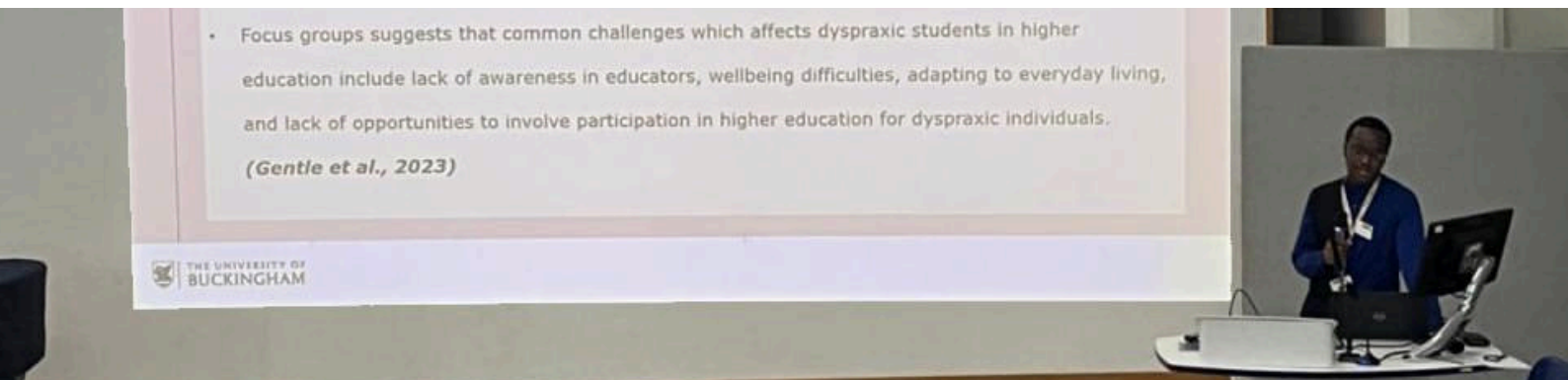


2025: The Reflection

M2 SPED AWARENESS
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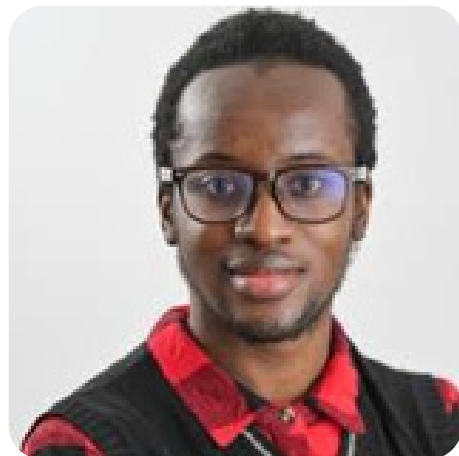
DECEMBER 2025

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER

by Dr Mitchell O. Junior MBBS BSc (Hons) PG Cert Med Ed PCBT
(Foundation)

This year, our work at M2 SPED Awareness has prompted continued reflection on the values that guide how we operate as an organisation. Throughout 2025, we have focused on embedding three core values across our programmes and partnerships: compassion, curiosity, and community.

In 2025, reflecting on our Street Clinics, internal and external CPD projects, Neurodiversity Youth Advocates programmes, and hearing directly from our alumni, a consistent theme has been the importance of compassion in addressing experiences of stigma and supporting neurodivergent young people to engage confidently with learning, leadership and advocacy.

Compassion has also shaped wider conversations around neurodiversity this year, with increasing attention given to inclusion, participation, and understanding within education and society. Developments in policy, research, and public discourse continue to highlight the need for approaches that recognise lived experience and challenge stigma through informed, practical action.



Alongside this, curiosity has driven much of the charity's programme development and professional learning activity. Our Conference Days explored themes such as neuroinclusive practice in sport and neurodivergent perspectives on digital innovation, the latter delivered with thanks to external guest speaker Daniel Cordwell, founder of Visions Design.

We also delivered CPD training with the support of the Dyslexia Hub and Worthing College, engaging educators and learning support assistants across a range of settings. In parallel, our Neurodiversity Youth Advocates have continued to engage their local communities through youth led awareness activity with meaningful impact.

This offers insight into how our values continue to shape M2 SPED Awareness' approach to supporting neuroacceptance through education aligned, evidence informed programmes.

Autism Act 2009: What it means for education today

The Autism Act 2009 was the first piece of legislation in England to place a specific legal duty on government to improve outcomes for autistic people. It led to the development of national strategies and statutory guidance intended to strengthen identification, support, and inclusion across health, education, and social care.

More than fifteen years on, the intent of the Act remains highly relevant to education settings. Awareness and diagnosis have increased, and expectations around inclusion, reasonable adjustments, and student voice are now embedded within statutory and inspection frameworks.

However, the Act itself does not create delivery capacity. Schools and colleges are required to meet increasingly complex needs within constrained resources and workforce pressures.

In practice, this has created a widening gap between policy ambition and on-the-ground delivery. Education settings are expected to evidence inclusive practice, support wellbeing, and enable participation, yet often lack the time, specialist capacity, or structured programmes to do so consistently at scale.

