, it has been a very positive, rewarding and fruitful pilot project for all involved, and we now greatly look forwards to the next chapter for the NDP Team. We are very pleased to share that we have successfully secured the NDPs as a permanent team within the Shropshire Educational Psychology Service.



We are also excited to share that the NDPs will be expanding their support range to include working across the age range (0-25) whilst continuing to support children and young people on a needs-led, as opposed to a diagnosis-led, basis across the constellation of neurodivergence. Their role in supporting schools and settings will continue to be in a preventive capacity. Therefore, individual work will be aimed at pupils who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or are in the EHC Needs Assessment process, as these pupils will already be undergoing / have undergone a holistic assessment of needs and receiving additional support. Their role will continue to be to enhance the awareness, understanding and empathy of pupils presenting with neurodivergent needs, to promote an assess, plan, do, review cycle, and to build knowledge, skills and capacity to support pupils both individually and systemically.

The NDPs will also be continuing the core systemic roles they are currently involved in, i.e., pupil voice projects, Emotional Based School Avoidance (ESBA) support and in the development of the Shropshire-wide inclusive practice documents for schools and settings. They will also be involved in delivering and supporting the implementation of the new Neuroinclusive Practice training modules and Network groups. Moreover, the NDPs have collated resources and information that could be supportive of your school which can be found on their Learning Gateway page.

We very much look forwards to hearing from you soon and to being able to work with you to provide additional support to our neurodiverse children and young people in Shropshire.

Best wishes,



Principal Educational Psychologist  
and Preventative Lead



Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist  
for Neurodiversity



## Dr Kathryn Morgan

Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist (Neurodiversity)

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Hi! I'm Kathryn. I am one of the strategic leads for the Neurodiversity Workstream and line manage the Neurodiversity Practitioner Team. I have been part of autism assessment teams for over 10 years and am currently one of the educational psychologists working in the Children's Development Centre. I am hugely passionate about enhancing neuroinclusive practice, including promoting neuro-affirming language, to empower and enable our neurodiverse learners and those around them.

## Helen Vincent

Neurodiversity Practitioner

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Hi! I'm Helen. I have been a primary teacher for 16 years as well as a school SENDCo and the designated lead for care-experienced children. I have worked with teenagers in residential care and am a parent of neurodivergent children. I am committed to raising the profile of neurodiversity and supporting schools to embed inclusive practice. I am especially interested in Emotionally Based School Avoidance and additional needs related to attachment.



## Hollie Jones

Neurodiversity Practitioner

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Hello! I'm Hollie, I am a qualified teacher and have been working with children for 20 years. I have taught across both the private and state sectors in the UK and abroad before specialising in neurodivergence. Having ADHD myself and parenting neurodivergent children, I bring both professional and personal experience to my role. My dream is to see neurodivergent people proud of their uniqueness and celebrated for being their wonderful selves.



## Rachel Tomkinson

Neurodiversity Practitioner

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Hi! I'm Rachel. I have been a qualified primary teacher for 27 years. I have also been a SENDCo supporting staff, children and their families. I am enthusiastic about championing the voice of our children and young people. I am currently involved in a Pupil Voice project which builds upon good practice in our schools, enabling pupils' experiences and ideas to be valued and acted upon by the wider audience of Shropshire's Neurodiversity Workstream.



# SHROPSHIRE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

## NEURODIVERSITY PRACTITIONERS

### ABOUT US



We are the Neurodiversity Practitioners (NDPs) who work within Shropshire Educational Psychology Service (EPS). We are all qualified teachers with a wide range of experience in Special Educational Needs. You can find out more on Shropshire Learning Gateway. This page is still in its infancy with many plans in progress, but there is

already a document with links to readily available resources that schools and settings can use to enhance and support in many areas, including: pupil voice; understanding and meeting sensory needs; environments; emotional regulation; transitions; practical strategies and activities for classroom teachers; and mental health.



### HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

One-to-one work with Children and Young People

Interventions to Support Neuroinclusive Practice

Parent Information Sessions

Staff CPD Delivery, including training

Working Collaboratively with other Services and Professionals

Whole-School Action Plans

Staff Coaching

### OUR VALUES, BEST HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

- For neurodivergent children to have the reasonable adjustments that they need.
- For neurodivergence to be seen as an asset: embraced and celebrated by all, and for this culture to start a ripple effect from schools through society.
- For neurodivergent children to understand themselves better and confidently communicate their needs.
- For neurodivergent children's strengths and areas of need to be recognised and supported.

