

Autistic Minds



Access, opportunities, support and services

For a world where autistic adults form an
integral part of their communities

September 2024

the **power** of **potential**

Autistic Minds (registered charity (1143855)) is now in its 15th year of supporting and celebrating the autistic community and was founded by our CEO Nadine Honeybone in response to the lack of information on services available for autistic children and adults.

Our charity delivers a range of support, services and ventures across Wales, and a HelpHub that covers the UK.

We are incredibly proud that **86% of our team of 42 charity staff are autistic**. We use our lived experience of autism to create powerful solutions and opportunities for the autistic community to build a better future for themselves

Our **vision** is a world where autistic adults have **equal access to opportunities, support and services**, and form an **integral** part of their communities.

a note from our founder & CEO



Nadine Honeybone
Founder and CEO

Autistic Minds and the Power of Potential

Every day I work with a team of autistic adults who inspire me, each in their own way and collectively as members of staff at our charity Autistic Minds.

As a charity, we began in 2010 as The Autism Directory with a service to provide **information** and **resources** for the **autistic community** across the UK. As a parent and wife of two **amazing** yet very different people on the **autism spectrum**, my world was not the same as my group of friends and family, and a new life began to emerge for me, together with a **passion to learn, help** and **support** others in my new-found world.

Over the years the charity and the directory grew. In 2021 we renamed and **rebranded** ourselves to better represent who we are and who we serve - a community of people with **phenomenal potential**, yet marginalised and excluded in many ways by society.

I'd love to share more here about who we are:

We are a team of **42 neurodiverse adults**, of whom 36 are autistic and together we are **Autistic Minds**.

We believe in the **power of potential** in all autistic and neurodivergent adults to advocate for themselves and build a more independent life.

We help by **improving access** to support, education, employment and social opportunities. We use our **lived experience** to develop creative ideas, create powerful solutions and deliver practical grassroots services for the community we serve to have equal access to **opportunities**.

We are based in **Treforest** and **Caerphilly** in South East Wales, yet our reach is further afield with our outreach services. These include community talks, befriending, awareness training and our **annual shows** in Llandudno and Cardiff. Here businesses and community groups exhibit to **share** their services and resources, and speakers from across the UK share their stories and knowledge at our all-day seminars.



At our offices in Treforest we have five **charity enterprises** which provide skills training and employment opportunities for autistic adults that have found it difficult to find employment elsewhere. They are; **Ambition Prints**, a design and printing service which can put any design on a mug, T-shirt, tote bag etc. **Green Valley Workshop** is our carpentry enterprise creating all things from wood such as bird boxes, hedgehog hotels and recycling units. **Safe Shred Wales** provides confidential document waste destruction for local businesses. **Resin Rat** is our latest enterprise which produces 3D printed models for gaming. Then we have our first-ever service, **The Autism Directory** which is now the **largest** niche directory for our neurodiverse community in the UK, and second largest in the world (for now!).



All our autistic staff are supported in work by a dedicated **Support Worker** from **The Autism Support Service**, who have a huge amount of experience helping neurodivergent employees get the best from themselves in the workplace, and supporting employers to learn that too.

Outcomes

In terms of outcomes our services make a **life-changing impact** on the lives of the people they are designed to support. We work hard to gather insights about the difference we make and we routinely gather feedback through surveys and listening groups.

We asked our community **what positive difference Autistic Minds had made to them.**

The responses were:

85% said Autistic Minds positively impact the autistic community as a whole

84% said Autistic Minds helped empower them and made it easier for them to access other community services

73% said that our services were easily accessible to them with different communication options

78% said that Autistic Minds have given them a sense of purpose and acceptance leading to increased confidence in themselves

82% said they now have better coping strategies and can be more independent

73% said they can take more ownership over decisions that affect them

90% said Autistic Minds have given them a platform and a voice to be heard



Our latest staff survey also confirms the positive impact we make on the lives of our staff:

95% of staff said they are happy in work

93% said their lives have been positively impacted in all areas by their employment opportunity

86% said their skillset had increased

84% said they felt more positive about future work opportunities

75% reported increased confidence in other aspects of independent living

78% reported reduced isolation and loneliness

73% reported an increase in social activities outside work



We are all very proud to be a part of a movement that is creating **better outcomes** in our small part of the UK, with other organisations and groups across the country that provide other great support services. We work closely with other charities and enterprises in our area and would love to expand this across the rest of Wales and the UK too.

A Network of Autistic Minds

Our longer-term vision is for a connected **network** of individuals, groups, organisations and businesses across the country who **share** the same vision for integrated communities in which all neurodiversity is **accepted, understood and celebrated.** Local hubs in your towns and villages that support the autistic community by those who understand them best – the autistic community **themselves.**

We support the autistic community in a truly unique way because **we are** the autistic community.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead.

Over the next few pages you can find out more about our work and how we achieve that impact.

