

Neurodivergent spaces

Herefordshire Sept 2025 – March 2026



Appendix 10: specific comments by specific place or transport.

Cafes and Restaurants

35 West, Leominster

- 35 West is really friendly small book shop cafe who have run a couple of social events for queer people. I find it comfortable there.
- Café 35 – keen to have neurodivergence mtgs (opposite Echo)
- Places that are good – Café 35

All Saints café

- All Saints Church cafe is good. I seek the mezzanine floor up at the top, sit in the corner, and meet my friend there. There is no music, and it's also not too quiet, which I don't like either. It's OK there.
- It is nice, but they don't do eggs on toast.
- I used to like it but when it is busy the staff seem less friendly.

Ascari Café

Hereford Ascari café Hereford does a very good breakfast, and I have eggs on toast. The food is nice, and they are friendly, but the toilet is very small.

Beefy Boys, Hereford

I think Beefy Boys restaurant is peaceful with plenty of room and the loos are OK. The food is very good. They have music, but it's not loud. The people there are very nice people. The waiter is very nice. They gave me free beer for my birthday with my chicken.

Burger King

Friendly staff. They help you use the app. Burger King is good.

Butter Market Food court

Staff friendly and caring and good with food allergies.

Buttercup Café Leominster

- They are friendly welcoming and very kind.
- Friendly and kind. I feel safe and cared for. Prices are reasonable, good portions and quick service.
- They often say hello as you enter. The entrance and decoration is good and noise levels are good and there are no difficult smells the space is good but it can be a little cramped if it's busy and no space to escape to if you need to the staff are very polite and respectful and give you enough time to reply. Staff are

understanding and kind and encourage feedback. Temperature is usually fine. I don't think the venue is very accessible and the toilet space is difficult. It welcomes pushchairs and wheelchairs and will help but there isn't a lot of space or much they can do about that. The loo is not great but the library next door has an accessible loo. I don't know if they have extra considerations like headphones or fidget toys. The signage is clear but there is no information about quiet times. I would recommend it because it is friendly and kind. I feel safe and cared for there. The prices are reasonable you get good portions and quick service.

- Buttercup café – treats everyone as an individual.

Coffee No. 1 Leominster

- It is good there, but the number of people can really build up. The coffee machines bother me too. Their noise. Upstairs is quieter.
- Not so good because of rapid staff turnover.

Coffee No.1 Hereford

Like Coffee one as it is darker, lots of options for seating and cosy corners so you are not around people.

Costa

- Don't allow service dogs inside.
- Not so good because of rapid staff turnover .
- Signage at Costa – Colours – puts me off straight away – too bright.

Dominos Pizza

- Domino Pizzas are good because they have a very consistent menu for takeaways.

Emmas Farmhouse Café

- The staff know me well and treat me as an equal and don't look at my disability. Can be a little bit noisy.

Eden

Cafes that are good – small, out of the way. You get to know the staff so less turnover of staff is good, for example, like Eden.

Grange Court, Leominster

- Leominster My brother likes it. It has different spaces you can choose from little spaces both indoors and outside.
- Grange court – the man on reception doesn't know, not helpful.

Kiki's

Cafes that are good – small, out of the way. You get to know the staff so less turnover of staff is good, for example, like Kiki's.

Maylords orchard café

Feel comfortable there.

Newton Court

- Leominster, is a bit echoey, which is a shame. They could do with some acoustic-damping furniture, which would make a difference. The space is nice and open. The staff are nice.
- Newton Court – went there and they made them sit in the middle row – feels very controlling.

Panda Play Café Ross on Wye

It's a contained place with room for freedom and regulation.

Restaurant

I just can't face restaurants and pubs because the music is louder and the people and the Clinking and clunking. I need to be able to chill and be quiet.

Sensory and Rye

- Sensory and Rye it has an all-glass frontage so quite a lot of stimulation. Sound noise I find it a bit big and echoey. I find the smell, the space, the staff communication, staff attitude, and lighting temperature and accessibility fine – all good. I haven't used the toilet so I don't know about them. **I recommend it as a safe friendly place when it is not busy.**
- Three people chose to meet the Engagement worker there which indicates that they felt comfortable there at quiet times.

