

Nature without
barriers





Welcome

Jess Waterman

Head of Engagement and Insights,
Barnwood Trust



**Welcome and
introduction**

**Understanding
the barriers**



**Break
(11.30am)**

**Access to
Nature network
learning**



**Lunch
(12.45pm)**

**Tips and
resources to
improve access**

**Closing and
next steps**

**Finish
(3.00pm)**



“Gloucestershire will be a better place when disabled people and people with mental health conditions are equal, empowered and their rights are upheld.”

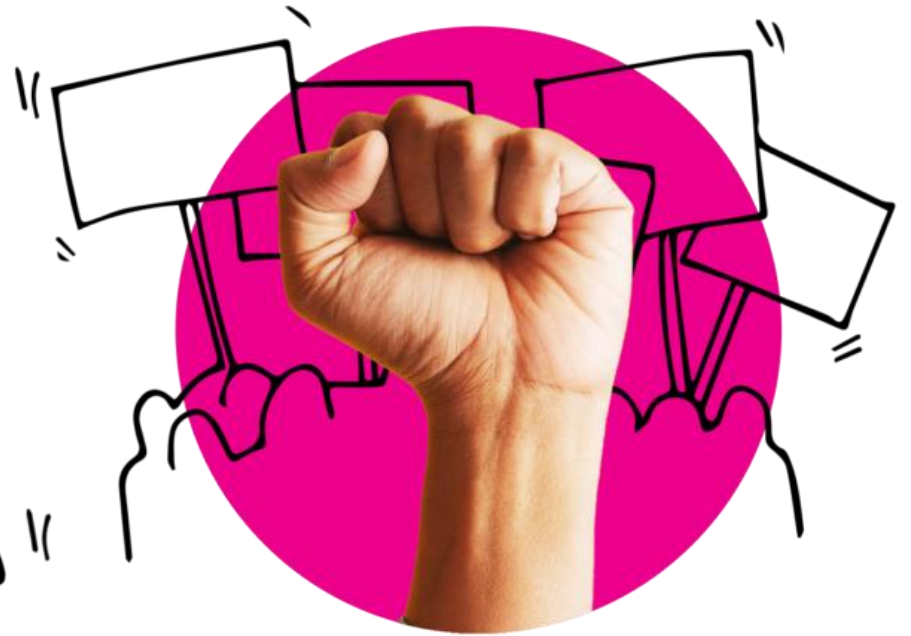
Goals



Opportunity



Inclusion

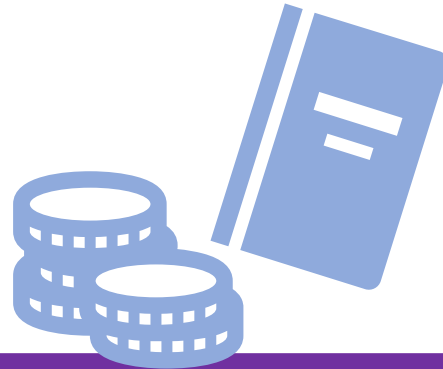


Rights

What we do



**We gather
intelligence**



**We fund,
share research
and learning**



**We influence
change**

Change themes

Academy of
Empowered
Employers.

Access
to Nature





The story so far...

Josh Jones

Learning Manager,
Barnwood Trust



Event



Learning



barn
wood circle



Networks

**Access
to Nature**



Understanding the barriers

Panel discussion, Q&A





Break



Access to Nature network learning

Keynote from Max Biddlestone, Facilities
Manager, National Trust Cotswold
Countryside

Culture for Access

Max Biddlestone, National Trust



National
Trust




National Trust

Access audits of our key sites – with experts by lived experience at Inclusion Gloucestershire

INCLUSION GLOUCESTERSHIRE

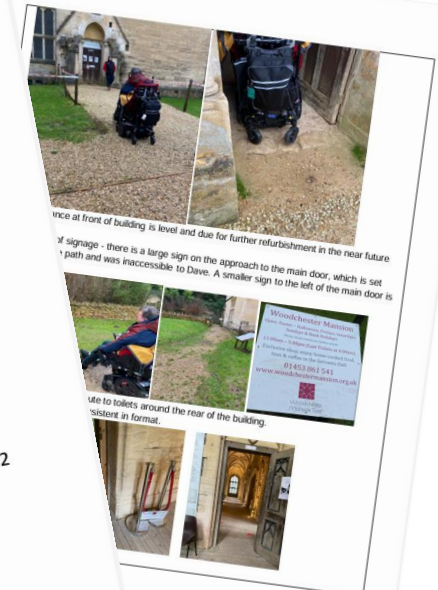
ACCESS AUDIT:



Location: Sherborne Estate (Ewe Pen - Woodland - Village)

Completed by: Hilary Dutta & Matt Latham

Date completed: Thursday 8th December 2022



...nce at front of building is level and due for further refurbishment in the near future

of signage - there is a large sign on the approach to the main door, which is set on a path and was inaccessible to Dave. A smaller sign to the left of the main door is

...ite to toilets around the rear of the building is not in format.

