



# connectiverse

BLACKPOOL, WYRE & FYLDE COAST

**8+** MENTAL HEALTH  
FEATURES

**CARERS SUPPORT  
LANCS CHILD & FAMILY APP**

**CELEBRATING LIZ TAPNER MBE  
WORKPLACE WELLBEING**

**SUPPORT FOR EXAM SEASON  
NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR WYRE**

**REJECTION SENSITIVE DYSPHORIA  
A NEW CHAPTER FOR ROSCO**

**LOCAL FEATURES  
CONNECTIVERSE PERSPECTIVES**

# ABOUT CONNECTIVERSE

Connectiverse Magazine is dedicated to connecting people with support, amplifying local voices, and fostering inclusion and wellbeing across the Fylde Coast and beyond. Our mission is to bring together stories, insights, and support that matter to you, your family, and your community.

Connectiverse isn't just a magazine; it's a movement. We believe everyone deserves to feel seen, heard, and supported. Whether you're navigating family life, seeking mental health resources, exploring education and career paths, or looking for inspiration. Our contributors are parents, professionals, educators, advocates, and neighbours, sharing lived experiences and practical advice.

Trusted by professionals and organisations, Connectiverse offers content curated by experts. Each issue provides accuracy and practical value. We also feature clearly marked lived experience pieces, giving you a balanced view of every topic.

Whether you're seeking guidance, inspiration, or belonging, you'll find support and connection here. Together, we're building a kinder, more inclusive community, one story at a time.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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CONNECTIVERSE MAGAZINE | MARCH & APRIL 2026

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# OUR PARTNERS

To find out more about our partners and contributors who support and share our values, please check out our website at [www.connectiverse.co.uk](http://www.connectiverse.co.uk)



# EDITOR'S LETTER

Spring is a season of renewal, an invitation to begin again, refresh our thinking, and breathe new life into our paths. At Connectiverse, that essence underpins our mission to connect people with support, provide a platform for local voices, and foster inclusion across our communities.

In this issue, we look at what it means to rebuild after life's hardest moments, from navigating the financial and emotional fallout of relationship breakdowns to the honest, powerful reflections of parent carers working their way through health services and digital changes across Lancashire. With Stress Awareness Month reminding us how easily burnout creeps in, we explore the freedom that comes from releasing old expectations and allowing the past to guide healthier choices.

We also dive into RSD, the influence of hormones on the brain, and how reframing exams can open doors young people may not yet realise are theirs to walk through. Alongside practical tools and uplifting local stories, this edition is a reminder that while life can feel overwhelming, understanding our options, trusting our strengths, and seeking support truly matters.

One thing that stands out to me as ever, is the passion of our columnists and their commitment to making a real difference in people's lives.

**DENISE LOWE**



# FAMILY & PARENTING



This edition we hear from retired Parent Carers as they call for change in healthcare systems. Kristen tackles finances following a relationship breakdown and we cover the work of the Lancashire Health Visiting and School Nursing service, including their APP. We take a look at Dad's Pad, an app for new and expecting fathers, closing the gap between support for both parents.

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# THE FINANCIAL TO-DO LIST

## WHEN A RELATIONSHIP ENDS (AND YOU WEREN'T MARRIED OR IN A CIVIL PARTNERSHIP)

Ending a relationship is hard enough emotionally. Even when it's the right decision, it can knock the wind out of you. What often gets missed though, is the boring but important money admin that needs tying up when you weren't married or in a civil partnership.

This was a situation which came up during my appearance on Radio Lancashire at the start of February, from a listener who thought she had been taken off the joint mortgage 11 years ago when her relationship ended. She had not!

You see, as there's no legal framework swooping in to sort things for you when you separate (without having been married or in a civil partnership)- it's down to you to make sure nothing is left dangling.



**KRISTEN GUNLIFFE**

### THE MORTGAGE OR TENANCY AGREEMENT

If you own a property together, this is top of the list. Being named on a mortgage means you're financially responsible for it, whether you live there or not. Make sure you're formally removed if one of you is buying the other out, or that the property is sold and the mortgage redeemed. Verbal agreements don't count here - the lender needs to confirm it in writing. If you're renting jointly, check the tenancy agreement and make sure your name is removed if you've moved out.



### JOINT BANK ACCOUNTS

Joint accounts are often left "for convenience" and then forgotten about. That's risky. Either close them or convert them to sole accounts once everything has been split. Also check overdrafts and loans- a joint overdraft or loan means joint responsibility. While you're at it, look through your own bank statements for any subscriptions, insurance or payments still linked to your ex.

### PENSIONS AND NOMINATIONS

This one is huge and often overlooked. If you've nominated your ex on your pension or for death-in-service benefits at work, update it. These nominations sit outside your will and will usually pay out to whoever is named - even if the relationship ended years ago. Same goes for any life insurance policies.

### UTILITIES AND HOUSEHOLD BILLS

Gas, electricity, water, council tax, broadband, mobile phone plans, all of these need checking. Make sure accounts are in the right name and that you're not still financially linked. Utility companies are surprisingly happy to chase the wrong person if things aren't updated.

### WILLS AND BENEFICIARIES

If you made a Will while you were together, it's time to review it. Separating doesn't necessary 'void' any previous Will you have written.

### CREDIT LINKS

Finally, check your credit file to make sure you're no longer financially associated. A lingering financial connection can affect your future borrowing.

Break-ups are emotionally draining, so go gently with yourself. You don't need to do everything in one day. But working through this list step by step can give you back a sense of control - and a clean financial slate for whatever comes next.



# WALKING THE TIGHTROPE

## CARING FOR OUR DISABLED DAUGHTER

Just when you think you have a handle on everything and it's running smoothly. I'm sure most carers will recognise it doesn't stay like that for very long.

### PARENT CARERS

#### FRUSTRATIONS TO BE HEARD IN PURSIT OF SAFEGUARDING OUR DAUGHTER

We are a couple in our 70s. We care for our daughter who has complex physical and mental health needs and learning difficulties. She is now in her 40s. We have a very good relationship with our local GP practice, pharmacy and Mental Health team, though it hasn't always been like this. At times we have felt no-one was listening to us. Our daughter was often contacted directly even though we explained that she would probably not understand, she might think she had done something wrong and agree to anything! It was a great frustration to have to repeat our request to be copied into forms, letters, appointments. If our daughter received official letters, she would tear them up and put them in the bin. We worked on it over several years and got there in the end!

#### A FINE BALANCE

Recently our daughter was admitted to hospital very seriously ill. All our regular contacts were wonderful. The issues started once she was admitted. Medically they were great and responded quickly and professionally. The hurdles seemed to be on the admin and pharmacy side. Forms to be filled in repeatedly with the same information the GP had sent in. Moving to four different wards in a week and information needing to be repeated over and over. Our daughter's needs are complex and the hospital won't accept her pre-packed medication.

She gets very alarmed when she doesn't understand that her medication looks different and she is being given it at all different times in the day. Some of the medication wasn't available and we had to take it in ourselves. It was difficult to find out what was happening. We wanted to devote our time and energy to our daughter not to all the paperwork!

“  
**WHEN EVERYTHING IS RUNNING SMOOTHLY, LIFE IS EASY! WE DEAL WITH THE SAME INDIVIDUALS WHO UNDERSTAND OUR FAMILY SITUATION. WHEN SOMETHING OR SOMEONE CHANGES, THEN LIFE BECOMES EXTREMELY CHALLENGING. THAT OCCURS ALL TOO FREQUENTLY.**  
”

#### ACCEPTING THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF CARERS

“  
**WE WANT TO CARE FOR OUR DAUGHTER BUT SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE OUR MAIN ROLE IS FILLING IN FORMS AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS WHEN THE ANSWERS ARE ALREADY IN THE SYSTEM SOMEWHERE!**  
”

*Home life was thrown into chaos, many hours spent initially at the hospital, hours spent on the phone changing and postponing pre-planned medical appointments, cancelling prescription deliveries, phoning all the medical support teams, reorganising her support workers, and hospital visiting twice a day. On top of all this of course is the personal impact on us when our daughter is so seriously ill and dealing with both our own and our daughter's distress.*

*The stress and strain are an enormous burden. It makes our usual routine caring role straightforward by comparison! We do understand that procedures are put in place to protect the staff and patients, but we do think more needs to be done to highlight and accept the professional role of carers. We know the situation better than anyone. It would be wonderful if there was a system so everyone could access the information directly.*

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT

What on earth would happen if we weren't there? Like many carers we are constantly faced with different organisations wanting the same information, NHS, Local and County Council, Health and Care support teams, DWP, Prescription exemption, bus passes, and so on.



LIVED EXPERIENCE

She is now home and recovering. She said to me "Is it your carers meeting today? You should go; it will do you good." She is right, we go to the coffee morning in St Annes organised for carers in Lancashire. It is wonderful to meet with others there. You can feel the support around you, and it is meaningful because everyone there has issues of their own to deal with and are a mine of information too. Sometimes we help each other with issues that impact on us like council tax rebates, forms we must fill in, and we share information about the help that was available to us. Other times we are just out for coffee and chat about holidays, tv, the weather, the usual stuff friends talk about. It gives us an hour or so break from our responsibilities.



## SUPPORT IS OUT THERE, YOU JUST NEED TO ASK

“AS CARERS, WE ALSO NEED CARE AND SUPPORT, AND IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO ACCESS AND ACCEPT IT. IT HELPS YOU TO BE A BETTER CARER!”

Through our journey, we've been supported by The Lancashire Carers Service and have benefited from

“ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE HARD WORK CARING FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE AND IT CAN BE TESTING, BUT IT'S SO VERY REWARDING TOO.”

- A JOINT CARERS ASSESSMENT TO REALLY UNDERSTAND OUR JOURNEY AND THE TYPE OF SUPPORT BEST FOR US
- HELP WITH CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR PIECE OF MIND
- ACCESS TO A RANGE OF FREE ACTIVITIES AND REGULAR COFFEE & CHATS
- ACCESS TO LANCASHIRE CARERS MAGAZINE TWICE A YEAR
- ACCESS TO APP BASED INFORMATION AND SUPPORT
- ACCESS TO TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



If you are in a caring role and would like to know more about how we can support you, please contact us;

North, Central and West Lancashire

Tel: 0345 688 7113 option 2

Email: [enquiries@lancscarers.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@lancscarers.co.uk)

Website: [www.n-compass.org.uk/our-services/carers](http://www.n-compass.org.uk/our-services/carers)

Facebook: @lancscarers



# Lancashire Health Visiting and School Nursing

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Emily, the new Community Engagement Manager for Fylde and Wyre about the service and their plans for the future. As ever I was struck by her passion for making a difference to all our children and families and to ensure our mums and dads are supported in the best way possible. My own personal experience of the service was much like many people, beginning with the Health Visitor through antenatal classes, developmental checks and immunisations and then with the school nursing service around the National Child Measurement Programme.

## “ SOMETHING I NEED TO GET OFF MY CHEST - THE NATIONAL CHILD MEASUREMENT PROGRAMME! ”

I have to admit as a parent, I wasn't a fan of my child being weighed and measured, I took it as a judgement on my parenting and ability to care for my child. I was also worried about the impact on my child, being told they didn't fit within a 'normal' range, were overweight or obese. The reality was, I was carrying my own baggage from childhood, and being ridiculed for my weight, looking back, I really wasn't that big so my personal hang-ups coupled with the mum guilt, working full time and relying on microwave meals and fast foods (particularly when other mums prepared things from scratch and included at least 7 different types of veg)!

In reality, the programme is a really important measure, not just to guide us as parents, and give us that support with knowledge, ideas and advice, to get it right in the early stages. The results also impact the funding and what's available for our children. It's not about judging you, it's about giving your child the best possible chances and honestly, preventing them from getting life limiting illnesses, or dying prematurely. This might sound extreme and it can be hard to imagine your child as an adult or a parent themselves, but this is the reality, the choices you make now as a parent, form habits for a lifetime and really matter.

## A PLATFORM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In Year 9, every child is given the opportunity to complete the Year 9 Health Needs Questionnaire. Year 9 is a pivotal age of independence and your child being responsible for more of their own choices. The questionnaire is not just about diet and fitness, it's also about keeping your children safe, it allows them to share their experiences of smoking, alcohol, drugs and sexual concerns, mental health, bullying, self-harm and anything they're concerned about. It also covers the dangers of the online world. As it is anonymous, children feel safer to speak about things they wouldn't tell a teacher or a parent (no matter how close you are). It allows the school and the service to put in appropriate support and ensure children have safe spaces to go to, and the information they need to make informed decisions.

As parents we might feel these questions don't apply to our child, we'd know, wouldn't we? The sad truth is, in spite of our best intentions, our children are being exposed to many more harms and situations we know nothing about, The questionnaire gives them a platform to voice their reality and the opportunity to give them the tools and support to make good choices at a time when life feels confusing enough.