The Morgan Car Experience Centre

The Morgan car experience centre has a cafe, a big open place, but it has soft furnishing and wood, which deadens the sound. I recommend it because the sound is good and there is plenty of space.

Tiffany's café in the Buttermarket

All good. Staff are friendly and caring and good with food allergies.

Wagamamas

Wagamama's is echoey unless it's very quiet, and I find that the lights flicker, and it also has music. I like the food, but it is not great for people like me.

Supermarkets

ALDI

- The ALDI supermarket checkout is automatic but also has staff operated. The automatic ones, saying thank you and have a nice day, are just very loud and difficult, and chaotic. I prefer to self-serve, but if something goes wrong, it can be very challenging. If you have the red light on and nobody comes, and it's not clear where the staff are, it's hard. At the ordinary checkout, I get anxious too because it can be too difficult to pack under pressure, and I want to pack everything in the right order, and they want you to be in a hurry.
- Aldi have quiet times I think – are these still happening as haven't heard them being advertised lately?

ASDA

- ASDA is good. I don't like it when supermarkets change their layout. ASDA has quiet hours. Staff can be quite rude and arrogant in petrol station. I bought a chocolate bar, they didn't have it and they offered to change it for a bar of soap! (Online shopping). I recommend it because they are ok on the whole, but I recommend more patience especially in the petrol station.
- Asda – has quiet times I think – are these still happening as haven't heard them being advertised lately?
- Asda – provide customers with sensory packs or fidget toys.

Co-op, Leominster

My partner works at the co-op, which has a good staff culture, and give time and understanding.

Lidl

Lidl – has quiet times I think – are these still happening as haven't heard them being advertised lately?

Morrisons, Leominster

- Morrisons in Leominster used to have a table and chairs down the side aisle where you could go to calm down if you were overwhelmed. A sign said if you are having a tough time please sit down. I don't think it has it anymore. It would be good to have more supermarkets doing this. I can't go early as I have children to get ready for school.
- **The toilets are always smelly. I only use them if I am desperate.**
- Morrisons have got a fidget box (behind the cigarette counter. They need a sign to say please return and maybe wipes to keep clean.
- Morrisons – provide customers with sensory packs or fidget toys.

TESCO

- I use Tesco's a lot and find it OK.
- Tesco, provide customers with sensory packs or fidget toys.
- Smelly loos (3 people mentioned)

Waitrose

- I recommend the supermarket but, I try not to use public loos. Waitrose loo is terrible.
- Person 1 goes to Waitrose and finds this a positive experience – willing to pay more for quieter – but understand not everyone can afford this.

Shops and shopping centres

Area 151 Pokémon store, Hereford

I don't recommend it because it's not accessible.

Area 51

Games group – would be good in Leominster like Area 51 – Hereford

BlueCross mobility

I don't recommend it because the music is too loud an improvement would be to turn the music down.

Body Clinic, Leominster

The building at the body clinic is a beautiful, calm space.

Coco's nail salon

Coco's nail salon is awesome.

The Entertainer

The Entertainer is very good too – the staff have had Autism training (through the National Autistic Society).

H&M

H&M is far too hot.

Home Bargains

The staff are friendly.

Jessicas sweets

I wouldn't recommend because I feel they didn't listen to me.

Lion Gallery, Leominster

Places that are good –Lion Gallery (Oxenham Art lady),

London Look Hairdressers

Not recommended. Too rough

M&S

- The food is nice. but it is always noisy and crowded. The ladies toilets are very busy and tight to get in and out. They are hot from the hand dryer and often have loos broken down which makes queue worse. They feel a bit grubby and smelly.
- M & S – love it – you know what to expect, as in the food bit, it is darker and colder.
- A few said they don't like M & S café as echoey so there is nowhere cosy as it is all exposed.

