

Neurodiversity within the police family

A short video following a full-time police officer's journey with their now diagnosed teenage daughter.

First published
20 August 2025

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) Leadership, development and learning Training and professional development
Organisation	North Yorkshire Police
Contact	Tracey Williams
Email address	tracey.williams@northyorkshire.police.uk
Region	North East
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	March 2025
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Adults Children and young people Workforce
---------------------	--

Aim

The aim of the practice is to:

- upskill frontline officers and staff to help them to have a better understanding of neurodivergent conditions
- ensure officers and staff are aware that they may need to change their communication skills or ask for help when communicating
- provide the workforce the confidence to identify children with a neurodiversity, recognise triggers and coping mechanisms

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes are to:

- improve the awareness of neurodiversity
- improve the knowledge of how neurodivergent conditions may present and that its different in every child
- raise awareness on triggers and coping mechanisms

All the above should then lead to improving confidence in children with a neurodiversity when speaking to police.

Description

A recent audit conducted by the child protection team revealed that was an increase in the number of neurodiverse children who are victims, witnesses, suspects or just come into contact with police officers. Some officers reported to be struggling or not knowing with communicating neurodiverse children. North Yorkshire Police wanted to upskill their officers by utilising their own workforce and

encouraging colleagues to share their experiences of having neurodiverse children. The force felt that the workforce was more likely to learn from colleagues' experiences, if they have empathy.

Neurodiversity video

The force created a 15-minute animated video which follows the journey of a full-time police officer who has a teenager who has a diagnosis of autism. The journey starts in primary school with the child being described as 'quirky' then into secondary school where they are described as 'disruptive'. After lots of hard work from the child's parents, a diagnosis is finally achieved. This means help and support is offered, particularly at school.

The video includes some top tips on how the child presents and communicates, and how they do not like the label of 'autistic' defining them. The story covers what the child excels at but also how they struggle at times, going into 'shutdown'. At the end of the video, there is also a scenario that involves police officers approaching the child during a routine missing child enquiry and which has two outcomes depending on how the officers communicate with them and recognising there may be some signs they are neurodivergent.

Production of the video involved the child protection inspection coordinator consulting a working group including the force's neurodiversity lead.

The child protection inspection coordinator liaised with families within the force who had children with a neurodiversity and asked if they would help produce some training material for their colleagues. There are three other families who also want to do this piece of work if more videos are produced.

The bitesize video was created internally at no cost by the force's learning and development team. They used PowerPoint and Camtasia to bring the animations and voiceovers together. The video was written in an alternate method of learning format.

A draft video was produced and shared with the families and neurodiversity lead to ensure all parties were happy with the content before it was released.

The corporate communication team launched the video during the force's neurodiversity week. The force created a thought-provoking title to encourage staff to engage and watch. The video was titled: "Some people can judge me and be unkind" watch Sadie's Story.

Evaluation

An evaluation is planned led by North Yorkshire Police. The evaluation will look at:

- feedback from the video views
- child protection case audits

Overall impact

The video has been viewed over 650 times to date. Viewers are invited to provide their feedback at the end of the video, however, this is not mandatory. The feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive from viewers and the neurodiversity working group.

The force continues to audit all cases of neurodiversity interactions and the use of victim-blaming language, this is then fed back to officers and staff for learning. The audits should help show the impact of the training video.

Learning

This 15-minute video was launched in March 2025 and is longer than the force's other bitesize learning. However, this story could not be reduced in length without losing information and advice.

The video has been shared with other forces including Dorset, Cleveland, Greater Manchester and Northumbria. It has also been shared with the national neurodiversity group, local authority children's safeguarding partnerships and The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).

The learning and development team encountered user accessibility issues with Camtasia when creating the video. These issues were resolved before the video was launched.

Copyright

The copyright in this shared practice example is not owned or managed by the College of Policing and is therefore not available for re-use under the terms of the Non-Commercial College Licence. You will need to seek permission from the copyright owner to reproduce their works.

Legal disclaimer

Disclaimer: The views, information or opinions expressed in this shared practice example are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or views of the College of Policing or the organisations involved.