

# Neurodiversity in Prisons:

Let's start a  
conversation



[scanningpens.com](https://scanningpens.com)

# Welcome introduction



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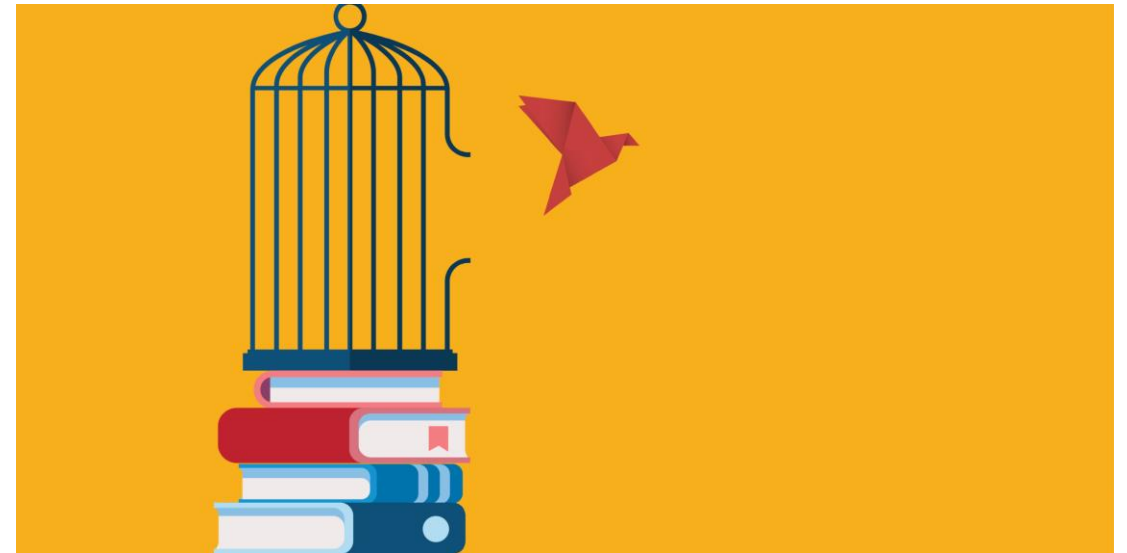
[prisons@scanningpens.com](mailto:prisons@scanningpens.com)

- Scanning Pens – support adult in vulnerable learners within the justice and community sector in the UK and Internationally.
- Offer support and resources and training to teaching staff, officers, employers etc to encourage them to promote inclusivity, raise awareness of Neurodiversity and to recognise the importance of individuals learning to read.
- Worked within the community and with vulnerable groups, NEETS for over 6 years.
- Worked within the Justice sector for over 12 years within Education sector.
- As Head of Justice, I managed IAG contracts UK wide in CAT A – CAT C / YOI.

# Valuing prison education, valuing prison educators

How many of you here have experience of working in a prison?

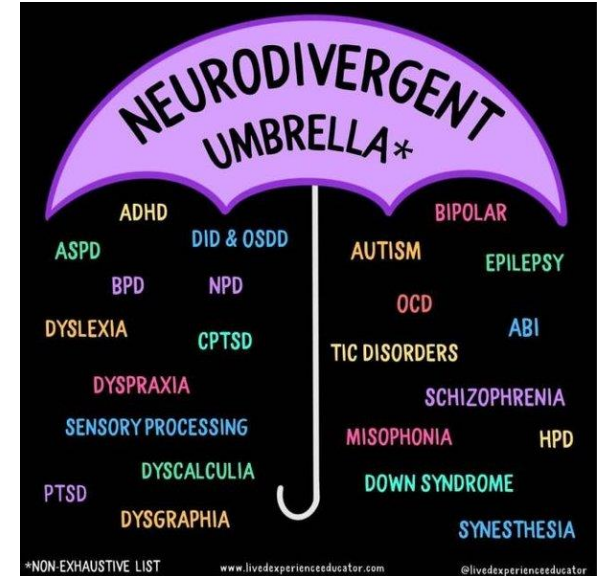
Who has heard of the term Neurodiversity?



# What is Neurodiversity?

“Neurodiversity” is a term that’s used to describe differences in the way people’s brains work. The idea is that there’s no “correct” way for the brain to work. Instead, there is a wide range of ways that people perceive and respond to the world, and these differences are to be embraced and encouraged.