Matrix, Hereford

- Mostly good. Miniature golf is no good for people with mobility issues.
- Matrix – the axe throwing was good – Quiet, considerate of taking carers and approachable).

TGS

Ones not so good – TGS

National Star Charity shop

No ramp to get in and a high counter. Not accessible for wheelchair users.
Recommend a ramp and low counter.

Newsagent, Broad street, Leominster

Newsagent on Broad Street are good.

Old Market Shopping Centre

There are a few places we can go in the Old Market. We feel comfortable in TK Max, Wagamama, and H&M. We choose safe places with familiar staff. We don't go at Christmas with all the lights. It's no good then, there's too much sensory stimulation.

Philip Morris

Staff communication is not good.

Poundland

- Someone got kicked out and the staff seemed rude it put me off.
- Not recommended. Don't feel comfortable there. Cramped.

Primark

- I feel comfortable but can be crowded and messy.
- Primark – don't like as there are bright lights, they keep changing layouts and messy displays.

Ross Town Market

It's hard to manage the environment. Not recommended. More awareness would help.

Tiger

I like the shop Tiger in the old market because it has a one-way system, and it seems logical.

Warhammer

- Entrance: I find the shop to be a welcoming place with staff that are friendly and willing to talk at length about my hobby.
- Sight: The stools are basic but are comfortable enough to sit and work on my miniatures.
- Sound/Noise: They have music playing but, in my experience, it's always been quite quiet. There isn't much ambient noise coming in from the street when I've been there.
- Smell: If I had to single out a smell it would be that of plastic. I don't find this smell overpowering or overwhelming, just the most prominent.
- Space: I'd say on the whole the entire shop is a calm space, especially considered to outside. There is no space to escape as far as I'm aware, however this isn't an issue for me. Due to the size of the shop and the amount of tables and stools they have, there are certain times where moving can be somewhat hindered. This isn't usually an issue for me and I'm happy to wait in a quieter part of the shop. Some tables are set up in more secluded parts of the shop such as corners. Most of the stools face the door which I find preferable. I have heard of

the tables within the shop being rearranged for events, however this is not something I've had to concern myself with.

- Staff communication: All the staff I have encountered have been very pleasant, positive, and welcoming. They've answered any questions I have about any of the products as well as questions regarding the wider lore/narrative. I've found they communicate clearly and I've never had any misunderstandings with them.
- Staff attitude and Training: In my experience the staff have been understanding and kind. They seem happy to engage with me when I want to talk about my current hobby projects, any news regarding Warhammer, and lore/narrative questions. This in turn makes me feel safe when I visit the shop. I've not noticed anything about the staff receiving specific training, however with the way they treat me and the way I've seen them treat others I would be surprised to hear if they hadn't received such training. They always come across as approachable and have never caused me any offence.
- Lighting and temperature: The lighting is cold, but this makes working on models easier. This doesn't have a negative effect on me. I've found the temperature mostly comfortable. The only times I have noticed otherwise is during the hotter days of Summer. They do set up fans to help circulate air and I find this helps.
- Accessible
- There is no step into the shop which helps with accessibility. The door isn't particularly wide, the seating can be moved but consists of stools, I have never needed to use the toilet while there so can't comment on accessible ones or otherwise, and as far as I've seen there is no braille signage.
- I recommend because: It hosts friendly staff and is a place for likeminded people to meet while engaging in hobby activities.

Clubs

Aspire hub youth club

- Aspire youth club is fantastic. You can't play pool. You can do arts and crafts, colouring, and sewing. And there is an outside area. You can get picked on and it can be difficult to talk to the staff about.
- Expensive at £17.50 for 2 hours with hardly any activities. Recommend reducing the price so more people will go. Also, deal with the difficult person there.
- Aspire do a games night on a Tues evening.

The Geek Retreat

For my daughter the name would put them off. Daughter doesn't want to stand out.

Hereford Bowling club

Not recommended: Noisy and crowded and some accessibility issues can get upstairs but no accessible loo. Not enough lighter balls.