INCLUSION GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ACCESS AUDIT:

Location: Woodchester Park & Woodchester Mansion



Completed by: Dave Evans and Hilary Dutta

Date completed: 10th and 18th January 2023

INCLUSION GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ACCESS AUDIT

Haresfield Beacon and Standish Wood, National Trust



Completed by: Hilary Dutta and Hilary Dutta

Date completed: 2023, 17th February 2023



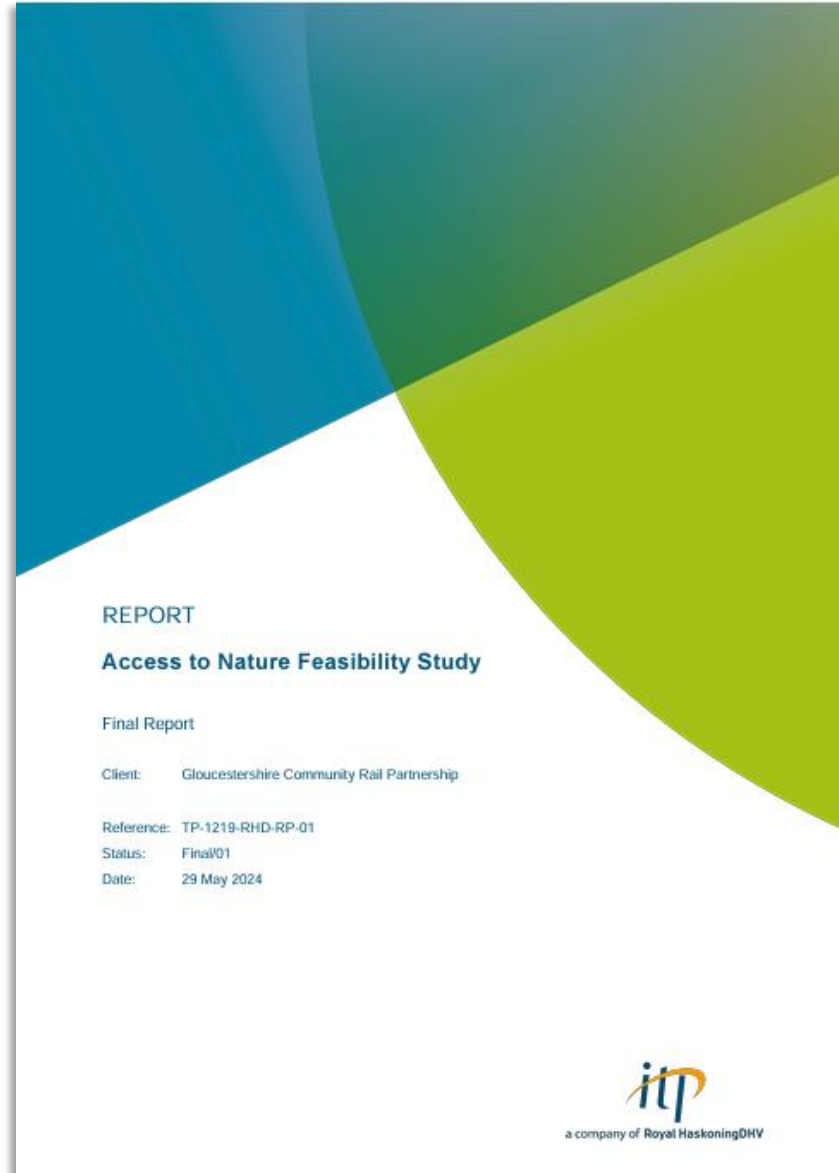
National
Trust

Tracks, furniture, parking and powered doors
– funded by Cotswold National Landscape





Access to Nature Transport Study – with Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership, Forestry England, Friends of Westonbirt, Cotswold National Landscape and WWT Slimbridge



A study into connecting our urban and Muslim communities with rural countryside sites – part of an ongoing relationship with the Friendship Café



Enhancing Nature Access for Urbanised Gloucestershire Communities: Woodchester Park Initiative

Enhancing accessibility and inclusivity for all community segments to connect with nature at Woodchester Park.