# IT DOESN'T STOP THERE

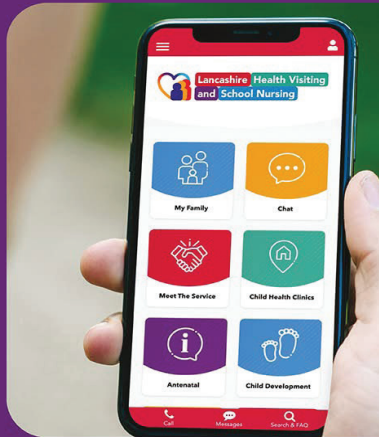
Both services cover so much more in terms of supporting your children to have the best chances in life and in finding support for you to navigate the ever-changing landscape of parenthood, you can find out more about their work at [www.lancschildandfamily.co.uk](http://www.lancschildandfamily.co.uk)

## HEALTH CARE IN A DIGITAL AGE THE LANCS CHILD AND FAMILY APP

Lancashire Health Visiting and School Nursing has launched a new mobile app that gives families instant access to health and wellbeing advice and information on local support available. The app makes it easy for parents and carers to access information on their child's development, from before birth to 18 years. It is well worth downloading and looking at the wide range of topics it covers.

### Download our app today!

Instant access to health and wellbeing information and advice for you and your family.



Chat to qualified healthcare assistants

Keep track of your emotional health

Dedicated Dads section

Keep track of your family vitals

Packed full of useful information for your child's development

LANCS CHILD AND FAMILY APP

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE MUMS

### "THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR NEW DADS, BECAUSE BABIES DO NOT COME WITH A SET OF INSTRUCTIONS."

As a new dad, you will feel excited but may also feel left out, unsure or overwhelmed. The DadPad can help. Developed with the NHS, the DadPad is the essential guide for dads-to-be and new dads, providing the knowledge and practical skills that you need to be able to support yourself and your partner, so that your baby gets the best possible start in life.



### NEED A BIT MORE ADVICE?

Our Single Point of Access (SPA) is the key point of contact for children, young people, families, GPs, schools and health and social care professionals to access advice and support from Lancashire Healthy Young People and Families Service. We have a single telephone number (0300 247 0040) and email address [vcl.019.singlepointofaccess2@nhs.net](mailto:vcl.019.singlepointofaccess2@nhs.net) Mon-Fri 9am-5pm.



The DadPad App  
[www.thedadpad.co.uk](http://www.thedadpad.co.uk)



# Safer Sleep

## ★ for your grandchild

**As a grandparent you can support your grandchild in the six steps to safer sleep:**

1. Always protect your grandchild from cigarette smoke before and after their birth. If you or your partner smokes, never share a bed with your grandchild. This can increase the risk of death.
2. Never fall asleep with your grandchild after drinking, taking drugs including medications that may make you drowsy.
3. Give your grandchild a clear, flat, separate sleep space, in the same room as you, such as a cot or Moses basket. Never fall asleep with your grandchild on a sofa or chair; this can increase the risk of death by 50%.
4. Put your grandchild to sleep on their back with their feet to the foot of the cot.
5. Keep your grandchild's head and face uncovered and make sure they don't get too hot. The room they sleep in should be between 16-20°C.
6. Support your grandchild's parents if they want to breastfeed - further support is available if they need it.

**Read how to support your grandchild's parents with the 6 steps to safer sleep.**

In supporting the parents of your new grandchild evidence now shows that:

**Bedding** can overheat babies, keep baby free from pillows, loose sheets, duvets, or any other items that could obstruct your grandchild's breathing or cause them to overheat. Sleeping bags for babies over 4 weeks are recommended OR using thin cellular blankets is fine as an alternative if they aren't too thick or doubled over. Babies should sleep with their feet to the foot of the cot. If using blankets, make sure they are firmly tucked in and come up no higher than the shoulders. **Babies do not need hats indoors.**

**Layers** use no more than 6 layers, this includes the vest and baby grow, but remember if you fold a blanket or sheet, that counts as two layers.

**Room Temperature** an Ideal temperature is between 16-20°C.

**Pets** do not let pets or other children in the bed with baby.

Discuss with your son or daughter if you are unsure.

**For further information visit:**

[www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk) and search 'safer sleep for baby' or scan:

[www.lullabytrust.org.uk](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk) and watch their video for all your grandchild needs for a safer nights sleep:

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=PMn2KKrKzV0>



comms: 9397



# BURNTOUT?

## STILL STRIVING BUT NOT THRIVING – YOU COULD BE SUFFERING FROM BURNOUT

Is life taking more and more effort to get through each day? Do even the little things seem hard, taking up so much more energy to complete? Maybe you're really having to dig deep for any sort of motivation, maybe you're procrastinating. You might be irritable or moody. Maybe you are constantly fatigued, no matter how much you try to rest. It might feel like you're on autopilot, and life is just a series of jobs to get through, if any of these are the case, then you may be experiencing burnout.



Burnout can be emotional, physical, mental and is caused by excessive or ongoing stress and the inability of your internal systems to cope with it. This can be exposure over time or a one off significant event.



### SOME COMMON SIGNS OF BURNOUT

**PHYSICAL** - Feeling constantly fatigued, trouble sleeping, headaches, muscle or joint pain, changes in appetite, intestinal issues, high blood pressure, heart palpitations, breathlessness, frequent illness, slow to recover from illness or injury, chronic pain.

**EMOTIONAL** - Loss of motivation, even for things you once loved, more cynical, over critical, negative outlook on life, feeling like a failure, worthless, imposter syndrome (to the extreme), feeling detached, like everything is happening around you, feeling overwhelmed, lacking sense of satisfaction and achievement, loss of interest and enjoyment, little or no joy or laughter, persistent feelings of dread, worry and anxiety.

**BEHAVIOURAL** - Difficulty concentrating, procrastination, everything feels so much harder, irritable, moody and short-tempered, withdrawing from people, responsibilities, hobbies, social gatherings, neglecting self-care or overgrooming, using food, drugs, alcohol, gaming, gambling, doom scrolling, shopping, sex, self-harm to cope, being late for work and/or higher absenteeism (this includes caring/parenting other roles of responsibility)

### ADDRESSING STRESS EARLY

The first signs that we've moved into chronic stress are often physical. If you recognise these signs in the early stages, you can make changes to make a difference and stop you tipping over into burnout. It is the frustratingly simple things that we often don't value that we really need to prioritise.

*Changing your state when you notice signs of stress or fatigue, moving, shaking it off, getting outside, fresh air, drinking water, making improvements to your diet, ensuring you're getting some proper nutrients.*

*Anchoring positive experiences through music, noticing laughter, joy and fun.*

*Prioritise sleep, breaks and enjoyment. Talk about it, let a loved one know what's going on for you and give yourself permission to ask them for help. Seek their support.*

*Spend time with people who lift you up and surround yourself with media and podcasts with healthy content.*

*Reframe things you are taking personally, it's not about you.*

*Respond rather than react if something is irritating you, give yourself some thinking space before responding.*

### THE DANGER OF POWERING THROUGH

As tempting as it might be, the worst thing you can do is ignore the signs and try to power through, working harder or fighting it will only lead to burnout quicker and make recovery harder, taking a break can help in the short term but burnout takes sustained supported recovery.

### I'M IN BURNOUT, WHAT CAN I DO?

If you have read this article and it resonates heavily with you, you may be in Burnout, it's important at this point to seek professional help and to have support around you. You've already done the hardest step, acknowledging that you are in burnout, the next step is to talk to someone about it.

# #BE THE CHANGE



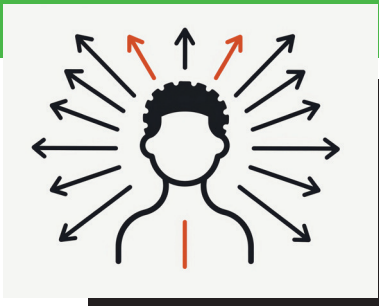
April marks Stress Awareness Month, a month dedicated to increasing public awareness about the causes, effects, and management of stress.

We live in a time where families are struggling to manage financially, there are greater negative influences in our children's lives through the online world, we have no real down time, budgets and jobs have been cut leading to people having to do more with less and health and social care our overwhelmed, the list goes on...

## THE REAL IMPACT OF CHRONIC STRESS

According to the Mental Health Foundation, 74% of UK adults have felt so stressed at some point over the last year that they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope. Chronic stress isn't just a "feeling"; it has tangible physical consequences, including:

- Increased risk of heart disease and high blood pressure.
- Disrupted sleep patterns and chronic fatigue.
- Weakened immune system response.
- Impacting digestive health and metabolic function.



*This Year's Theme  
Be The Change*

“THIS YEAR IS NOT ABOUT SIMPLY UNDERSTANDING STRESS IT IS ABOUT RECLAIMING THE POWER EACH OF US HOLDS TO RESPOND, ADAPT, AND CREATE LASTING CHANGE IN OUR LIVES AND COMMUNITIES.”

## #BE THE CHANGE – FOR YOURSELF

### 1. PRIORITISE REST AND MICRO-BREAKS

Breathing and stretching, for even a few minutes, can significantly reduce cortisol levels through the day.

### 2. STEP AWAY FROM THE DEVICE

Digital fatigue is rapidly increasing and is a major contributor to anxiety. Connect with people in the real world, speaking to someone on the phone or face to face acts as a buffer against psychological stress.

### 3. SAY NO

Setting healthy boundaries is about self-care, you're no good to anyone if your stressed or ill, and it can be easy to feel obligated to say yes, so practice.

### 4. BE COMPASSIONATE

Firstly and foremostly to yourself, stop judging and blaming yourself, speak to yourself as you would a younger version of you, be compassionate and be the person you needed when you were that age.

## #BE THE CHANGE – FOR OTHERS

1. **BE A ROLE MODEL** – for your partner, children, family, friends or colleagues, show them how to manage stress positively, recognise it, name it, talk about it and change it.

2. **LEADER BY EXAMPLE** – At work, avoid sending emails and requests out of core working hours without stating you don't expect a response. Stop competing to be the first in, last out, focus on productivity not busyness.

3. **SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW** – when you find something that works for you, share it with others.

4. **CREATE A SAFE SPACE** – possibly the most important one; be that safe space for someone to come to when they need support and let them know you've got them.

# WELLBEING IN WYRE



## Wyre Wheels

Every Friday  
at Memorial Park Fleetwood

Sessions every Friday, just turn up!	10:30am - 1:00pm Last admission 12:30pm	£4 per session
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For more information contact our team on **01253 887234** or visit **[www.wyre.gov.uk/cycling](http://www.wyre.gov.uk/cycling)**

ACTIVE TRAVEL Healthier Wyre wyre council



## Slimming World

feel *real* good

If you are a Wyre resident or registered with a GP in Wyre and would like to lose weight, you could be eligible for a **FULLY FUNDED** 12 week referral to Slimming World

Scan the QR code or ask your GP or Healthcare Professional to check if you qualify.



   [slimmingworld.co.uk](http://slimmingworld.co.uk)

# GET TO KNOW YOURSELF EVEN BETTER

## HOW ANCIENT IDEAS CAN HELP US EVERY DAY

People in many cultures have recognised the importance of understanding triggers, thoughts, feeling and drivers to better control personal reactions to events. Two famous sayings reflect this idea well. The first, from the Delphic oracle, tells us to **“know thyself”**, the second, from Lao Tzu, says, **“Mastery of others is strength, but mastery of yourself is true power”**. Even though these sayings are from long ago and far apart, they still matter to us today.



JOHN FISHER

“Know thyself” was written on a temple in ancient Greece. It means that before you try to understand the world or change it, you should try to understand yourself. You should know what your strengths and weaknesses are, what you like and dislike, and what is important to you. Lao Tzu’s saying is a bit different but related. He says that it is strong to control or lead other people, but it is even better to control yourself. Being able to guide your own thoughts and feelings is the greatest power of all.

### ANCIENT LEARNING FOR THE MODERN WORLD

Today, people often focus on what others think or what they can attain. But these old ideas remind us that real happiness and growth start inside us. Without knowing yourself, you might act from habits or fears you do not notice. Without self-control, you might say or do things you regret later. A practical way to apply both sayings is through reflection before action. When faced with a challenge, ask two simple questions: What is really going on in me right now? and What response aligns with the person I want to be? This practice combines self-knowledge with self-mastery. It helps bridge the gap between awareness and behaviour and puts you firmly back in control of how and who you want to be.

When you know yourself, you can make better choices that fit who you really are. When you can control yourself, you can stay calm, make wiser decisions, and feel stronger inside.

### SELF-MASTERY

Self-mastery means learning to control your habits and emotions, learning about yourself takes deliberate noticing and time, but you can start with small steps:

#### BREAKING A HABIT

Maybe you want to stop using your phone late at night. First, notice what makes you reach for your phone - are you bored or worried? Then, try a new routine, like reading or listening to music. Each time you succeed, you feel more in control and proud of yourself.