Neurodiversity has also evolved from a focus on individuals with a formal diagnosis of autism, ADHD, Tourette's, or a learning disorder to include a broader group of people, many of whom self-identify as neurodiverse.

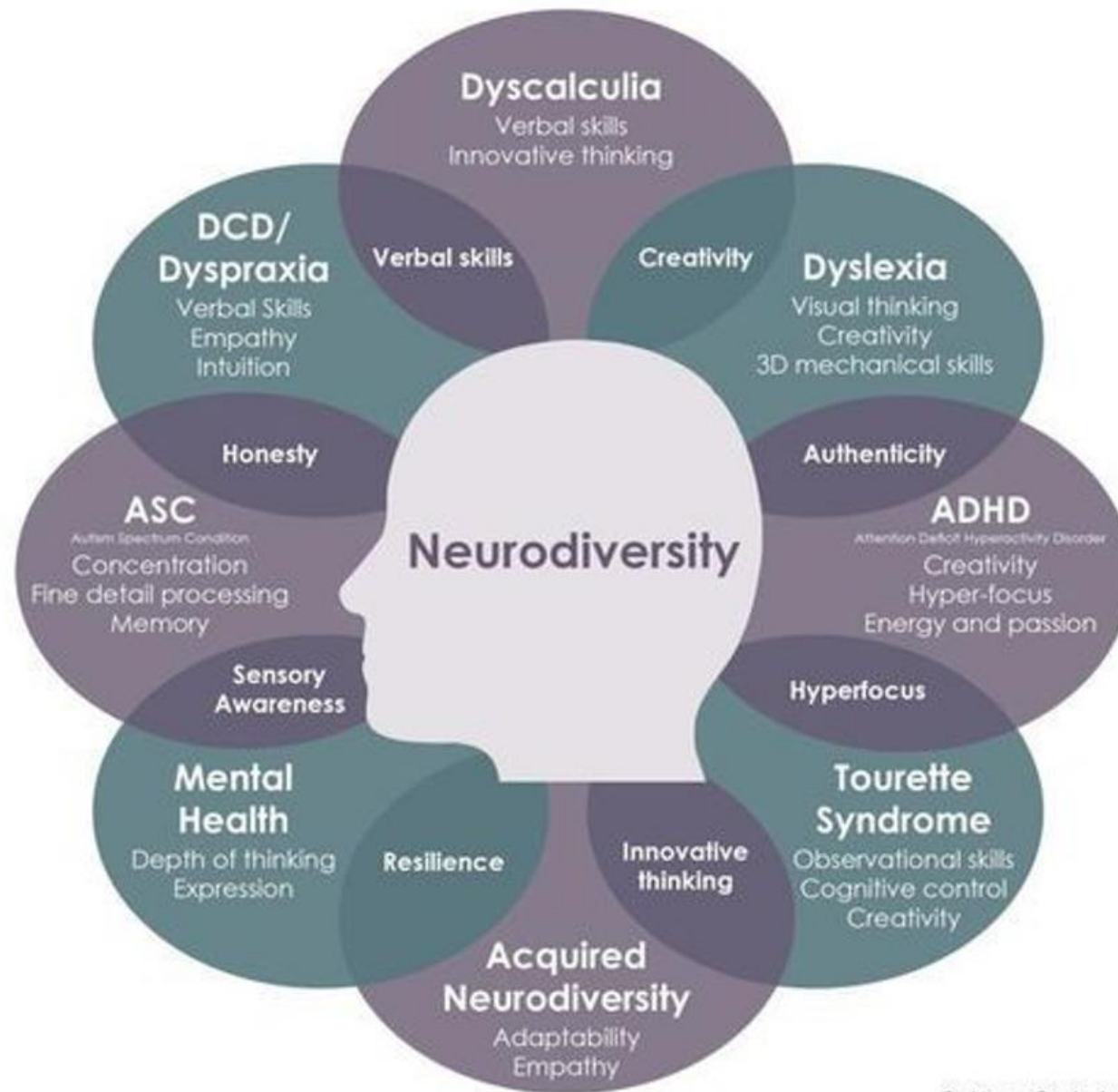


# What is neurodiversity like in the Criminal Justice System?

As most people with neurological differences are undiagnosed, they often find the school environment challenging and face obstacles in later life finding employment. This can then lead to into a life of crime.