Ismail Kholwadia,
Friendship Café
July 2024





National
Trust

Working to deliver a new site, committed to
access to nature at Woodchester Park





National
Trust

All terrain “Tramper” – provided in partnership with the Countryside Mobility Scheme





National
Trust

Learning from and working with likeminded
organisations at Access to Nature



Access 
to Nature



“

We all want quiet. We all want beauty...we all
need space.

Octavia Hill

Co-founder of the National Trust



Our strategy 2020–2025

Delivery Plan 2022-2025

Our belief:

Nature, beauty, history.
For everyone, for ever.

Our public benefit:

We protect and care for places so people and nature can thrive, ensuring everyone benefits. We offer access, enjoyment and a chance to help out.

Our values:

Love people and places
Welcome everyone
Think now and forever
Make it happen

Ambitions	Looking after We will care for places and give them a sustainable future.	Land and nature We will improve the state of nature in the UK.	Curation and experiences We will make sure our places keep evolving, attracting people and inspiring them.	Urban places We will address unequal access to nature, beauty and history.	Growing support We will give people more opportunities to get involved and support our work.	People and resources We will be an inclusive, welcoming and sustainable organisation.

Essentials	Compliance	Conservation excellence	Environmental management	High-quality service and experiences	Growing public trust and relevance	Loyal and growing member and donor base	Financial sustainability	Engaged staff and volunteers

Objectives	Priority 1: Everyone Welcome By 2030 better reflect the changing communities we serve.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve more people in maintaining and actively improving our places and collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase access to the outdoors, focusing on opportunities for people and nature to connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use history and culture to bring people together, increasing the number and diversity of visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance urban green spaces and link access to countryside to create 20 green corridors (by 2030) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase engagement opportunities for children and young people at our places and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed an inclusive culture and diversify our staff and volunteer workforce 	
	Priority 2: Climate Action By 2030 be net zero carbon as an organisation.						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the ability of our places to adapt to the impacts of climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore and establish carbon-rich habitats, including 20 million trees (by 2030) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise the environmental impact of our business, and transition to lower carbon 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow fundraising income, inspiring support through stories of climate change solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and enable our people to make day to day choices that are lower carbon 	

Welcome everyone, for ever, by:

- making our places better for people who need support to access them, working through partnerships and testing new approaches
- working with others to increase access to parks and green spaces in, around and near urban areas
- playing our part to create a fair and equal society, free from discrimination.

Our staff, volunteers, members, donors and supporters will all help us to achieve this, and over the coming years we will: improve our membership offer; give visitors better experiences; introduce simpler and more efficient processes for our staff; and create more ways to volunteer and for volunteers to feel their skills are recognised.

National Ambitions

By 2030: The go-to provider of entry level experiences outdoors

For everyone

A visitor offer that enables visitors to use the outdoors in the way they want to

Working in partnership,
connecting to communities

Everywhere

A product range at scale of consistent quality – walking, cycling, play, social gatherings etc.

A network of destination ‘hubs’ that provide a full day experience of outdoor activities



Focusing on Everyone Welcome

We all have a part to play in **better reflecting the changing communities we serve**. Here's how we're making a difference in the Cotswolds Countryside:



Definitions

Protected Characteristic:

A characteristic that is protected by law under the Equalities Act

The protected characteristics are **age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation**. Nine protected characteristics are set out in the Equality Act

Recruiting for our values

Love people
and places



Welcome
everyone



Think now
and for ever



Make it
happen



Living our commitment to access



Everyone Welcome hub



'Everyone Welcome' is our commitment to inclusion and diversity at the National Trust.



