Understanding, Valuing & Celebrating Neurodiversity
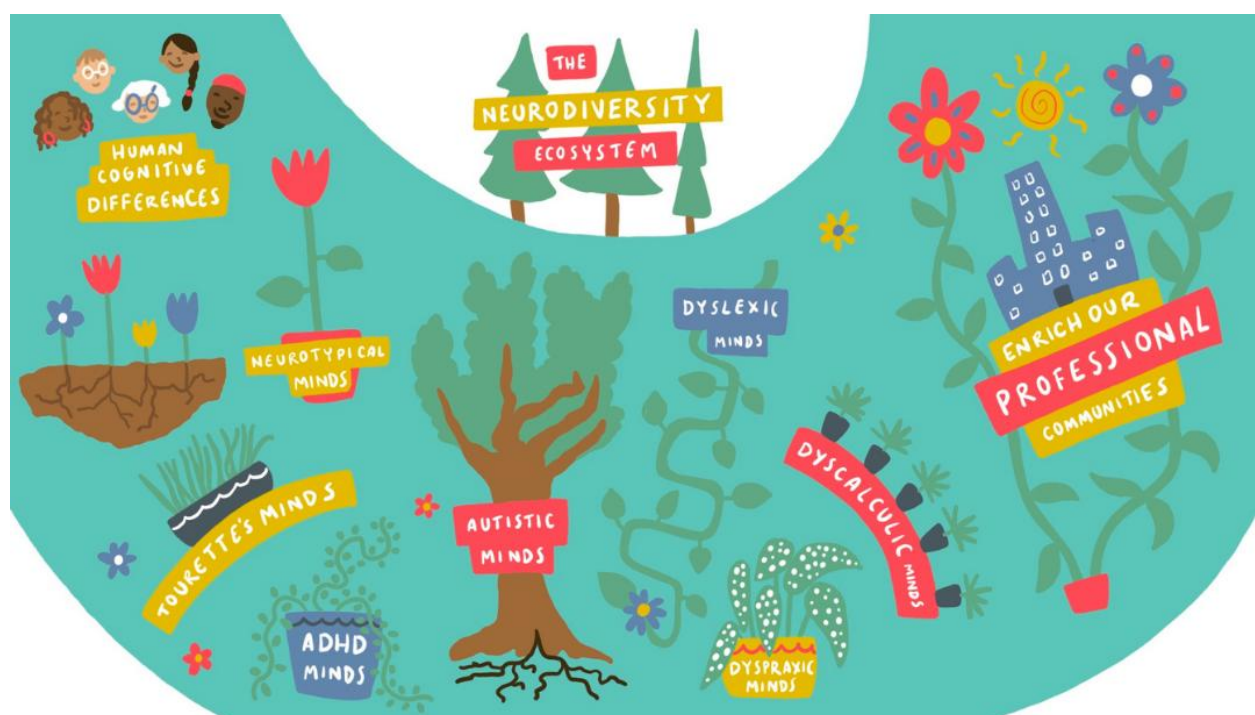
End of Project Report

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www.jic.link/neurodiversity/

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Executive Summary

Project Overview

The Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project, funded by BBSRC's Connecting Culture fund and delivered from July 2024 to July 2025, has transformed Neurodiversity support across BBSRC institutes whilst establishing a model for research-focused neuroinclusive practices. Led by Dr Clare Stevenson at the John Innes Centre and delivered by Leah Milner-Campbell, the project built upon existing advocacy foundations to create comprehensive training, awareness, and network development programmes that significantly exceeded original targets.

Strategic Foundation and Delivery Excellence

The project built strategically on earlier groundwork including JIC's Accessibility Advocates sessions (2022-2023), Professor Graham Moore's leadership blog on dyslexia, and growing recognition of the need for specialist Neurodiversity support in research environments. Clare Stevenson's successful BBSRC Connecting Culture fund application established a three-pillar framework of training, communications, and network development that provided essential structure whilst enabling strategic flexibility in implementation.

The appointment of an accredited Neurodiversity trainer facilitated a crucial pivot from procuring external training to developing bespoke resources specifically tailored to research environments. This adaptive approach transformed initial targets into substantially enhanced deliverables: e-learning participation increased from 200 to 600+ participants (3x increase), in-person training expanded from 20 to 172 participants (8.6x increase), and workshop delivery grew from 5 to 15 sessions across 7 BBSRC institutes.

Exceptional Impact Across All Stakeholder Groups

The project's bespoke, research-environment-focused methodology produced transformational outcomes that substantially outperformed generic training approaches. When compared to an external provider's session delivered at NBI in April 2024, the project's ally training scored 17% higher for delivering objectives and 7.5% higher for facilitator effectiveness, demonstrating the superior value of contextually-relevant approaches.

Quantified Impact Measurements:

- **Managers:** 39.5% increase in knowledge of managing Neurodiverse teams; 33% increase in confidence managing different neurotypes; 37% increase in ability to help others understand working styles.

- **Allies:** 53% increase in ally knowledge; 28% increase in confidence discussing Neurodiversity; 24.5% increase in understanding power and privilege (with further improvements at 3-month follow-up).

- **Neurodivergent Individuals:** 74% increase in workplace advocacy confidence; 61% increase in sensory profile understanding; 41% increase in productivity knowledge.

- **Parents:** 86% reported positive workplace changes following webinar series; average satisfaction rating of 5.4/6.

Sustained Behavioural Change: Three-month follow-up data demonstrated that improvements not only sustained but often increased, with allies showing continued growth in confidence and understanding. Participants implemented concrete actions including policy changes, communication improvements, and reasonable adjustments implementation.

Organisational Transformation: 100% of BBSRC institute contacts rated the project as valuable, with 70% rating it "extremely valuable." The project catalysed organic network formation, including the "Neurodiversity Nook" and parent support group at Quadram Institute.

Commercial Validation and External Recognition

The project's commercial viability was demonstrated through Newcastle University's £2,000 licensing agreement for the e-learning resources, with expressions of interest from University of Cambridge Crop Science Centre, Unilever, Max Planck Institute, University of Portsmouth, University of Essex and UEA. This external validation, combined with social media reach of 43,400 impressions across platform campaigns, evidences broader sector appetite for research-focused Neurodiversity resources.

Comprehensive Legacy and Ongoing Initiatives

Sustainable Resources Created:

- Two comprehensive e-learning courses with funding secured until February 2027.

- Complete in-person training resource packs for ongoing institute use.

- Communications library including blogs, videos, and neuroinclusive guidance.

- Six recorded parent webinars accessible via e-learning platform.

Active Initiatives:

- Neurodiversity Champions programmes scheduled for NBI and Roslin (October-December 2025)

- Working group established for NBI-wide Neurodiversity network development

- Commercial licensing programme generating ongoing resource maintenance funding

Critical Recommendations for Systematic Transformation

While the project successfully catalysed training, awareness, and network development, extensive feedback revealed that sustainable transformation requires comprehensive institutional change extending beyond individual capabilities.

For BBSRC Institutes:

1. **Implement Comprehensive Neurodiversity Policy Frameworks** addressing widespread clarity gaps that create systemic confusion and limit effective support.

2. **Transform Management Culture** through mandatory training and development programmes addressing academic institutions' unique challenge of promoting scientific rather than management excellence.

3. **Establish Comprehensive Reasonable Adjustments Frameworks** including clear and practical implementation guidance based on best practice.

4. **Invest in Ongoing Neurodiversity Development Support** equivalent to Stonewall Diversity Champions and Athena SWAN commitments.

5. **Roll Out Neurodiversity Champions Programmes** across all institutes with institutional commitment to resourcing equivalent to Mental Health First Aiders.

6. **Transform Recruitment and Career Development Practices** to eliminate systematic barriers and access Neurodivergent talent pools.

For BBSRC as a Funder:

1. **Leverage Funder Influence** to require comprehensive Neurodiversity policies as grant conditions, recognising that most institutes lack the leadership prioritisation achieved at JIC.

2. **Continue Connecting Culture Fund Investment** in sustained Neurodiversity development recognising this as essential research infrastructure.

3. **Demonstrate Leadership Through Internal Development** implementing comprehensive support for BBSRC's own staff.

4. **Drive Sector-Wide Transformation** through vocal leadership and best practice promotion across UKRI and the wider research landscape.

Strategic Imperative for Continued Investment

The project's exceptional outcomes—measurable improvements ranging from 7% to 74% across stakeholder groups, sustained behavioural change, commercial validation, and organic network development—provide compelling evidence that specialist, contextually-

relevant Neurodiversity interventions deliver transformational value. However, the scale of systematic change required to create truly neuroinclusive research environments extends far beyond individual awareness and training.