According to a recent report, if ADHD is recognised in prisons and managed appropriately, crime rates could lower by 32% for men and 41% for women. However, 80% of people in prison with ADHD are also undiagnosed.

In prison, the lack of programmes that have been tailored to their neurodivergence can mean that they aren't able to effectively address their offending behaviour and do not receive the right preparation for when they are released from prison.

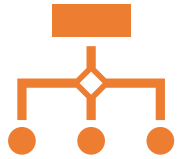


Dr Nancy Doyle, based on the work of Mary Colley

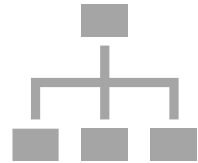
# Inclusive Talent Pool

- Autistic brains are said to be highly creative with exceptional concentration, logic, imagination and visual thought. They also tend to be systematic, meticulous and detailed and share unique insights and perspectives in problem-solving.
- People with ADHD have great imagination and score higher on creativity tests than non-ADHD people. ADHD people can hyperfocus, which means that while they generally have an attention deficit, they do have a high focus on their area of interest.
- Dyslexic people have demonstrated the ability to think outside the box: 84% of dyslexic people are above average in reasoning, understanding patterns, evaluating possibilities and making decisions, according to the charity Made by Dyslexia.

# Simple changes



**Visual Support** – provide templates or forms, use a flowchart to show steps to take, develop pictorial and written reminders.



**Organisation** – provide a structured work pattern, assign one task at a time, provide clear feedback, provide timelines.



**Sensory** – minimize noise, provide private areas to work, reduce harsh lighting.



**Preparation** – provide plenty of notice before changes, allow for increased processing time.



# What can be done?

- Raise Awareness
- Effective communication
- Support a cross departmental approach
- Involve Neurodivergent people in the decision making
- Share good practice
- Upskill yourself / attend training
- Be open-minded to assistive technology

## What can Reader Pen Secure be used for?

Reader Pen Secure can help you to meet your ethical obligations to give private access to correspondence.

When information is of a highly sensitive and of a confidential nature – provide a ReaderPen Secure.

- ✓ Medical
- ✓ Legal
- ✓ Financial
- ✓ Personal
- ✓ Probation
- ✓ Terms of release



How would you overcome the issue of needing reading support if you couldn't read?

Would you feel comfortable asking for help?