#### DEALING WITH CRITICISM

If someone criticises you at work or school, it can hurt. Instead of reacting quickly, take a moment to think. Is the feedback useful? Can you learn from it? This helps you grow stronger and keep good relationships.

### UNDERSTANDING WHO WE ARE

The old advice to “know thyself” and to “master yourself” are as relevant as ever today. When we understand who we are and learn to guide our actions, we make better choices and live happier, more meaningful lives. These are not just old sayings, but practical tools for anyone who wants to reduce stress, increase understanding and live with honesty and confidence.

FINAL  
THOUGHTS



# LETTING GO OF THE 'SHOULD'S'

I have had so many discussions with business buds lately about how busy things are for them! Great news for kicking off the year!

What I'm also hearing (and telling myself if I'm honest), is that they feel they 'should' be doing so much more. The sense that they are capable of getting more stuff done, being more productive, getting through the to-do list and turning those ideas into reality more swiftly... "What's wrong with this?" I might hear you say - "People are giving themselves a kick up the backside... this is a good thing, right? "

## THE REALISM THAT NOBODY WANTS A MOOD HOOVER

The issue that I see is that this 'should' mindset doesn't help us to be more productive. It hinders us. It risks us getting less done as we're too busy beating ourselves up and then not getting round to what we want to get done. And this does not feel great...

All those stress hormones are not good for us; affect our eating habits, the sleep we get, how energised we feel to move and interact with others, how much we moan... and I say this with love... no one wants to be the mood hoover!

Also, a biggie for me is that it is not realistic in terms of where we're up to. We aren't just 'work/business'. We have other commitments, children, family, relationships, maybe other sources of income generation, that also have our focus and are of priority.

**STRONG  
MINDSET**

So yes, we might be capable of smashing everything on the list, if we are firing on all cylinders, without any other commitments. This isn't real life. It's something only most of us can do for a short period of time, before crashing and burning. Having realistic expectations will support us to get more done. Giving ourselves some grace is not the 'soft' option... It's the one that has longevity, allows us to be happy doing what we're doing, reflecting on accomplishments even, and especially the small ones. They add up to big wins and allow us to have a strong mindset! And of course, it goes without saying as a Strengths Coach this is the space that I advocate for us to be in!

So next time you hear yourself saying what you 'should' be doing, I invite yourself to gently give yourself a nudge and ask yourself:

- Where is this coming from?
- Are you being fair to yourself?
- Would you speak to one of your pals in this way?
- What would be more helpful to shift yourself into a strong mindset. One that has longevity to support you through the tough times!
- How can you support yourself to be winning at life?



*We've all got a lot to offer! Time we started to give ourselves this message, eh?  
See you next time, lots of love*

*Helen xx*

## The Manor & Hub

### SPOTLIGHT ON BREW AND MOVE OUR NEW GROUP FOR ADULTS YOUNG AND OLD

**Every Tuesday at the Hub 10am -12:00pm term time only**

Brew and move is our latest offering at the hub, Jules kicks off the morning with exercise and movement, ward off those aches and pains, improve core strength, agility, balance and flexibility. This isn't just for older generations, it's ideal if you're managing an underlying health need, recovering from injury, want to improve your mobility or want to stay fitter for longer, if you're over 18, then this is a session for you. Have a few laughs, learn techniques to use at home and make some friends along the way.

**Jules is guaranteed to have you in stitches** (literally) and what's more, it's free - the only investment you need to make is your time.

The second part of the session is over to you, from informal chats over a brew through to support and advice sessions, we'll be guided by you and what you need. Future sessions include guidance for carers and the practical and financial support available to you, scam prevention and health checks, let us know what you need and we'll bring the experts along to advise you. You can find us on the site of Manor Beach Primary School, Manor Drive, Cleveleys FY5 1EU. Stay up to date with the hub via our facebook page



“

**GREAT FUN**

**REALLY ENJOYABLE**

**KEEPS ME MOVING**

**LOVE THE DRUMSTICKS**

**HELPFUL ”**

The Manor & Hub

## BREW & MOVE

*Your Session - Your Way*

- Participant Led Sessions
- Fun and Educational Activities
- Support and ConnectWell Support

### SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

**TUESDAY'S, 10 AM**

The Manor & Hub  
Manor Drive  
FY5 1EU



# NEURODIVERSITY & ACCESSIBILITY



CONNECTIVERSE MAGAZINE | MARCH 2026

- 01** SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH R.S.D
- 02** R.S.D THE STORYTELLER THAT FILLS IN THE GAP
- 03** THE FEMALE BRAIN AND WHAT MEDICINE ISN'T TEACHING
- 04** THE HOOGERWERF HUSTLE
- 05** CELEBRATING DIFFERENT MINDS
- 06** COMMUNITY ROOTS UNDERSTANDING ADHD

In this section we explore Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria, how it might present in Children and Young people and how to support them. Teo dives deeper into root causes with her article around RSD in adults, and how to challenge unhelpful patterns. Dr Helen Wall explains the complex relationship between hormones and brain function and the implications for women's health.



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# SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH R.S.D



Children and young people with Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) experience the world through a nervous system that reacts intensely to the possibility of rejection, criticism, or disapproval. What looks like an overreaction from the outside often feels, on the inside, like something deeply important is at risk: belonging, safety, or worth.

For these children, small moments can carry enormous weight. A teacher's neutral tone, a friend not replying straight away, classmates looking in their direction, a gentle correction at home, all can be interpreted as evidence that they've failed or disappointed someone.

## HOW RSD SHOWS UP IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Big emotional reactions to mild feedback, meltdowns or shutdowns after school or social events.  
Statements like "Everyone hates me" or "I always mess things up"  
Avoidance of activities they care about for fear of doing badly  
A pattern of being "fine all day" and falling apart at home  
These responses aren't manipulation, defiance, or attention-seeking. They're signs that the child's nervous system believes rejection has already happened, even when adults can't see any evidence of it.

**“THE REACTION ISN'T CHOSEN. IT'S AUTOMATIC, FAST, AND ROOTED IN THE BODY.”**

**“THE CHILD ISN'T ASKING, 'IS THIS LOGICAL?' THEY'RE ASKING, 'AM I SAFE?'”**

## WHY REASSURANCE OFTEN FALLS FLAT

When a child with RSD is triggered, their body reacts first. Heart racing. Muscles tight. Thoughts narrowing. By the time words arrive, the nervous system is already in protection mode. That's why saying "They didn't mean it" or "You're overthinking" often doesn't help. To the child, the threat feels real. Correcting the story too quickly can feel like being misunderstood - or worse, dismissed.

## SUPPORT STARTS WITH SHIFTING THE GOAL

*The aim isn't to convince the child they're wrong. It's to help their nervous system settle.*

### LEAD WITH EMOTIONAL SAFETY

"I can see how much that hurt" or "That felt like a lot for you" helps the child feel understood without confirming the feared rejection.

### NAME THE PATTERN GENTLY

Over time, some children find comfort in language like, "Sometimes your feelings get there before the facts, do you think this might be one of those times?" Naming it creates distance between the feeling and the facts.

### CALM THE BODY BEFORE THE STORY

Movement, deep breathing, quiet presence, or familiar routines help bring the nervous system out of alarm. Reasoning works better after this.

### ALLOW TIME AND SPACE

RSD reactions often soften on their own once the body realises there's no immediate danger. Pushing for resolution too fast can prolong distress.

### KEEP THE GAP OPEN

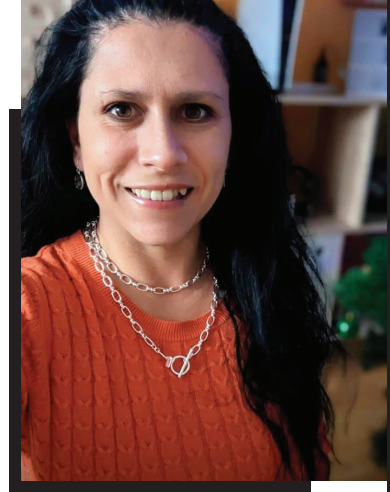
Phrases like "We don't know yet" or "There could be lots of reasons" help resist the urge to close uncertainty with a painful conclusion. Children with RSD are often deeply perceptive. They notice tone shifts, pauses, and emotional undercurrents that others miss. That sensitivity isn't a flaw, but it does need understanding, safety, predictability, and compassion.

# R.S.D

## THE STORYTELLER THAT FILLS IN THE GAPS

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria is commonly framed as an emotional overreaction, a sudden disproportionate flare-up triggered by the perceived friction of social existence.

It is described as a spike in sensitivity, a fragile threshold, or a sudden move away from rational composure in the face of the mundane. However, these descriptions remain superficial because they fail to account for the internal mechanics of the experience. RSD is not simply an emotional destination, but a sophisticated narrative engine. It does not arrive as a solitary, isolated feeling, but rather as a fully formed, bulletproof history that is assembled at such a speed that by the time the emotion reaches the conscious thought, the verdict has already been (unwillingly) offered.



“THE FUNDAMENTAL OPERATION OF RSD IS THE FILLING OF GAPS. IT ENCOUNTERS THE INHERENT AMBIGUITY OF HUMAN INTERACTION (THE UNREAD TEXT, THE SUBTLE SHIFT IN VOCAL TIMBRE, THE PAUSE THAT LASTS A FRACTION OF A SECOND TOO LONG TO NAME A FEW) AND IT REFUSES TO LET THAT SPACE REMAIN EMPTY.”

## SEWING TOGETHER DATA POINTS

Where logic might suggest a dozen variables for a friend's distraction for instance, the RSD storyteller provides a single, cohesive, and devastatingly logical explanation based on the subject's specific history of social trauma. It pulls from a vast library of pattern recognition, tone, and context, sewing together disparate data points into a narrative that feels less like an interpretation and more like an objective discovery of a hidden truth.

## THE IMPACT OF NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES IN CHILDHOOD

One of the most persistent misunderstandings regarding this experience is the assumption of its randomness, yet RSD is a patterned storyteller trained by the necessity of survival. For many neurodivergent people, especially those who navigated childhoods defined by being repeatedly misread, corrected, or socially sidelined, the gap was never neutral territory. Silence was rarely just silence. It was the breath before a correction, the quiet of a room after a faux pas, or the precursor to a sudden withdrawal of affection. In these formative environments, waiting for clarity came at an agonising cost.

## RECOGNITION OF THE INEVITABLE PATTERN

When uncertainty appears in the present, the nervous system refuses to sit with the vulnerability of not knowing. Oh, the dreaded limbo! It constructs meaning with such intensity that it restores a sense of predictability, even if that predictability is painful. Because this storyteller draws from real, visceral emotional data of actual ruptures, previous exclusions, and the lived experience of being an outsider, the resulting story does not feel like a hypothetical worst-case scenario. Instead, it feels earned. It feels like the recognition of an inevitable pattern. It is the calm of believing a question has already been answered, leaving no room for the curiosity that might otherwise diffuse the tension.

“THE BRAIN LEARNED THAT TO BE BLINDSIDED WAS TO BE DESTROYED, AND THUS, IT DEVELOPED A HYPER-EFFICIENT SYSTEM TO SCAN FOR MISSING INFORMATION.”

## A SPONTANEOUS COGNITIVE RESPONSE

The internal storyteller is not a liar, nor is it a malicious entity seeking to sabotage the self. It is a specialised cognitive function that lacks the ability to update its ending. Once the narrative forms, the body's physiology follows the logic of that story rather than the physical reality of the present moment.

# HURT ARRIVES BEFORE CONTEXT

This is why hurt arrives before context, and why shame precedes reflection. They are all biological responses to a story whose conclusion has already been written. The body is bracing for a loss it believes is already underway and reacting to an ending it has seen a thousand times before.

This mechanism is mislabelled as low self-esteem or inherent insecurity, but such a framing overlooks the intellectual diligence of the RSD process. Many people with RSD have a grounded, coherent sense of self-worth during periods of stability, however, they also possess a pattern-recognition system that lacks a pause button.

Neurodivergent brains are exceptional at detecting nuance and subtext, and RSD is essentially that skill turning inward under the weight of an emotional load.

## HYPER-EFFICIENT STORYTELLER

The storyteller becomes hyper-efficient, stitching micro-signals into a narrative that positions the individual as the primary responsible variable. It is a rather strange, paradoxical form of control in the sense that if the pain has a specific cause, then there is a theoretical possibility that it can be prevented in the future.

## PAINFUL CERTAINTY IS PREFERRED TO AMBIGUITY

The tragedy of this adaptation is that the storyteller is motivated by fear. It exists to reduce uncertainty in social environments where ambiguity was historically expensive. It would much rather deliver a definitive, painful verdict now than risk the catastrophe of being blindsided by a rejection it didn't see coming. This is the primary reason external reassurance so often fails to land when the system is in a state of hyper-arousal. Reassurance arrives as new data if you will, but the storyteller has already closed the chapter. The nervous system is already in a state of defensive bracing, and the logic of survival dictates that it is safer to remain behind the shield than to trust a late-arriving contradiction.