M2 SPED Awareness operates within this gap. We are not a clinical, diagnostic, or therapeutic service. Our programmes complement statutory responsibilities by building young people's confidence, communication skills, and capacity to understand and advocate around neurodiversity.

Through structured Summer School and Post-16 programmes, students develop practical skills through lived experience and evidence informed learning, supporting participation, reducing stigma, and enabling informed conversations across schools, families, and communities.

As policy expectations continue to evolve, the challenge for the education system is not a lack of intent, but the availability of scalable, credible delivery mechanisms aligned to existing pressures.

Our work sits deliberately in that space, translating statutory aspiration into practical, youth centred outcomes that schools and partners can engage with confidently and sustainably.

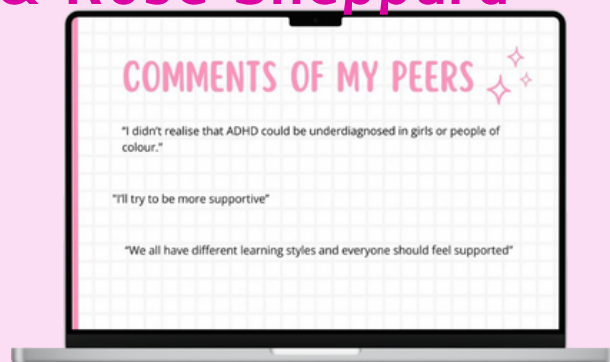
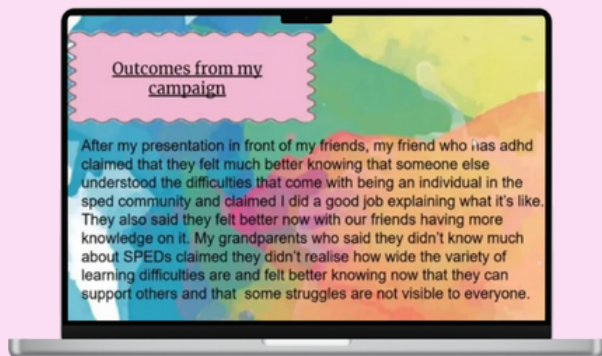
Updates from Neurodiversity Youth Advocate Programmes: 2025 Outcomes

In February 2025, we celebrated the graduation of a new cohort of Neurodiversity Youth Advocates from schools across Birmingham, Leicester, and London.

Across the programme, confidence in empowerment and Neurodiversity Advocacy grew significantly. What began with 50% of students reporting confidence at the start of the programme, concluded with 100% of participants expressed confidence by the end. Alongside this growth, every participant reported developing key skills, including analytical thinking, problem solving, and time management.

Below, we highlight how this year's participants put their learning into practice through impactful neurodiversity awareness campaigns within their communities. Congratulations to Emaan and Rose for their work.

Post-16 Programme 24-25 Winners: Emaan Anwar Riaz & Rose Sheppard



Our Neurodiversity Youth Advocates were challenged to design and deliver a neurodiversity awareness campaign within their communities, putting their learning into practice beyond the classroom.

Rose delivered an ADHD awareness campaign for friends and family members across a range of age groups. Her work focused on building understanding of ADHD in everyday settings and contributed to a more inclusive and supportive environment for a peer with lived experience of ADHD.

Emaan delivered an ADHD awareness campaign to her school peers, with a particular focus on intersectionality and the experiences of female and ethnically diverse students. Her campaign encouraged greater awareness of underdiagnosis and supported more informed conversations around access to understanding and support.

Neurodiversity Youth Advocate Programmes: Looking Ahead to 2026



Introducing the Two Year Neurodiversity Youth Advocate Programme

Our Post-16 Neurodiversity Youth Advocate programme supports young people to lead awareness activity while developing confidence, communication, and leadership skills through youth led campaigns.

With dedicated funding in place, we are developing a two year programme model that enables deeper learning and progression, expanding content to include areas such as Dyscalculia, positive psychology, intersectionality, and parent perspectives, while maintaining a strong focus on advocacy and real world application.

Which years will the programme run for?

The programme begins in Year 11, focusing on knowledge development and problem solving through three full school days between September and January, followed by a week long Summer School in July.

Participants then progress into Year 12, where the focus shifts to reflective practice and advocacy delivered through evening sessions between September and February. All sessions across both years are delivered remotely.

Where can I learn more info?

Further programme information and details on registering early interest will be published on our website from February 2026.

Looking ahead to 2026

We are currently progressing a number of developments that remain subject to governance review.

Further information will be shared at key points in February 2026 and May 2026, once decisions are finalised.



Street Clinics, Conference Days & CPD Projects



Street Clinics

In April, our fundraising team delivered a Street Clinic through our Dyslexia Awareness booth at King's College London. The activity supported students to reflect on common experiences of dyslexia at university, alongside signposting to further information, while generating funds to support the charity's education programmes.