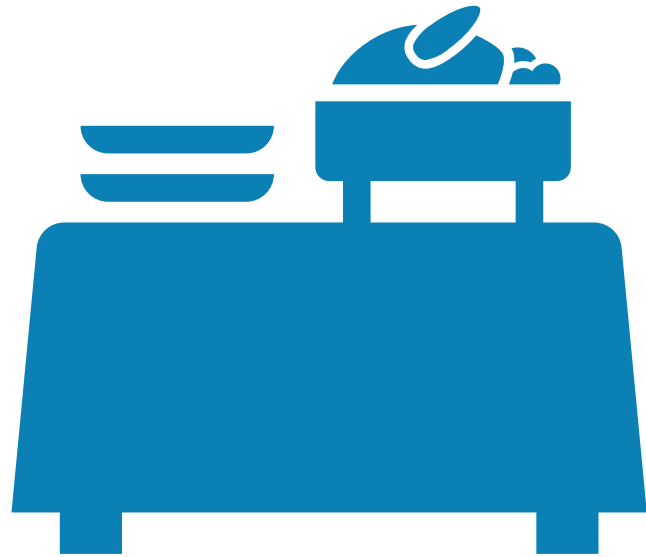


Thank you



Table Discussions

to hear more from the
Access to Nature Network



Lunch



How can you improve access to nature for disabled people?

Taster sessions by Inclusion Gloucestershire, Activity Alliance and Andrew Cotterill



Clear and Accessible Communications

Sarah Brown-Fraser

Activity Alliance

A quick tour of communications

Access to nature: November 2024

activityalliance.org.uk



activity
alliance

disability
inclusion
sport

Factsheet 1: Social media

Social media has an undeniably huge reach, with the power to connect with most audiences, including disabled people. For example, Facebook has more than 1.8 billion monthly active users, which makes it the world's most popular social media network. But to reach disabled people it's vital to make sure that communications from your social media channels are accessible and inclusive.

It's worth remembering that traditional media channels are often favoured by older audiences. However, do not presume all disabled or older people do not use social media. So it's best not to rely on social media for all your communication and have the age guidelines to hand. Your audience is as diverse as the channels they use!

Planning: Create an inclusive communications policy

The best way to reach more disabled people through accessible social media is to develop an inclusive communications policy that clearly sets out your commitment to inclusion. You should consider:

For more information about how to develop your policy see our **Inclusive Communications Guide** available on our website.

What are the benefits of good communications?

Accessibility is good for our brand and profile.

You can reach more people, including more disabled people.

We all have preferences. Our habits and abilities change.

Recruit and retain staff. Keep customers.

Make us future proof. Everyone will experience barriers to communications. These can be permanent, temporary or in the situations we are in.



Three areas:

1. Knowing your audience.
2. Reaching more people.
3. Providing support and formats.



Knowing your audience

One size doesn't fit all

Intersectionality. Disabled people identify with many demographics and have various motivations.

Regularly monitor communication needs and preferences

In your planning



Don't assume your audiences don't (or do!) have requirements

Consider age ranges and barriers to channels and information.

Form panels/groups who can test and advise on your communications

Reaching more people

Write in clear English, with less jargon, acronyms and 'buzz' phrases.

Test your colour contrast in design or documents.

Use images that are positive and inclusive.

In your planning



Use a font that is easier to read, and avoid using all capitals, italics and lots of bold words.

Don't assume that your distribution way is the best way.

Include more supportive information on your posters or advertisements.

What to include on posters and advertisements

- Engaging image
- Attention grabbing headline
- Supporting messages
- Contact details
- Website and social links
- Other details:
 - How to get to the venue
 - Venue accessibility and facilities
 - Support offered at the venue



Accessible formats

These are some of the accessible formats you may get asked for:

- HTML or web pages
- Accessible PDFs
- Accessible Word documents
- Large print
- Audio descriptions
- Captioning and BSL interpretation on videos
- Easy read
- Textphone, text messaging
- Plain text versions of email flyers/newsletters
- Transcripts
- Braille

Why should I be more active?



Being active is good for your health and well-being physically and mentally.



Having a health condition or impairment may affect what you can do but you can still try.



Being active will make a fitter, healthier you!

It also helps you meet people and make new friends.

Providing support and accessible formats

Ask people for communication format preferences on forms etc.

Have a budget assigned (or an idea of what things cost)

Have a list of suppliers and know rough production time.

Promote that you have these formats.

In your planning



Offer two contact points and a real person for support.

Create virtual tours, use photos and access statements.

You can do some accessible formats for free or little time/cost.