### WHAT PEOPLE LIKE AND ADMIRE ABOUT US



### HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

- Assist our joint consultation model of meeting together with teachers, the SENDCo and parents/carers.
- Provide as much detail as possible on the Form 4 (involvement and reports from other professionals, Pupil Centred Plans, pupil voice).
- Provide a quiet space for us to work with pupils.
- Encourage all staff to contribute to the creation of whole school actions.
- Share any feedback from staff with us.



The term **neurodiversity** describes the diversity of human minds and the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning. Individuals can be **neurodivergent**, which means that their neurocognitive functioning is divergent from what may be deemed as average or **neurotypical**.

## We are:

### Pupil / Person-Centred

We ensure that children / young people and their parents / carers are truly listened to, and are at the heart of all decision-making. This process enables the children / young people to recognise their unique strengths and know how their own existing skills, alongside identified support strategies, can help them to manage challenges within their home and educational settings. Using person-centred principles, we emphasise tailoring support to meet the individual needs, preferences and aspirations of our neurodiverse children and young people.

### Needs-Led

The needs-led approach is a holistic perspective to supporting children and young people, and the adults who support them. Working in partnership with individuals and their families as well as education, health and care professionals, we explore and identify strengths and needs to improve outcomes and experiences for neurodiverse children and young people. The children and young people who we can support do not need to have a diagnosis relating to neurodivergence.

*“Lovely empathetic ladies that 'get' the busy demands within a school environment for SENDCos. Lovely to discuss issues and how best to support our neurodivergent children.”*

*“I feel the partnership between schools and NDPs can be an important resource for systemic change, and a longer working relationship would allow for further development of this.”*

### Solution-Focused

Solution-focused approaches empower people to create positive change. Using solution-focused principles enables us to explore what is working well at school and at home, to build on strengths and competencies and move together towards shared goals, priorities and aspirations.

## Coaching

Coaching is a way of working with people that focuses on supporting them to improve their performance, to learn and develop, and/or experience greater well-being. Coaching takes place through the medium of conversations with the two primary aims being to raise awareness and to develop responsibility.

The NDPs use coaching to gain a better understanding of the school / setting as well as individuals and to support the process of change over time towards an individual, school or setting's best hopes and aspirations. Coaching has been effectively used to support Senior Leadership Teams and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinators to facilitate school-wide changes that promote and enhance neuroinclusive practice for all.

### Case study:

A primary school was keen to embed a consistent approach to supporting emotional regulation for neurodiverse learners across the school. The NDP met with individual staff members and, through collaborative discussion, explored how evidence-based interventions could be used to understand and promote the emotional literacy and positive mental health of all learners. Over time, staff were supported by the NDP to set realistic and achievable objectives, both short and long-term, which could be implemented in the classroom, taking account of individual confidence and capacity.

*“Great to have the opportunity to discuss school based SEND issues to devise an action plan to support the growing number of neurodivergent children at our school.*

*Great facilitator to enable staff members to open a debate about key issues which have been identified by the school.*

*A flexible approach when working with the school and parents.”*

## Developing a Culture of Neuro-Affirmative Practice

The NDPs empower staff and schools / settings to develop approaches that embed neuroinclusive practice and celebrate neurodiversity, thereby further promoting an inclusive ethos and culture. This can include promoting and enhancing the use of neuro-affirmative language within schools / settings.

## Environments

The NDPs support schools to identify what is working well and highlight potential areas for development. These can be linked to, for example, supporting readiness for learning, sensory preferences and / or emotional regulation. This can include conducting a learning walk and enabling child / young person voice within explorations and planning adaptations.

## Sensory Audits

This involves raising awareness and understanding of sensory preferences and challenges. The NDPs can advise on how to enhance neuroinclusive learning environments and meet needs through reasonable adaptations and providing sensory diets.

*“It has been invaluable to work with someone who has grown to understand the needs of our school and work with us to tailor support which meets the children's needs.”*

## Advice on Teaching and Learning Styles

The NDPs can work with staff to recognise the range of learning styles of neurodiverse learners and recommend strategies for supporting whole class, small group and individual pupils.

