

Understanding and working with the interplay of trauma and neurodivergence in children and young people



UK TRAUMA
COUNCIL



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Agenda

Time	Agenda item	Speaker
09:00 – 09:15	Arrival & coffee	
09:15 – 09:20	Opening address & welcome	Dr Jo Coombs
09:20 – 10:05	Session 1 Trauma and neurodivergence in children and young people: vicious and virtuous cycles in double jeopardy.	Professor Helen Minnis
10:05 – 10:20	Q&A	
10:20 – 11:15	Session 2 A trauma informed approach to mental health support for autistic children, young people and their families.	Dr Georgia Pavlopoulou & Alexis Quinn
11:15 – 11:30	Q&A	
11:30 – 11:55	Coffee break	
11:55 – 12:40	Session 3 Not fine in school: school trauma and neurodiversity.	Dr Naomi Fisher
12:40 – 12:55	Q&A	
12:55 – 13:45	Lunch	
13:45 – 14:30	Session 4 Creating belonging: supporting neurodivergent children who have experienced trauma to thrive.	Dr Waveney Patel & Dr Vicki Wardman
14:30 – 14:45	Q&A	
14:45 – 15:10	Coffee break	
15:10 – 15:55	Panel discussion Bringing it altogether: summarising and reflecting on themes from the day.	
15:55 – 16:15	Closing reflections and feedback forms	
16:15	Conference close	

About our speakers

Professor Helen Minnis

Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow

Helen Minnis is Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow. She has had a longstanding clinical and research focus on the psychiatric problems of abused and neglected children. She is running randomised controlled trials of interventions for children who have experienced early adversity. She also conducts epidemiological research and is currently focusing on the interplay between abuse and neglect and neurodevelopment across the life-course. She has collaborations with colleagues at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King's College London, the Universities of Aalborg and Aarhus, Denmark and with the Gillberg Neuropsychiatry Centre, Gothenburg, Sweden.



Dr Georgia Pavlopoulou

Associate Professor in Developmental Psychology and Mental Health at University College London (UCL) and founder of the Group in Research in Relationships and Neurodiversity - GRRAND

Georgia is Associate Professor in Developmental Psychology and Mental Health at University College London (UCL) and founder of the Group in Research in Relationships and Neurodiversity - GRRAND. She works at the intersection of research, clinical care and education to bring sustainable and positive change for neurodivergent people and the professionals who support them. She is also a BACP relational pluralistic psychotherapist and lead editor of the three times best seller "Improving Mental Health Therapies for Autistic Children and Young People", published by Routledge in November 2024. Her recent research focuses on school induced emotional burden, situating emotion regulation in adhd and autism and adaptations in therapy settings when working with distressed autistic adults.



Alexis Quinn

Manager of the Restraint Reduction Network

Alexis Quinn is a psychotherapist and author of two books: her ground-breaking memoir, Unbroken, and Autistic & Expecting, a guide for autistic parents to be. Alexis speaks on neurodivergence, trauma, restraint, solitary confinement and mental well-being. She works as Manager of the Restraint Reduction Network.



Dr Naomi Fisher

DClinPsy, PhD, MA (Cantab)

Dr Naomi Fisher is a clinical psychologist and EMDR-Europe Trainer who specialises in trauma, autism and alternatives to school. She is the author of several books, including A Different Way to Learning: Neurodiversity and Self-directed Education and the recent When the Naughty Step Makes Things Worse, with Eliza Fricker. She works with families of children who are struggling with school or who are no longer attending. She runs training for professionals on EMDR and is currently writing a book on adapting EMDR for neurodivergent people.



Dr Vicki Wardman

Regional Director Clinical, Witherslack Group

Vicki is a Clinical Psychologist with 17 years' experience working across child and adolescent mental health services and specialist education and residential provisions. Vicki has previously held the role of Clinical Lead within a CAMHS service, overseeing a multidisciplinary team delivering specialist assessment and intervention for neurodivergent children and teenagers. Vicki has worked within the Witherslack Group for 8 years, previously as the Senior Clinical Psychologist across a range of specialist settings. Vicki is now the Regional Director for Clinical, supervising and managing multi-disciplinary teams across education and residential settings. Vicki has a particular interest in neurodivergence, developmental trauma and empowering adults around children to create environments where children can thrive.



Waveney Patel

Regional Director Clinical, Witherslack Group

Waveney is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist with 30 years' experience working across community based and specialist child and adolescent mental health services with an area of interest in developing and embedding psychological practice in education settings. Waveney has worked as a Clinical Lead in school based mental health services and has led teams embedding psychology practice in services for children who are looked after. Waveney has been a Clinical Lead within specialist CAMHS, overseeing a multidisciplinary team delivering specialist mental health assessment and intervention. Waveney has been a Clinical Lead in a large school for autistic pupils and has been working at Witherslack Group for 5 years as a Regional Director for Clinical alongside Vicki, supervising and managing multi-disciplinary teams in education settings. Waveney has led the Safe and Sound Protocol roll out across Witherslack Group. Waveney has a particular interest in creative approaches to therapy that are accessible to children and young people who have experienced complex trauma and are neurodivergent.



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