Other resources

English Federation of Disability Sport | BIG VOICE Make every word count | SPORT ENGLAND

Access for all: inclusive communications

Reaching more people in sport and physical activity through inclusive and accessible communications

14point Bold

Inclusive Communications Factsheets

- Social Media
- Events
- Digital Comms
- Language
- Budget
- Campaigns
- Design
- Photography
- News



activity alliance | disability inclusion sport

New learning hub

Discover and develop

learn.activityalliance.org.uk

Thank you

info@activityalliance.org.uk

Call 0808 175 6991

activityalliance.org.uk

**activity
alliance**

disability
inclusion
sport



Co-production

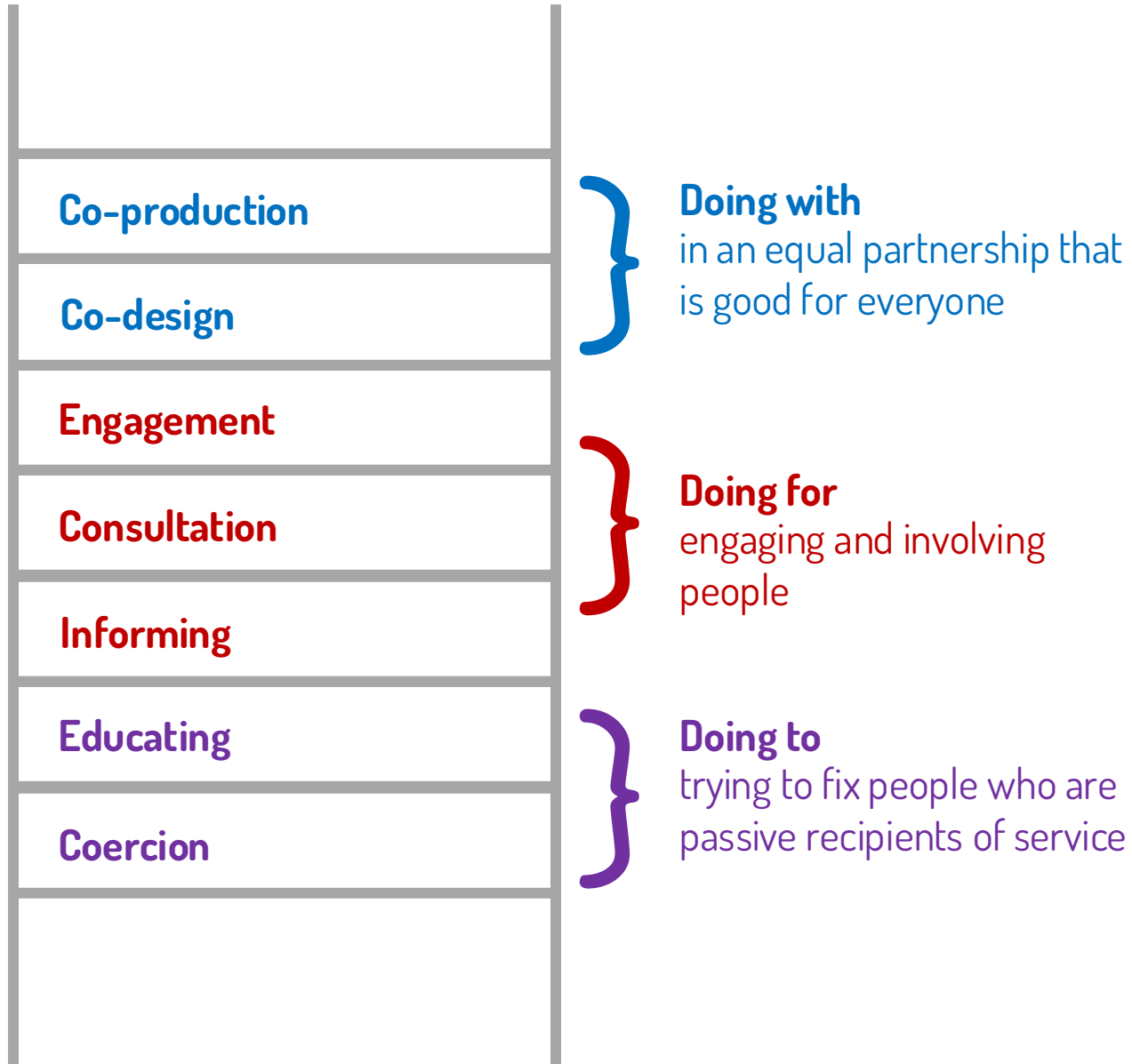
Vicci Livingstone-Thompson and Bee Barker
Inclusion Gloucestershire



What is co- production?

Working together as equal partners, with shared power and shared responsibility.