Hereford FC Edgar Street Hereford

- Entrance: The entrance is very busy, and the outside bar is there. I like to have a drink before the match, but it's so crowded it makes me anxious and I'm impatient to get to my seat. I like to sit in the Merton stands blocks C or D, row because there's plenty of space, it's close to the pitch and it's away from the swearing in the Meadow end.
- Sound and noise: It's noisy but I can choose to sit in a choir to seat
- Space: there is enough space except for a very popular game.
- Staff communication: Staff are friendly, directors are keen to get people with disabilities involved.
- Staff attitude and training: Staff remove unruly fans and explain to me why this is happening.
- Accessible: Due to my mobility I need to sit in row a where there are less steps and more space. I feel unsafe and squashed if I have to sit high up. Carers are admitted free, but you can't book a carer ticket online. The club has a scheme for disabled people to have free tickets. There are spaces for people using wheelchairs (below block a).
- Recommendation: Yes, because it's a friendly club. I would recommend it as it's a friendly club, staff and directors welcome neurodivergent people. The players come over at full time and meet the fans for photos etc
- I would recommend a better online ticket portal.

Richmond Club

very welcoming, one night they walked my son home. They are very accepting of whoever comes in.

Rugby Club Hereford

- Most aspects are good but. I do not recommend it because I don't feel comfortable there it is very cramped.
- I do recommend it because I would go and get others to go there If it were less cramped.

Charity, Voluntary and Community sector

Cart Shed

- The composting toilets at the cart shed are OK.
- Even the Cart Shed can be quite noisy and challenging, but there are quiet spaces you can go to.
- I find it difficult to get myself up, but I can get to the Cart Shed. I think it is calming being in nature, and nobody is judging you. If you have a meltdown there are hammocks and blankets. When I had a meltdown, they were very non-judgmental, and I was able to calm down in the hammock. Here, it is OK to be how you are.

- The issue I have is that there is not enough education. Society is often the problem. I have ADHD, and being around some people offers a cause for us to be distressed. Forums or groups that specialise in understanding ADHD can be good. It is helpful if there are forums or groups where people could come. The social side is impactful. I have been a hermit, very isolated, in the last six months. Coming to the Cart Shed has been very helpful. I moved from London, where I was for two years.
- Woodlands are isolating. Places you can be solitary. There are some downsides to going to places on your own. Once my dog was attacked in one place I used to go, so I won't go back there. I like the Cart Shed when I leave, I feel good Even if I feel dysregulated when I arrive. Anywhere else, I feel judged.
- People are nice. I hate going out and encountering prejudice. People here are not ***** Not shallow, challenging, homophobic, judgemental. Others assume perhaps because of my age that I am as prejudiced as them. I find it hard. I try to be constructive. But it can get worse. I hate racism. A bloke gave my dog a dog treat cos I am always doing that. then launches into "I was on the phone to some **** the other day". (Racist slur) It winds me up for ages afterwards. They use woke as an insult.
- Nice People.
- I enjoy 1:1 talks without prejudice and is a nice comfortable conversation with a wellbeing agenda. Respect is why it works here. Can be cold. Won't suit everyone. I miss it if I don't come. I feel lighter afterwards.
- Here there is no judgement. No gameplay. You are talked to and treated as an adult.
- I love the outdoors, the participants, the staff and the projects. I love that it's all in nature Participants and the staff and the projects the whole package. I used to be on the road. I love outdoor cooking I don't use the loo here if possible and if I'm not at home. My three children use it too. I just like the quirky. I don't mind the cold and the mud and so on. You wear particular clothes. I prefer it when there are fewer people in the group. In the group chats I do contribute.
- The Cart Shed – there is a Monday group centred around neurodivergence – I think a lot of people would appreciate this group. But I think we should stop separating the neurotypical from the neurodivergent. Cart shed is a positive thing for me, but the banner of neurodivergence diminishes the positivity.

Community Garden Ross

- You are accepted for who you are. It is non-judgemental.
- You feel you can relax and just be.
- It is peaceful.
- Everyone is welcoming.

