

**AUTISM FORWARD
PARTICIPATES IN
BUCKLAND REVIEW
OF AUTISM
EMPLOYMENT**

**AUTISM FORWARD
AWARDED CVC
30TH ANNIVERSARY
CHALLENGE DONATION**

**NEW MENTOR
PARTNER COVERING
BEDFORDSHIRE,
HERTFORDSHIRE AND
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**LINKEDIN LEARNING
COURSE ON
NEURODIVERSITY
IN THE
WORKPLACE**

AUTISM FORWARD NEWS

Buckland Review of Autism Employment

Earlier this year we were invited to join a roundtable organised by the Legal Neurodiversity Network at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer's London office with Sir Robert Buckland MP and a team from the Department of Work and Pensions as part of the Buckland Review of Autism Employment. Our trustee Jane Pierce was invited to speak about Autism Forward's work meeting the crucial gap in funding and support for autistic people making the transition into employment. Other speakers included Rachel Pearson from our partner AS Mentoring and several young neurodivergent lawyers who shared their experiences and suggested creative ideas to remove barriers to employment to autistic people seeking jobs and remaining in the legal profession.

The Legal Neurodiversity Network is a fast-growing network of neurodivergent employees, partners and allies working in the UK legal services sector. They currently have over 55 organisations from all over the UK as members. These include all the 'Magic Circle' firms, The Law Societies of England and Wales and of Scotland, Lexxix and Neurodiversity in Law. They also welcome the full participation of the legal departments of non-legal services companies and bodies. Any organisation interested in joining the network can contact them via [LinkedIn](#). They have a number of upcoming events including a Neurodiversity Celebration event on 19 March at Allen & Overy.



New Mentor Partner

We are very pleased to announce that Sonya Power, founder of Spectrum Career Coach has joined our network of approved partners which has expanded our geographical reach and increased our capacity to support autistic job seekers into employment. Sonya covers Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire as well as offering remote support and is a very experienced mentor who achieved successful outcomes for many Autism Forward clients in her previous role as employment coach with Autism Bedfordshire. Further details of the support Sonya offers can be found on her website www.spectrumcareercoach.co.uk.

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Autism Forward Beneficiaries

We have now awarded over 330 grants for mentoring support and continue to see encouraging employment outcomes for our grant holders across the country. Over 70% of the job seekers we have supported since April this year are already in paid or voluntary employment and 95% of our current clients reported that the mentoring support had helped improve their self-confidence and understanding of their strengths and challenges. We continue to receive excellent feedback on the support we fund, as demonstrated by recent comments from some of our clients:

"This mentoring has changed my life! I have gone from not knowing what I want to do for employment, to finding out that I love coding and now I'm pursuing a software engineering apprenticeship. I am very pleased to have just been offered a place on one apprenticeship and I am waiting for the result of another. I am so much more confident now in my work and personal life and I am really looking forward to starting my job, with the continued support of AS Mentoring."

"I have enjoyed the mentoring support because it has given me a chance to identify my strengths and match those strengths to the right job. I have been offered a role as a co-facilitator to support training healthcare professionals in regards to autism and learning disabilities, which will be rewarding and make a difference to society."

"Sonya has been incredibly understanding, patient and accommodating and helped broaden my perspectives. The support has been of a very high calibre and has improved my self confidence and it is lovely having someone believe in yourself and help you to find your strengths."

We are very grateful to all our donors and regular supporters who enable us to fund this vital support. If you would like to set up a regular donation to support our work, you can do so through [Just Giving](#) or by contacting jane@autismforward.org.uk. As we have no overheads, all funds are used to fund specialist mentoring support for autistic job seekers from our network of experienced mentors.

LinkedIn Course on Neurodiversity in the Workplace

LinkedIn Learning is offering a course presented by HR professional and organisational psychologist Tiffany Jameson addressing neurodiversity and the importance of recognising how different individuals' learning and communication style influences how they work best. She covers common challenges the neurodivergent face in the workplace and how to best support candidates and current team members who learn and communicate differently, emphasising how recognising and incorporating the strengths of neurodiverse employees can lead to a better and more effective workforce.

You can sign up for the course now via [LinkedIn](#).

CVC 30th Anniversary Challenge

Our thanks to all those at CVC who participated in the 30th Anniversary Challenge which involved walking, cycling and running to earn points which were then turned into a donation to the nominated charities.

We were delighted to be nominated by two of the CVC teams which resulted in a very generous donation of over £17,000 to help us help more autistic people into employment.

Our thanks to all at CVC who participated in the challenge and nominated us for this award.

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If you would like to raise funds for Autism Forward or nominate us as your firm's Charity of the Year please contact:

jane@autismforward.org.uk