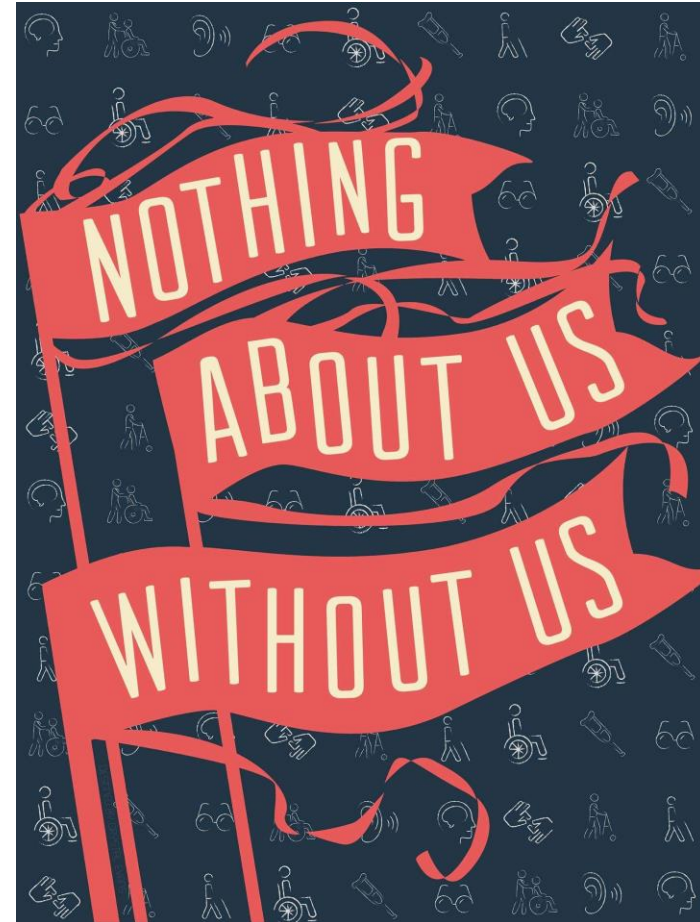
Partners involved are people with lived and learned experience.



Co-production ladder

Why does co-production matter?

- People are the experts in their own lives
- Offering what people want in an accessible way
- Makes nature inclusive to everyone
- Reduced inequalities in health and wellbeing
- Empowering and welcoming



How to make Co-Production Happen

1. Co-production is everybody's business
2. People representing different groups and communities need to be involved
3. People need to get something out of it
4. People need to understand co-production and hold each other to account



Coproduction myth busting



It is difficult, and takes a lot of time and money



It's someone else's job



Organisations and individuals don't have the skills/experience/capacity for us to share power with



It isn't possible to hear seldom heard voices

Coproduction isn't...



I had an Access Audit so that's coproduction sorted



I came up with a plan/strategy/model and asked Experts by Experience for feedback



I had an Expert by Experience on an interview panel and they read the questions that I provided



I asked someone else to do it



How do we check it's working?

Measure success

Think about how it makes people feel

Think about the impact on people's lives

Look for magic moments



Neurodivergence and Nature

Andrew Cotterill

Gloucestershire Autism Partnership Board



Neurodivergence and Access to Nature

Andrew Cotterill,
late diagnosed autistic

This talk:

Neurodiversity, Neurodivergence and the individual

Some Neurodivergent challenges

Practical examples of what might you do?

- The environment
- For the individual
- Equipping Staff

Example – An Arboretum

Neurodiversity and Neurodivergence

Neurodiversity – The natural diverse variation

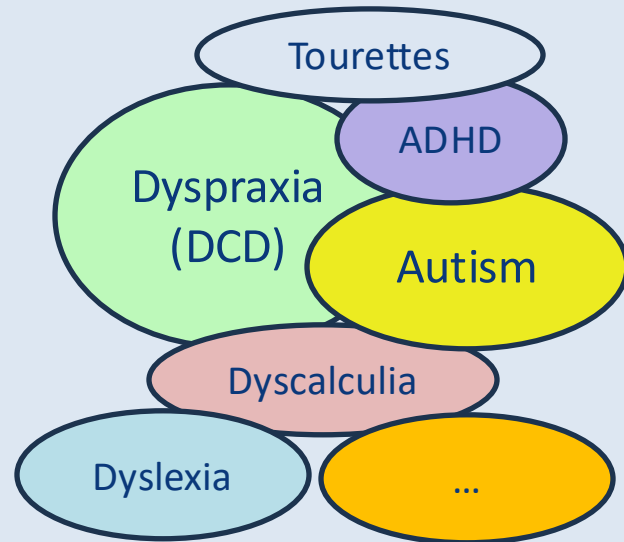
Neurodivergent – Those whose neurological make up diverges from that considered typical