When viewed through this vantage point, RSD stops looking like emotional fragility or irrationality. Instead, it reveals itself as an overdeveloped meaning-making system, one that learned to connect dots because missing them resulted in isolation. The system did not break at all. In fact, it adapted with incredible precision to an environment that demanded constant vigilance yet hasn't been informed that the conditions of the present are no longer the conditions of the past. It continues to narrate with relentless conviction because it believes it is saving the self from a repeat of history.

## THE GOAL, CHANGING OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE VOICE

The goal of understanding RSD as a storyteller is not necessarily to make the stories vanish, because they do not, but rather to change our relationship to the voice. Reframing the experience allows the pain to be seen as proportionate to the story being told, rather than a symptom of a character flaw. It shifts the focus away from arguing with the facts of the story and toward recognising the weight of the history that makes the narrator speak so loudly.

It involves the radical act of allowing silence to be empty and permitting a shift in tone to be ambiguous rather than corroborative. We must recognise that not every pause is a verdict, and not every social tremor is a precursor to an earthquake. When we see the storyteller for what it is, we can begin to acknowledge the heavy past it carries, and perhaps, eventually, give it permission to stop writing the ending before the middle has even begun.

“  
**THE HEALING PROCESS LIES IN THE SLOW, DIFFICULT WORK OF TEACHING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM THAT SOME GAPS ARE ALLOWED TO REMAIN OPEN.**  
 ”

# THE MISSING LESSON

## THE FEMALE BRAIN, AND WHAT MEDICINE ISN'T TEACHING

Last weekend I was speaking as I often do at a healthcare professionals' conference on women's health. I was overjoyed to have been asked to talk about hormones and the female brain; in particular, a look at the effects of perimenopause on neurodivergence. It may or may not surprise you to hear that most of what medicine teaches about female hormones is still framed through a single lens: reproduction. Periods. Fertility. Pregnancy. Contraception. Then if you're lucky menopause as the point at which those things end. I took my chance in a room full of healthcare professionals to ask who had been taught in their clinical training about the effects of female hormones on the female brain and as expected...

tumbleweed. It never fails to amaze me how little we talk about this matter in clinical practice, how little space is given to the effects of hormones on our brains, despite it being one of the most hormonally responsive organs in the body.

Oestrogen and progesterone are not "reproductive hormones" that happen to affect mood. They are neuroactive hormones, deeply involved in cognition, emotional regulation, motivation, sensory processing, sleep, pain perception and stress response. This is important for every woman and even more so to some extent for those who are neurodivergent and already battling altered neurotransmitter regulation. Yet for many doctors, formal teaching on hormones and the brain ends with a vague nod to "PMS", "postnatal depression" or "menopausal mood changes". I believe this needs to change.



### HORMONES AND THE FEMALE BRAIN

The female brain is not static across the month or across the lifespan. It is rhythmic, responsive and often super sensitive to hormonal change. Oestrogen modulates dopamine, serotonin and noradrenaline; the very neurotransmitters that underpin focus, reward, motivation and emotional resilience. Progesterone and its metabolites act on GABA receptors, influencing anxiety, calm, sedation and threat perception. In some women these effects can be paradoxical and cause agitation, low mood and irritability. The effects of hormones on our brains are not subtle, and they are important. They do not disappear just because a woman looks to be "coping", or masking in neurodivergent terms.

### SO WHY IS THIS NOT TAUGHT?

Part of the answer clearly lies in history. Medicine has long since treated the male body as the default, the female body as a variation complicated by hormones. Hysteria was used as a formal medical label and diagnosis in women for nearly 4000 years, only being removed from the official diagnostic manuals in 1980. Sadly, women are more likely to be labelled as emotional, over reactive or dramatic, even in 2026.

In my experience of reproductive hormone teaching, hormones are generally seen as something to 'get past', suppress, regulate or replace, rather than something to understand in terms of brain function and wellbeing.

### RARELY A TEXTBOOK ANSWER

Another part, I believe lies in discomfort with complexity and uncertainty. Teaching that hormones affect the brain is nuanced and requires acknowledging sensitivity and variability, not just deficiency. That some women experience disproportionate cognitive or emotional effects from perfectly normal hormonal shifts. That two women with identical hormone levels can feel entirely different not because one is fragile, but because brains differ and worst still - there's no way of knowing which is which. There's rarely a textbook answer and there's certainly no scope for 'copy and paste' management.

# THIS MATTERS PROFOUNDLY FOR NEURODIVERGENT WOMEN.

For women with ADHD or autism, the brain already relies on finely balanced neurotransmitter systems. Oestrogen's effect on dopamine means that fluctuations across the menstrual cycle, post-partum, perimenopause and menopause can feel like the ground shifting under their feet. Executive function may collapse premenstrually. Every. Single. Month. Emotional regulation may deteriorate rapidly. Anxiety, rage, despair or shutdown may appear suddenly and cyclically. These patterns are often misdiagnosed as mood disorders, personality disorders, or "stress".

Many neurodivergent women have spent decades compensating, masking and over-functioning. Hormonal transitions reduce the brain's ability to sustain that effort. The result is not a new illness, but the unmasking of a nervous system that has been working overtime for years. When medicine lacks the education and lens for this, women are left questioning their sanity, and clinicians dismiss them or reach for labels that don't quite fit.

Even outside neurodivergence, the consequences of this educational black hole are widespread. Women struggling with brain fog, loss of confidence, overwhelm or emotional dysregulation in perimenopause are told their blood tests are "fine". Women with severe premenstrual symptoms are reassured it's "just hormones", without explanation of why those hormones are dismantling their lives every month. Women struggling with progesterone intolerance on HRT are told to 'get on with it' or stop HRT altogether, despite clear neuropsychiatric side effects and a need for a trial of alternatives.



Here comes the saddest part; we have normalised women adapting to symptoms, rather than medicine adapting to female biology.

This is not about blaming individual clinicians. Most doctors practise within the limits of what they were taught. Medicine is vast and advancing year on year. Training is pressured and still mostly organised around bodily systems rather than lived experience. Topics sit in silos, hormones in endocrinology or gynaecology and mental health in psychiatry, the brain in neurology. Just like most things in life, working in silos rarely pays off. Women feeling dismissed, doubting themselves, or apologising for symptoms that make perfect neurobiological sense once explained is a daily offering rather than an exception.

## CHANGE REQUIRES INTEGRATION

Medical professionals need to be taught that hormones are brain modulators, not background noise. That sensitivity matters as much as levels. That cyclical patterns are diagnostic clues, not inconveniences. That female mental health cannot be fully understood without understanding hormonal context across the lifespan. The irony is that this knowledge already exists. What is missing is not evidence, but awareness. The female brain is not an afterthought to reproduction. It is central to women's health. It is time our education systems caught up.

*You can read more from Dr Helen Wall on her website at [www.Drhelenwall.com](http://www.Drhelenwall.com)*

# THE HOOGERWERF HUSTLE

## THE ONE WHERE... IT FINALLY STARTS MAKING SENSE

WITH REBECCA HOOGERWERF, OPERATIONS DIRECTOR OF RKMS & Rosco



Well, well, well... where do I even start with this issue of The Hoogerwerf Hustle?

Our journey into the world of Special Educational Needs and Disability began back in 2023, when Rosco was just five years old in Reception. Fast forward to now and he's nearly at the end of Year 3, about to turn eight, and honestly... the time in between feels like it's been lived in chaos years. In those three short school years we've experienced what feels like an entire lifetime of battles, heartbreak, advocacy, confusion, and the occasional flicker of hope. It's been a ride that most parents never imagine they'll find themselves on.

And yet, after all the years of fighting and pushing for someone to listen, something remarkable seems to be happening. Things are finally falling into place. Which, if I'm honest, leaves me with one big question:

**“ WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE SO HARD? ”**

### WHEN THE SYSTEM FINALLY LISTENS

For years we've been navigating the maze that is the SEND system. Meetings, reports, exclusions, assessments, emails that disappear into the void, and more waiting than should ever be required when a child's future is at stake.

*But in the last few months, something has shifted.*

**After years of fighting, we now officially have:**

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) issued.

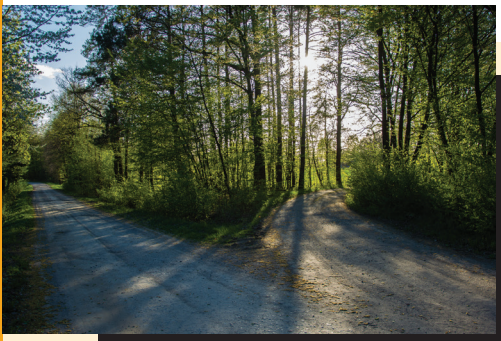
A specialist school placement confirmed starting this September

A completed ADHD assessment and diagnosis



All of this has happened within the space of just a few months after years of uncertainty. When the confirmation finally came through, I remember sitting there thinking, so it really was all real.

We weren't imagining it. We weren't exaggerating. Our concerns had been valid all along. Because that's the strange thing about this journey - when you spend years being questioned, dismissed, or told to "wait and see," you start to doubt your own instincts. But parents know their children. Always.



### A CHOICE WE WRESTLED WITH

Deciding on a specialist school was never an easy choice for us. In fact, it's something we approached with a lot of reflection and hesitation. For years, we held onto the hope that Rosco could thrive in mainstream education. Like many parents, we worried that a specialist placement might limit him academically or socially. We feared he might be underestimated or left behind. The truth is, Rosco is brilliant. His mind simply operates differently, and that difference has always been his strength. The

struggle wasn't about his capability - it was about how the system interacted with him. Mainstream environments often exposed him to constant sensory challenges and pressures that left him exhausted and discouraged. Over time, that can erode even the most resilient child's confidence.

We've realised that supporting Rosco isn't about lowering expectations - it's about breaking down the barriers that prevent him from meeting them. Choosing a specialist school isn't giving up on him; it's giving him the chance to truly flourish.

# A NEW CHAPTER FOR ROSCO

This September, Rosco will begin a fresh chapter in a place designed to meet his unique needs. While our original goal was to make mainstream education work, experience has shown us that he needed more than perseverance – he needed understanding. He needed a setting that could respond to how his brain processes the world, adapt to his sensory needs, encourage his strengths rather than frustrate them and recognise the funny, caring, and bright boy we know every day.

## SPECIALIST EDUCATION ISN'T A COMPROMISE, IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY

It's a chance for Rosco to thrive in an environment that works with him, not against him. The aim was never to force Rosco to fit into a system that wasn't built for him. The aim was to find a system that fits him. I genuinely cannot emphasise enough how important it is to have schools and teachers who truly understand and care about children like Rosco. Armfield Academy have been nothing but supportive throughout this journey and continue to keep in touch even now. That kind of compassion makes all the difference.

## THE SMALL WINS THAT MEAN EVERYTHING

The past couple of weeks have brought something we haven't had much of during this journey... Good news. Rosco recently won the Headteacher's Award again at his PRU, proudly saving up his behaviour points so he could cash them in for his ultimate reward - a McDonald's treat. A boy after my own heart. But the moment that really stopped me in my tracks came during an incident at school.

Another child was becoming increasingly escalated, and Rosco stepped in to help calm them down. He even moved objects away to prevent the child from hurting themselves or others. For a child who has spent years being labelled as the one who struggles with emotional regulation, that moment was huge. Then, just to make me laugh, he came home one day and casually announced "School is easy now. You just sit down and do your work." Oh really, Rosco? Funny how it suddenly seems simple after three years of us repeating exactly that sentence every day. Parenting really is the long game. But something else has changed recently too. As Rosco grows older, he seems to be understanding himself more, recognising when he feels overwhelmed, when he needs space, and when things feel too much. That kind of self-awareness is powerful. Because once a child understands themselves, the world starts to make a little more sense.

“  
SCHOOL IS EASY NOW.  
YOU JUST SIT DOWN AND DO  
YOUR WORK.”  
OH REALLY, ROSCO?  
”

## TO THE PARENTS STILL IN THE FIGHT

If you're reading this while navigating EHCP meetings, school battles, waiting lists, or the endless maze of assessments, please know this - You are not alone. The SEND journey can feel overwhelming, isolating, and at times completely exhausting. But sometimes... eventually - persistence pays off. Sometimes the doors do open. Sometimes the pieces finally fall into place.

## THE NEXT CHAPTER

This September represents a fresh start for Rosco. A new school. A new environment. A new opportunity to learn in a way that works for him. And for the first time in a long time, we feel hopeful about what lies ahead.