Creative Services

Outreach Team

Caerphilly Community Hub

Autistic Minds LIVE

The Autism Directory

Ambition Prints

Resin Rat

Green Valley Workshop

Safe Shred Wales

Autistic Minds LIVE shows



Our **mission** is to **empower** and equip autistic adults to advocate for themselves, by improving access to **support, education, employment and social opportunities** so they can reach their full **potential** and build a more **independent** life for themselves



Our annual free to attend events for the autism community, providing you with face to face access to the services, resources and provisions that are there to help autistics, families and professionals that support.

The capital of Wales hosts the flagship show in Cardiff City Stadium and welcomes over **70** exhibitors as well as **3000** registered visitors each year.

We also visit Llandudno with our show. Venue Cymru is a superb venue boasting **easy access** from across North Wales and the West Midlands. Welcoming around **1,500** visitors.

We would love you to join us at our LIVE Shows.

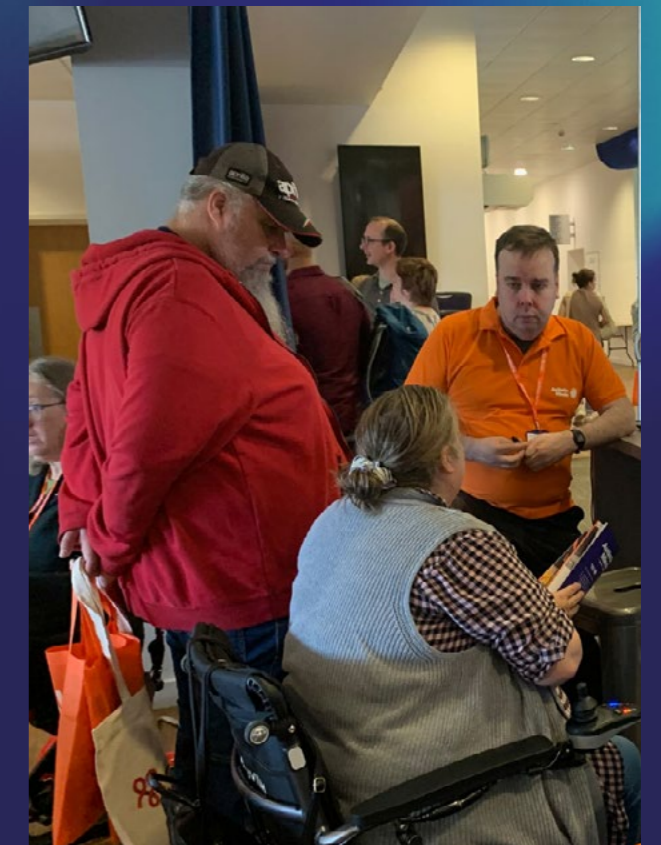
Organisations, support groups, third sector organisations, business and services can exhibit at or sponsor either show and our very **reasonable rates** make getting involved accessible to all.

Visitors can talk to exhibitors & attend **seminars** or **workshops**. Plus, there are opportunities for one to one meetings with organisations that provide **specialist** and **bespoke** support.

Whether you are autistic, a family member or a professional supporting the autism community, our LIVE shows are for you.

Above all, we don't believe that charging the autism community to access the shows is just or right.

Hence visitor tickets are free!



funders and partners

We are very grateful to the **relations** we have **built**, and are **building** with various people and organisations. Some that support us with practical equipment, knowledge and expertise, or their time to donate for various projects.

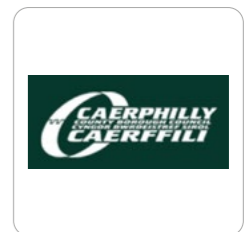
We are also thankful to our **funders**, without which we would not be able to provide the much needed resources and services that the charity offers.

More about our partners and funders can be found on our website at <https://autisticminds.org.uk/about-us/friends-and-partners/>



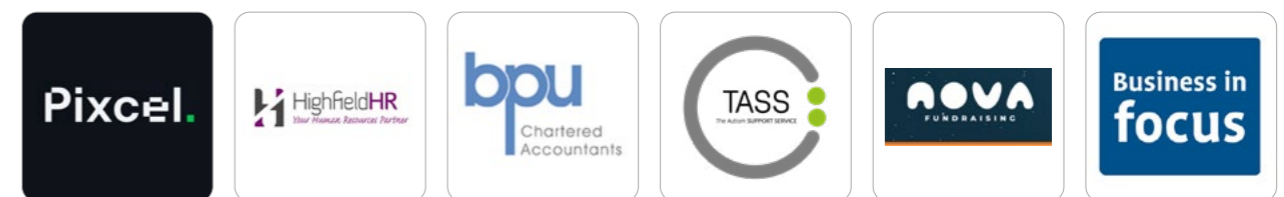
“Citizens Advice’s working relationship with Autistic Minds developed during 2021. The organisation supported our **Test and Learn project**, and we were able to offer advice **sessions** at the **Caerphilly Hub** and provide information on the wide range of issues we can help with. This gave us the **opportunity** to find out more about the barriers faced by those with autism so we could **better understand** how we can support people with autism. We are looking **forward** to **strengthening** our **relationship** with the organisation and continuing to bring advice to the **heart of communities.**”

Ceri, Operations Manager for Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent

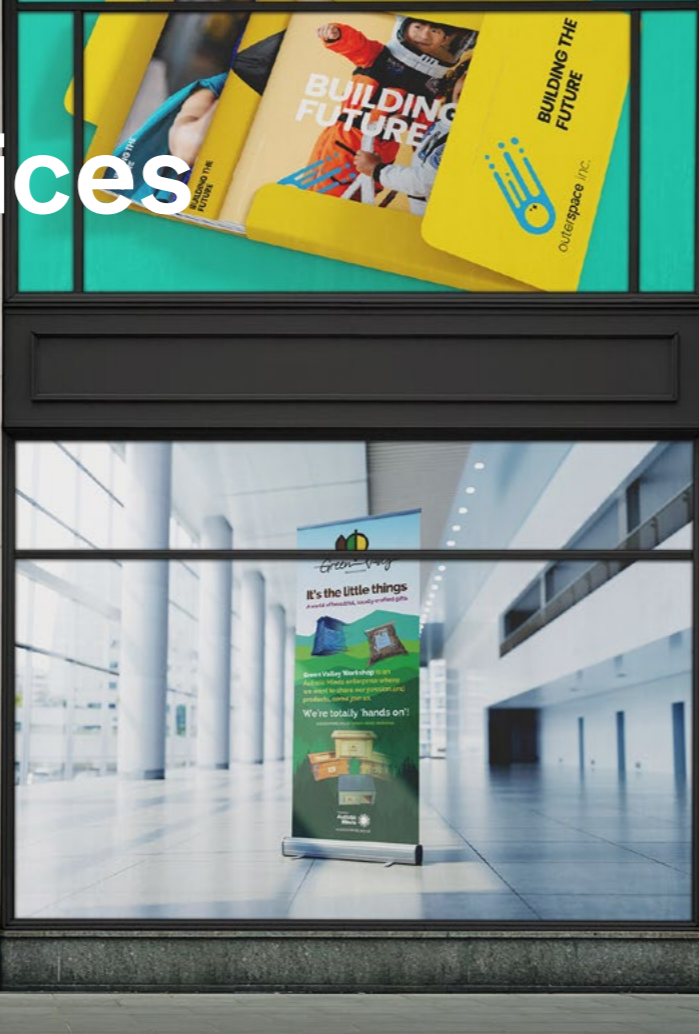
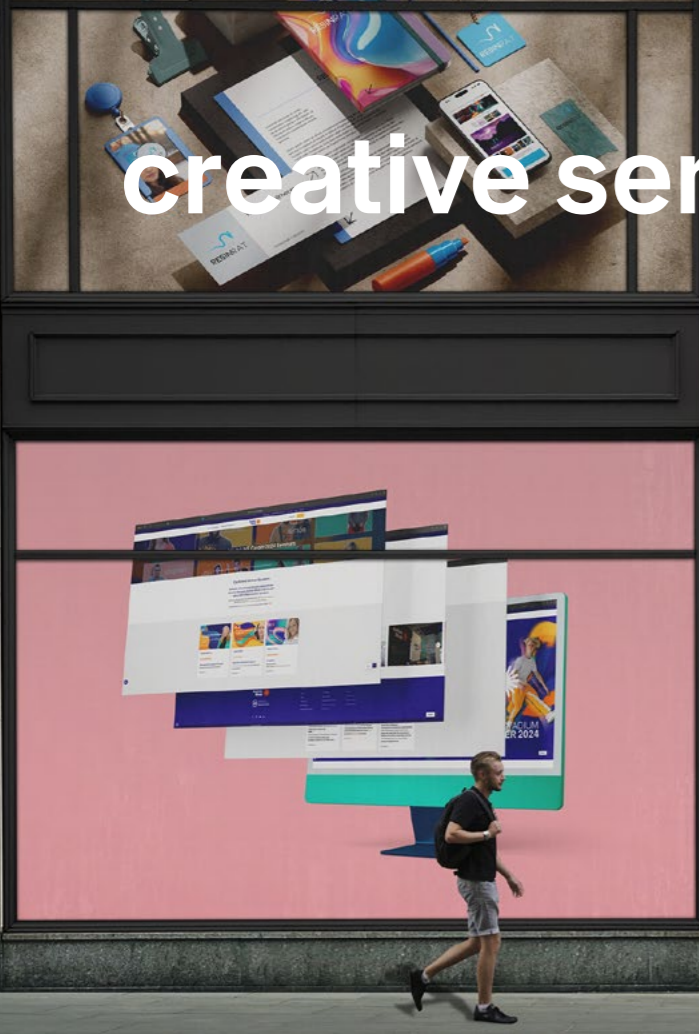


“Since the **Hub** opened it has been an extremely **valuable** addition. They work closely with myself at the job centre to ensure a **holistic support** for the customers, regularly reviewing and **enhancing** the service that they provide based on the community needs. They have **opened** their doors for job centre staff to support customers from inside the hub, **breaking down the barriers** for customers to attend the sessions that the **Hub** offers.”