The choice now is not whether to continue Neurodiversity support, but how to implement the comprehensive policy frameworks, management development, and ongoing specialist support needed to embed neuroinclusion as a permanent feature of research culture. The project demonstrates what is possible when adequate capacity and expertise are available; the recommendations provide a roadmap for scaling these approaches across the entire BBSRC network and broader research sector.

Success in implementing these recommendations will position BBSRC institutes as continued leaders in neuroinclusive research culture, ensuring the significant individual and organisational benefits demonstrated by this project become embedded institutional capabilities that enhance research excellence and innovation. The foundation has been established; the opportunity now exists to build comprehensive transformation that delivers sustained value for researchers, institutions, and the broader scientific enterprise.

Foundations: Where we started

The Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project built upon significant groundwork that had already been laid across the John Innes Centre and the broader BBSRC institute network. This foundation of awareness, advocacy, and early action created the conditions for the project's success.

Early Advocacy and Awareness-Raising

The project's foundations can be traced back to sustained efforts by JIC's Accessibility Advocates group, who have been championing Neurodiversity awareness by holding information sessions since 2022 including dedicated online seminars on Neurodiversity (8 March 2022), Dyslexia (22 November 2022), and ADHD (30 November 2023). These events raised awareness of gaps and needs. However, reach was limited and it was clear that wider engagement was needed in order establish more comprehensive support.

Leadership advocacy proved equally crucial. In January 2024, Professor Graham Moore, Director of the John Innes Centre, published a powerful blog post based on the seminar held in November 2022 titled "Dyslexia - it gives me my strengths and they have shaped my career." This visible leadership commitment to Neurodiversity raised the profile and sent a clear signal about institutional values and helped create a culture where Neurodivergent staff and students felt increasingly able to share their experiences.

Building on this momentum, JIC's communications department highlighted additional Neurodivergent voices during 2024 Neurodiversity Celebration Week, including a blog from Lab Manager Gary Wortley on aphantasia and video interviews with Group Leader Dr Kelsey Byers and PhD Student Jared Carpenter. This growing visibility of Neurodivergent experiences across different career stages and roles further strengthened the foundation for the project that was to come.

Institutional Recognition of Need

In April 2024, Norwich Bioscience Institutes brought in external provider Genius Within to deliver Neurodiversity awareness training. Whilst valuable for many of the participants, this experience highlighted the limitations of generic corporate training approaches when applied to the unique culture and challenges of research environments.

Across the BBSRC institute network, similar recognition was emerging. Whilst informal in many Institutes, Pirbright Institute developed a Neurodiversity network, and efforts to establish an NBI-wide Neurodiversity Network date back to 2023, thanks to the work of Dr Cailean Carter and colleagues at Quadram Institute.

Project Conception and Leadership

It was against this backdrop of growing awareness and demonstrated need that Dr Clare Stevenson, Head of Science Coordination and Research Culture at JIC, identified the opportunity for a more comprehensive, evidence-based approach to Neurodiversity support. Clare's vision extended beyond awareness-raising to encompass training, network development, and resource creation that could benefit not only JIC but the entire BBSRC institute family.

Clare's successful application to the BBSRC Connecting Culture fund in 2024 secured the resources needed to translate this vision into reality. Her leadership in shaping the project's scope to include training development, comprehensive communications strategies, and sustainable network building provided the strategic framework within which the project operated.

Recognising the importance of high-profile institutional commitment, Clare also spearheaded the creation of an annual diversity lecture at JIC, securing funding from the John Innes Foundation for this initiative. Her decision to prioritise Neurodiversity for the inaugural lecture in September 2024 demonstrated strategic alignment between the project's objectives and broader institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion. The lecture, delivered by Helen Musgrove from Lexxic, attracted 118 registrations and 100 attendees, generating valuable feedback that informed the ongoing project work. Following the discussions, a selection of staff took part in a roundtable which shaped the direction and focus of the project.

Building on Strong Foundations

The project's ultimate success stemmed from this solid foundation of prior advocacy, demonstrated institutional commitment, and strategic leadership. Rather than starting from scratch, the Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project was able to build upon existing goodwill, emerging networks, and proven appetite for change. This enabled the project to move quickly from conception to implementation, achieving significant impact within its one-year timeframe.

Clare's continued commitment to driving forward Neurodiversity work as a legacy to the project ensures that these foundations will continue to support ongoing transformation across JIC and the broader BBSRC network.

Activities: What we did

The Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project built upon Clare Stevenson's comprehensive strategic vision while demonstrating remarkable adaptability in implementation. The original proposal's three-pillar framework of training, communications, and network development provided essential structure, but strategic flexibility enabled significant expansion of scope and impact. The appointment of Accredited Neurodiversity trainer Leah Milner-Campbell as Project Officer facilitated a strategic pivot from procuring external training to developing bespoke resources specifically tailored to research environments. This adaptive approach, supported by both JIC leadership and BBSRC Connecting Culture Fund flexibility, transformed initial targets into substantially enhanced deliverables across all workstreams.

Training Development and Delivery

Training Scope and Targets

The original proposal envisioned online training for 200 participants, a three-hour face-to-face workshop for 20 participants at JIC, and delivery at four additional BBSRC institutes (totalling 5 workshop locations). The final delivery exceeded these targets extraordinarily, developing comprehensive training programmes that reached far beyond initial specifications.
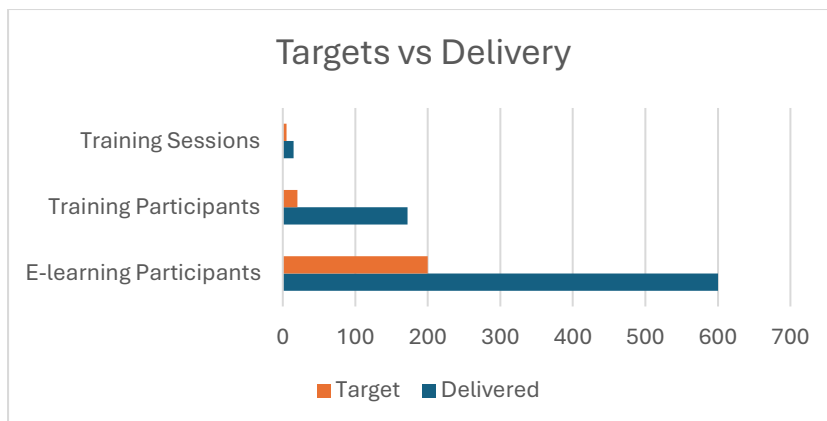
E-learning: 200 target → 600+ achieved (3x increase)

In-person training: 20 target → 172 achieved (8.6x increase)

Workshop locations: 5 target → 15 sessions achieved (3x increase)

E-Learning Development and Reach

Building on the original vision for accessible online training, the project developed two bespoke e-learning courses specifically tailored to research environments:

<u>Introduction to Neurodiversity in the Scientific Workplace</u>

Introduction to Managing Neurodiverse Teams in Research Institutes

The courses featured 24 filmed interviews with staff and students across the career spectrum, from PhD researchers to senior scientists, capturing authentic experiences within research environments. Critically, the original proposal envisioned procuring external online training that would have required ongoing licensing costs per participant. Instead, the project created bespoke resources owned by JIC that are now exploring commercial licensing opportunities, representing significant added value over the original concept.

Since launching in mid-March 2025, as of 26th June 2025:

- Over 600 individuals joined the e-learning platform
- Introduction Course: 391 fully completed, 112 partially completed (0-50%), 15 nearly completed (51-99%)
- Manager Course: 153 fully completed, 35 partially completed (0-50%), 3 nearly completed (51-99%)

