Neurodivergent News

FROM NeuroHub Connect

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FRONT PAGE · FAMILIES

Ombudsman: York council failed to give a non-verbal Autistic boy the communication support in his EHC Plan

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman found City of York Council at fault for not making sure classroom staff were trained in Makaton, as a non-verbal Autistic boy's Education, Health and Care Plan required.

Neurodivergent News desk, edited by David Gray · AI-written · AI fact-checked

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An Education, Health and Care Plan is meant to be a legal promise. A decision published by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman on 5 November shows what happens when that promise isn't kept.

The Ombudsman has upheld a complaint against City of York Council from the mother of a non-verbal Autistic boy who relies on Makaton to communicate. His EHC Plan said all teaching staff working in his classroom had to be trained in Makaton to level three to four. The Ombudsman found that between September 2023 and July 2025, not all of his teachers were trained to that level.

What the Ombudsman found

According to the decision, the council had accepted, in response to the family's legal letter, that it had breached its duty and failed to deliver the provision. The council said staff absences and course cancellations had delayed the training. The Ombudsman said that did not excuse the delay, and that the council should have looked for other training providers.

The Ombudsman's news release says that for more than a year, either no member of staff or at most one held the required level of qualification. It describes the training as patchy and slow, with staff still learning Makaton while they were teaching the boy. It also says

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the boy's mother was repeatedly left chasing the council for updates.

The decision is direct: "We find fault by the Council which has caused injustice to Mrs X and Y." (The Ombudsman does not name the family, and neither do we.)

What happens now

The council had already paid the boy's mother £9,000 for the missed provision. The Ombudsman recommended an apology and a further £1,575 for the boy's loss of provision between March 2024 and July 2025. The council must also review its procedures, and draw up an action plan to reduce delays in Makaton training and commission more trainers. The Ombudsman says the council has accepted these recommendations.

Julie Odams, Chief Executive at the Ombudsman, said: "A legal duty to a disabled child is not something a council can work around."

Why it matters

For a non-verbal child whose Plan depends on signing, untrained staff are not a minor gap in provision. They are the difference between being understood at school and not. In this newsroom's view, payments and action plans matter, but they can't give back more than a year of school without the communication support the law required.

It is also a reminder of why families hold on so tightly to the legal duty an EHC Plan creates.

This piece summarises the Ombudsman's published decision and news release. Read the original decision for the full findings.

SOURCES

City of York Council (25 005 046) (Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman)
lgo.org.uk/decisions/education/special-educational-needs/25-005-046

York council left disabled boy without the support to communicate for more than a year (Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman)
lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2026/nov/york-council-left-disabled-boy-without-the-support-to-communicate-for-more-than-a-year

This article online

FAMILIES

Hertfordshire approves up to 128 new specialist SEND places, most in mainstream schools

Hertfordshire County Council's Cabinet has approved four SEND units in mainstream schools and a special school satellite, adding up to 128 places so more children can learn close to home.

Neurodivergent News desk, edited by David Gray · AI-written · AI fact-checked

Hertfordshire County Council's Cabinet has approved up to 128 new specialist places for children with special educational needs and disabilities, Hits Radio reports. The decision was made on Wednesday 4 November.

Where the places will be

Most of the new places are in SEND units based inside mainstream schools. According to Hits Radio, four units will provide 88 places, at a cost of more than £7m:

- St Mary's Infants' School, Baldock: 12 places
- Shenley Primary School, Radlett: 16 places
- Hitchin Boys' School, Hitchin: 36 places
- Ralph Sadleir School, Ware: 24 places

The units are for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans who have more complex or multiple needs. Pupils are based in the unit and join mainstream lessons and school events where that's right for them.

The Cabinet also agreed to enlarge Colnbrook Special School through a satellite at Woodhall Primary School,

adding 40 places for children and young people with severe learning difficulties, at a cost of more than £3m.

No opening dates have been given yet.

Close to home

According to Hits Radio, the aim is for children to get specialist support as close to home as possible, while staying connected to their local school community. The council's executive member for education, SEND and inclusion said: "Every child deserves to feel included, supported, and able to thrive in education close to their home."