Jess, Disability Employment Advisor



creative services



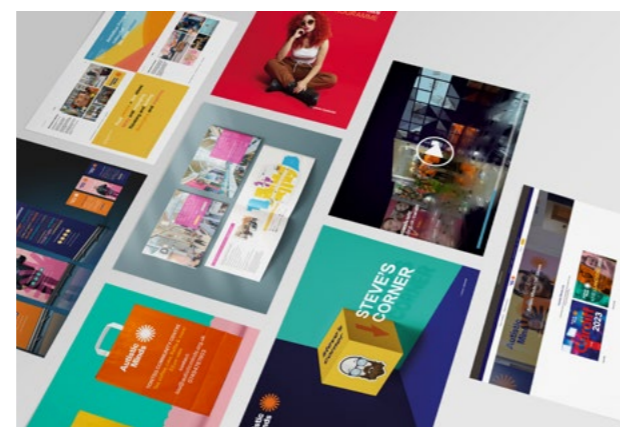
design services

design by us, for you



Our team is proudly neurodiverse. Of our 42 staff across the charity, 36 of us are autistic and with that comes a huge range of talents and expertise.

Supporting our services teams to provide their support to the autism community is our **Creative** team. With over 30 years of experience at the highest professional levels and clients worldwide, they do an amazing job getting our brand and our message out there, so more people get to know about us and get access to our services.

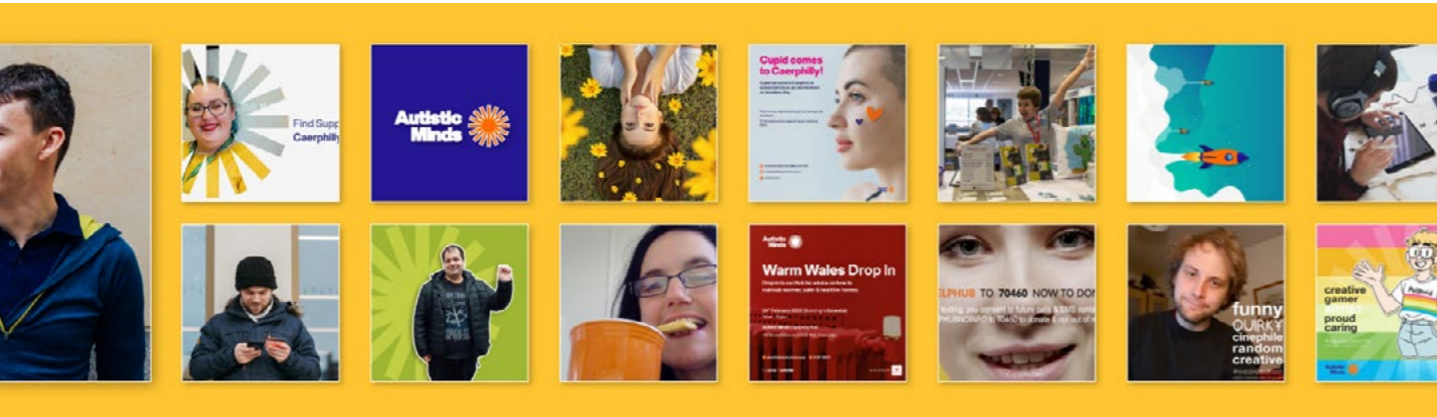
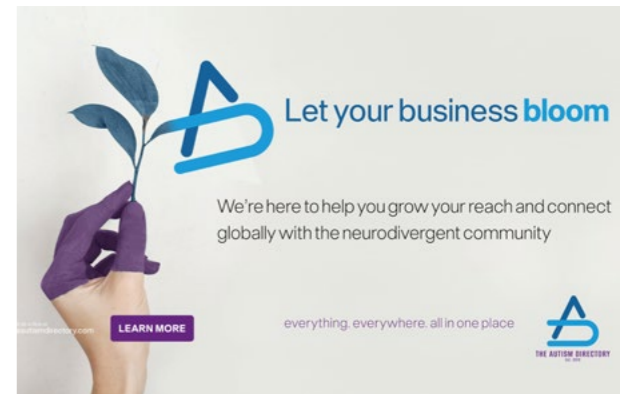
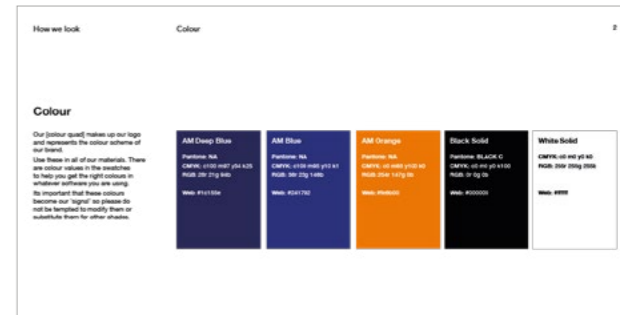


Our Creative team also provide commercial design services at competitive rates to organisations so that they can communicate with their audiences with beautiful graphics, video and online content and to help them make their own media accessible.

An example is the autistic guide to Cardiff's St Davids Shopping Centre to support autistic customers to have a more positive experience when shopping there.

