Final Report: Diverse Minds Community Project

Project Title: Diverse Minds Community
Reporting Period:
Prepared by: Lindsey Barrington, Andrew Barrington, Amrit Singh and Anna Jardine
Date: 20/09/2025

Number of sessions over 12 months: 48 sessions 2 locations 38 parents supported over 70 parents engagements Multiple referral bodies 25 sensory resources in our parent support library

1. Project Overview

The Diverse Minds Community project was established with the aim of providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive space for both parents and carers of neurodiverse children. The project welcomed individuals from diverse backgrounds to connect, share experiences, receive peer support and signposting to other relevant services, and to also have access to a wealth of resources to support their own mental health and wellbeing. Operating across two separate venues, the project has successfully built a community rooted in peer support, diversity, and empowerment.

2. Participation and Engagement

Over the course of the project:

- A total of **102 parents** have engaged with Diverse Minds Community through contacting, referrals and enquiries..

- 32 parents directly engage with the project on a regular basis These participants attended sessions held across **two community venues**.

- Each venue has now developed a **core group of regular attendees**, highlighting the program's success in fostering ongoing engagement and a sense of community.

- The demographic of attendees reflected a wide range of backgrounds, and the group environment encouraged open discussion, mutual support, and the development of social networks. Most parents were female, noting 2 men who joined to get support.

The Project data can be summarised below:

Participants in Walsall parent groups were predominantly female and from diverse ethnic backgrounds, with a notable proportion living in areas of higher deprivation (average decile 2.5). The majority were aged between 25–44 years. Wellbeing scores (ONS) showed a meaningful improvement, rising from 18.7 before the intervention to 24.2 afterwards — an average increase of 5.5 points. This suggests the groups had a positive impact on participant wellbeing.

Participant Profile and Outcomes

Category	Breakdown / Result
Sex	29 Female (90.6%), 3 Male (9.4%)

Ethnicity	65% White British, 21% Asian, 14% Other
Age	37% aged 25–34, 34% aged 35–44
Deprivation (IMD decile)	Average 2.5 (more deprived areas)
ONS Wellbeing Score (Pre)	18.7
ONS Wellbeing Score (Post)	24.2
Change	**+5.5** points

3. Referral Pathways

Service users accessed the project through a variety of referral methods:

- **Self-referral:** Many participants discovered and joined the group through promotional materials, social media, or word-of-mouth, taking the initiative to engage directly.
- **External agency referrals:** Partnerships with local mental health services, community organisations, Family Hubs, NHS staff and family support workers, have played a key role in directing individuals to the project.
- **Peer referrals:** Several attendees were introduced to the group through existing members, demonstrating the positive reputation and trust built within the community.

This mix of referral methods contributed to a diverse group dynamic and helped reach individuals who may otherwise have remained isolated.

4. Key Outcomes

- Increased social connection and reduced isolation for participants.
- Establishment of ongoing peer-led support networks.
- Engagement from hard-to-reach individuals through varied and inclusive referral pathways.
- Positive feedback from attendees, many of whom expressed appreciation for a sensitive and inclusive space.
- Continued training and professional development for the facilitators, and some of the volunteers.
- All parents coordinators have received First Aid mental health training, Suicide prevention, facilitation and mediation, HENRY training and various relevant neurodiverse training.

Service user endorsements

“ Being parent led enhances feeling of no right and wrong’ (Walsall Parent)

“Eye opening in regards to hearing adults accounts on neurodiversity (as children can’t often articulate their experiences).
I feel it’s a safe space with no judgement, and informative hearing others perspectives”.

“ Very positive, understanding of neurodiversity with great information and people are non judgemental”.

“ It’s great to share experiences with each other's parents knowing I'm not alone. I feel great and enjoy the groups”.

“ There is a sense of community and feeling of being in a trusted space. It’s a lovely place to share knowledge and ideas”

“Neurodiversity Group - I have been attending a group for months now which supports parents with Neurodiverse conditions such as Autism, ADHD etc or parents of Neurodiverse Children. It's been a real safe, non-judgemental space. A great eye opener hearing an adults perspective to dealing with Autism and ADHD as young children are generally unable to articulate their unique experiences as well as an adult”

Darlaston Parent meeting

Case Study

Anna was a parent who joined the group for support. Her daughter was going through diagnosis, and wanted support and connection. She then decided that she wanted to support parents through helping DMC coordinate the parents group in Walsall. She has successfully coordinated the Walsall group, focusing on self care and parent strategies.

“I started attending this parent group a year ago to help my mental health and to feel part of a non-judgmental group of parents/carers as my daughter has been on the pathways for SENS for over 3 years now.

She is still without a diagnosis however, this group has taught me so much and I now have more knowledge to help her and our family to understand neuro diversity on many levels.

It is a much needed group and it really does help us all to feel more supported as we realise we are not on our own, with the daily challenges we have to experience in the home and the school settings.

I have facilitated this group along with Amrit, Lindsey and Andrew for approximately 6 months and I am passionate about seeing it grow to help the parents/carers in the community continue to have this support so that they feel listened to and heard. I am grateful that this group was set up and I do hope to see it continue for many more years”.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Diverse Minds Community project has successfully met its objectives of fostering inclusion, wellbeing, and community support. The continued presence of regular attendees, and the diversity of referral sources, demonstrate a sustainable and meaningful impact.

Recommendations moving forward include:

- Continue to strengthen referral partnerships with local agencies.
- Provide additional training for peer facilitators to support growing groups.
- Explore potential for expansion to additional venues based on demand and community feedback.

We would like to thank all of our participants, partner organisations, and community members who contributed to the success of the Diverse Minds Community project.

Here's a polished **report-style draft** of your "Next Steps for Phase 2" section:

Next Steps – Phase 2

Legal

- Establish the legal framework for DMC by **Q4 2025**, with the organisation constituted either as a **community interest company (CIC)** or as a formally recognised group.

Management and Coordination

- **Management Leads:** Andrew Barrington and Lindsey Barrington
- **Assistant Coordinator:** Anna Jardine

Location and Community Focus

- Concentrate delivery in areas of highest need, particularly in **Blakenhall, Darlaston, and Walsall Central** (lower decile communities).
- Establish a central meeting venue to host support sessions and guest speaker events.

Meeting Format

- **Weekly meetings** to plan and record delivery of sessions.
- Agenda to include:
    - Progress updates
    - Identification of opportunities
    - Action tracking and allocation

Guest Speakers and Events

- Develop a **calendar of guest speakers** sourced and coordinated by DMC.
- Guest speaker events will be promoted via:
    - Community hubs
    - DMC support sessions
    - Social media platforms
    - Social subscriber referrals

Communication and Engagement with Parents

- **Social Media:** Launch a dedicated Facebook page by **Q1 2026** to raise awareness and promote DMC activities.
- **Website:** Develop and launch by **Q4 2026**, providing information, resources, and contact details.
- **Contact Information:** A dedicated phone number and email address to be established for parent and community enquiries.

Expansion Model

- Create a **replicable template model** enabling parents who have benefitted from DMC support to become facilitators themselves.
- Provide facilitators with:
    - A **set-up resource pack**
    - Initial support and training to deliver sessions at additional venues.

Funding

- Proactively seek **additional funding sources**, including:
    - National Lottery
    - Grant opportunities
    - Community funding schemes
- **Mettaminds' role** to remain advisory and supportive in securing and managing resources.

Would you like me to format this as a **formal report with headings and subheadings** (like above), or as a **concise action plan in bullet-point style** for easier internal use?