CPD Projects



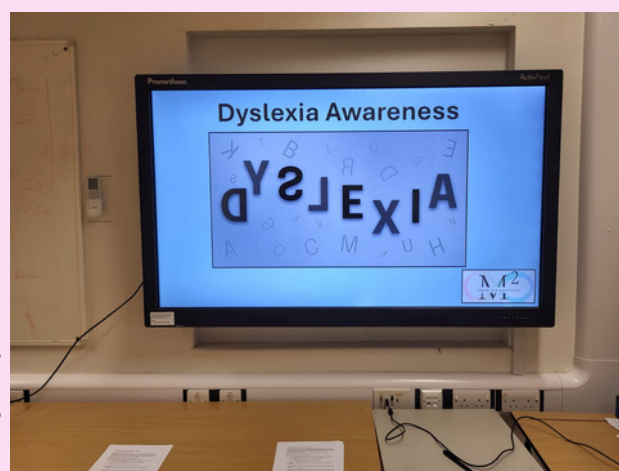
In September, our Project Development Intern, Kirsty Slimming, developed and delivered a Dyslexia Awareness CPD session to 46 learning support assistants at Worthing College.

The session created space to reflect on existing practice while introducing practical technological, academic, and emotional support strategies relevant to further education settings.

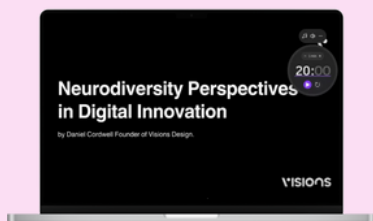
One attendee shared

"I enjoyed learning about electronic support options such as fonts, and Read, Write & Gold."

We would like to thank Worthing College for their collaboration and engagement with this year's CPD activity.



Conference Days



In January and April, our Conference Days brought together education and professional audiences to explore learning practices in dyslexia and neuroinclusivity in sport.

Sessions were delivered by trustees Dr Mitchell and Sam, alongside an external contribution from Daniel Cordwell of Visions Design, who shared neurodivergent perspectives on digital innovation. Recordings of these sessions are available as a learning resource to support ongoing reflection and professional development.

People Behind the Work

Welcoming New Team Members

Over the past year, M2 SPED Awareness has welcomed new colleagues who have strengthened our ability to deliver programmes safely, consistently, and sustainably. We would like to welcome Ben, Brionny, Hannah, Kirsty, Laura, Rohan, and Rosy, and thank them for joining the organisation.

Each has contributed time, skills, and commitment across delivery, coordination, and support activity, helping ensure our work remains youth centred, credible, and aligned with the realities of the education environment.

Thank you Malek Busaidy

We would like to offer particular thanks to Malek Busaidy for their contribution to M2 SPED Awareness over the past several years. Malek delivered a CPD session at our Conference Day on 24 April, 2024, titled “ADHD and Deviance”, which explored ADHD through sociological and criminological perspectives, with a focus on education, stigma and systemic outcomes.

Drawing on their postgraduate research in criminology, Malek’s session supported professional reflection on how neurodivergent behaviours are interpreted within education and wider systems, and the impact this can have on young people’s experiences and trajectories. Their contribution added depth and rigour to the conference programme and was valued by attendees across education and public service roles.

Education & ADHD

A survey in 2009 found that 11% of children with ADHD have been permanently excluded. This is considerably higher than the permanent exclusion rate of 0.1% reported from the general population (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009).

Teachers tend to rate ADHD-diagnosed students as performing below grade level. ADHD-diagnosed students who perform above grade level may not be acknowledged by teachers due to perceptions influenced by real or perceived behaviors associated with ADHD (Metzger *et al.* 2020).

Students with ADHD are at the risk of:

- Low self-esteem
- Underachievement
- Developing social and emotional problems
- Exclusion.



Supporting Our Work

Thank you to Dyslexia Hub



We thank Dyslexia Hub for collaborating with M2 SPED Awareness by inviting Dr Mitchell to be one of the guest speakers in this year's Dyslexia & Neurodiversity Day run by the Dyslexia Hub on Friday 19th September. This provided an opportunity for M2 SPED Awareness to network with esteemed individuals in the sectors of assistive technology, coaching, and educators with a vision to promote neuroinclusivity.

Dyslexia Hub is a great initiative run by Dr Sarah J Myhill and Patricia Covarrubia from the University of Buckingham. The team's main aim is to educate the educators from the Post-16, Further and Higher Education through innovation and research. We are grateful for the collaboration and networking opportunities provided to support our aligned goals towards neuroacceptance and neuroinclusive practices.

Thank you to Frances & Kevin

We'd like to thank Frances & Kevin for their support in strengthening M2 SPED Awareness' marketing capability during the past year.

FRANCES & KEVIN

Through their leadership development programme, members of our marketing team were able to access structured training and mentorship focused on strategic thinking, leadership, and evidence led decision making. This support has directly contributed to our ability to plan more clearly, prioritise sustainably, and align marketing activity with programme delivery and organisational governance.

We are grateful for their investment in our people and for recognising the importance of building leadership capacity within charities delivering complex, education aligned work.

As we move into 2026, we plan to extend the regions in which we work. With your support, we can continue delivering structured programmes that support GCSE and A-Level students to develop confidence, leadership skills and independent research capability. We invite you to consider donating, knowing that every £1 is reinvested directly into the delivery of our programmes.