If this journey has taught us anything, it's this:  
"Your child is not the problem. The system simply hasn't caught up with them yet."  
Keep advocating. Keep asking questions and most importantly, keep believing in your child. Because one day, the pieces might just fall into place. From our wonderfully chaotic household to yours,

*Rebecca & Rosco*



# CELEBRATING DIFFERENT MINDS



**Neurodiversity Celebration Week**  
**March 16 - 20, 2026**

March marks Neurodiversity Celebration Week, and whilst we understand some people's frustrations with having awareness weeks or celebration days, because for us this is 24/7 and lifelong, they do fulfil an important role in developing understanding for those who sit outside our experience, and this can only be good.

## THE DIVERSE WORLD OF NEURODIVERSITY

Often when we think of ND, we can naturally think about Autism, sensory issues and ADHD, they are more familiar to us, but Neurodivergence is an umbrella term for when an individual's brain functions or processes information in a way that differs from what is considered neurotypical. The umbrella is expansive, recognising the richness, strengths and diverse talents that come from the many ways people think, communicate, and experience the world

“ According to Neurodiversity Week Approximately 15-20% of population has a neurological difference. Instead of labelling people with deficits or disorders, when we use the term neurodiversity, we take a balanced view of an individual's unique strengths and challenges. Many challenges neurodivergent people face are more to do with the environment and systems they are placed in, often designed by a majority population. ”

**NEURODIVERSITY CELEBRATION WEEK IS ABOUT CELEBRATING THE STRENGTH OF OUR DIFFERENCES**

- ADHD Celebrating energy, creativity and innovation
- ASD The power of deep focus and unique perspectives
- Dyslexia Strength in problem solving and story telling
- Dyscalcula Recognising different ways of thinking about numbers
- Dyspraxia Celebrating adaptability and perseverance
- Tourette Syndrome Embracing authenticity and self-expression

Did you know Lewis Capaldi has Tourette's?



Lewis Capaldi, Singer / Songwriter

www.neurodiversityweek.com

Did you know Will.i.am has ADHD?



"Music brings control to my thoughts. I am here to let you know that you can be anything you want to be"

- Will.i.am, Singer / Producer

www.neurodiversityweek.com

Did you know Maggie Aderin-Pocock is dyslexic?



"My dyslexic thinking means I don't just think outside the box... I think outside the planet"

Maggie Aderin-Pocock, Space Scientist

www.neurodiversityweek.com

Did you know Daniel Radcliffe is dyspraxic?



"It has never held me back. Some of the smartest people I know are people who have learning disabilities"

Daniel Radcliffe, Actor

www.neurodiversityweek.com

## WE'D LIKE TO CHALLENGE YOU THIS NEURODIVERSITY CELEBRATION WEEK, TO CELEBRATE!



"Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general. Who can say what form of wiring will prove best at any given moment"

- Harvey Blume, Journalist

www.neurodiversityweek.com

The news and social media feeds are often filled with the challenges of being neurodiverse, often treating people as though they are deficient in some way, as if there is something 'wrong' with them. This can lead people to shrink to fit societal expectations, to hide away, and to believe they are the issue, this is so damaging. It's time to embrace differences, the neurodivergence. Consider your strengths, what is unique to you, what does your ND give you? It's easy to forget that the things you enjoy and excel at, others find really difficult, and how amazing you are.

And for our change makers, policy writers, and strategic leaders, our challenge is to think about how we can shift the ongoing practice of trying to fit people into systems and boxes. No one should be made to change for someone else's convenience. Get to know the person behind the label, connect with what life is really like for them, give them a voice, truly listen, and let's create environments and processes that help them thrive.



Lancashire &  
South Cumbria  
NHS Foundation Trust

## Understanding ADHD

By learning about ADHD, we are able to develop a more compassionate approach to those living with ADHD. This not only enhances their lives, but those of them around them. This course is designed to give you some insight into what ADHD is and the different ways that this can present.

We aim to try and understand the impacts which ADHD can have on our daily life and we will then go on to discuss ideas on how to manage the challenges it can present, whilst living a happy and fulfilled life. We will explore some myths around ADHD and look at the facts, in hope to dispel some of the stigma which surrounds ADHD. Lastly, through sharing experiences, we can learn better how to understand people who live with ADHD and help them live a happier life and those living with ADHD can feel less alone.

**Come join us...**

**Date: Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April**

**Time: 9:30am- 11:30am**

The Manor  
Manor Drive entrance  
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# EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



Leading up to Exam Season, Tracey-May shares the importance of seeing exams as a gateway for the future. Kooth's Toolkit for managing exam stress gives practical tips for healthy revision and we share some of the schools across the Fylde Coast who have received Special Recognition from the Secretary of State for Education.

CONNECTIVERSE MAGAZINE | MARCH 2026

**01** EXAMS -  
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**04** NATIONAL  
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# EXAMS

## KEEPING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

Every year, as exam season approaches, I see the same mixture of emotions from students, determination, nerves, excitement and sometimes a little uncertainty about what comes next. As a Careers and Employability Officer, my role is to help young people understand that exams are not just about grades, they are a gateway to future opportunities.

Preparing for exams can feel overwhelming, but it is also a valuable time for students to build skills that employers look for every day. Organisation, time management, resilience and problem-solving are all developed during revision and exam periods. These are the same skills that will support young people in university, apprenticeships, the workplace even in daily life.



TRACEY CLARKE

One of the conversations I often have with students is about connecting their studies to their future goals. Whether someone wants to work in healthcare, digital industries, engineering or creative fields, the subjects they are studying now help to build the foundation for those careers. Exams can open doors to the next step, whether that is higher education, training or employment.

Of course, it's also important that students remember to look after their wellbeing during exam season. Creating a realistic revision timetable, taking breaks, getting enough sleep and asking for support (and accepting it) when needed can make a huge difference. Exams are important, but they should never come at the expense of a young person's health or confidence.



Recently I spoke with a student here at Blackpool Sixth Form College who shared their thoughts about preparing for exams and thinking about their future.



That perspective is something I encourage all students to keep in mind. Exams are not the end goal; they are part of the journey. Each assessment is an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, build confidence and move one step closer to future ambitions.



**“I USED TO THINK EXAMS WERE JUST ABOUT GETTING THROUGH THEM,” THEY TOLD ME. “BUT NOW I SEE THEM AS A STEP TOWARD WHAT I WANT TO DO NEXT. WHEN I’M REVISING, I TRY TO REMEMBER THAT IT’S HELPING ME MOVE CLOSER TO THE CAREER I’M AIMING FOR.”**

Julie our skills advisor within our learning resource centre, says that her best advice is to not leave revision to the last minute and keep calm and carry on!

Amy, our work placement officer says that you should ramp up your self-care on the day of the exam. How you set yourself mentally helps. Good night's sleep, food, water....

For young people across our community, the path after college will look different for everyone. Some will progress to university, others will take up apprenticeships, and many will go directly into employment. What matters most is recognising that the effort put into preparation today can help unlock the opportunities of tomorrow.

As careers professionals, educators and mentors, we are here to support students through this important stage. With the right preparation, encouragement and belief in themselves, exam season can become not just a challenge, but the starting point for exciting careers ahead.

# THE ULTIMATE EXAM STRESS TOOLKIT

## WHAT IS EXAM STRESS?

Exam stress is a term used to describe any worries or anxiety related to exams. Exam stress might be the cause of those uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, and physical responses you experience in the lead up to an exam, how you feel the morning you're due to sit an exam, or even the feeling you get while you're waiting for your results.



Exam stress might cause some difficult thoughts, such as:

“I can't do this.”

“I'm worried I might fail.”

“I'm concerned I haven't prepared enough for my exam.”

“Everyone's much more prepared than I am.”

“I should know more/do more.”

Exam stress might cause some difficult feelings, such as:

Pressure to succeed

Being overwhelmed

Fear

Fervousness

Anxiety

Frustration

Confusion

Exam stress might even cause some uncomfortable physical symptoms, too, such as:

Stomach aches

Headaches

Feeling unable to concentrate

Restlessness

Changes to eating habits

Changes to sleeping patterns

Tiredness

## IMPACT ON THE FAMILY

Stress can sometimes come out as impatience and anger, shouting and swearing, picking on younger siblings, falling out with friends. Small disagreements may escalate, there may be lots of tension in the home. It can also lead to withdrawal. Parents / carers, it's important to know that this isn't personal, and although it might not be easy, if you remain calm and measured, you will bring your child's stress levels down and de-escalate the situation. Keep talking, give them space when they need it and be consistent. They need to know they can rely on you.

## IS ALL STRESS BAD?

Stress isn't always bad; at certain times, stress and anxiety can actually be helpful. For example - when it comes to exams, a little bit of stress can help motivate you to ensure that you prepare and do your best. It's only when your stress levels rise to the point of being overwhelmed that it can become unhelpful.

There might be all sorts of reasons why people feel especially stressed about exams. If you're feeling stressed, it might be useful to ask yourself:

- Do I feel any expectation from others to succeed? For example - family, friends, teachers.
- Am I comparing myself to others?
- Do I feel prepared for my exams?
- Do I have any additional responsibilities that might be adding to my stress? For example, am I a young carer, a parent, or am I supporting someone else in some way?
- Do I have any issues that might be adding to my stress? For example - mental, physical, emotional health issues.
- However you're feeling, and whatever the reason for your exam stress, remember you are not alone.



### TOP TIPS FROM A STUDENT ON HOW TO MANGE EXAM STRESS

Think about your study space – Find a space where you can really concentrate. It might be your bedroom, a space at home, or even your local library. It can be useful to have a calming space without too many distractions.

Be realistic about your study/revision plan – While it might be tempting to cram or do as much as you possibly can in a day, be realistic about what you can do in a day, it can help you feel more in control, and feel more confident.

Find your own way to study – Just because your friend is using flashcards, or you know someone colour coding their revision notes, it doesn't mean you need to do exactly the same. We all learn in different ways, so find what works for you.

### TOP TIPS FROM A TEACHER ON HOW TO MANGE EXAM STRESS

Your sleep and sleep routine are really important – While it can be tempting to revise late into the night, getting a good night's sleep and having a consistent sleep routine in the lead up to exams can really help you to feel well-rested, and better prepared for exams.

Create a simple revision timetable – Creating a timetable can help you focus on the topics you need to revise, and can help you break things down into smaller, more manageable chunks. Don't forget to factor in breaks, too- taking breaks is essential; it gives your brain a rest so you feel energised, and ready to concentrate again.

Put your worries into perspective – Exams can help you take the next step whether that's college, university, or something else – but you are also more than a set of results. To remind you of this, make time for things you enjoy, or think about what else feels important in your life aside from exams, it's all about balance.

### TOP TIPS FROM A COUNSELLOR ON HOW TO MANGE EXAM STRESS

Try not to compare yourself to others – It can be tempting to compare yourself to your peers, or other people in your family, when it comes to exams, exam prep, and academic success. It's helpful to remember that we are all different; we all prepare for exams in different ways, and we all have different strengths. Focus on you, and your own unique qualities.

Make time for self-care – When managing exam stress, lots of people forget to take care of their other needs. Take a moment each day to look after your basic needs (for example, drinking water, moving your body, taking a shower) and you'll see what a difference it makes.

Reach out for support – You don't have to go through this time alone. Talk to your friends or family about your feelings, or even find a study group if you'd find it useful to get some practical support. You can find more support and practical tips at [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

### A FINAL WORD FROM US AT CONNECTIVERSE

Exams can feel scary and mindset can make all the difference, if you are telling yourself over and over that you can't do this, that there's no point or that you're stressed, your body will react, your brain will find the evidence to make it true and it will feel so much harder.

Instead, try getting curious about what you can do, start with what you know or what you're good at, no matter how small, prove to yourself what you can do. Then think about something that you couldn't do, that you used to find hard, like riding a bike or a skateboard, you probably laugh at how easy you find it now. This proves to your brain that you can do things that once seemed impossible.

Exams are one part of your journey, and yes, they are important, but they don't define you. Think of all the things you are good at that your exams won't measure, what do people value in you and what do you value about yourself, what makes you you? Remember, you are more than the marks on a page.

# CELEBRATING NATIONAL RECOGNITION ACROSS OUR SCHOOLS

A message from  
Bridget Phillipson



This year, a number of our schools received letters of recognition from Secretary of State for Education Bridget Phillipson, acknowledging the exceptional impact they are making for disadvantaged pupils. While each school serves a different community and has its own story to tell, what unites them is a shared commitment: a refusal to allow circumstance to limit potential. The stories that follow highlight just a couple of our schools that have brought this to life in various ways, through nurturing environments, strong partnerships with families, carefully targeted support and an unwavering belief in children and young people. Together, they offer a powerful reminder that educational success is not accidental; it is built day by day through dedication, teamwork and a deep understanding of what pupils need to thrive.

Dear Colleague,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at your school achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.



## BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Larkholme Primary School is proudly celebrating national recognition from the Secretary of State for Education for its exceptional outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. While the acknowledgment highlights impressive academic results, the school is clear that the achievement reflects far more than data alone.