## Working with Parents and Carers

The NDPs recognise the power of schools working in partnership with parents, carers and families. Whenever possible, joint consultations between the NDPs, school staff and parents / carers are recommended to enable a more holistic understanding of the child / young person.

*“It makes such a difference to have someone who is trained to teach these things. My son also feels really comfortable with her and looks forward to their sessions...”*

## Transition

The NDPs can advise on what support may be offered to a neurodivergent individual / cohort of pupils to promote carefully managed, positive transitions. Depending on packages, this could include transition support across schools, e.g., primary to secondary.

## What is the Purpose of a Consultation?

- Develop a broader insight and understanding into challenging situations, utilising applied psychology approaches.
- Explore and agree upon person-centred, reasonable actions and evidence-based approaches to address challenges and bring about positive change for the setting, for pupils and for their families.
- To evaluate recommendations and adapt strategies to promote effectiveness.
- *To ensure the consultation is as effective as possible, please ensure that the Form 4 is completed fully, there is an appropriate space to hold the meeting in and that key members of staff, and parents / carers if possible, are able to attend.*

## Case study:

A joint consultation between the NDP, class teacher and parents enabled key adults working with an autistic child to compare observations and better understand his needs. Teaching staff were concerned that the child was reluctant to write or to contribute to class discussions. Through the consultation process, adults recognised that the child was experiencing anxiety around making mistakes in front of peers. Once this was identified, strategies were suggested to support the child to develop resilience and acceptance of mistakes; these included direct teaching of a growth mindset, self-regulation calming strategies and interventions to promote the child's strengths and positive self-construct. Parents were keen to adopt these strategies at home, too.

## Solution Circles

NDPs can facilitate a structured, problem-solving process around identified pupils. Multiple members of staff contribute ideas to enable understanding and future support strategies, with an action plan being formed within the process. Many children / young people can be discussed within each Solution Circle, thereby promoting positive change for many as well as CPD for staff.

*"I feel that Rachel's input has been invaluable. Her knowledge and what I have learned about my student has really helped me understand him and also how to notice the triggers and to be able to prevent the outbursts."*

## Individual Support

The NDPs work with individual pupils to enable them to share their experiences. This may include exploring their thoughts and feelings about the school / setting and supporting them in recognising their areas of strength and challenge. Through observation, pupil consultations and activities, children and young people are empowered to share their views meaningfully and to be actively involved in their futures, including the creation of support plans.

A report will be written following individual support which will be shared with families and schools / settings. As part of the support, strategies can be modelled to members of staff in the hope that they will use them with other children / young people in the future.

## Working on What Works (WoWW)

WoWW aims to promote pupils' sense of belonging, focusing on finding solutions to problems or challenges and building positive relationships between all class members and a greater sense of belonging. The NDP, in role as the WoWW coach, initially works with the class teacher to identify targets to achieve within an agreed time frame.

## Case study:

A primary school was keen to enhance the sense of belonging for neurodiverse pupils in a mixed Y4/5 class. After coproducing targets with class staff and children, the WoWW Coach (NDP) visited weekly to observe and share specific positive feedback reflecting upon the targets. The NDP observed increased engagement in learning, reinforcing of learning behaviours and expectations both from staff and peers as well as a sense of collective ownership. The class want to continue the approach and share with families too.

*“Hollie allowed students, parents and staff to feel that their voice was valued and validated, and she acted as a powerful and positive catalyst for collaborative work and progress.”*

## Promoting Pupil Voice

The NDPs are skilled at enabling children and young people to share their views, experiences and understanding of the world. This is achieved through using person-centred tools and creative activities which encourage the voice of the child / young person and inform strategies which could be implemented. This may be done on an individual basis or as part of a wider school approach.



## Continued Professional Development (CPD)

The NDPs deliver training on a wide range of areas to enhance understanding and promote neuroinclusive learning environments. Bespoke training can also be created to meet the needs of individual schools / settings and our training offers are continuously growing.\*

### Our CPD training offers currently include, but are not limited to ...

What is Neurodiversity?

Masking

Learning environments

Behaviour as Communication

Neuro-affirmative language

Enabling child / young person voice

Understanding sensory needs

Supporting emotional regulation of neurodiverse learners

\*Please see our Learning Gateway page for updates on our CDP training offers.