Estimates suggest 1 in 7 / 15% of people are neurodivergent

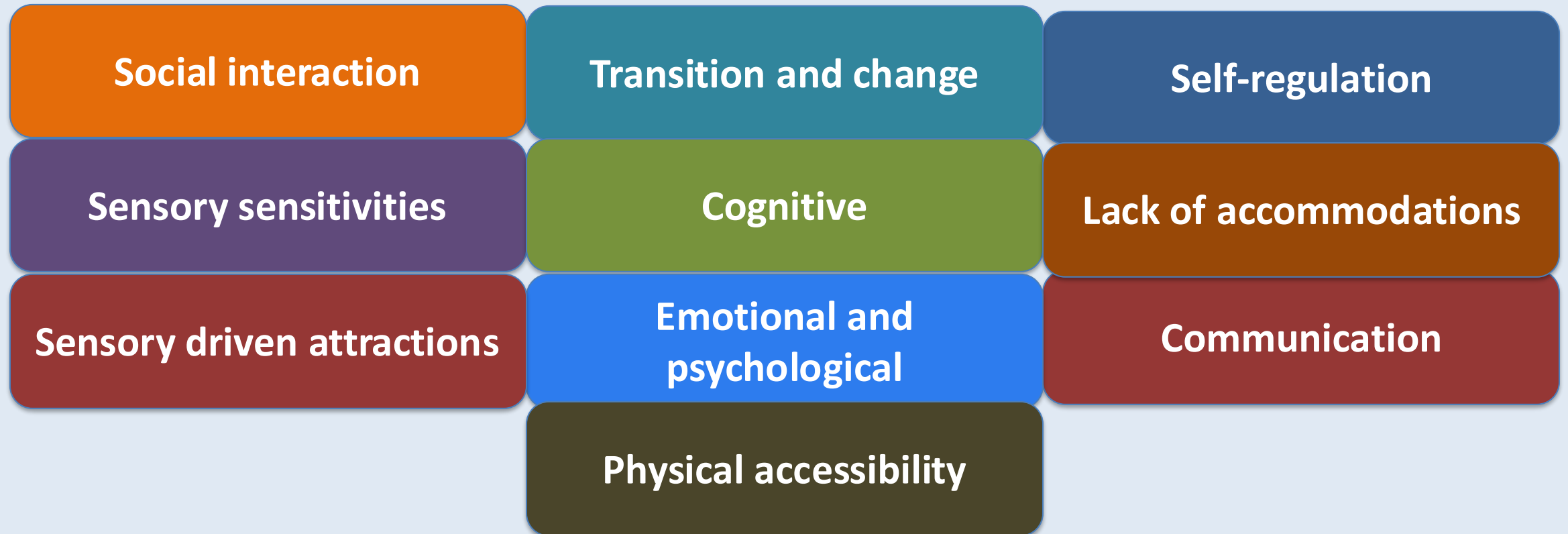
Variation amongst neurodivergent individuals is **LARGE**

Do : Recognise the individual!

Many have co-occurring conditions including often mental health issues.



Some areas of possible neurodivergent challenges



What can you do?: The environment

- Sensory accommodations & information / map
- Clear and accessible signage / information
- Flexible entry and exit options
- Small group options
- Provision sensory kits
- Flexible policies
- Adapted experiences
- Activities and engagement
- Communications aids
- Accessibility features
- Emergency and support readiness
- Feedback and co-production
- Provision of introductory pictures / videos of the environment
- Caregiver passes

What can you do?: For the individual

- See the person, not just the neurodivergence
- Engage with the individual
- Prioritize flexibility
- Understand sensory preferences
- Balance support with independence
- Be patient and empathetic
- Plan for recovery needs
- Recognize intersectionality
- Focus on open and ongoing communication

Warning : Many individuals don't know their own needs, challenges and what works for them as reasonable adjustments

What can you do?: Equipping Staff

- Provide Training in
 - understanding neurodivergence
 - Tools and strategies
- Develop supporting visual communication aids
- Create clear protocols / guidelines for handling situations
- Foster Empathy and Understanding
- Foster an inclusive culture
- Practice ongoing improvement

Enhancing understanding is also good for recognizing and supporting neurodivergent staff!

Example An Arboretum

Making tailored accommodations can make it even more enjoyable and accessible.