*Headteacher Claire Gilmour describes the recognition as:*

**“A REFLECTION OF THE DEDICATION SHOWN EVERY DAY BY OUR STAFF, THE EFFORT OUR CHILDREN PUT INTO THEIR LEARNING, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR FAMILIES.”**

Staff across the school work tirelessly to create a nurturing, ambitious and inclusive environment; one where every child is supported and encouraged to believe in what they can achieve. Their commitment, from classroom teaching to pastoral care, ensures pupils feel known, valued and motivated to aim high. “Children, too, play an inspiring role.” Teachers see daily examples of pupils showing determination, pushing through challenges, exploring learning with curiosity and demonstrating resilience when things feel difficult. Larkholme also credits its families for their vital partnership.

**PROGRESS IS STRONGEST WHEN PARENTS AND CARERS COLLABORATE CLOSELY WITH THE SCHOOL; THIS SHARED PURPOSE BUILDS THE STRONG FOUNDATIONS EVERY CHILD NEEDS FOR SUCCESS.**

Together, the staff, children and families of Larkholme have built a community where ambition is shared, and achievement is truly collective. While Larkholme’s work shows the power of early foundations, similar principles of belief and support continue to shape pupils’ journeys as they move through later stages of education.

# LIGHTING THE WAY

## CREATING BRIGHTER FUTURES

In every school, there are students whose journeys begin with greater challenges than most. For them, education is not just about exams and grades; it is about hope, opportunity and the belief that their future can be brighter. At Millfield, that belief is not just spoken; it is lived every day.

Walk through the corridors of Millfield and you'll notice something quietly remarkable. It isn't the colourful displays or the vibrant artwork lining the walls, it's the unmistakable sense of shared purpose, a quiet determination and a refusal to accept limits on what young people can achieve. Every student, regardless of their background, is met with the same message: your potential is real, and we're invested in helping you reach it.



Millfield understands that true achievement is about more than academic success. A number of students face barriers outside the classroom that can impact on their learning and progress. The staff at Millfield respond with compassion and practical action.

For these students, support is personal and meaningful for them as an individual, whether that be pastoral support, academic interventions or mentoring. The support we offer our young people creates a powerful message: you are capable, and we will help you prove it.

**LEADERS AND STAFF HAVE BUILT A CULTURE WHERE EVERY CHILD MATTERS: THEY ASK NOT, "WHAT ARE THESE STUDENTS LACKING?" BUT "WHAT DO THEY NEED TO SUCCEED?"**

Progress is tracked closely, but numbers never tell the whole story. Behind every data point is a young person whose confidence is growing, whose voice is stronger, whose ambitions are expanding. No student is excluded from opportunities because of cost. Trips, clubs, music, sport and leadership experiences are opened to all, allowing students to discover talents and interests they never knew they had. For many, these moments are transformative. They are not just participating; they are belonging.

***In an email received from Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson, she states:***

**"YOUR SCHOOL'S PERFORMANCE PLACES IT AMONG THE VERY BEST NATIONALLY, AND THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT." WE ARE IMMENSELY PROUD TO HAVE RECEIVED THIS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR STUDENTS.**

*In a world where disadvantage too often defines destiny, Millfield is writing a different story: one of determination, commitment and possibility. It proves that when schools combine high expectations with genuine care, they do more than raise attainment - they change lives.*

### EMPATHY AND AMBITION IN ACTION

We recognise that schools across Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre are doing exceptional work for disadvantaged pupils, and we know that many others in our local education community have also received this national recognition from the Secretary of State for Education. This collective recognition is a testament to teamwork, within schools, between schools and across communities. It highlights what is possible when high expectations are matched with empathy, and when disadvantage is met not with lowered ambition, but with greater determination.

To have your school featured in the next edition of Connectiverse, please contact [Denise@connectiverse.co.uk](mailto:Denise@connectiverse.co.uk)

# BUSINESS & THE WORKPLACE



Elliot challenges employers to think differently about Chronic Illness in the workplace, Lou looks at the importance of compassionate leadership and Rosie takes a look at Day One Employment rights. Warren showcases how to successfully manage hybrid working balancing productivity and creativity and we have a special feature celebrating the passion and dedication of SELNET CEO, Liz Tapner MBE.

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Are you looking to  
**scale and grow** your  
business online?

# CHRONIC ILLNESS

## THE HUMAN COST IN THE WORKPLACE

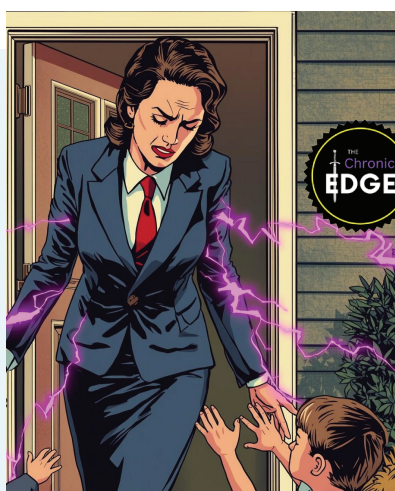
I've seen so many brilliant people sidelined for roles they would be perfect in, not because their long term health condition makes them unreliable, but by how employers assumed it would. The myths we believe around chronic and long term illness mean that many talented people are frozen out of the workplace.

Disclosure of an illness or medical condition for some can be a double-edged sword, managers may listen to what you can do but focus on what they believe you can't without ever asking.

You know that saying – 'It's WHO you know? Well, it's more – 'WHAT you know, about WHO you know'. Because often the one area a manager is most concerned about, can be the one area in which you thrive, and if they knew that about you, that fear would never surface in the first place. That's the real cost – to individuals, families, work colleagues, and companies, it's rarely the illness itself, but more the myths and assumptions we still carry with us.



ELLIOT EVANS



### WHAT ARE THESE MYTHS?

What are these myths and how can we reframe them moving forward? 'People with chronic conditions will drag productivity down' – It is an understandable statement, especially if you look in the news or online, people with chronic conditions are often labelled – the vulnerable, the economically inactive, lazy, the burdens of society.

Most chronic conditions, such as arthritis are mostly hidden, and subject to flares (temporary spells when symptoms are at their worst) rather than an every moment and visible issue like a broken arm. But, let me tell you a little secret, most people with a chronic condition suffer from their symptoms every moment of every day, but they've learnt to manage to a certain extent.

There is no such thing as mild arthritis; there are over 100 different types, slotting into 7 distinct categories and they ALL hurt. So, it is understandable that people hear the term 'arthritis' and slot the person into what they know, who they know, and what they've heard, to help form the basis of their assumption, thus creating the probable myth.

***"But if their capabilities are reduced, then obviously productivity reduces right?"***

**I DON'T HAVE TO IMAGINE THAT SCENARIO, BECAUSE MY SISTER LIVES IT EVERY DAY, AND SHE IS FAR FROM UNRELIABLE, SHE'S FRANKLY INCREDIBLE.**

Not necessarily. Productivity can be impacted in so many different ways in everyone, not just those with chronic illness. Wages, training, culture, engagement, location, mindset or personal circumstances, to name a few, can all impact productivity on any given day.

Could you imagine managing several stores, driving hours on end throughout the day, and missing family events for your work? Now imagine doing this in a role where your colleagues don't know that there are days you need to be carried to bed because the pain in your body dropped you to your knees. All the while they'd make suggestions about diary planning, and making work a priority, without ever understanding the daily battle.

Maybe if we spent more time looking at the people beneath the myths, we'd find so many more talented, loyal, and highly productive individuals managing their health while maintaining a balance between work and life, rather than seeing them as the reason productivity slows, when the real cost is personal and goes much, much deeper.



# CELEBRATING LANCASHIRE WOMEN IN BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

Liz Tapner is no ordinary business leader in Lancashire. For nearly two decades she has steered the Social Enterprise Lancashire Network (Selnet), and is as committed as ever to supporting the county's most vulnerable people. Ask anyone who has worked alongside her and they'll tell you the same thing: Liz wears her heart on her sleeve, she knows first-hand what it takes to overcome life's toughest moments, and that authenticity shapes every part of her leadership. When someone says they've got nothing left, Liz doesn't reach for a checklist, she's more likely to give them a hug, tell them she's been there, and promise that the team will help them get back on their feet.



## THE HUMBLE JAM JAR

It's that same level headed approach that informs her now-famous "jam jar" way of talking about money to board members - an analogy inspired by her mother separating cash for rent, electricity and essentials when she was a child. The jam jars may once have held a few pounds; today they represent ring-fenced project budgets running into tens of thousands, carefully stewarded so that every pound reaches the people who need it most.

It would be easy to paint Liz as a saintly 'Mother Teresa' figure, but that would miss half the picture. You don't lead a major organisation for 20 years without a substantial amount of steel. That combination of warmth and resolve has made her one of the North West's most respected social enterprise leaders. In 2021 she was awarded an MBE for services to social enterprise - a recognition of years spent building one of the UK's most active social enterprise networks and unlocking major investment for community impact.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

One of the programmes that Liz is especially proud of is called Under One Roof and provides instant access to essential furniture and white goods for Lancashire people in crisis who find themselves in a bare property. That maybe someone recently evicted, perhaps a domestic abuse victim or someone facing serious issues with a rented house, like the recent case of a young family living in a house with extensive mould; Selnet wrapped around the family, provided essential goods and support until the family were able to safely return to their home.

Perhaps Liz's greatest achievement to date is as lead partner for the Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme in Lancashire, she convened around 60 specialist social enterprises and VCSE organisations to work across three projects - Age of Opportunity, Invest in Youth and Changing Futures. Running from 2016 to 2023, the programme brought £17.68m into the county and delivered patient, person-centred support to people facing complex combinations of poor health, caring responsibilities, trauma, debt, divorce, grief, mental health, and more. As Liz often acknowledges, "We're talking about people with extremely complex, intertwined social problems. There were no quick fixes." Some participants needed over a year of consistent support to unravel issues that had built up over decades.



# THE BOMB DISPOSAL EXPERTS

Lancashire has extraordinarily gifted people working in the non-profit sector - people with the patience, skill and emotional intelligence to sit with someone in crisis and slowly untangle the knots. Liz affectionately describes them as “social bomb disposal experts”, defusing the pressure points one by one until people can breathe again.

Ask Liz what keeps her going and you'll hear passion, humility and absolute determination:

“NOBODY SAID IT WAS EASY RUNNING A NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION THAT HELPS HUNDREDS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE EVERY YEAR. AND, WHILE THE STAFF ARE HARDWORKING AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ARE SUPPORTIVE, I AM ACUTELY AWARE OF THE BUCK STOPPING WITH ME AND THAT DOES PLAY ON MY MIND SOMETIMES.”

## A FORCE FOR GOOD



Recognition for Liz's leadership has been significant. She was among the first Honorary Fellows of Social Enterprise UK in 2017; the year after, she was named the UK's most influential woman in social enterprise. In 2019 she entered the Northern Power Women's Top 100 and later joined the WISE100 of women leading social business.

Selnet has matured alongside her. Founded in 2005, the network now blends representation with delivery, offering business advice for new and growing social enterprises, membership services connecting buyers with high-impact suppliers, and multi-partner contracts supporting people far from the labour market. Recent years have brought a wave of UK Shared Prosperity Fund projects; Move Forward in Preston and Pendle for adults out of work, Invest in Youth for 16-24s, and Skills Bootcamps in sales, marketing and social media. Selnet also plays a role in WorkWell, helping people with health conditions to start and stay in work.

## 20 YEARS OF SELNET

All of this comes as Selnet marks 20 years at the heart of Lancashire's social enterprise story. The network has launched “20 Weeks for 20 Years”, shining a spotlight on the people and moments that shaped the county's ecosystem, culminating in a 20th-anniversary celebration and awards on 24 April 2026 at Ribby Hall. It's quintessential Liz, celebration with purpose: convene the sector, share what works, and point the way forward.

Today, as Selnet's Chief Strategy Officer, Liz remains the driving force behind the organisation's growth into a regional infrastructure body and a national voice for social enterprise. Her leadership hasn't changed: she's as ready to fight for fair budgets with government as she is to offer a hug to someone in crisis. The jam jars may be bigger, but her mission stays the same.



FINAL  
THOUGHTS

*“And if you don't know what social enterprise is”, Liz explains, “just think of the people selling the Big Issue - they sell a magazine, so that's the enterprise part, and it helps them get out of rough sleeping- that's the social bit.” Trading creates income; the mission changes lives. And that's exactly where Liz Tapner has made her home.*

# THE DAY-ONE REVOLUTION

## HOW THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT 2025 IS RESHAPING UK WORK WITH RR LEGAL

The world of work in the UK is facing its most significant shake-up in a generation. The Employment Rights Act 2025 (ERA 2025) is set to fundamentally alter the landscape of employee welfare, with sweeping changes to sickness and paternity pay driven by the principle of day-one rights. This shift aims to create a healthier, more supportive, and ultimately more productive workforce, but it also introduces new financial and administrative challenges for businesses.



### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

For the employee, the act represents a long-overdue victory for financial security and public health. The most impactful change is the removal of the three-day waiting period for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Eligible employees will now receive SSP from their first day of absence. This is coupled with the abolition of the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL), which previously excluded many low-paid workers (particularly women), from receiving SSP at all. This reform directly tackles the endemic issue of presenteeism, where workers feel compelled to come to work while ill, a practice estimated to cost the UK economy up to £25 billion annually. By ensuring immediate financial support, the Act empowers workers to stay home, recover faster, and prevent the spread of illness. A clear benefit for both the individual and wider public health.

### PARENTAL RIGHTS

The Act also modernises family rights, granting new fathers and partners the right to Statutory Paternity Leave and unpaid parental leave from their first day of employment, removing the previous 26-week qualifying period. Furthermore, new flexibility allows paternity leave to be taken after paid shared parental leave, giving families greater choice in how they manage the crucial first year of a child's life. These changes ensure that new parents are not penalised for changing jobs or starting a family early in their career.

### THE IMPACT ON BUSINESS

However, the "day-one" provision for sick pay has triggered significant concern among businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). For employers, the legislation translates directly into increased costs, as they must now absorb the financial burden of one-day absences that were previously unpaid. Business groups, including the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), warn that the reforms could be exploited, leading to a rise in casual, short-term absences, with some employees potentially viewing the day-one SSP as a route to a paid "day off," creating a management headache and financial strain for businesses already navigating a challenging economic climate.

The government acknowledges these concerns, but maintains that reducing presenteeism outweighs the risks of abuse. They argue that employers are best positioned to manage this risk through robust, fair, and clearly communicated sickness absence policies. The establishment of the new Fair Work Agency (FWA) in April 2026, which will oversee compliance with rights including sick pay, is intended to provide an enforcement mechanism to ensure the system is not abused.



Ultimately, the ERA 2025 marks a pivotal moment in UK employment law. It is a bold legislative step that prioritises worker well-being and public health, moving the UK closer to its European counterparts in terms of employee protection. While the new costs and the challenge of managing short-term absence will require careful adaptation from employers. The Act sets a clear direction: the future of work is one where employee health and family support are foundational rights, not privileges earned over time.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



# OFFICE V HYBRID WORKING

## WHY WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT AT LAB CREATIVE



WARREN LANGFORD

The debate around office versus hybrid working continues to dominate business conversations across the UK. Some organisations have returned to full time office attendance in pursuit of collaboration and control. Others have embraced remote working entirely, prioritising flexibility primarily. Most sit somewhere in between, still trying to find the right balance. At Lab Creative, we have chosen to be intentional rather than reactive. We are not anti-office. In fact, we strongly believe in the power of being in the room together. Energy is different when a team shares space. Ideas move faster. Creative direction sharpens. Sales conversations are more dynamic. There is a natural rhythm that develops when people collaborate face to face. For a growing agency, culture matters deeply. New team members learn through proximity. Momentum builds when everyone feels aligned. The office provides structure, identity and accountability. These things are not outdated. They are powerful.



### IMPLEMENTATION

Hybrid working, when implemented properly, is not about working less. It is about working smarter. The problem many businesses encountered was confusing flexibility leading to lowered standards. At Lab Creative, flexibility sits alongside clarity. Expectations are defined. KPIs are measurable. Deadlines are non-negotiable. Communication is consistent.

“  
**BUT HERE IS THE IMPORTANT PART - THE OFFICE IS NOT THE ONLY PLACE WHERE GREAT WORK CAN HAPPEN.**  
”

### “WE FOCUS ON QUALITY OF OUTPUT, NOT HOURS AT A DESK.”

That single shift in mindset changes the conversation entirely. When adults are trusted to manage their performance, most rise to the challenge. When people are measured purely on presence, creativity can quietly suffer. In a creative agency, that is not a risk worth taking. Recently, one of our designers made the decision to live and work in Thailand for three months. For some companies, that scenario might feel uncomfortable. For us, it felt like an opportunity. New environments stimulate new ideas. Exposure to diverse cultures, colours, architecture, design styles and lifestyles inevitably influences creative thinking. Inspiration does not exist in isolation. It is shaped by experience. And when you allow talented people to experience the world, the work often reflects that growth. This decision was not about being trendy. It was about trust. If the work is delivered to the same high standard, if clients remain delighted, and if communication stays strong, why should geography become a barrier? The modern workforce values autonomy. High performers want responsibility and flexibility. If businesses want to attract ambitious talent, they must adapt without sacrificing standards.

Daring to be different does not mean being careless. It means designing a working model with purpose. We still invest in time together. We still believe collaboration strengthens ideas. We still prioritise team planning sessions, shared accountability and face to face momentum. The office remains central to our culture.

But we also recognise that creativity is not confined to four walls or traditional hours. It can be sparked by a change of scenery, by stepping outside routine, by seeing the world differently.

The real debate is not office versus hybrid. It is control versus trust. It is presenteeism versus productivity. It is rigidity versus evolution. At Lab Creative, we are building a culture that blends structure with flexibility. Accountable but empowering. Collaborative but forward thinking. We believe performance should be measured by results, not postcode. The world of work has shifted. Rather than resisting it, we are choosing to shape it in a way that works for our team and our clients. Because great ideas do not depend on location. They depend on energy, perspective and trust.  
***And that is something we will always protect.***

# THE QUIET STRENGTH OF COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP

Leaders are expected to hold direction and steadiness for others while quietly managing their own challenges and pressures. Today, the way we lead ourselves and others matters more than ever. Compassionate leadership can be misunderstood, seen as soft or overly accommodating. Compassionate leadership asks something far more courageous, inviting us to stay present with the human realities of work while also holding clarity, responsibility, and direction. My understanding began long before my coaching work, during my early career in manufacturing and later in public sector museum audience development. In both settings I saw how differently people engage and learn; some through reflection, others through dialogue, and some through practical experience.



“  
**WHEN LEADERS RECOGNISE AND RESPECT THESE DIFFERENCES, WORKPLACES CAN BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE, CREATIVE, AND COLLABORATIVE.**  
 ”

## WHERE TO BEGIN

Compassionate leadership begins with self-awareness and presence. It invites us to notice what is happening within ourselves and around us. This may mean recognising the pressure someone a colleague is carrying, sensing when morale is shifting or acknowledging the emotional impact that ongoing change is having on people's wellbeing. Rather than reacting quickly or pushing through difficulty, compassionate leaders pause, they take a breath. They listen carefully and ask thoughtful questions. They connect rather than criticise. They recognise that people bring their full lives into work; hopes, responsibilities, worries, and aspirations. For when we are seen and respected, trust grows and conversations become more open and constructive.

## WEIGHT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Leaders carry significant responsibility, often unexpectedly alone. Without opportunities for reflection and connection, they may find it tricky to balance work and family life. They may begin to unconsciously harm their long-term health through unhealthy patterns of overworking and sustained stress. Central to my work has been creating mindful, reflective spaces where leaders can explore challenges honestly and safely held when vulnerability shows up. Evidence suggests when leaders relate to themselves with empathy and compassion, from that foundation they access greater clarity in how they lead.

MSc research and Mindful Self-compassion teacher training informed the development of compassionate leadership coaching circles for women. These circles offer supportive environments where women strengthen self-leadership, reflect on the realities of leadership, and build meaningful connection with others navigating similar responsibilities. Self-care and self-kindness are core to compassionate leadership. Many leaders hold themselves accountable to high standards, quietly carrying the wellbeing of others alongside their own responsibilities. Without care for their inner world, leaders can become overtly self-critical, depleted and vulnerable to burnout.

## STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Self-kindness helps restore balance. It allows leaders to settle their nervous system, ground, respond thoughtfully, set healthy boundaries, and make decisions with steadiness.

“Compassionate leadership strengthens accountability. Difficult conversations still take place and expectations remain clear, grounded in respect, curiosity, and a genuine desire to support growth.”

In uncertain times the workplace asks a lot of leaders and teams alike. Compassionate leadership reminds us that organisations thrive not only through strategy and performance, but through the quality of relationships that shape everyday working life.

To find out more about Louise's work or Compassionate Coaching Circles visit [www.elementascoaching.com](http://www.elementascoaching.com)



# YOUR LOCAL AREA

## BLACKPOOL, FYLDE & WYRE



We learn about Jubilee Bowling and Social Club from Matthew Schofield, who shares his vision to bring bowling to the next generation. We take a look back at Joyfest26, and look to the future, as Community Comic Con comes to Lytham. Tune in to Connectiverse Perspectives as the latest edition of the podcast sets to launch.

CONNECTIVERSE MAGAZINE | MARCH 2026

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Everyone is invited to this free Comic Con (short for Comic Convention). Which is a celebration of pop culture, fandoms and creativity, bringing together fans of comics, movies, TV shows, gaming, cosplay and so much more.

It's a place where people can meet like-minded fans, discover incredible artists and traders, take part in fun activities and see amazing cosplayers dressed as their favourite characters. Following the huge success of Fleetwood Community Comic Con, where an estimated 2,500 people attended our very first event, we're thrilled to be doing it all again! This time in the beautiful surroundings of Lowther Pavilion Theatre & Gardens in Lytham.



**JOIN US ON SUNDAY 2ND AUGUST, 10AM – 5PM**

**FOR A FULL DAY CELEBRATING CREATIVITY, FANDOM AND COMMUNITY.  
AND JUST LIKE OUR LAST EVENT... IT'S COMPLETELY FREE TO ATTEND.**

## COMMUNITY DRIVEN FOCUS

Our events are run by Community Comic Con CIC, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company that is entirely run by volunteers.

We support artists, makers, cosplayers, clubs, community groups and small businesses by giving them opportunities to share their passion with thousands of visitors. By keeping the event free to attend, we remove barriers and make sure everyone can experience the magic of Comic Con, regardless of their financial situation.

This welcoming and inclusive approach is at the heart of everything we do.

## VOLUNTEER DRIVEN

One of the most remarkable aspects of Community Comic Con CIC is that everything is powered by volunteers. From the directors and committee members to the event volunteers on the day, every person involved gives their time because they believe in creating something special for the community. At our first event in Fleetwood, 52 volunteers helped make the day a success. They assisted with everything from setting up and packing away to helping run activities and even becoming zombies in our interactive walk-through in the Scare Zone.

Their passion, enthusiasm and teamwork created an unforgettable atmosphere that brought the whole event to life. This year we hope even more people will want to get involved and be part of the experience.

# SUPPORTING CREATIVITY ALL YEAR ROUND

Community Comic Con isn't just about one event each year. Throughout the year we actively support the pop-culture community in a number of ways:

**The Comic Con Community Podcast:** Our weekly podcast gives creators, artists, actors, authors, cosplayers and organisers a chance to share their stories, talk about their projects and give fans a behind-the-scenes look at the creative world.

**Our Social Media Platforms:** Through our social media channels, we regularly promote local creatives, clubs, businesses and events, helping them reach new audiences and grow their communities.

**Supporting Local Clubs and Groups:** We also actively support local not-for-profit hobby and community groups by helping them promote their activities and reach new members. For example, we proudly support Thornton Cleveleys Board Games Club, a welcoming group that meets weekly and provides a fantastic space for people to come together, learn new games and build friendships through tabletop gaming.



AUGUST 2026

“  
**OUR MISSION IS SIMPLE:  
TO GIVE LOCAL CREATIVES FROM  
ACROSS THE FYLDE COAST AND  
BEYOND A PLATFORM TO SHOWCASE  
WHAT THEY DO TO THE WIDER PUBLIC.**  
”

## OUR ANNUAL COMMUNITY COMIC CON

Our main event brings everything together - traders, artists, special guests, cosplay, activities and community groups - creating an unforgettable celebration of fandom and creativity.



## JOIN US FOR COMIC CON 2026

Whether you're a lifelong comic fan, a cosplayer, a gamer, an artist or simply curious to see what it's all about, Lytham Community Comic Con has something for everyone.

You Can Expect:

- Amazing cosplayers
- Unique artists and traders
- Interactive activities
- Special guests
- Clubs and community groups
- A welcoming atmosphere for fans of all ages

Most importantly, it's a celebration of the things we love, created by the community, for the community.

**LYTHAM COMMUNITY COMIC CON**  
Lowther Pavilion Theatre & Gardens  
Sunday 2nd August  
10am – 5pm  
FREE ENTRY

*If you'd like to get involved as a volunteer or learn more about what we do, simply contact us through our social media platforms by searching: Community Comic Con We'd love to welcome you into our little community.*



# CROWN GREEN BOWLS

## A FAMILY TRADITION

Some of the most important parts of our lives begin quietly, without us realising how much they will matter later on.