*I can use the information from the session for certain children in my setting to improve their experience of education.*

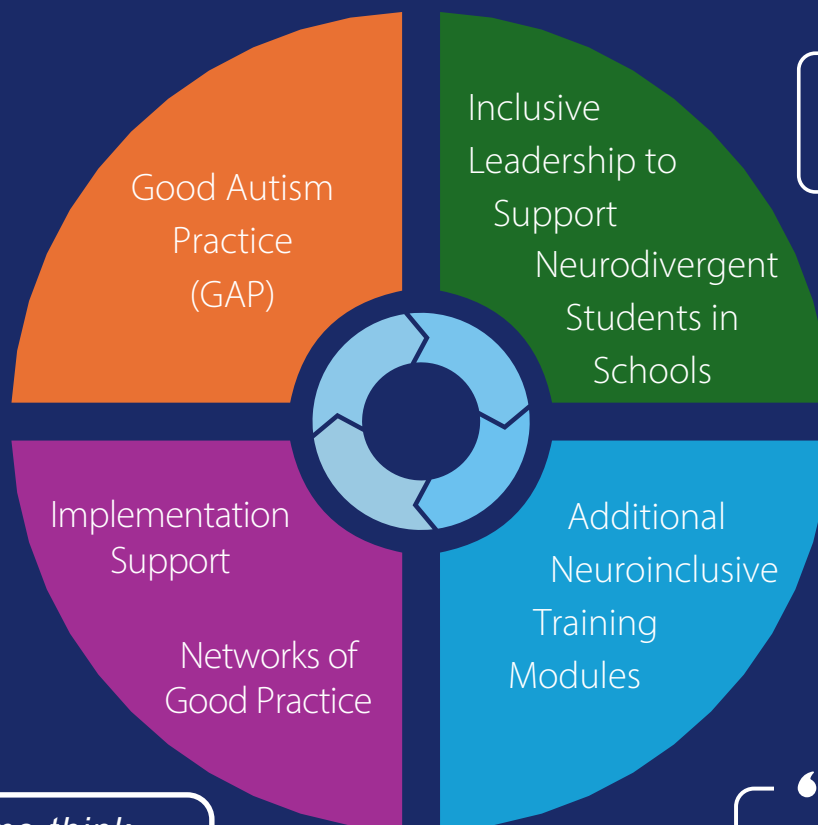


*It was the most amazing session! Everyone was engaged from the moment you began the day until it finished.*

*Excellent session - very engaging, informative, inspiring, really interesting and eye-opening. Delivered in a very friendly and understandable way.*

The NDPs are also key members of the Autism Education Training (AET) delivery team in Shropshire. As well as delivering the Good Autism Practice (GAP) training, they can support schools / settings with the implementation of the knowledge and skills following the training. Moreover, the NDPs can deliver the additional AET modules, including 'Understanding Anxiety' and 'Transitions in Schools' as well as some of the additional neuroinclusive training module. The full Shropshire Neuroinclusive Training offer can be found below. *(Please contact [kathryn.morgan@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:kathryn.morgan@shropshire.gov.uk) for more information.)*

“  
*A fantastic course.*  
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“  
*Very informative and enjoyable.*  
”

“  
*It really made me think about the needs of individuals regardless of diagnosis.*  
”

“  
*Brilliant and clear information. Light-hearted.*  
”

## Networking & Signposting

The NDPs support schools to enhance their awareness of available resources, professionals and opportunities for staff development across Shropshire in relation to neurodiversity.

“Not for profit”

Each package will be costed depending on the number of sessions required to deliver the support. This will need to be agreed with the requesting service.


Each session is approximately three hours.

Current pricing for the remainder of the academic year 2024-25 is £100 per session.

Form 4 - Request for Involvement can be accessed by **schools / settings** via the Shropshire Learning Gateway.

	Sessions	Cost
<u>Package A</u> 3 Coaching sessions	3	£300
<u>Package B</u> 3 Coaching sessions and 2 CPD sessions	5	£500
<u>Package C</u> 3 Coaching sessions and 3 individual casework	12	£1000
<u>Package D</u> 3 Coaching sessions, 2 CPD sessions and 3 individual casework	14	£1200
<u>Package E</u> Bespoke package agreed with school	Bespoke packages are priced individually	

For further information on the Neurodiversity Practitioners or to arrange an informal discussion about your school's / setting's needs, please contact us:

 Tel: 01743 258414

 [eps@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:eps@shropshire.gov.uk)

 [Learning Gateway](#)