E-learning Completion

Managers Course

Intro Course

0   100   200   300   400   500   600

■ Completed   ■ 51-99% Completed   ■ 0-50% Completed

E-Learning Participants by Institute

TSL 2%

External 4%

Babraham 9%

BBSRC 4%

NBI 4%

Earlham 4%

Quadram 8%

Pirbright 8%

Rothamsted 8%

Roslin 11%

JIC 35%

IBERS 3%
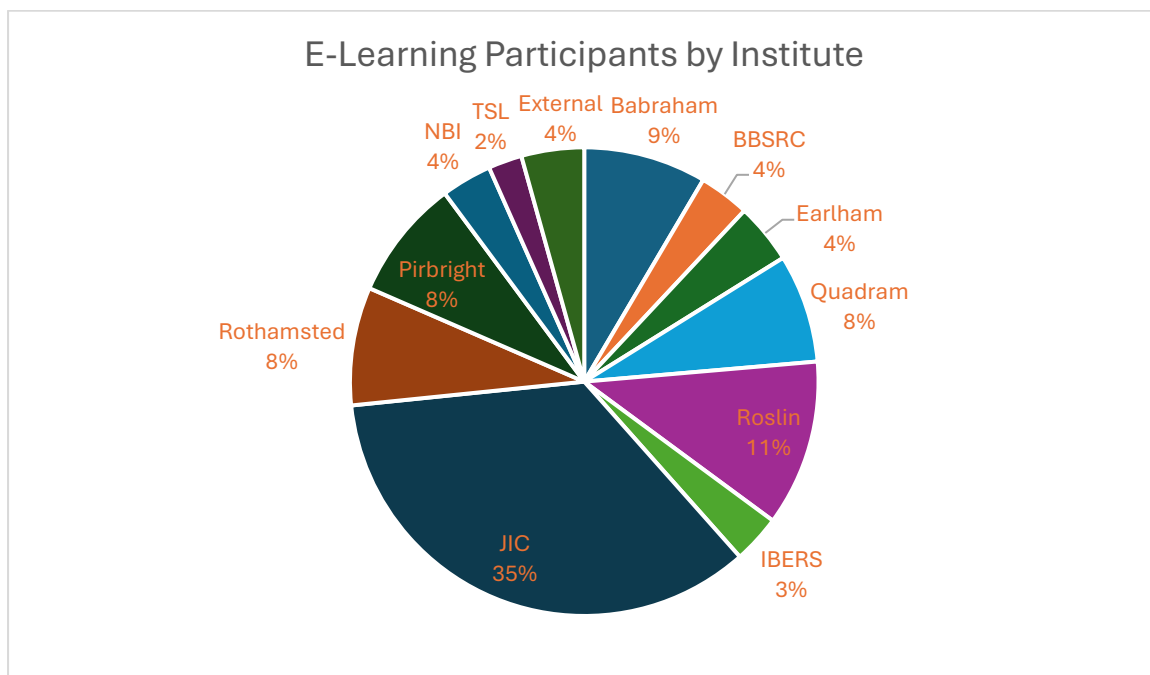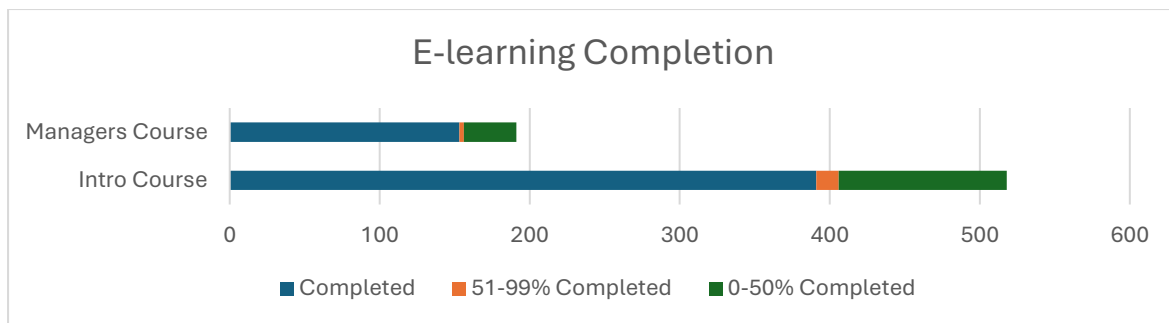
In-Person Training Programme

The original proposal recognised the importance of face-to-face training delivery, envisioning workshops that could be adapted and shared across BBSRC institutes. This strategic foundation enabled the development of a comprehensive three-module training programme:

How to Support Your (Neurodivergent) Self at Work: 40 participants across 5 sessions

How to be a Neurodiversity Ally: 71 participants across 5 sessions

Managing a Neurodiverse Team: 61 participants across 5 sessions

Total Reach: 172 participants across 15 training sessions delivered to 7 BBSRC Institutes (JIC, EI, QIB, IBERS, Pirbright, Babraham, and Rothamsted).

In Person Training Participants

(Horizontal stacked bar chart)

- Allyship
- Managing
- Supporting Yourself

X-axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80

Legend: JIC/EI/QIB, Pirbright, Rothamsted, IBERS, Babraham
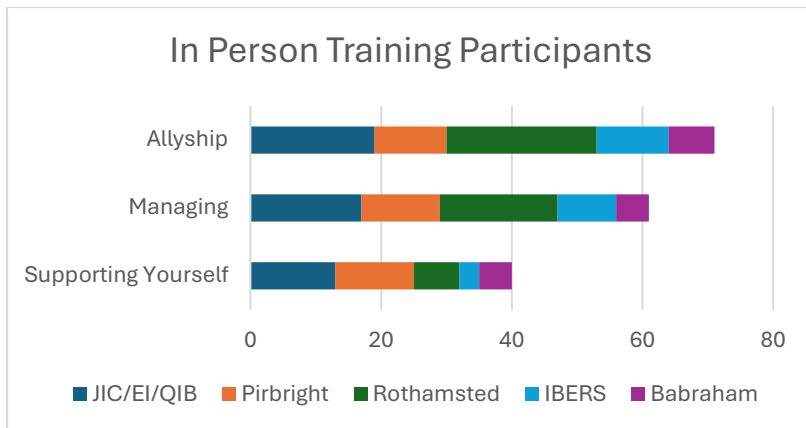
Communications and Awareness-Raising

Internal Communications

The project made tangible changes to our physical environment that served as visible introductions to neurodiversity inclusion early on. Fidgets were distributed to all meeting rooms and sensory regulation items were added to the wellbeing suite in October 2024, receiving positive feedback and creating daily reminders of the project's practical impact.
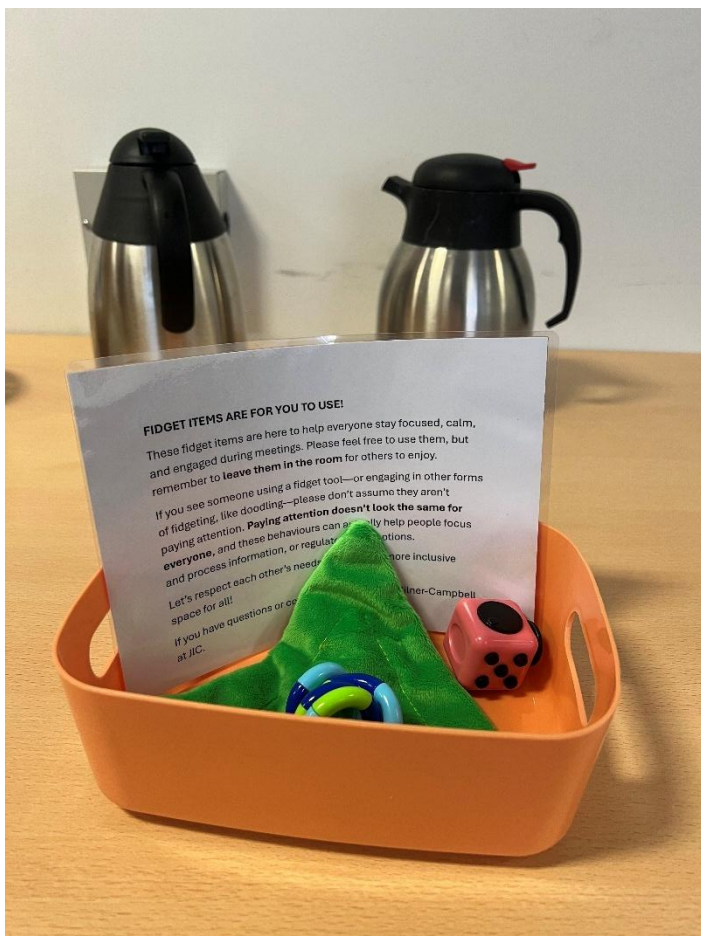
The project also delivered a series of internal events designed to engage different aspects of the community: a "Time to Talk" event in collaboration with the mental health/wellbeing

group in October (with approximately 15 participants), featuring activities including a statistics BINGO game to foster engagement and discussion; and a Communications and Knowledge Exchange (CAKE) Club event in November (also with approximately 15 participants), delivered in partnership with the communications team to introduce the new Neuroinclusive Communications Guide. These early, visible interventions demonstrated institutional commitment whilst the internal events created space for dialogue and learning in smaller, more intimate settings that complemented the broader communications campaign.

Monthly internal JIC blogs throughout the project period including topics on stimming and fidgeting (October 2024), neuroinclusive communications (November 2024), training programmes (January 2025), parenting Neurodivergent children (January 2025), and opportunities to get involved (May 2025).

Video Content:

- 10 short videos created for social media from e-learning material for Neurodiversity Celebration Week.
- Thank-you video for e-learning participants and supporters, shown at the launch of the e-training.