For me, crown green bowls started during summer holidays as a young child, spending time with my Auntie. While she practised, I would also play using the jacks, the small bowl used as the target in the game, copying what I saw and learning without pressure. At the time, it just felt like fun being outdoors and enjoying time together. That early introduction stayed with me.

When I was 14 years old, an opportunity came up that showed me just how inclusive and adaptable the bowls community could be. Our local club, Jubilee Gardens, set up a team which was specifically for me and another lad my age. Because of our age, special permission had to be granted by the league so that we could play, a decision that showed a real willingness to encourage young people into the sport.

What made that team even more special was who we played alongside. My teammate's Grandad and Dad were part of the team. As time went on and player numbers began to dwindle, the bowling league made an important decision, moving from a men-only league to a mixed league. That change meant that my Mum and Auntie were also eligible to play in the team.



### CONNECTION

Last year, I took on the role of team captain. The values that shaped my own journey are the same ones I want to pass on. If someone has never played bowls before but wants to give it a go, they are welcome in my team at Jubilee Gardens. They can play as many games as they want, win or lose, because experience matters far more than results.

Crown green bowls has never just been about competition for me. It is about friendship, inclusion, encouragement, and community. It is about giving people the chance to belong, to learn and to grow in confidence at their own pace. It is also about families, how something as simple as a local green can connect children, parents and grandparents in ways that last a lifetime.

“  
**WHAT STARTED AS A SIMPLE CHILDHOOD PASTIME HAS QUIETLY BECOME A SHARED FAMILY EXPERIENCE, SPANNING GENERATIONS AND ADAPTING WITH THE TIMES.**  
 ”

## FREE FAMILY FUN DAY

In a time when many communities feel fragmented, clubs like Jubilee Gardens Bowling & Social Club show how shared spaces and traditions still have the power to bring people together. Sometimes, all it takes is one person, an Auntie, a parent, a friend, to spark an interest. And once this happens, you might be surprised where it leads.

That same spark is what the club hopes to share this spring, when Jubilee Gardens Bowling & Social Club opens its gates for a Free Family Fun Day on Saturday 18th April, which will be a relaxed opportunity for families to spend time together, try something new and experience the kind of welcome that has shaped my own journey.

Matthew Schofield  
 Proud member of Jubilee Gardens Bowling & Social Club



# Jubilee Gardens Bowling & Social Club



Jubilee Drive, Cleveleys, FY5 1LD

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# STEP INTO JOY

*"Imagine a day where you can leave your worries at the door, step into fun, and just be yourself, that's Joyfest26."*

That's exactly what visitors experienced at this year's Joyfest26 at The Marine Hall in Fleetwood. A vibrant celebration of wellbeing, creativity, and community, from the moment the doors opened, laughter, music, and energy filled the air, showing just how powerful one day of joy can be.



## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Families and children explored a variety of activities: making a Jar of Joy, designing personalised T-shirts, and building in the LEGO corner. Music, dance, and movement flowed throughout the day, from on-stage performers to laughter yoga, Pound fitness sessions, and pedalling for a smoothie on the bike.

Beauty and creativity were celebrated with hair braiding, henna tattoos, and dancing with Tia's Crown. Visitors also found support and guidance, with Healthwatch providing information, blood pressure checks from healthcare professionals, and spaces to connect with the Family Hub, Alcohol free living and Breast Cancer Support Groups.

## A COMMUNITY EFFORT

JoyFest26 is not just a one-off event, it's part of a movement to make wellbeing accessible, fun, and inclusive. Generous local businesses sponsored wristbands for attendees, and our incredible volunteers ensured everything ran smoothly from start to finish, radiating the joy that defines Joyfest26.

Support from Fleetwood Town Council and Fleetwood Arts CIC helped bring the day to life, providing spaces, workshops, and opportunities for connection.

*"It's not just a festival, it's a movement to make wellbeing accessible, inclusive, and fun for all."*

## GRATITUDE AND CELEBRATION

To our volunteers, attendees, partners, and sponsors a huge thank you! Joyfest26 exists because of you. Together, we are building a culture where joy, wellbeing, and connection sit at the heart of community life one festival at a time.

Save the Date - Step into joy. Celebrate connection. Experience the power of community. We are looking forward to welcoming you on 17th Jan 2027 to do it all again.

*Wishing you all another year of Joy  
Karen and Sparkly Margaret*



**"EVERY SMILE, EVERY LAUGH, EVERY MOMENT OF CONNECTION IS PROOF THAT JOY CAN RIPPLE FAR BEYOND THE FESTIVAL."**

## JOY THAT LASTS BEYOND THE DAY

Attendees shared how their children left buzzing with creativity, and adults reflected on how a single day of joy lifted their spirits and reminded them of the importance of connection and self-care. Every activity, workshop, and moment of engagement nurtured wellbeing and proved that joy, once experienced, can ripple far beyond the festival itself.

# CONNECTIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

**REAL VOICES, REAL CONNECTIONS**  
**HOSTED BY TOM BARRATT**



Our new monthly podcast brings the stories and conversations from the Connectiverse community to life; you can find us on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon and Pod Co.

Each month, we'll reflect on the latest digital and print editions, exploring the themes, stories, and ideas that mean something to you. Alongside this, a second episode each month will feature an in-depth conversation with one of our contributors; giving you the chance to hear the person behind the words, their lived experience, and the work they do in the community. From health and wellbeing to education, care, finance, neurodiversity, and community support, this podcast is about connection - helping people understand what support exists, why it matters, and how services and communities can work better together.

## EPISODE TWO

With Denise Lowe (Editor in Chief) and Andrea Sandiford in this month's 'hot seat', Tom looks at peeling back the layers to reveal the decisions and reflections that underpinned the content covered in our January / February edition of Connectiverse. Providing insight into the purpose and passion that drives the decision making behind the articles, Denise and Andrea speak about the responsibility and importance of being authentic and true to each contributor's expertise and experience. Throughout the episode Tom spotlights the articles that spoke to him personally, sharing how valuable Harry's article was for him, making him feel seen as part of a misunderstood generation of 'Gen-z' and the unexpected impact of Baby Callum's story, which in itself will bring comfort to Callum's parents, knowing that his legacy lives on.



## PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

Now don't get us wrong, Connectiverse Perspectives is not a polished performance - it is authentic and true to what we believe, we hope it speaks to you as much as it speaks to us. Our aim is to take the essence of the Connectiverse community and turn it into conversation. If we can do it, so can you - we are looking for our next round of contributors and partners, from seasoned professional broadcasters to the complete novice, we want to hear from you. If you would like to contribute to the conversation and feature on our podcast, then please contact [denise@connectiverse.co.uk](mailto:denise@connectiverse.co.uk) and use Podcast Query as the subject header.

*Our thanks as ever go to Darran Wilson from Tuneability for making our podcast a reality.*

## FIND US

Connectiverse Perspectives is a growing community of real voices and meaningful connections. If this episode resonated with you, we'd love your support: follow us, subscribe on your favourite platform, and share the podcast with someone who might benefit from these stories. You can find us on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon, and Pod Co. And if you're ready to add your voice to the conversation, reach out, we're always looking for new contributors who believe in progress, not perfection.



# connectiverse

## COMMUNITY SPACE

IN OUR COMMUNITY

### WHAT IS TEAM?

A 12-week programme of personal development training

The programme 're-engages' young people, helping them to think about their futures. In many cases it changes their lives.

You can join a Team that has up to 15 participants. A Team comprises unemployed people including people leaving care, young offenders, students and employed people sponsored by their employers.

**More than 70% of participants go on to jobs, training or education.**

THE KINGS TRUST

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- > Mix with new people and make friends
- > It won't cost you anything and you won't lose your benefits

Over the last five years, **3 OUT OF 4** young people supported by The Prince's Trust have moved into work, education or training after completing one of our programmes.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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LFRS Prince's Trust Team programme  
Fleetwood Fire Station  
Radcliffe Road FY7 6UJ

PTFleetwood@lancsfireandrescue.org.uk

Or call free on 0800 842 842 or visit  
princes-trust.org.uk/team  
to find out when your nearest Team starts.



Prince's Trust



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### CONFIDENCE



Prince's Trust



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Do you know of a service or group you'd like to see featured in Connectiverse magazine?  
Get in touch and let us know.

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COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

### Fylde Volunteer Fair

Want to make a difference in your local community?  
Come and meet local charities and organisations for free advice, information and opportunities to volunteer!

**FREE ENTRY**

**Monday 20 April 2026, 10am-1pm**  
Fairhaven Methodist Church,  
Lytham St Annes, FY8 1BZ

Want to host a stall and showcase your organisation?  
Email [victoria.clegg@fylde.gov.uk](mailto:victoria.clegg@fylde.gov.uk)



WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

**MENTAL HEALTH**

**SENDIAS Lancashire** support families with children who have, or may have, Special Educational Needs or Disabilities in Lancashire. Visit [lancssendias.org.uk](http://lancssendias.org.uk) for more information.



**SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING**



**Sometimes all we need is someone to listen....**



Would you like to:

- Feel more confident having conversations about mental health
- Learn practical skills to support someone in a moment of need
- Understand how to signpost on to professional services that can continue to help

Book your free place today and join us on an Orange Button course. If we work together no one has to feel alone.

Scan QR for more details or visit our website.

**SENDIASS Blackpool** provide help and support Blackpool based families with children who have, or may have, Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. Contact [sendiass@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@blackpool.gov.uk) or phone on 01253 477083

**Blackpool Sendiass**

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**CONNECTIVERSE DIRECTORY**

**LOCAL CONTACTS**

- CITC** [www.counsellinginthecommunity.com](http://www.counsellinginthecommunity.com) | 0808 1963483
- CASHER** 07810 696565 | email: [bfwh.casher.team@nhs.net](mailto:bfwh.casher.team@nhs.net)
- Blackpool Carers Centre** 01253 393748
- Ncompass** 03450 138208
- Blue Skies Hospital Fund** 01253 957904
- Brian House** 01253 359362
- Trinity Hospice** 01253 358881
- Citizens Advice** 0300 330 1184
- Walk-In Centre** 01253 953953
- Blackpool Victoria Hospital** 01253 300000
- Young Carers Project** 01253 393748
- Fylde Coast Women's Aid** 01253 596699
- Home-Start Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre** 01253 728615
- Duty Chemist Sunday Morrisons** 01253 852376
- Connect Young People Centre** 01253 751047
- Aiming Higher** 01253 206447
- Play Inclusion Project** 01253 899883
- Together We Can Do** 07859916181
- Sam's Place** 07391539239
- Empowerment** 0300 3232100
- School Nurse (Lancashire)** 0300 2470040
- The Platform Blackpool** 07342056448
- Talk Zone Lancashire** 0800 511111

**NATIONAL CONTACTS**

- Samaritans** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) 116 123
- Childline** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) 0800 1111
- Young Minds** <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>
- Mind** 0300 123 3393
- Barnardo's** <https://www.barnardos.org.uk>
- NSPCC Child Protection** 0808 800 5000
- National Autistic Society** [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)
- Age UK** 0800 055 6112
- Alcoholic Anonymous** 0800 9177650
- The Money Advice Service** 0800 138 7777
- The Silver Line** 08000 470 80 90
- Domestic Abuse (24hr)** 0808 2000 247
- Child Death Helpline** 0800 282 986

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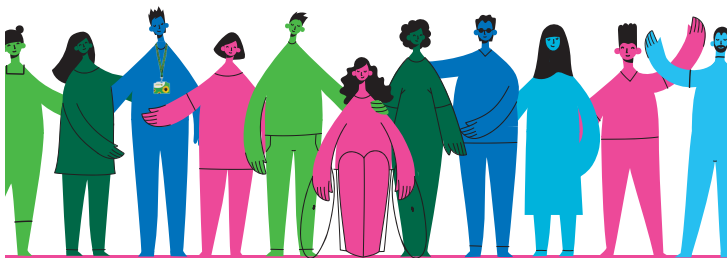
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## Neuro-Inclusive Mental Wellbeing Training

For parents and carers of young people who struggle with their mental health and wellbeing.

Young people with specific challenges linked to mental health and neurodiversity /neurodivergence (autism, ADHD, dyslexia etc) are also included in the course. It is neuro-affirming, which means we don't treat these kinds of differences as only negative.

"I feel better knowing I'm not the only parent struggling and finding it hard to get help for their children. Thank you for providing a course with really stories and resources."

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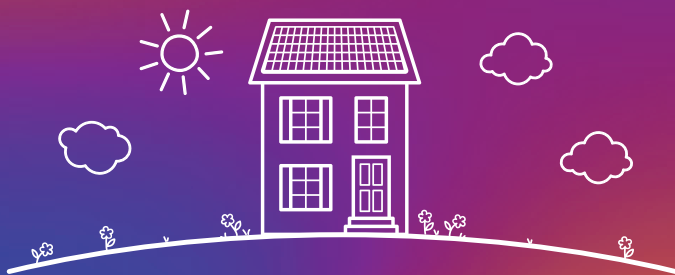


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