Here's some specific thoughts to make more inclusive and supportive:

- 1. Pre-Visit Preparation**
- 2. Arrival and Orientation**
- 3. Environmental Considerations**
- 4. Activities and Engagement**
- 5. Accommodations During the Visit**
- 6. Amenities and Accessibility**
- 7. Post-Visit Support**
- 8. Example Itinerary**

Pre-Visit Preparation

- **Provide Detailed Information:**
 - Offer a downloadable visitor guide or social story explaining what to expect, including photos of key areas (entrance, restrooms, paths).
 - Include sensory information about sounds (e.g., birds, water), smells (e.g., flowers, mulch), and terrain.
 - Identify quieter days / times of the week.
- **Virtual Preview:**
 - Provide virtual tours or videos to help visitors familiarize themselves with the arboretum layout and attractions.
- **Advance Booking:**
 - Allow for pre-booking of accommodations like sensory kits or quiet room access.

Arrival and Orientation

- **Clear Signage:**
 - Use simple, visual signs with icons and arrows to guide visitors from parking to entrances, restrooms, and main attractions.
- **Welcome Staff Training:**
 - Equip greeters with basic neurodiversity training to recognize and support neurodivergent visitors.
 - Offer a "quiet hour" option for less crowded entry times.

Environmental Considerations

- **Sensory-Friendly Paths:**
 - Identify quieter, low-traffic trails and label them on the map.
 - Provide pathways with smoother surfaces for those sensitive to uneven terrain.
- **Quiet Zones:**
 - Designate peaceful areas with shaded seating for relaxation or recovery.
 - Include signage for these spaces so they're easy to locate.
- **Minimize Overwhelming Sensory Features:**
 - If possible, reduce high-pitched sounds or flashing lights in exhibit areas.
 - Offer alternatives for areas with intense sensory elements, such as loud waterfalls or fragrant plants.

Activities and Engagement

- **Interactive Options:**
 - Provide age related hands-on activities like planting seeds, tree identification games, or art stations for those who enjoy tactile engagement.
 - Use sensory tools like touchable bark samples or calming water features.
- **Flexible Group Activities:**
 - Offer small group or individual experiences, such as guided nature or history walks or history tailored to different comfort levels.
- **Educational Materials:**
 - Use multi-sensory learning tools like audio guides, tactile maps, or video explanations.
 - Include simple labels on plants with icons or QR codes for interactive learning.

Do involve some neurodivergent visitors for gaining some suggestions! Experiment with some options!

Accommodations During the Visit

- **Sensory Kits:**
 - Provide optional kits with noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, fidget toys, and visual communication cards.
- **Companion Passes:**
 - Allow a caregiver or support person to accompany visitors at no extra charge.
- **Staff Availability:**
 - Ensure staff are visible and trained to assist with needs like directions, accommodations, or calming techniques.

Amenities and Accessibility

- **Restrooms and Facilities:**
 - Ensure restrooms are sensory-friendly (e.g., low-flush noise, consistent lighting).
 - Include at least one family restroom or private space.
- **Rest Areas:**
 - Provide frequent shaded benches or sheltered areas for breaks along trails.
- **Food Options:**
 - Offer sensory-friendly dining areas with low noise and adjustable seating arrangements.
 - Include simple or plain food choices for those with dietary sensitivities.

Post-Visit Support

- **Feedback Channels:**
 - Create easy ways for neurodivergent visitors or their caregivers to provide feedback (e.g., simple surveys or a dedicated email address).
- **Follow-Up Options:**
 - Offer discounts or memberships for return visits to encourage familiarity and comfort.

Example Itinerary

- **For a Quiet Morning Visit:**

1. **Arrival (9:00 AM):** Early entry during a quieter time. Staff provides a sensory map and sensory kit.
2. **Exploration (9:30 AM):** Follow a marked sensory-friendly trail with shaded rest areas.
3. **Activity (10:15 AM):** Participate in a guided nature activity like leaf rubbing or seed planting.
4. **Break (11:00 AM):** Relax in a quiet zone with water features and benches.
5. **Optional Tour (11:30 AM):** Join a small group tour focusing on trees and flowers, with a guide trained to use simple explanations and a slower pace.

Recap: You heard about:

Neurodiversity, Neurodivergence and the individual

Some Neurodivergent challenges

What might you do?

- The environment / Attraction
- For the individual
- Equipping Staff

Example – An Arboretum

Nature without barriers



Thank you and next steps



Find out more:

Josh Jones, Barnwood Trust Learning
Manager

Josh.jones@barnwoodtrust.org

Access 
to Nature