# Some of the Chief of Prison's other recommendations include:

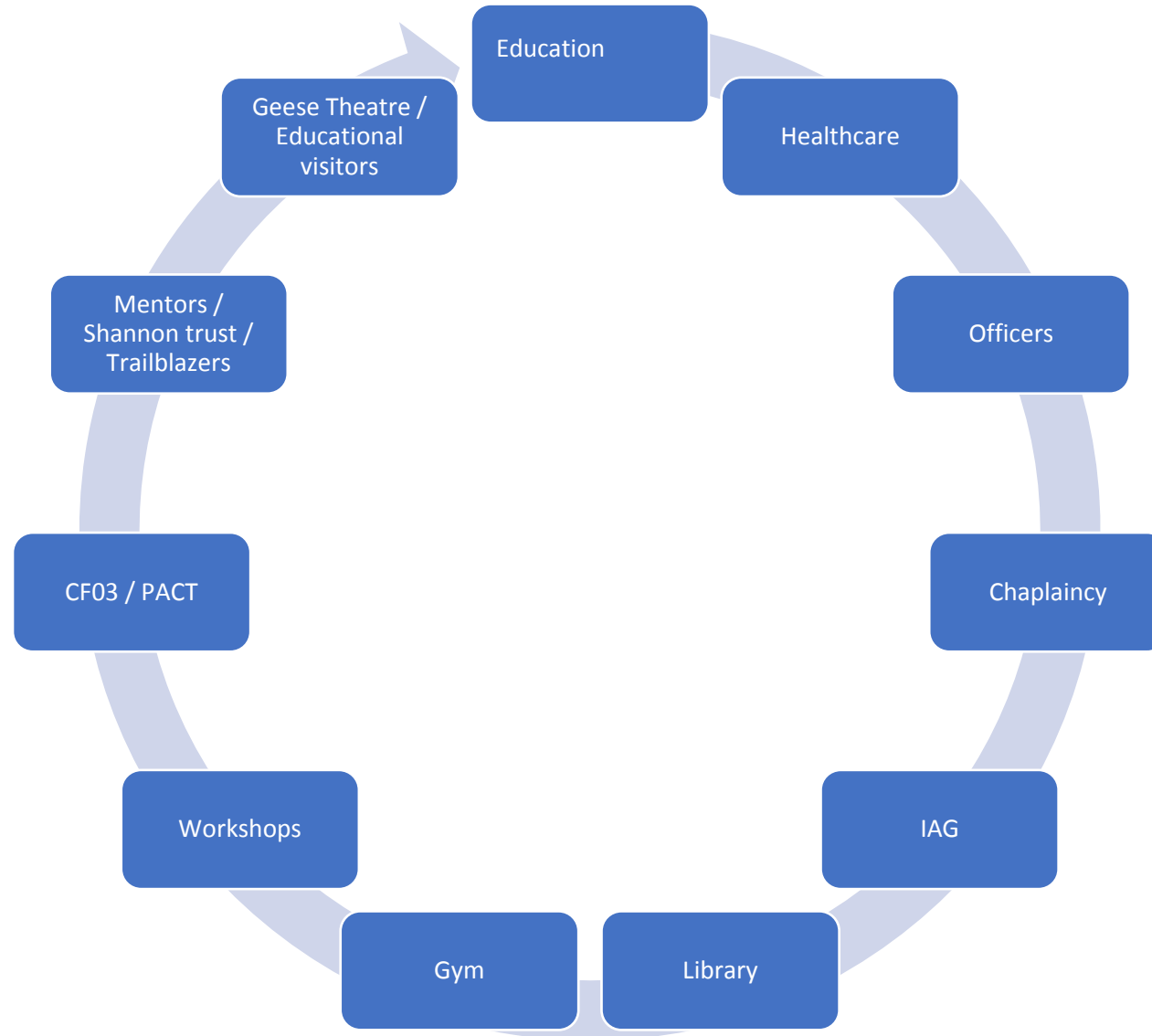
- a common screening tool for universal use, and shared
- collecting screening data to provide a more accurate assessment of neurodivergence
- delivery of a programme of awareness-raising and specialist training to staff working within criminal justice services
- adjustments to meet the needs of those with neurodivergent conditions throughout the criminal justice system.
- criminal justice system agencies should work together and with other statutory and third sector organisations in a coordinated way.

# Neurodiversity Managers in Prisons

5 points from the NSM framework

- 1. Facilitate the sharing of information on neurodiversity and identification of need across the prison service.
- 2. Provide training and support for prison staff to equip them to better understand and support those with neurodivergent needs within the prison.
- 3. Ensure reasonable adjustments are made throughout the prison to help develop a more 'Neurodiversity supportive environment.'
- 4. Ensure that specialist or targeted support is available where appropriate, practical, and reasonable – both in education and the prison more widely.
- 5. Incorporate consideration for additional requirements of neurodivergent prisoners when preparing for release. This might include support finding employment, promoting awareness, and linking up with local services and support to access additional support available in the community for neurodivergent prisoners.

# Valuing prison education, valuing prison educators



# In the headlines....

- Failure to assess educational needs
- Education undervalued and under resourced
- Learning is disincentivised
- Incentives must be provided- to prisoners and businesses a digital divide
- Prison educators vote to strike across England over low pay

### Educating inmates

For education to be a tool for change, it is imperative that prison inmates be provided with opportunities to study



**Pratyush Nath Upreti & Asmita Dhalal**

Pratyush Nath Upreti and Asmita Dhalal are students at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay. They are the authors of the article 'Educating inmates' published in the journal 'Prisoners'.

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# Who are we dealing with?

Individuals with:

- Addictions / Mental Health issues
- For many all they know is a life of crime
- Disabilities / Neurodivergent needs
- Language barriers, low level readers / negative educational experiences
- Adverse childhood experiences abuse / neglect
- Care / Homeless / No family guidance or support / No positive role models
- Alongside all of this then entering prison and dealing with bullying, anger, anxiousness.