- Project impact celebration video.
- E-learning promotional video.

The communications strategy successfully aligned with key awareness periods (ADHD/Dyslexia awareness in October, Autism awareness in April, Tourette's awareness in May) whilst building sustained engagement throughout the project period, as originally envisioned.

External Communications Campaign

The original proposal outlined a systematic communications strategy to position BBSRC institutes as leaders in Neurodiversity inclusion, building on the foundation established by Professor Graham Moore's blog and planned engagement with key awareness periods. The project delivered this vision comprehensively:

12 External Blog Publications:

"Unlocking JIC's Neurodiversity: An introduction to our Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project" (September 2024)

"Celebrating Neurodiversity in Science: Honouring Trailblazers" (October 2024)

"Top Tips for Neuroinclusive Communication" (November 2024)

"Exploring Neurodiversity through an intersectional lens" (January 2025)

"Diverse Minds for a Diverse World: The Case for Neurodiversity in Science" (February 2025)

"What Makes a Neurodiversity Ally?" (March 2025)

"Beyond Awareness: Creating an Autism-Affirming Environment" (May 2025)

"Harnessing the Strengths of Tourette Syndrome in Scientific Research Environments" (May 2025)

"Being proud of our authentic selves" (June 2025)

"From Awareness to Action: Creating Authentic Neurodiversity Support in STEM Workplaces" (June 2025; published by the British Science Association as part of the APPG on Diversity & Inclusion in STEM)

"7 Essential Ingredients for Building a Neuroinclusive Research Organisation" (to be published in July 2025)

Conference and External Engagement

The project fulfilled its commitment to share learning through the Connecting Culture Conference, presenting at The Earlham Institute led Connecting Culture conference and maintaining an information booth throughout, as outlined in the original proposal. The presentation was very well received. Despite ranking 8th of 12 topics deemed most

interesting to potential attendees before the event, 39.7% of attendees chose the Neurodiversity session as their favourite out of 9 options. The next highest session received just 11.1% of the vote, demonstrating the positive impact of the session.

Additionally, specific inputs were provided to make the conference neuroinclusive, including guidance on Neurodiversity-related EDI data collection during the application process.

In addition, the project was represented with a booth at JIC's Annual Science Meeting in October 2024 and was presented at the University of Portsmouth's Research Culture ConnectFest on 17th June 2025.
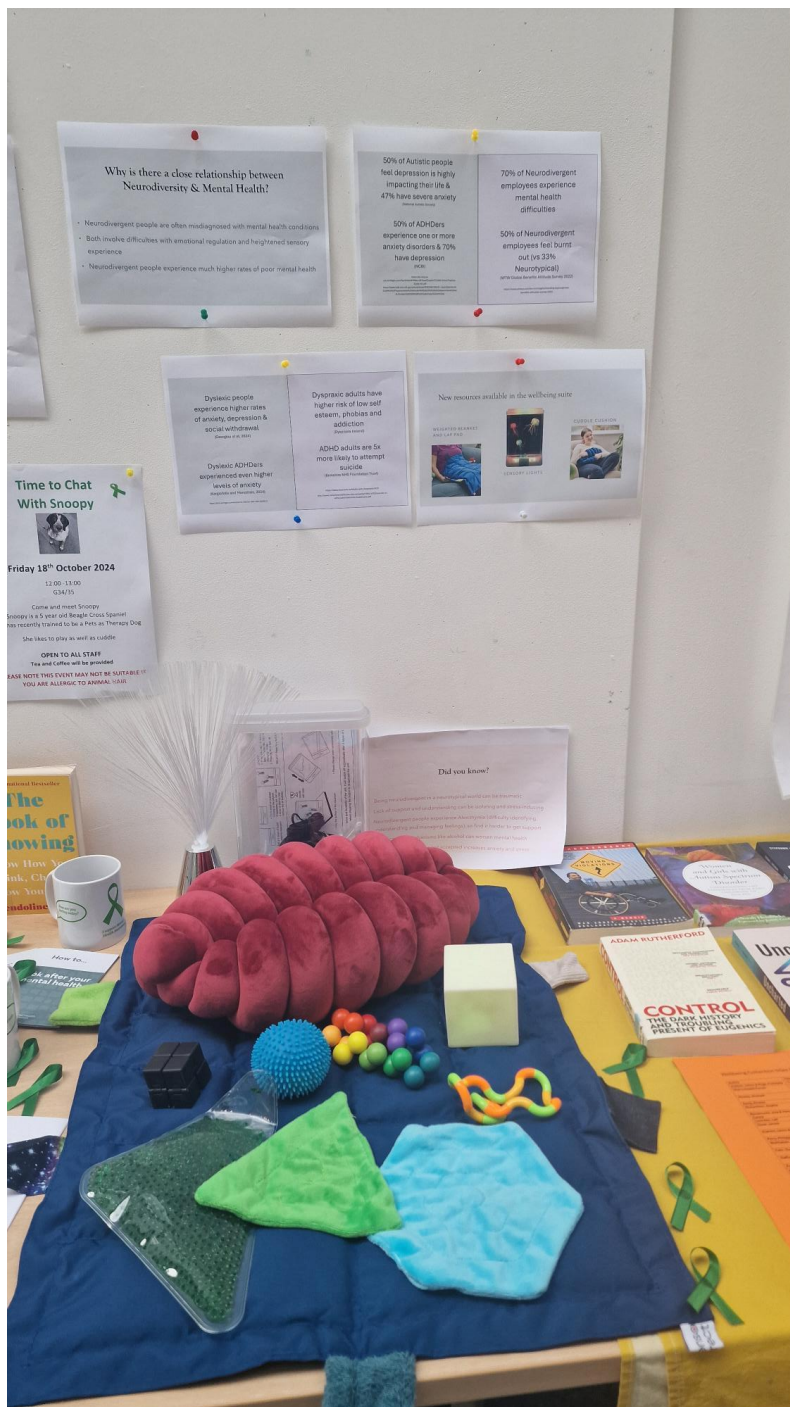
The blog series as well as networking through new and existing channels led to interest and engagement in the project from a wide range of organisations, including the Inclusive Norwich Partnership, a farmer and Nuffield Scholarship scholar delivering a neurodiversity project for Farmer's Weekly, a wide range of universities from Newcastle to Essex and the APPG on Diversity & Inclusion in STEM (see blog they commissioned above). These engagements have resulted in exchange of ideas as well as licensing opportunities for the e-learning.

Network Building and Support

Neurodiversity Network Development

The project successfully catalysed network development across multiple levels:

JIC/NBI Network Formation:

- Throughout the project, surveys, events and informal discussions gauged the interest of diverse stakeholders to engage
- During the project, QIB established 'Neuro Nook' a Neurodiversity support network and both QIB and EI colleagues expressed an interest in forming a network with JIC
- On 19 June 2025, an exploratory meeting was held for 10 JIC individuals, who reached consensus that an NBI-wide Neurodiversity formally recognised by each institute was desired, open to everyone with potential sub-groups for peer support
- A Working group has been established to progress the network.

Parent Support Network:

- A series of 8 webinars was delivered to 69 parents across all BBSRC institutes.
- Sessions covered topics selected through parent survey, featuring specialist external speakers including PDA Society, Claire Quigley Ward on ADHD, and Katie Partridge on Dyslexia.
- Six of the 8 webinars remain as recordings available on the same platform as the e-learning.
- Connections have been made between parents interested in establishing a parent support group.

Comprehensive Listening Exercise

The project's listening exercise extended far beyond the original scope of "structured interviews with a small cohort." Instead, it encompassed:

- 24 filmed interviews for e-learning development.
- Meetings with three campus 'voices' groups (students, post-docs, research support staff).

- Multiple engagements with LGBTQ+ group, REED group and parents and carers group in order to foster an intersectional approach
- Ongoing conversations throughout the project with diverse stakeholders.

This comprehensive approach generated rich insights that informed all project workstreams and will contribute to evidence-based recommendations in the final report.

Accessibility Advocates Engagement

Regular engagement with JIC's Accessibility Advocates throughout the project ensured continuity with existing advocacy work and provided valuable guidance on project development, including active involvement in planning the network development meeting.

Project Evolution and Strategic Flexibility

The project's remarkable success stemmed from the combination of comprehensive strategic foundation and the adaptive implementation that institutional leadership enabled. The original proposal's three-pillar approach - training, communications, and network development - provided the essential framework, whilst extensive research into external providers informed the ultimate decision to develop bespoke solutions.