In fact all of the audio visual and promotional material you see from us is designed in-house by our Creative team.

From branding, corporate stationary, leaflets, brochures and posters to exhibition banners, displays, video and animation **talk to us about your promotional needs.**



outreach team

The Outreach team at Autistic Minds strive to deliver exceptional services to the community.

Support

The Outreach team are building a support network across the South Wales area, with events such as peer support groups, coffee mornings and social groups.

The team also provide a national help and advice telephone service, where individuals can seek advice about diagnosis, benefits, education and accessing other services. You can call us and speak directly to our autistic staff team who with their lived experience can relate and support.

We also deliver specifically funded projects to provide individual support for adults to build independent living skills and increase community engagement. We also have a befriending service for social connection.

Training & Coaching

The Outreach team offer tailored training packages to businesses and organisation, which can be suited to the needs of that organisation. A key topic covered in our training is Autism Awareness, but the team will also share insights or deliver specific training around communication, reasonable adjustments and supporting autistic adults in the workplace.

Training packages can be delivered in person or virtually and can be from one hour to a full day, a single session or ongoing regular sessions.

Over the years we have supported around 1500 people per year across our outreach services.

The team have a wealth of experience from delivering coaching contracts with the Department for Work and Pensions, 3SC and The Ministry of Justice.

We also support Autistic Minds and The Autism Support Service with internal training for staff.

Community Engagement

The Outreach team are building community awareness and positive relationships with other organisations.

We offer community talks where our autistic staff share their own experiences and knowledge with an emphasis on raising awareness and being inclusive. We have delivered talks to many well-known companies including

- Welsh Rugby Union
- Level Playing Field
- Race Equality First
- Nationwide Swansea
- Welsh Water
- Cardiff Bus
- Royal Mint
- Cardiff Airport
- Cardiff Library
- All Wales People First
- Bipolar UK
- Platform Wellbing