# Working in a pressured environment

- Unmotivated individuals
  - Late / no regime
  - Staff shortages / last minute cover / no downtime
  - Disruptive / Abusive behavior
  - Unreliable PCs / limited access VC
  - Limited class resources / IT not working
  - Mixed allocations
  - Photo copier not working
- Dealing with assaults / fights
  - Bars at windows / workspaces
  - Dealing with threats
  - Refusals
  - Interrupted lessons / activities
  - Other work deadlines
  - Mixed learning levels / abilities
  - Maintaining security / reporting



# The current situation – feeling unvalued

- Long hours , 3 hours in class supporting multiple Neurodivergent needs
- Frustrations of COVID which amplified even more so the day-to-day barriers.
- Stress and exhaustion
- Feel that professional views, based on their experience and expertise not always heard
- Salary, cost of living, strikes



# IT'S **NOT** ALL **DOOM** AND **GLOOM**



# How do we value something?



What does it mean to value something?



How can we show value?



How does being valued feel?



What happens if we do not feel valued?

# Valuing prison education

- Education – huge improvements made to align prison qualifications, training, courses with “real world” experiences, apprenticeships.
- Employment - more effort to support with sourcing employment upon release, support with signposting, talent pool.
- Innovation – shift in mindset towards learning and engagement, digital, reading pens, online learning.
- Inclusivity – becoming more aware of the barriers to learning, day to days tasks for Neurodivergent individuals and staff, Neurodiversity Managers working towards 5 key areas.
- Peer to peer support - allows individuals to access support as well as build key relationships, trust and confidence.

# Valuing prison educators

- Education staff, Healthcare staff, IAG, Shannon Trust Mentors, Chaplaincy, Officers, Librarians, LSPs, etc. We all act as educators!
- 100s of knowledgeable, skilled, experienced, passionate creative individuals all under 1 roof.
- To value we must appreciate the person, their role and what they deal with / overcome / adapt to everyday / respect opinions and differences.
- Remain inclusive and supportive of everyone around us.
- Able to relate / build rapport
- On top of all that we have to work with complex Neurodivergent needs alongside multiple barriers.

Catalyst of valuing yourself, who you are and what you do.

Wearing many hats and if not taking care of you how can you be the best version of yourself.

Do you show up to work as half of yourself, that's no help to anyone?

Taking care of others is difficult if your mind is in and out other places.



To give value to others, you  
have to begin by valuing  
yourself.

Tim Fargo

# My experience (poker face on)

- Worked for 2 Education providers myself teaching and in a HUB manager role.
- Teaching Art (therapy)
- Managing the Personal and Social Development courses – music, sports, wellbeing, independent living skills etc – all having Direct claims status
- Worked in adult estate managing PSD and inclusion team, carrying out observations, supporting staff with curriculum delivery
- Represented prisoners at Southbank for Koestler Awards.
- Grade 1 staff observations
- Offered CPD opportunities
- Passionate
- Motivated
- Good rapport with prisoners and staff
- Hardworking

In my eyes this is what makes me so  
valuable.



# Remind yourself..

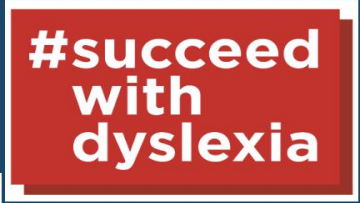
- If it was easy everyone would work in a prison
- Don't lose your self belief
- Work with people who inspire you, treat them well and the good stuff follows
- Remember your uniqueness
- Embrace your wisdom
- Your lived experiences can offer human wisdom to others

# My example of shared values

Achieving Dyslexia kitemark in a Youth Offending Institute

- Willing to try / Positivity
- Communicate effectively
- Team Effort / Staff buy in
- Shared Vision / Innovation
- Everybody contributing
- Sharing knowledge / skills / good practice
- Common goal
- Value yourself and your experience
- Power of uniqueness





# It's Time to Go Red for Dyslexia!

October 1, 2022

It's the first of October, and we've Gone Red for Dyslexia.

**Go Red for Dyslexia** is a worldwide campaign supported by Succeed With Dyslexia that takes place during Dyslexia Awareness Month in October. It aims to change the narrative for people with dyslexia and low literacy. It's focused on raising awareness of dyslexia and working to end the stigma, and showing the world all of the amazing things that individuals with dyslexia can do.

2022 is Go Red's year of inclusivity: that means focusing on celebrating and helping the people w

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# Your turn:

Any Questions?

Let's Talk

Feedback

<https://forms.office.com/r/iLGYC4VVf6>