The flexibility demonstrated by both JIC leadership and the BBSRC Connecting Culture Fund proved transformational. Rather than restricting the project to its initial parameters, this adaptive approach allowed specialist expertise to expand the scope significantly. The preparatory work in identifying potential training providers ultimately informed a deeper understanding of the limitations of existing offerings, enabling the strategic pivot to bespoke development.

This collaborative approach - combining strategic vision with implementation expertise and institutional flexibility - delivered far greater value than rigid adherence to original specifications could have achieved.

How the budget was spent

The chart below outlines how the budget was spent. The following should be noted:

- Resource which had been allocated to events, networking and miscellaneous costs was re-allocated to staff time and online training due to the strategic decision to develop bespoke training in-house rather than spend on external providers
- Some expenses and invoices have yet to be paid from JIC's accounts. However, these costs have all been agreed and allocated. After planned spend, £3.77 is anticipated as an under-spend. This has been included in the miscellaneous budget line. This will be spent on the ongoing costs of maintaining the e-learning.

Item	Budgeted Cost	Actual Cost	Notes
Staff Time	£18,160	£25,380.60	Re-allocated as training was delivered by staff rather than from external provider
Online Training	£980	£11,839	E-learning developed in-house
In-person training	£8750	£8,129.44	Includes cost of Neurodiversity champions programme
Webinar	£2750	£2,015	Total cost for 8 webinars
Events & Networking	£12,000	£1,377.70	Budget re-allocated to e-learning and staff time.
Miscellaneous	£7,360	£1,258.26	Neurodiversity awareness materials

Impact: What difference we made

The Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project delivered transformational outcomes across all stakeholder groups, demonstrating measurable improvements that sustained and strengthened over time. The project's bespoke, scientific research-environment-focused methodology produced exceptional results that evidenced the value of specialist, contextually-relevant workplace Neurodiversity support.

Individuals engaging with the project consistently appreciated the efforts to tailor the project and the learning materials to a scientific research workplace, with one stating "*I loved the way this course relates the topic with the plant science workplace, particularly the plant science workplace, is very insightful and relatable. A great training course!*" and another acknowledging, *"I believe this kind of training is essential for raising awareness and fostering the understanding that a diverse community is key to creating an excellent research environment."*
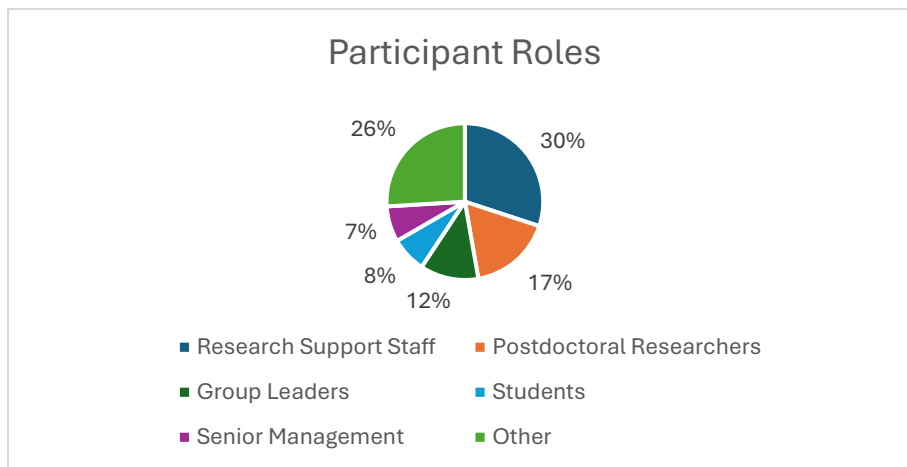
The impact of the bespoke and in-depth approach was notable when comparing feedback between the generic Neurodiversity awareness course delivered by Genius Within in April 2024 with the bespoke allyship training. The project's allyship course scored 17% higher for delivering objectives (4.8/5 instead of 4.1) and 7.5% higher for facilitator effectiveness (4.9/5 instead of 4.5).

Overall Organisational Impact

The project reached over 600 individuals across the e-learning platform and 172 participants through in-person training, creating widespread organisational transformation that extended far beyond traditional training approaches.

The introductory e-learning course achieved substantial impact across the entire organisational spectrum, with participants from all career stages and roles. Participants at all levels and roles found the course valuable, with several emphasising *"I would highly*

recommend the training to anyone and all people the same regardless of position", "All PGR supervisors should be required to complete this course", "This is a must for all managers".

Participant Roles

- 30% Research Support Staff
- 17% Postdoctoral Researchers
- 12% Group Leaders
- 8% Students
- 7% Senior Management
- 26% Other

Post-training evaluations revealed overwhelmingly positive emotional responses: *"Empowered," "Confident," "Inspired," "Informed," "Optimistic," "Understood and valued," "Hopeful."* Participants overwhelmingly recommended the in-person training and e-learning with universal enthusiasm: "*Absolutely do it*!", "*Definitely worth attending*", "*Just do it*", "*"Essential to do"*.

One elaborated, *"I love this course - it was the best e-learning I have ever done! Engaging examples, a good pace, enough depth, and useful signposting to learn more."*

Participants demonstrated an increase in knowledge and understanding following the e-learning:

- "How would you rate your current level of understanding about Neurodiversity?": **34.5% increase** (3.57 to 4.8) following the e-learning

"I found it very informative, especially the analogies to the natural world. It was especially good at highlighting the positive aspects of Neurodiversity rather than focusing on the difficulties."

"I realised that I was also falling victim of some of the misconceptions that people have about Neurodiversity."

- "How relevant is Neurodiversity to your role/workplace?": **14.8% increase** (4.53 to 5.2)

"This should be mandatory training for those working in scientific environments."

- "How confident do you feel talking about Neurodiversity?": **32.7% increase** (3.36 to 4.46)

"What an eye opener, this helped me understand to a degree my struggles within the workplace but also day to day life. It also helped me understand how my little girl may also need help too."

Universal Institutional Value

Participants across BBSRC Institutes reported there was a *"Much greater awareness of prevalence of Neurodiversity and how to make things easier for people."* as a result of the project. Another explained, *"There have been more conversations about Neurodiversity in general."* And another, *"There have been more conversations about how to make things work better for Neurodiverse people."*

A survey of key contacts across BBSRC Institutes identified that **100% respondents** rated the project as valuable with **70% rating it as 'extremely valuable'** (maximum score).

These colleagues gave substantial feedback about the project overall including:

"A number of people reported how helpful the training was, especially the resources for parents of Neurodivergent children. It's opened up more discussion about local support and the value of champions."

"I've had many staff members tell me how valuable they found the online and in person training and have had lots of enquiries about whether there will be regular in person Neurodiversity training."

"I am very sorry to hear that the Neurodiversity project officer is leaving. I really think that her part time position should be made permanent - maybe across all 8 institutes for affordability."

"Developing Neurodiversity e-learning resources in-house ensures they can be tailored to the specific needs and culture of BBSRC Research Institutes, and this promotes inclusivity and relevance. I think this is a really good way to foster a deeper understanding of Neurodiverse perspectives while empowering staff to create a more supportive and accessible environment within their own institute" (Research Scientist, Earlham Institute)

Specific Stakeholder Impact

Many of the project's activities delivered impacts for a particular group of stakeholders.

Impact for Managers

The project delivered substantial improvements in manager confidence through both e-learning and in-person training approaches. One participant from the in-person training explained, *"The course was very helpful, in particular about understanding everyone's individual needs. I now intend to implement in my team the idea of having written working profiles to help me best manage people."*

Role Commitment and Knowledge:

- "To what extent do you feel embracing Neurodiversity is a key part of your role as a manager?": **7.1% increase** (5.07 to 5.43) following e-learning.

- "I know how to be a good manager of a Neurodiverse team": **39.5% increase** (3.38 to 4.71) following in-person training.

One participant said, "Definitely take the course! Very practical guidance and explanations about how to use your role as a manager to support Neurodivergent team members effectively."

Confidence:

- "How confident do you feel managing people with a different neurotype to your own?": **32.5% increase** (3.54 to 4.69) following e-learning and a **33% increase** (3.62 to 4.82), with **30.5% net improvement** sustained at three months following in-person training.

Participants feel more equipped to work effectively across neurotypes, with one reporting *"I am speaking more directly with a colleague after understanding their social preferences better. It has improved our working relationship and helped me to become more concise in my communication."* And another stating *"I'm now much more mindful about things I think are just easy or common sense to me as they may not be to someone who looks at things from a Neurodiverse perspective."*

- "How confident do you feel implementing reasonable adjustments?": **16.8% increase** (4.16 to 4.86) following e-learning and **17.3% increase** (4.17 to 4.89) following in-person training.