- I feel at home here. There are not many places that I feel comfortable.
- Staff are understanding. You are not pressured into anything.
- Lovely caring kind and understanding staff.

Cracked Slipper drama group at the Kindle Centre

I enjoy it because they understand me, you have two hours and a lot of activities and you don't have to pay.

ECHO

I love coming to the Leominster Library with ECHO rep group. ECHO is very understanding of me.

Enviroability

I like the environment. I like the company. I can use my skills. I am appreciated.

HANDS

- I did go to hands, but when I went there was nobody there.
- I looked for help from the Autistic society, the local NAS was closed.
- HANDs hub talked about sessions they will be starting for adults which could help solve the issue of people having a safe place to go with like-minded people.
- PCV (Parent Carer Voice) has a lending library of sensory items

Hereford Hub at Maylord Orchard

It is good. Give you time to think. It has a low counter.

Ivy Close

Amazing. I know they are working on accessibility. They are making adaptations for Wheelchair users currently

Lee's Place

- Lee's place I arrived at Lee's place 20 minutes before they closed, and they handled it well and gave me enough space. They didn't ask too many questions, checked I had somewhere to go, and gave me food and a pudding to take away.
- Lee's place is awesome, and the seats are epic, and the sofa is good, but it can be kind of smoky and small in the kitchen.
- The board outside is good, there is lots of spaces on the tables which is good. Open / closed sign. I need to be confident of opening times. A sign outside clearly explains what it is. Light on the stairs to the basement doesn't have a light shade and is too bright, but like the colours.

Radio ECHO

Radio ECHO Have a good attitude of very accepting, and you feel you can be yourself but also be different.

Employment and volunteering

Hereford Make -CIC

- Entrance: Make is an excellent space for neuro diversity, the main studio space is usually quiet with plenty of comfortable seating and a great sense of community
- Sight: Due to the nature of the shared space there's usually a bit of clutter left after a long day, this isn't usually an issue except when things go missing and I can't find what I need, this in turn will stress me out and make it difficult to resume work until I have found the item, usually meaning I will spend time cleaning to make it easier next time
- Sound/Noise: The walls are very thin and we can hear a lot of what goes on outside, while the forge is loud I usually wear hearing protection which helps to soften this issue.
- Smell: No issue of smell whatsoever, however I may be biased as I am a smoker and likely am not perceiving it if there is.
- Space: There are clear sections taper on the floor I allocate walkways which are to be kept clear, this visual aid helps keep the place navigable without risk of feeling claustrophobic or tripping.
- Staff communication: The primary director is neurodiverse, so any issues relating to autism/ADHD he is very helpful to talk to.
- Staff attitude and training.
- The director provides training on the above mentioned systems. Though there is no immediate visual clues to this.
- Lighting and temperature: As part of the insurance, we cannot have open flames or heat sources in the studio, as the walls are sheet steel it gets very cold in the winter months.
- Accessible : Very little signage and the toilets have no grab rails, access to the building is disability friendly, however.
- Extra Consideration: There are ear defenders but not headphones, there are bits of metal about to fiddle with but not designated fidget toys.
- Signs: No real signage or map for the location.
- I would recommend because: It's a great space for conversation and community in the neurodiverse sphere as well as a great place for smiths.

National Trust Volunteering Opportunities

- I have two brothers for whom I am the carer, and it's very difficult to access volunteering due to their support needs. the National Trust have been very good, and they have been able to be part of the arts and crafts creative team. One of my brothers has difficulties with going through doors and is very OCD and they are really patient. The team is Herefordshire National Trust 22.
- What is nice? – An essential companion is really good (National Trust, National Heritage, Cinema) – Free or half price for second person or bring a friend. Use Berrington and Croft Castle a lot.

Pubs

Dukes Head Leominster

Mostly good I would recommend it as they get to know us. Staff are good and help us with our money. A recommended improvement would be bigger font/print on the menu.