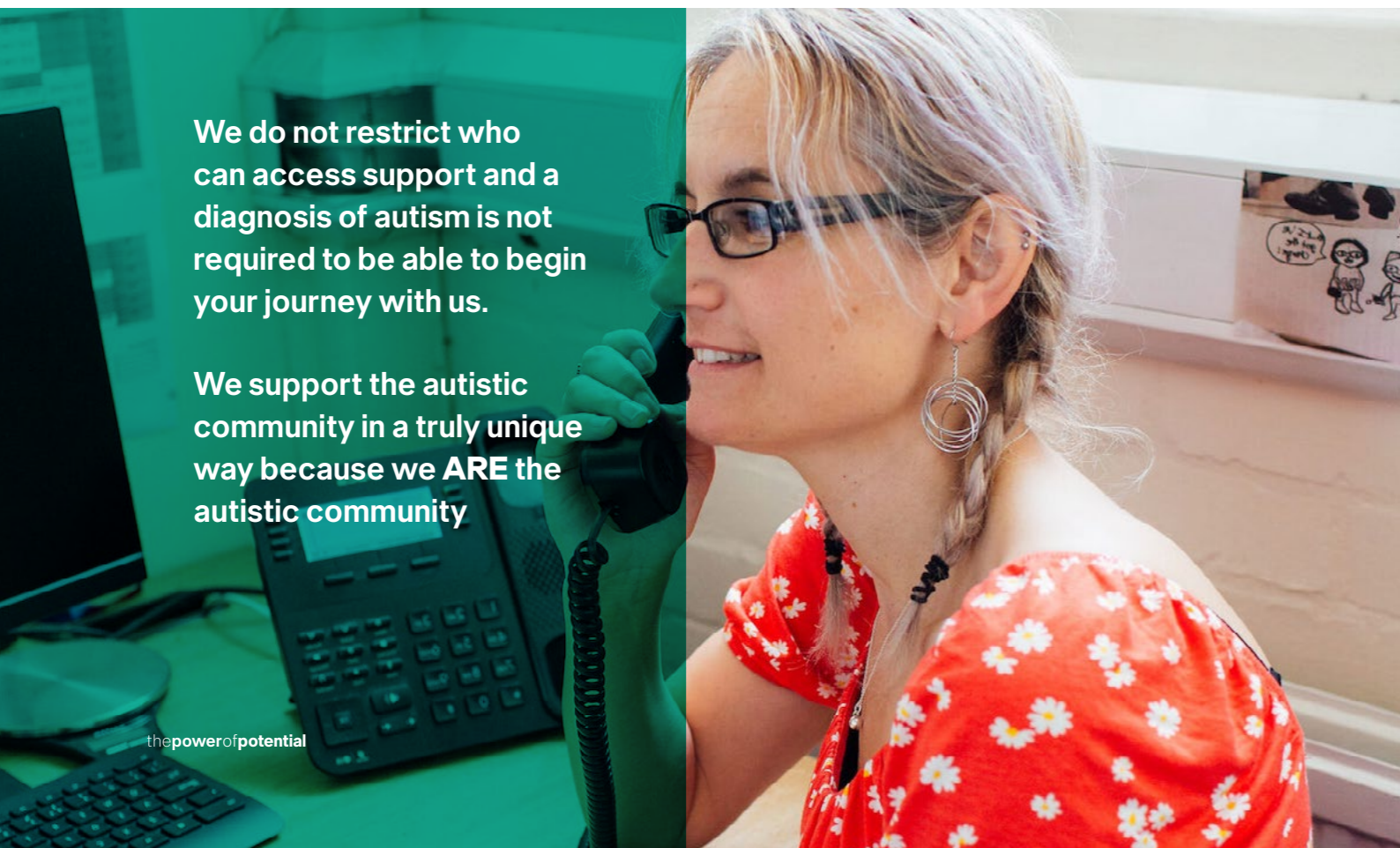


The team also attend monthly events with Cardiff University and new, upcoming organisations who are looking for help and guidance.

We are looking to build referral partnerships with all types of organisations and work in partnership to create useful resources and support groups.

New in 2024 are our weekly Coffee Mornings at Coffee Spot in Cardiff City Centre. Informal events welcoming all autistic and neurodivergent adults to come and chat, get some advice and listen to some of our community talk about their experiences. Thursdays at Barrack Lane, Cardiff at 10am.

If you would like to partner with us, just get in touch!



We do not restrict who can access support and a diagnosis of autism is not required to be able to begin your journey with us.

We support the autistic community in a truly unique way because we ARE the autistic community

support at the Caerphilly community hub

Our Caerphilly hub is run by a 100% autistic team. The idea of the hub is to provide a much-needed resource for the autism community in Caerphilly AND to also provide employment and work training opportunities for autistic adults in the area.

Employment and Training of Staff

Providing employment and career progression is a key part of the charity's mission. All staff undertake apprenticeship training, typically in customer service and admin, as well as training in COSH, health & safety, safeguarding and others. Most staff also have a 1-1 support worker to help overcome some of the barriers they face in a work environment and support them to maximise their potential in employment.

All the services run from the Caerphilly Hub are delivered by this team.

Charity Shop

At you enter the Hub from Caerphilly's Market Street, we have our Charity Shop.

Set up in April 2022, the shop provides employment for five retail staff working part-time throughout the week. Each gets experience in all aspects of the shop floor and upstairs in the sorting room, where we receive the charitable donations and prepare them for the shop. Unsuitable items get sent to cash-for-clothes or other charity banks looking for specific items. Staff interact with the customers that come in, and deal with queries, sales and stock control.



Social Groups

The hub runs a number of different social groups across the monthly for the autism community. Groups such as Dungeons & Dragons, Warhammer, Board Games, Console Gaming and also a Walking Group. These are facilitated by our staff and volunteers.

Timetables for these can be found on the Caerphilly Hub Facebook Page: [/AutisticMindsCaerphilly](#)

Support

Support for a wide range of topics is provided by the team. These come in via referrals from our website, and also drop-ins at the hub itself. The team can provide help, advice and support on diagnosis, housing, benefits, employment and independent living skills.

Hefin Davies AM, Caerphilly Job Centre, Citizens

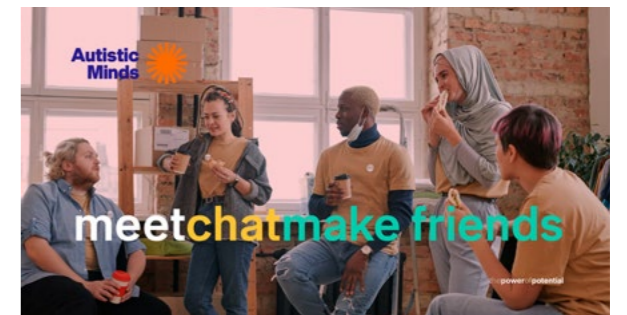
Advice and others also use our hub to run appointments specifically for the autistic community and clients, as the hub can provide any support needed.

We typically support around 40 people a month at the Caerphilly Hub

Being a part of the autistic community we are unique as the team all have lived experience. This provides valuable insight and support on almost every question we are asked. Understanding an individual's autism is a key part of this and something frequently spoken about with those who come in for support.

“ My claimants have grown in confidence being at the Hub. There is a significant change in their engagement with me, they feel more relaxed and are happy to discuss things with me. I enjoy every minute of my time there. The Hub and its team are a huge asset to the community ”

Sue, Universal Credit work coach



the Autism Directory



The largest online directory of services + businesses for people on the autism spectrum in the UK

We are a grassroots charity that started in our CEO's kitchen in 2010. The aim was to help other families and individuals find the help they need.