The ongoing increase is likely due to practice. One participant explained *"I've begun implementing the adjustments passport and ensuring I am held accountable for implementation following discussions with my team."*

Self-Awareness and Communication

- "I understand my own communication and working styles": **17.5% increase** (4.4 to 5.17), maintained at three months following in-person training.

- "I know how to help others understand their own communication and working styles": **37.3% increase** (3.46 to 4.75), with a **further 11% increase** after three months following in-person training.

Managers continue to use the exercises introduced in the training, with one explaining that within three months of the training, *"I used the social style test with my group, which was really useful to better understand each other. Also everyone filled up the 'how to work with me' table, which led to interesting discussions."*

Impact for Allies

The allyship training produced exceptional results, with participants showing substantial and sustained improvements that continued to strengthen over time.

Knowledge and Understanding:

In the words of one e-learning participant, *"I over-estimated my understanding of Neurodiversity before taking the course. I thought I knew, but I really didn't."*

- "I believe I am a Neurodiversity ally": **26% increase** (4.4 to 5.09) following the in-person allyship training, with a **further 9.5% increase** after three months.

- "I know how to be a good Neurodiversity ally": **53% increase** (3.24 to 4.95) following the in-person training, with a **further 6% increase** after three months.

One training participant explained, *"Before this training, I used to think like me, but now I try and think like other people",* articulating a key message from the training, that we should expect each other to be different and find ways to bridge the gap – rather than expecting everyone to be the same.

Three months after the training, allies identified concrete actions they had taken to implement what they learned. One said, *"Family members [were] using offensive, outdated and incorrect terminology…. I set them straight with this so that they now know how these subjects can be better discussed."*

- "I understand my own power and privilege": **24.5% increase** (4.0 to 4.98) following the allyship training, with a **further 12% increase** after three months.

Another participant explained, "*I don't think I realised how much privilege I have as I often see my own personal identity as a barrier to privilege. I now recognise the privilege I actually have in certain spaces*." Participants credit specific activities in the allyship training with this shift, "*The privilege wheel was very eye opening", ""The privileges for sale... a real eye opener and have never done it before."*

Communication and Confidence:

- "I feel confident talking about Neurodiversity": **28% increase** (3.75 to 4.79) following the in-person training, with a **further 6% increase** after three months.

One participant explained, *"The language used and the way it was delivered felt more informal and easy to understand than other training courses and it didn't feel like I was being 'told off' for not being as inclusive as I could be."* Participants have been able to put this into action, with one explaining *"I was planning a meeting of numerous stakeholders and used my training to create a neuro-inclusive space."*

Impact for Neurodivergent People

The project made a substantial impact for Neurodivergent participants.

Self-Awareness and Understanding

Remarkably, the project has helped several participants to recognise that they are Neurodivergent, with one stating "*This course was a real eye opener and made me realise that I too am Neurodivergent also!"* and another *"I didn't know that I'm Neurodivergent. Now I know...".* And another, *"It's not just my daughter who is ND! But I am also recognising it in more and more colleagues and this is slowly making me braver in exploring my own ND."*

For those who were aware enough to join the Supporting Yourself in person training, the following impacts were documented:

- "I understand my own neurodivergence": **34.6% increase** (3.41 to 4.59), with a remarkable **further 25.5% increase** after three months

"It was insightful - handy for learning more about how my brain works as an individual with diagnosed ADHD & Dyslexia!"

- "I understand my own sensory profile": **61.3% increase** (3.0 to 4.84)

"*I am better at recognising when I am beginning to feel sensory overwhelm and feel less guilty about temporarily removing myself from the situation*."

"*[Most valuable were] exercises encouraging [us] to identify and think about ways to calm my sensory overload - I found numerous examples of things to try! Also the instructor took great care about our comfort. She is the best*!"

- "I know what helps me to be productive at work": **40.5% increase** (3.29 to 4.62)

"*Identifying my own challenges and reframing them to work with them not against them. It has been affirming and given me confidence*."

"*Before this training, I used to think that I worked well in a stressful environment, but now I understand that I am less productive in a stressful environment*."

"*Have implemented in fidget toys, asked for agendas before meetings and currently looking into applying for the Access to work-reasonable adjustments.*"

The strongest area of impact across the project appears to be around being able to get needs met at work.

Overall, participants of the in-person training reported a 74% increase re the statement "I feel confident advocating for my needs at work" (2.64 to 4.59), which was **sustained at three months.** Not all participants experienced this and several described ongoing barriers – which are explored in the Legacy section

"Before this training, I used to be worried to discuss my Neurodiversity openly, but now I'm not!"

"I was able approach the facilities team to modify the lighting in my office and would feel more confident advocating for any additional adjustments."

"I have managed to obtain a standing desk to help me concentrate. I feel more confident in asking help with prioritization and organization."

Validation and Affirmation:

Finally, feedback throughout emphasised how the project as a whole had validated and affirmed Neurodivergent identities, reducing isolation and emphasising the value they bring to the research workplace.

One highlighted how the project had made them *"more aware how many people there are working here who are Neurodivergent, nice to not feel alone!"*

Another stated that the best part of the training was "Having my own experiences reflected by someone else's and seeing a number of clear explanations and subsequent strategies for challenges I face. I didn't feel so isolated and this has made me hopeful."

Individuals who contributed to the e-learning by sharing their own lived experiences felt *"very proud to work at a place like JIC, empowering people to speak up"*. Another agreed, *"I'm really proud to be working in an institute that cares enough about diversity to make videos like this, and that has provided a good environment for all of us. I hope and believe the videos will help many people."*

Impact for Parents

Identified as a key stakeholder in the project's original brief, parents of Neurodivergent children have engaged throughout the project.

One, who was interviewed for the e-learning described the experience very positively – "It was lovely taking part; parenting a special needs kid is sometimes lonely, but because you asked about it, I felt that someone, JIC, cared.".

In response to a bulletin in the staff newsletter announcing the webinar series for parents, another wrote "I've been thinking about your piece in the newsletter a lot this weekend. You have managed to reframe something that is quite challenging by bringing out a lot of the positives. As a parent who is going through the diagnosis process, it is very affirming reading about Neurodiverse kids in this way."

The parent webinar series delivered both direct support and catalysed organic community formation. Parents gave an average value rating of 5.4/6 for the webinar series. When asked

"How much have the webinars improved your understanding of how to support your Neurodivergent child?" the average score was **4.9 out of 6.**

86% of participants reported positive workplace changes as a result of the webinar series

One said, *"Thanks again for organising all these, it has been incredibly beneficial for me and my family. Today at Quadram there is a meeting to put support in place for parents of Neurodivergent children, so hopefully I will soon have the tools to talk about this with my line managers."*

And another explained, *"It helped me to have more of an insight into how things are for people who do not experience the world as I do. My daughter is Dyslexic, and this was really helpful in explaining things in a way I understand."*

The most significant parent impact was spontaneous community formation: parents at Quadram Institute established their own support group following webinar participation, with initial meeting held 29th May 2025, representing sustainable legacy beyond project completion.

Impact Beyond BBSRC Institutes

Following the success of the e-learning resource, a number of institutions have engaged in discussions to licence this resource for their own organisation. Following discussions with BBSRC, a decision was made to pursue commercial licencing of the training, which would allow income generated by licencing to cover the ongoing maintenance costs of the e-learning, and to develop new resources in future.

A colleague from Newcastle University said, *"A huge thank you for sharing this training. I'm delighted to let you know that I've completed both parts, and I must say, it's excellent. The content is not only well-structured and informative but also incredibly empathetic."*

Driven by Dr. Clare Stevenson, so far £2,000 has been secured from Newcastle University for a pilot. Discussions are ongoing with University of Cambridge's Crop Science Centre, Unilever, Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems, University of Portsmouth, University of Essex and UEA.

The project's external communications strategy achieved substantial digital reach and engagement across multiple platforms. Social media campaigns supporting the first seven external blogs and Neurodiversity Celebration Week generated 83 posts across Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, reaching 43,400 total impressions with 1,400 engagements and 468 link clicks to blog content. The most successful campaign was the introductory blog "Unlocking JIC's Neurodiversity" with 14 posts generating 12,200 impressions, while the "Celebrating Neurodiversity in science: honouring trailblazers" blog achieved the highest single-topic engagement with 6,500 impressions from 10 posts. Neurodiversity Celebration Week 2025, featuring video snippets from the e-learning content, reached 6,200 impressions across 17 posts. The consistent engagement rates across campaigns (averaging

3.2% engagement rate) and strong click-through rates to blog content (468 total clicks) demonstrate sustained public interest in the project's research-focused approach to Neurodiversity, extending the project's impact far beyond the immediate BBSRC institute community to broader academic and public audiences.

