

20/20 LEVELS
"I AM CHANGE"
NEURODIVERSITY
PRESENTATION

LAUNCH OF
BUCKLAND REVIEW
OF AUTISM
EMPLOYMENT

LEGAL
NEURODIVERSITY
NETWORK
CELEBRATION AT
ALLEN & OVERY

TUESDAY NIGHT
MOVIE CLUB
SOCIAL EVENTS
IN BRIGHTON

AUTISM FORWARD NEWS

20/20 Levels - "I Am Change" Programme

We were invited to present a session on neurodiversity at work to the current cohort of young people on the excellent 20/20 Levels "I Am Change" programme covering declaring a diagnosis, Equality Act rights, reasonable adjustments, Access to Work and other support available for neurodivergent people in the workplace.

20/20 Levels is a social mobility organisation, empowering Black and racially underrepresented young people through opportunities to maximise their potential. Their programmes have transformed the lives of over a thousand young people across London, with over 60% of their candidates gaining new employment within 3 months of completing their programme. We look forward to meeting the next cohort later this year.



Launch of Buckland Review of Autism Employment

We recently attended the launch of the Buckland Review of Autism Employment initiated by Sir Robert Buckland KC MP, having been invited to contribute to the Review alongside the Legal Neurodiversity Network. We welcome the recommendations of the Review and the attention it brings to the pressing need to remove barriers to employment for autistic people.

It highlights many of the issues that Autism Forward was set up to address, in particular the lack of specialist support for autistic people seeking employment, the difficulty in obtaining DWP Access to Work funded support, the lack of awareness of the right to "reasonable adjustments" in the workplace and the lack of guidance and awareness training for colleagues and line managers.

The report has some excellent recommendations for employers, however it offers little in the way of pre-employment support for autistic people, the gap in support between education (or late diagnosis) and employment that is the primary focus of our work. However we welcome the renewed focus on what employers should be doing to make workplaces more accessible for autistic people, which will benefit our clients and autistic people across the country.

**AUTISM
FORWARD**

Tuesday Night Movie Club

Autism Forward is funding a new Tuesday Night Movie Club for the autistic job seekers supported by our mentor partner in Brighton, Karen-Anne Manghan, who came up with the idea as a way for mentees to meet up socially. Several Autism Forward clients have joined the group.

The first Tuesday Night Movie Club group met via Zoom, having all watched Noah Baumbach's 'Frances Ha' before the meeting. The group discussed the neurodivergent aspects of the film and characters, and talked about the resonance to their own lived experience.

The participants have set up a WhatsApp group to stay in contact and voted on the next film, Stanley Kubrick's 'Dr Strangelove'. They are planning a trip to the Duke of York's cinema in Brighton during April, which is one of the oldest working cinemas in the world. The feedback is that the mentees really enjoyed the group and it is hoped that new members will be joining soon.



We were also pleased to see Karen-Anne featured in Autistica's Change Makers campaign for the fantastic work she does supporting autistic students and job seekers.

Autism Forward Expands Mentor Network

We are very pleased to welcome on board our newest mentor partner, Autistic Nottingham, an entirely autistic led charity based in Nottingham. As well as offering employment support, the charity provides support to people seeking a diagnosis, university students and offers online self-help courses as well as organising online and in person social events and games nights for autistic adults.

This year we have awarded more grants than any other previous year to autistic job seekers, with over 75 new grants being made to autistic job seekers. We also continue to support over 40 clients from previous financial years. With the expansion of our mentor network we should continue to grow in the coming financial year.

Thanks to all our donors for your continued support which makes it possible for us to continue to expand our reach. We would particularly like to thank CVC Philanthropy and the Jomati Foundation who have provided us with extremely generous support again this year, as well as our regular individual donors who help us maintain a consistent level of funding. Donations can be made via Just Giving or the Charities Aid Foundation.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week

Last week we joined the Legal Neurodiversity Network last week for their Neurodiversity Celebration event at Allen & Overy. It was great to connect with so many ND professionals and allies.

Through the tireless work of the LNN, the legal profession is making great progress to drive change forward to improve opportunities and inclusion for neurodivergent people.

Nurturing Neurodivergence is a new peer mentoring initiative offering one to one support for neurodivergent people in the legal profession. Interested mentors and mentees can sign up on their [website](#).



It was also great to hear about about Fair Shot's work supporting young people with learning disabilities into employment through their year long hospitality programme at their excellent cafe in Covent Garden.