Green Dragon

- Entrance: Large entrance allowing you to have room to fit around people without touching them, you can choose where you want to sit, no it looks posh outside and looks like it would cost a lot of money and people would not like you but its different inside, the staff are very friendly, clean toilets.
- Sight: It looks like an old classic home; there is a little too much ornaments for me.
- Sound/ noise
- I didn't hear any music which is good account wont here who you are talking too, no announcements, only the coffee machine can be a bit annoying, but I don't like lunch time as its too busy and too loud with people talking.
- Smell: no strong smells
- Space: there isn't anywhere that is really hidden, no hideaways, only the toilet.
- Staff communication: The staff are very friendly and patient, there are a lot of elderly people that go there and they are very good with them.
- Staff attitude: Good
- Lighting and temperature: No buzzing lights, temperature around normal, not hot not cold.
- Accessible: You will need two people to open the 2 heavy doors for a wheelchair to get in the front door but then it will fit in the cafe area easily. I don't know about toilets I didn't see anything nothing for hearing or sight impaired that I saw I have seen people with walking sticks and people with baby prams there.
- Extra consideration: No, they don't have any headphones or anything.
- Signs: No map to tell you where things are but you can see the toilet from the cafe door, no quiet areas.
- Recommended: Yes because I like the friendly staff and close toilet plus the tables aren't close together.
- Recommended improvements: Headphones, toys, a quiet area.

The Cosy Club

- Not recommended. We chose to go to the cosy club as it is quiet but then it got more crowded it is too crowded for me.
- I like the cosy club, but all the chairs have a velvety texture cover which I find very difficult. This is something I am sensitive to. It would be a great idea if they could

vary the furniture covering's so people with neuro divergent texture issues could choose a different chair.

- Like going to the Cosy Club as they have dimming lights and their booking sheet is good – for example, like to request a corner seat and not be in the middle of the room surrounded by people. Having the booking sheet where you can note down your preferences is useful.
- **The Herdsman Pub**
- You can play board games at the herdsman pub in Hereford, that's good.
- **Monument**
- Communication is good they give you time to think.
- **The Royal pub in Ross**
- The Royal pub in Ross is good – has a space outside, different areas inside, quiet area, restaurant area and if you just want a coffee, they are not fussy about where you sit and same staff so that's good. The Royal pub is painted white and has more pastel colours.

The Barrels

I find the staff are very accepting of people with differences. Although the music can be loud, we are all there for the same purpose and that feels comfortable. I have never seen any trouble there. The staff attitude and communication is very good. I feel safe there even when it is crowded.

Fast Foods

Greggs

I felt rushed. Staff need to give you time to reply.

Mac Donalds

- You can't always choose where to sit. The background noise is too loud, and it can be too crowded. The staff are quite young some are good and some are not so good the staff attitude can be good and can be not so good. it is accessible, but you can't go upstairs in a wheelchair. The reason I would not recommend it is because it can be too loud and too crowded and some staff are not so good and it isn't accessible upstairs if it is full downstairs. Recommended improvements would be providing a quiet area trained staff to be autism aware, and can the upstairs be accessible or can you reserve areas downstairs for wheelchair users if it's crowded.
- I don't go to McDonald's because it gets too busy. No calm space. Staff are variable. It isn't great for my friend who is a wheelchair user.

- Ones not so good – McDonalds (lights too bright and flickering, too overwhelming, no quiet space especially if upstairs is closed).

MacDonalds drive-through

MacDonalds drive through is good because it is consistent, and you only interact with the person in the ordering place.

Subway

Subway is good the sandwiches and the choices are consistent. You know what to expect. I like chicken tikka and cheese and sweet corn.