Conclusion: Transformational Impact Across All Levels

The project's impact data demonstrates that specialist, contextually-relevant Neurodiversity interventions deliver exponentially greater value than generic approaches. The sustained and often increasing improvements at three-month follow-up evidence the project's success in building genuine capability rather than temporary awareness.

Most significantly, the project created self-sustaining systems - from empowered Neurodivergent individuals to competent allies and managers to supportive parent networks - that ensure ongoing positive impact well beyond the project's formal conclusion. The combination of measurable improvements (ranging from 7% to 74% across different metrics), sustained behavioural change, and organic community formation demonstrates transformational impact at individual, interpersonal, and organisational levels.

Future: What Happens Next

The Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project's exceptional impact and widespread recognition has created a strong foundation for sustained transformation across BBSRC institutes and beyond. The project's success in delivering measurable improvements, generating commercial interest, and catalysing organic network development demonstrates both the effectiveness of the bespoke approach and the substantial appetite for continued Neurodiversity support in research environments.

Legacy: Sustainable Resources Already Created

The project has generated a comprehensive suite of resources that will continue delivering value long beyond its formal conclusion, with funding and institutional commitment already secured for ongoing accessibility.

Training and Educational Resources

E-Learning Platform: Funding secured until February 2027, with Clare Stevenson actively pursuing commercial licensing arrangements. The Newcastle University pilot licensing agreement (£2,000) demonstrates commercial viability, with expressions of interest from University of Essex, University of Cambridge Crop Science Centre, Unilever, Max Planck

Institute for Intelligent Systems, University of Portsmouth, and UEA validating broader market demand for specialist Neurodiversity resources in research environments.

In-Person Training Resources: Comprehensive facilitation notes, handouts, and slides have been updated and bundled into resource packs for ongoing institute use. Institutional commitment is evidenced by JIC/EI/QIB contracting Leah Milner-Campbell to deliver additional ally and self-support training sessions in November/December 2025.

Parent Support Materials: Six recorded parenting webinars accessible via the e-learning platform, providing ongoing support for parents of Neurodivergent children across BBSRC institutes.

Communications and Awareness Materials

Comprehensive Resource Library: Communications guide, meeting room fidget information, event posters, blogs, videos, and social media content bundled for continuous use across the BBSRC network. The external blogs' social media reach of 43,400 impressions with 1,400 engagements demonstrates sustained public interest in the research-focused approach.

Plans: Initiatives Already in Motion

Building on the project's demonstrated success, several key initiatives are already progressing to embed and expand Neurodiversity support across BBSRC institutes.

Neurodiversity Champions Programme

Following the successful model of Mental Health First Aiders and Culture Champions, Neurodiversity Champions will play a critical role in creating neuroinclusive workplaces. Champions signpost colleagues to resources, help apply guidance and offer safe spaces for support.

Delivery Plan: Two cohorts of 20-25 participants each will receive two full days of in-person training plus resource packs:

- NBI-wide cohort: October-November 2025.

- Roslin cohort: November-December 2025 (with Roslin contributing to costs for expanded delivery).

Champions will represent diverse seniority levels and role types, including students, technicians, support staff, and researchers, ensuring comprehensive organisational coverage.

Network Development

NBI Neurodiversity Network: Working group established to progress formal recognition of an NBI-wide network, building on the consensus reached at the June 19th planning meeting. The network will be open to all with potential specialist subgroups for targeted peer support.

Organic Growth: The project has already catalysed spontaneous network formation, including the postdoctoral researcher-led "Neurodiversity Nook" and parent support groups at Quadram Institute, demonstrating self-sustaining momentum.

E-Learning Expansion

Commercial Development: If licensing proves successful, agreement exists in principle to develop complementary e-learning modules available across BBSRC institutes. Potential topics include:

- Supporting students specifically

- Detailed reasonable adjustments guidance

- In-depth neurotype understanding

- Broader EDI modules (Introduction to EDI, micro-behaviours)

Recommendations: Building Comprehensive Neuroinclusive Research Culture

The Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project catalysed significant transformation in training, awareness-raising, and network development, demonstrating what can be achieved when adequate capacity and expertise are available. However, the extensive feedback and listening exercise revealed that sustainable change requires ongoing commitment and systematic institutional development. The project's success in building knowledge and capability has created the foundation, but lasting transformation requires comprehensive policy frameworks, structural changes, and continued specialist support that extend far beyond individual awareness and skills development. Change of this magnitude doesn't happen overnight, but the project provides compelling evidence of the transformational outcomes possible when institutions invest appropriately in neuroinclusive approaches.

For BBSRC Institutes

1. Implement Comprehensive Neurodiversity Policy Framework

Each institute should develop a standalone Neurodiversity policy or integrate comprehensive Neurodiversity commitments into existing frameworks, establishing clear institutional commitment, expectations, and accountability measures.

Core policy components should include:

- Institutional recognition of Neurodiversity as an organisational asset

- Defined expectations and responsibilities across all levels

- Clear pathways to reasonable adjustments framework (detailed in Recommendation 3)

- Explicit Access to Work commitment and support pathways

- Legal protections clarification for both diagnosed and undiagnosed individuals

- Performance and accountability measures for neuroinclusive culture development

Why this is essential: The project revealed significant clarity gaps at all organisational levels regarding Neurodiversity support, creating systemic confusion that undermines well-intentioned efforts. Institutional leadership and HR departments appear to over-estimate the cost of workplace adjustments, managers lacked understanding of their role in implementing adjustments causing unnecessary delays, and individuals feared requesting support due to uncertainty about institutional commitment. When asked about advocating for workplace accommodations, one participant responded simply *"No, I don't feel safe doing this."*

One institute's bureaucratic process requiring HR sign-off for all adjustments has limited access even when managers support proposed changes, illustrating how unclear policies can create barriers. As one participant noted, *"There is probably a need for managers to be Neurodiversity aware and be more accommodating to the needs of their team members... we need a clear Neurodiversity policy and more training."* Another explained the systemic nature of the problem: *"I think this course was helpful. However, there are issues with a disconnect between what you would like to do and provide as an individual, compared with how those are supported or actioned by your institute, senior leadership and associated HR departments."*

2. Transform Management Culture and Development

Require mandatory Neurodiversity training for all managers (e-learning minimum, in-person for senior leadership) and implement comprehensive management development programmes that address the unique challenges of academic leadership roles.

Specific requirements:

- E-learning completion for all current and aspiring managers

- In-person training for senior leadership roles across all institutes

- Coaching support alongside traditional management structures

- Management competency frameworks specific to research environments

- Mentorship programmes pairing experienced and new managers

- Clear performance expectations for management effectiveness beyond research outputs

Why this is essential: Academic institutions face a fundamental challenge where individuals are promoted for scientific excellence rather than management capability, creating significant organisational risk when brilliant researchers are placed in management positions without adequate support or development. Unlike corporate environments where management skills are explicitly valued and developed, academic institutions often assume management capability will emerge naturally from scientific expertise. This creates systemic problems when managers lack the skills to support diverse teams effectively.

3. Establish Comprehensive Reasonable Adjustments Framework

Develop detailed reasonable adjustments processes with clear timelines, decision-making frameworks, implementation guidance, and resource libraries that enable effective support whilst managing conflicting needs.

Framework components should include:

- Streamlined reasonable adjustments process with defined timelines

- Clarity around expectations and best practice, such as documenting adjustments

- Common reasonable adjustments by neurotype with implementation examples

- Decision-making frameworks for balancing conflicting accommodation needs

- Clear escalation pathways when adjustments conflict or require senior authorisation

- Case studies of successful implementation across research environments

- Resource libraries and cost guidance for managers

- Explicit commitment to utilise Access to Work and clear process outlined

- Training for HR staff and senior managers on adjustment approval processes

Why this is essential: The project revealed that many managers and individuals want to implement supportive adjustments but lack practical guidance on what to do and how to do it effectively. Feedback consistently highlighted the need for practical implementation guidance beyond awareness-raising, with participants requesting *"More examples of reasonable adjustments would be helpful"* and *"A list of the most commonly used reasonable adjustments for certain types of Neurodiversity would be very useful. Even if it's just to start off the conversation."*

Complex scenarios require sophisticated frameworks, as one participant explained: *"I would want to know how to deal with challenges of making the workplace accessible... if there were conflicts in that. For example one staff member who would want to use a 'fidget' to help focus in a meeting but another who would have sensory discomfort associated with the 'fidget', how would this be navigated?"*

Current processes create unnecessary barriers, with participants noting that *"Do any reasonable adjustments need to be signed off by a more senior member of staff? This could be an additional barrier if that senior manager is not as inclusive or does not have the same relationship with the employee and same level of understanding/compassion."* Others requested *"More practical advice. E.g. how can the institutes change, what institutional changes can we suggest?"* and *"Mechanisms and workflows or processes that other employers have implemented in the form of case studies."*

4. Invest in Ongoing Neurodiversity Development Support

BBSRC institutes should invest in sustained Neurodiversity development support, in line with the commitments and resources that institutes make to LGBTQ+, gender and race equality through involvement with Stonewall Diversity Champions, Athena SWAN, and Race Equality Charter programmes, recognising Neurodiversity as requiring ongoing specialist expertise rather than one-off interventions.