Our view

Long journeys to distant placements cost children a lot: time, energy, friendships and a sense of belonging in their own community. Specialist bases inside local mainstream schools can offer the best of both, if they are properly staffed and the whole school is ready to welcome the children in them. New places are welcome news for families who have been waiting. The test will be how quickly they open, and whether they are built around what the children actually need.

This piece summarises reporting by Hits Radio. Read the original article for the full story.

SOURCES

Hertfordshire County Council expands SEND provision with new specialist places (Hits Radio)
hellorayo.co.uk/hits-radio/beds-bucks-herts/news/hertfordshire-county-council-expands-send-provision-with-new-specialist-places

This article online

IDENTITY

NAS Cymru publishes a guide to help Welsh politicians understand and represent Autistic people

The National Autistic Society in Wales has published a guide for Members of the Senedd and councillors on communicating with Autistic constituents, making surgeries accessible and challenging misinformation about autism.

Neurodivergent News desk, edited by David Gray · AI-written · AI fact-checked

The National Autistic Society's Welsh arm, NAS Cymru, has published "Understanding Autism: A guide for Members of the Senedd and Councillors". It is aimed at elected representatives in Wales and people standing for election, and is available in English and Welsh.

What the guide covers

The guide explains what autism is and the barriers Autistic people face, and asks politicians to join the Senedd's Cross-Party Autism Group, for which NAS Cymru provides the secretariat.

It gives practical advice on communication: avoid metaphors and open-ended questions, help people prepare for meetings, and follow through on commitments. It recommends the term "Autistic people", while checking how each person describes themselves.

There is a section on making constituency surgeries autism-friendly: giving information about the venue in advance, allowing time to process, adjusting lighting and noise, and sticking to plans.

Challenging misinformation

The guide also asks politicians to tackle misinformation and harmful narratives about autism. It sets out five steps: consider the language, check the source, check the facts, counter false narratives, and report misinformation. It states that autism is not caused by vaccines or paracetamol, says there is no evidence of "overdiagnosis", and challenges biased claims about benefits. On Personal Independence

Payment, it says that of £28.5bn awarded in 2025-26, just 1.4% was overpaid because of fraud.

The figures

The guide puts the number of Autistic people in Wales at at least 31,000, and in the UK at at least 700,000. It says only 30% of Autistic people are in any form of employment, and that 80% of Autistic adults in the UK report difficulty visiting a GP.

The guide also sets out NAS Cymru's campaign, launched in January 2026, for an autism and learning disability act for Wales.

Our view

Politicians shape the services Autistic people rely on, and the stories told about them in public debate. A plain, practical guide like this one asks elected representatives to do two simple things: make themselves accessible to Autistic constituents, and stop repeating myths about them. Both are overdue.

This piece summarises the National Autistic Society's announcement and the guide itself. Read the original guide for the full detail.

SOURCES

NAS Cymru launches guide for Politicians (National Autistic Society)
autism.org.uk/what-we-do/news/nas-cymru-launches-guide-for-politicians

Understanding Autism: A guide for Members of the Senedd and Councillors (NAS Cymru)
nas.chorus-mk.thirdlight.com/file/24/sjY6wh1sjZaC3gEsjm7xstB9SQE/UA%20Guide%20for%20Sennedd%20Members%20English.pdf

This article online

FROM NEUROHUB · OUR OWN CONTENT

Autistic burnout as a crisis of connection, not a flat battery

In The Wider Existence, David Gray-Hammond argues that Autistic burnout is better understood as disconnection than depletion, and that left unrecognised it can become a route into psychiatric crisis.

This is NeuroHub's own blog post, from The Wider Existence. We wrote this summary; the original is linked in the Sources box.

Content note: this piece mentions Autistic burnout and psychiatric crisis.

Most advice about Autistic burnout stops at exhaustion: rest more, do less, lower your expectations. Following Parts 1 and 2 of his series on The Wider Existence, David Gray-Hammond argues that this advice helps but is incomplete. The article's subtitle puts it plainly: "Autistic burnout is not a flat battery."