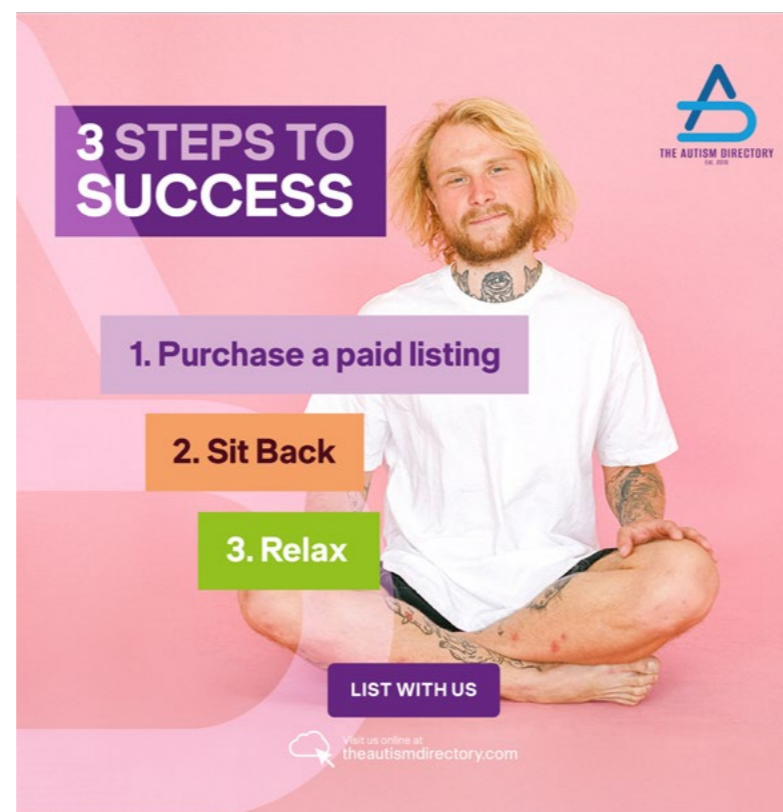
It started out as a resource for the community in South Wales and has now become **world-wide**. It is the **biggest** niche directory in the UK and the **2nd largest** autism-specific directory in the **world** - for now!

The directory has grown over the past 14 years to over **36,000** with a small part-time team, the members of which are all autistic.

As well as over **36,000 listings** from the UK and other countries, the directory has more than **200** articles all with the authors' permission AND we have **600** active events, this is more than an event per day on average and there is at least one event every week.

The directory is **updated** and quality checked **daily**, providing new resources and information all the time.

The directory is categorised for finding resources that specifically support the **autistic community**:



Join Us !

We help over **4,500** visitors every month to find the help they need!

It's **easy** to join the directory. We have both free and paid-for listing options available for your organisation, group or business.

Free listings allow you to put yourself on the directory with a summary description and contact details

Paid-For listings give you the ability to add much more information on a webpage of your own, linking to your socials, use of video and a photo gallery.

Banner Adverts also available for greater exposure

With over 4,500 visits a month, being on the directory is a great way for the autism community to find you.

<https://www.theautismdirectory.com/advertise>

All customer questions will be answered by a team leader as soon as possible and personally.

Contact us at Support@theautismdirectory.com

Sign up today - It's quick and simple!



“ **Advertising with The Autism Directory** is the **perfect** way to **reach** people who may need find you! The rates are **very reasonable** and if you utilise your listing with great images and links then it becomes very **appealing to people** searching the site. The process is very **easy** and the directory are happy to facilitate where needed. I would **highly recommend** advertising with **The Autism Directory** to anyone who has a product or service that autistic people **need** to find. ”

Customer Testimonial, Lorraine Young @ Chewigem

Safe Shred Wales



Green Valley Workshop

Powered by
Autistic Minds



Safe Shred Wales

- is a **social enterprise** which provides voluntary and employment opportunities to autistic adults.
- provides a **secure** and **accredited** shredding service for paper and **confidential** waste alike.
- As a by-product of the shredding part of the enterprise, we use the shredded material to provide a range of **eco-friendly** products, all of which were originated by the team.
- These products include briquettes for barbecues or wood-burning stoves, animal bedding, eco-friendly seed-potting, and dehydrated blocks for use in the creation of small-scale model landscapes, such as model railways.
- provides a **reliable**, friendly and dedicated sales service to both personal and **commercial** clients alike.
- is led, managed and run by a **talented** team of autistic staff and volunteers.
- offers opportunities for work-based learning and upskilling in a safe and collaborative environment, as well as enhancing the team's current skills.

Our products are available to purchase either directly in person from our workshop, on our dedicated **Etsy** page, or via the **Autistic Minds** charity shop which is based at our **Caerphilly Community Hub**.

To find out more **Scan the linktree code above.**



Its the little things that count A world of beautiful, locally crafted gifts

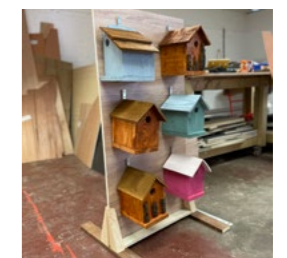
Green Valley Workshop is an Autistic Minds Enterprise that aims to repurpose waste materials and create products that helps us sustain employment for over 10 neurodiverse individuals.

We believe we grow as individuals, crafts people and communities through learning and making together.