There are currently no Neurodiversity-specific charters or membership networks currently operating, operating so this represents a real opportunity for BBSRC Institutes to lead in this area. There is a welcome possibility to engage further with Leah Milner-Campbell to establish this.

There are several options worth further exploration – establishing a jointly-funded BBSRC-specific pooled resource providing specialist expertise across all BBSRC Institutes, or expanding more widely to engage with other parts of UKRI or the wider scientific and research landscape. While this project has focused on understanding and awareness-raising, ongoing development support could support embedding of this learning across the Institutes and a greater reach.

Why this is essential: Individual institutes struggle to maintain specialist expertise whilst demonstrated demand exceeds current capacity. The project catalysed spontaneous network formation across multiple institutes, demonstrating substantial appetite for sustained, coordinated support. As one survey respondent noted, *"I am very sorry to hear that the Neurodiversity project officer is leaving. I really think that her part time position should be made permanent - maybe across all 8 institutes for affordability."*

The ongoing demand for support is evidenced by participant feedback: *"I've had many staff members tell me how valuable they found the online and in person training and have had lots of enquiries about whether there will be regular in person Neurodiversity training."* Organic network development shows the appetite for continued engagement: *"There is an appetite to form an NBI Neurodiversity network and people seem better informed on Neurodiversity in general"* and *"The training has empowered a postdoc to create the Neurodiversity Nook where those with an interest can meet."*

Successful transformation requires sustained capacity: *"A number of people reported how helpful the training was, especially the resources for parents of Neurodivergent children. It's opened up more discussion about local support and the value of champions."*

5. Roll Out Neurodiversity Champions Programme Across All Institutes

Establish Neurodiversity Champions programmes at all BBSRC institutes, following the successful Mental Health First Aiders and Culture Champions models, with 20-25 trained champions per institute representing diverse roles and seniority levels.

Programme components should include:

- Two full days of comprehensive champion training

- Resource packs and ongoing support materials

- Regular network meetings and peer learning opportunities

- Clear role definitions and institutional recognition

- Integration with existing wellbeing and EDI support structures

- Annual refresher training and development opportunities

- Institutional commitment to resourcing and supporting champions equivalent to Mental Health First Aiders

Why this is essential: The project demonstrated substantial appetite for peer support networks and specialist knowledge sharing. Champions provide accessible, knowledgeable support that bridges the gap between formal policies and day-to-day implementation. Even at JIC and Roslin where Neurodiversity Champions training has been scheduled, there remains a critical need for institutional leadership to embrace this support system and commit to resourcing it with the same level of commitment given to Mental Health First Aiders and other wellbeing initiatives.

The Neurodiversity Champions programme already planned for NBI and Roslin has generated significant interest, building on the project's finding that *"There is an appetite to form an NBI Neurodiversity network and people seem better informed on Neurodiversity in general."* The organic development of networks like the *"Neurodiversity Nook"* demonstrates the value of peer-led support structures, but these require institutional backing to be sustainable and effective.

6. Transform Recruitment and Career Development Practices

Implement comprehensive neuroinclusive recruitment processes that eliminate systematic barriers and showcase the diverse strengths that Neurodivergent candidates bring to research environments.

Key implementation areas:

- Accessible application processes with alternative formats and clear timelines

- Bias reduction in selection criteria and assessment methods focusing on essential vs. desirable requirements

- Interview format alternatives including practical demonstrations, portfolio reviews, and structured conversations

- Clear communication about available support and accommodations from application stage

- Assessment methods that recognise diverse cognitive styles and strengths

- Recruitment panel training on neuroinclusive practices and unconscious bias

- Post-appointment support and onboarding processes that facilitate successful integration

Why this is essential: Traditional recruitment practices systematically disadvantage Neurodivergent candidates, limiting organisational diversity and access to the innovative thinking and problem-solving approaches that Neurodivergent individuals often bring to research environments. Given that Neurodivergent individuals are often drawn to STEM fields, institutes risk excluding significant talent pools through inaccessible recruitment processes.

Participants specifically requested guidance on *"How to make recruitment more inclusive"* and *"More detail on recruitment process."* The project also revealed ongoing challenges around *"how to assess if someone already in the role whose neurodivergence has just come to light can be supported, especially if they cannot perform certain functions,"* highlighting the need for comprehensive career development support beyond initial recruitment.

For BBSRC as Network and Funder

1. Leverage Funder Influence to Drive Sector Change

Mandate Institute Implementation: Use BBSRC's position as major research funder to require comprehensive Neurodiversity policies and support frameworks as conditions of major grant awards, driving sector-wide improvement in research environment inclusivity.

Grant Requirements: Consider requiring evidence of:

- Neurodiversity policy implementation

- Management training completion rates

- Reasonable adjustments frameworks

- Network development and peer support systems

Why this is essential: BBSRC's position as major research funder provides unique leverage to drive sector-wide improvement. Given the demonstrated benefits of neuroinclusive approaches for research productivity and innovation, this represents strategic investment in research excellence.

2. Continue and Expand Connecting Culture Fund Investment

Sustained Funding: Recognise Neurodiversity support as essential infrastructure for research excellence requiring continued investment through programmes like Connecting Culture fund.

Strategic Expansion: Fund development of:

- Advanced training modules addressing complex implementation challenges

- Cross-sector learning and best practice development

- Research into neuroinclusive practices and research productivity

- Sector-wide network development and coordination

Why this is essential: The project demonstrated that quality Neurodiversity support requires sustained investment and specialist expertise. One-off interventions, while valuable, cannot address the systemic changes needed for comprehensive transformation.

3. Demonstrate Leadership Through Internal Development

Implement comprehensive Neurodiversity support for BBSRC's own staff, demonstrating leadership commitment to neuroinclusive research culture and providing a credible model for institute implementation.

This should include:

- BBSRC staff access to the project's e-learning resources

- Neurodiversity policy development for BBSRC as an organisation

- Management training for BBSRC leaders and programme managers

- Reasonable adjustments framework for BBSRC employees

- Internal Neurodiversity network development

Why this is essential: Leadership by example establishes credibility and demonstrates genuine commitment to neuroinclusive research culture. Institutions and grantees are more likely to implement comprehensive changes when funders demonstrate the same commitment to their own workforce.

4. Drive Sector-Wide Transformation Through Vocal Leadership

Use BBSRC's influential position to actively promote Neurodiversity best practices across the broader UK research landscape, leveraging the project's proven effectiveness as an exemplar model for other funders and research organisations.

Leadership activities should include:

- Conference presentations and case study sharing at sector events

- Collaboration with other research funders to promote neuroinclusive practices

- Publication of best practice guidance based on project outcomes

- Integration of Neurodiversity considerations into research culture initiatives

- Advocacy for neuroinclusive practices in government and policy contexts

Why this is essential: The project's exceptional outcomes provide compelling evidence for scalable solutions that could benefit the entire research sector. BBSRC's leadership position creates opportunities to accelerate adoption across UK research institutions, maximising the impact of the investment made in developing these approaches.

Conclusion: From Foundation to Transformation

The Understanding, Valuing and Celebrating Neurodiversity project has demonstrated that specialist, contextually-relevant approaches deliver transformational outcomes across all stakeholder groups. The combination of measurable impact (7-74% improvements across metrics), sustained behavioural change, commercial validation, and organic network development provides compelling evidence for continued investment in comprehensive Neurodiversity support.

However, the project's success has also revealed the scale of systemic change required to create truly neuroinclusive research environments. While training, awareness, and networks provide essential foundations, sustainable transformation requires policy frameworks, management development, structural adjustments, and ongoing specialist support that address the complex realities of academic research environments.

The resources which have been created, the initiatives in motion, and strategic recommendations identified create a comprehensive pathway for embedding and scaling this work. The choice now is not whether to continue Neurodiversity support, but how to implement the systematic changes needed to make neuroinclusion a permanent feature of research culture rather than a temporary improvement.

Success in implementing these recommendations will position BBSRC institutes as continued leaders in neuroinclusive research culture, ensuring the significant individual and organisational benefits demonstrated by this project become embedded institutional capabilities that enhance research excellence and innovation across the sector.