From "autism" to the monotropic mind

The article revisits Dr Luke Beardon's well-known equation, Autism + Environment = Outcome, and offers a revision: Monotropic person + Environment = Outcome. Monotropism, the theory set out by Dinah Murray, Mike Lesser and Wenn Lawson in 2005, describes attention that pools into fewer channels and runs deep. David argues that naming the way of attending, rather than the diagnostic label, explains how burnout happens. It also includes people the label has been withheld from: the undiagnosed, the refused and the misdiagnosed.

He describes a monotropic mind in a world built on constant switching (open-plan offices, bells every fifty minutes, back-to-back meetings, notifications) and draws on Tanya Adkin's term "monotropic split" for being pulled out of deep focus. One split may be survivable; years of them, he writes, are the soil burnout grows in.

What burnout is

The article draws on Dora Raymaker and colleagues' 2020 study, built with Autistic adults. That study describes burnout as long-term exhaustion, loss of function and reduced tolerance to stimulus, arising from chronic life stress and a mismatch between

expectations and abilities without enough support. David points out that this definition already locates the cause in a mismatch, not in the person.

A crisis of connection

The central argument, which David and Helen Edgar have made together, is that burnout is better understood as disconnection than depletion. The article maps that disconnection across three levels:

- The bodymind: chronic masking means overriding your own signals until hunger, pain and overwhelm become hard to notice.
- Relationships: constant correction and invalidation become minority stress, and belonging starts to feel conditional.
- Institutions: underemployment, inconsistent services and constant self-advocacy drain energy.

As the article puts it: "Capacity is not a fixed internal reserve, it is co-regulated and scaffolded by the ecosystem."

The rest of the article is for paid subscribers. Everything summarised here comes from the free opening sections.

This is a From NeuroHub piece: an AI-written news summary of our own content, based only on the article's free preview. Read the original: scan the QR code in the Sources box.

SOURCES

When the Web Frays: Burnout, Crisis and the Monotropic Mind (The Wider Existence)
thewiderexistence.co.uk/p/when-the-web-frays-burnout-crisis

Read the original

This article online

FROM NEUROHUB · OUR OWN CONTENT

The Mycelial Mind: neurodivergent spirituality, isolation and belonging

In episode 4 of The Mycelial Mind: NeuroKin Conversations, David Gray-Hammond and Adele Murray talk about what spirituality can mean for neurodivergent people, and why Autistic isolation isn't the same as being unsociable.

This is NeuroHub's own blog post, from the NeuroHub Connect blog. We wrote this summary; the original is linked in the Sources box.

What does spirituality mean for neurodivergent people, and why do so many Autistic people feel alone even in community? Those are the two big questions in episode 4 of The Mycelial Mind: NeuroKin Conversations, hosted by David Gray-Hammond and Adele Murray.

Spirituality without the baggage

According to the episode description, the hosts start by separating neurodivergent spirituality from religion, recognising the faith-based trauma that many people in the community carry. They then talk about spirituality as purpose, meaning, values and ethics, and about the ripple effects of actions beyond a single lifetime. Along the way the conversation takes in Cloud Atlas, and the places where quantum physics, Buddhism and neurodivergent ways of questioning the world meet.

Isolation is not the same as being unsociable

The second half turns to isolation. The description is clear on the starting point: "Autistic people aren't unsociable; we socialise differently." The hosts link much of the distance Autistic people feel to the double empathy problem.

They also draw on the idea of urhomelessness to explore what it means to feel unsafe and unacknowledged, even among your own people. They make the case that neurodivergent communities need to include everyone, especially people whose experiences challenge the community itself.

Also in the episode

The episode covers what's coming up at NeuroHub Connect and the launch of The Wider Existence, a Substack exploring neuroqueering, ethodiversity and posthumanism. The new Substack begins with symphrenia, which the description calls a community-created, non-pathologising term for AuDHD people with psychotic experiences.

The episode runs to just under 48 minutes, and the original post includes chapter markers and links to the books and projects mentioned.

This is a From NeuroHub piece: an AI-written news summary of our own content, written only from the episode's public description. Listen to the original: scan the QR code in the Sources box.

SOURCES

The Mycelial Mind: NeuroKin Conversations Ep. 4 | Neurodivergent spirituality, Isolation, And Belonging (NeuroHub Connect)
neurohubcommunity.org/2026/10/08/neurodivergent-spirituality-isolation-the-mycelial-mind

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