Contact Us
GreenValleyWorkshop@AutisticMinds.org.uk
or **Scan the linktree code above.**

We have a wide range of products that keeps growing as we develop the abilities and skills of our workforce including:

- Birdboxes
- Hedgehog Homes
- Wood Burner Briquettes
- Planters (bespoke sizes)
- Refuse Stations (bespoke sizes)
- Animal Bedding
- Mulch
- Bespoke Lasered Plaques
- Scent Bags
- Tooth Fairy Bags



Resin Rat

Powered by
**Autistic
Minds**



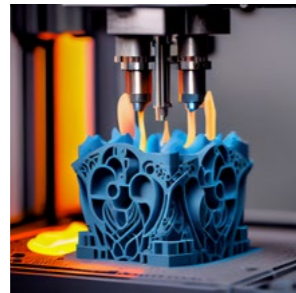
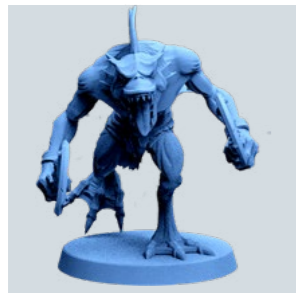
A new, 3D printing social enterprise from Autistic Minds.

Our goal is to **empower** people on the autistic spectrum by providing **training** and **skills** through creativity, 3D modeling and design.

We make and sell **fine detail 3D models** for tabletop and roleplaying games with our resin and FDM technology. Our profits go towards **supporting** the charity to achieve its goals of helping and improving the lives of neurodivergent people.

Drop us an email at resinrat@autisticminds.org.uk

or **Scan the linktree code above.**



Ambition Prints

Powered by
**Autistic
Minds**

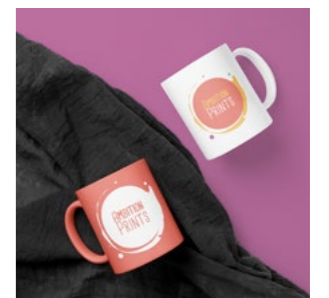


Ambition Prints:

- is a social, creative **enterprise** which provides voluntary and employment **opportunities** to autistic adults.
- provides a range of **personalised** gifts and **products** all designed by our art team.
- is a **reliable** and **dedicated** sales service to both domestic and business customers.
- is managed and run by a **talented** creative team of nine **autistic** staff and volunteers.
- offers opportunities for **work-based learning** and training as well as enhancing our art teams' current creative skills

Our **product range** currently includes mugs, badges, tote bags, t-shirts, greetings cards and mouse mats. These products are available to purchase directly from our **Etsy** page or in person at our **Charity Shop**, based in the **Autistic Minds Caerphilly Community Hub**.

Get social with us! You can share, like and follow us on our social media pages to view new content, products, giveaways, Q&As, photos, videos and behind the scenes insights. **Scan the linktree code above.**



TASS: the autism support service

The Autism Support Service or **TASS** for short!

TASS provides Employment Support at Work

We all need help and support throughout life, and for autistic adults this need can be greater than most, and it's not just in one aspect of daily life, but in **all** and **throughout** the day, week and year.



TASS provides employment support for the charity's staff to help them thrive in their careers and have the same opportunities afforded to them as others. Using the Access To Work scheme run by the DWP, they provide bespoke support to meet each individual's support needs in the workplace.

They also provide support for other employers, such as:

- How to **support** an autistic workforce.
- Help to make the recruitment process **accessible**.
- What are **reasonable adjustments** and how to implement the right ones.
- How to make the **environment** accessible and supportive for all.
- The **benefits** of employing autistics.

Also, they can provide support for other employees outside of the charity on matters such as

- How to tell your an employer you are autistic and **disclose** your diagnosis.
- Support to help an employer understand **needs** and reasonable adjustments.
- How to do well in **Interviews**
- Getting support from the **Access To Work** scheme

Email: hello@theautismsupportservice.com

Phone: 07932 791963



how you can help

As a charity we rely on the support of the community in order to provide the help and support to the community.

We are funded by grants and donations, and a small amount from the products we sell. Without the funding we cannot do anything.

Whether you are able to volunteer your time, fundraise or donate, your support means everything to us.

Volunteer



When you sign up as a volunteer for us, you become one of our **Awesome Ambassadors**.

We need Ambassadors that are **enthusiastic, dedicated** and **passionate** about how to make a difference within the Autism Community. Being one of the faces of our charity in the community means that we have more **voices** to highlight the need for support at a **grass roots** level.

We would love to have ambassadors from **all walks** of life, who are willing to **share** their stories, from both within and outside the Autism Community. Having people with a **personal experience** of autism and being able to share their experience helps others who need the support and to hear that they are **not alone**.

Fundraise



Whether you fancy baking cakes or running a marathon, there are plenty of ideas we can support you with if you would like to fundraise or organise a fundraiser for us.

Just get in touch!

Donate

<https://autisticminds.org.uk/support-us/donate/>


Text **AUTISM** followed by your donation amount to **70460**

Autistic Minds


the power of potential



 www.autisticminds.org.uk/

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 www.linkedin.com/company/autistic-minds-uk

 www.instagram.com/autisticmindsuk/

 www.pinterest.co.uk/AutisticMindsUK

 www.tiktok.com/@autisticmindsuk

registered charity no. 1143855

