

Remit Name:

Personnel:

Outline of Remit:

Target Groups, Aims

Target Audience:

Parents and carers of children of all ages who:

- Have an autism diagnosis
- are awaiting an assessment
- are displaying early indicators (suggesting their child may be Neurodiverse)

Aim:

To raise awareness of local support

- Bringing parents and services/ organisations together under one roof,
- to learn what support can be offered to families, in an informal, friendly, none clinical environment.

How MUCH did we do?

Organisations who support this target group were invited to attend each cafe. This local support is from statutory, community and voluntary services.

September 2022- March 2023

Total Autism Social Café:	6
Total Stalls:	130
Total Workshops:	15

1. How WELL did we do it?

Total families attended:	371
Total Professionals attended to learn about services:	223
Attendees at workshops:	143
Feedback from parent's	100% positive
Feedback from Locality planning Groups	100% positive
Autism Social Cafes helped provide families with support	97% positive

2. Is anyone BETTER OFF?

"After derry/londonderry one in Jan, our membership requests jumped. Over 60 requested in two days. I'd say overall in the last three meet ups we've had almost 100 new registered families."

~David Campbell, Circle of Support

"The autism social café was a huge success and a real asset to the local community. It was a shining example of partnership working at its best. Parents received so much information and avenues of support, that most of them were unaware of. The feedback from parents has been phenomenal and will make such a difference to so many families. There is huge potential to extend this model and indeed to replicate it in other areas of work. Well done to all involved, it really illustrates the strength of joined up working."

~ Sharon Callaghan, Strabane SureStart Manager

"Speaking at the social café as an autistic adult who is raising an autistic child, helped show foresight and understanding, thank you for inviting me. More autistic voices being heard is critical. A quote coined from disability rights movement which sits well here is 'nothing about us, without us'. We are all learning everyday as parents and professionals. It is vital that services and professionals continue to work together for the benefit of the individuals."

~ Sarah McGill, Autistically Support

"I am currently waiting diagnosis for my son and there is times I feel so alone. I now know of many groups I can attend for help and support. The biggest comfort I got from Friday was during the workshop. Hearing other mothers worries and concerns knowing I am not alone. I have since exchanged phone numbers with a mum who is in a similar situation. We have chatted since and honestly it has helped me a lot"

~ Emma McGuinness

Parent

"I attended the autism social café and what an event it turned out to be, really informative and interesting with representatives on hand to answer any queries professionally and knowledgeably. The turnout was really indicative of the needs in this area. Ten out of ten to the organisers and participants for a job well done"

~ Cllr Raymond Barr, Counsellor

"I found the social autism café very informative and helpful. It allowed me to meet parents in similar situations and interact with a range of professionals who were helpful and friendly"

~ Rachael Devine Parent

"It was a great morning, well organised. I received a lot of information and learnt more about autism. I received a lot of contacts to help my son.

~Dyymna Maxwell

Parent

"This was an opportunity for parents and carers to meet and learn what programmes and services are available to them. Meeting others who are also raising neurodiverse children can create a network of support. The Journey for parents and carers doesn't begin or end with a diagnosis. The journey starts long before and continues long after. It can be overwhelming, emotionally and physically tiring and at times lonely. We hope the autism social cafés help even in a small way for families."

~ Lisa Storey

**Child Development Interventions Coordinator, Health Improvement Equality Involvement Dept.
WHST**