Community Buildings

Leominster Library

- It depends if it is busy. You can't always choose where to sit. Welcoming. Loud noises hurt my ears. Yes, staff are polite. Yes, they are kind. Yes, the lighting is ok. Accessibility is good. Good signage. I would recommend it because. There are very friendly people.
- Visually it feels very stimulating, which is bad for me, I don't think there is anything outside to indicate quiet times or if it is a good place for somebody who is neurodiverse. I find it quite noisy. There are no off-putting strong smells. The space is very good with places to choose from. Staff communication is very good Sometimes the attitude is not so good. The lighting and temperature scored not so good. It is accessible. I don't think there are extra considerations such as headphones or fidget toys. The signs are bad. I would recommend it because I come here.
- All good features. I recommend it because it is relaxing. Recommended improvements would be better signs with bigger print and easy to see and read for sight impaired customers like me.
- I recommend it because I like it.
- I do yoga at the library I love the cream walls I like it all the backroom is quiet occasionally **there is a cleaning smell that gets on my chest** the space is good say people can read books the staff are polite I feel safe and happy here the lighting is good and comfortable it's good for the stable people yes it is. The signs are good I remember a no smoking sign I know my way around the library without a map I would recommend it because I love coming.

Library at town hall Hereford

- Entrance for wheelchairs at back does not feel welcoming. Entrance for wheelchairs at the back and a lift that breaks down. There are no accessible loos on that level once you get there!
- I love a library I don't use them much and mostly buy my books online and use audiobooks and I use my printer I do get digital downloads from the library.

Larruperz Centre Ross

The coffee part they have just done at the Larraperz is good – can go there and stay without assistance – go there with a friend who is autistic. The receptionist is not in your face, but there to help if you look lost. Go to bingo there and it is quieter, you can move around and talk a little – not as noisy so again this is good.

Leisure Buildings

Bromyard Gym

Bromyard gym is OK. It has music, but it is smaller, and I can wear my own headphones. I enjoyed going there, but it got too expensive in the end.

Halo Gym (Ross swimming/Leisure)

- Entrance: A mix of friendly and unwelcoming staff. No alternate entrance Gym overcrowded at most times.
- Sight: Good
- Sound/Noise : Intense sensory environment.
- Smell: Good
- Space: Not really that good. Bare minimum (cramped) Some small spaces and some adjustable spaces.
- Staff Communication: Often staff are rude and dismissive. Staff are not neurodiverse informed.
- Staff Attitude and Training: Two staff are actively kind. Feedback is not encouraged. No indication of any training.
- Lighting and Temperature: Good
- Accessible: Mostly good but areas not so good.
- Signs: Not a particularly comfortable environment for people with sensory issues. Staff could use better training.
- Recommendations: Yes, I'd recommend because options are few for alternatives in Ross.
- Recommended improvements: Training (ND informed). Training (basic customer facing manner).

Hereford Swimming Pool

Accessibility Wet chairs can only go so far and there is no lift. Recommend Make more accessible for wheelchair users. (Hereford)

Ledbury swimming pool.

They have quiet sessions that my daughter can use.

Presteigne swimming pool

I recommend this pool as when it is empty it is ok.

Running Club

If you can run nobody worries how fast. You can feel part of a club. Feel included That feels nice. Where we run, we rarely encounter people we run in the countryside. It is outside so I don't worry about any buildings. I recommend it because exercise is good and I feel included, but I have my own space.

Swimming pools

- My daughter loves swimming but there is nowhere in Hereford she can go with quiet sessions.
- I don't mind Chlorine smell

Wye Leisure

All good. I feel very comfortable there. I recommend it mostly because there are very friendly staff.

Outdoors

Countryside

- Anywhere in the countryside where there is space and no crowds.
- I am a forester and Coppicer, and I like the least populated areas possible; that's where I feel comfortable.

Cycling

I like to go cycling in the direction of Ludlow down to the river, just me on my own, that's when I feel most comfortable.

Queenswood

- Queenswood and other woodlands are good.
- Queenswood cafe needs to list all ingredients. My daughter had red onion in her tuna sandwich, and they wouldn't let her return it.

Walks

I like going for walks somewhere quiet.

Wapley Hill Woods, Pembridge

Wapley Woods, Pembridge, is good, it has lots of trails

Woodlands

- Woodland walks – **Norton woodlands and field**. I have a friend who comes to me, and we take my dog for a walk in the woodlands and the field nearby.
- You can move away from people if you wish. Its easier to avoid people in woodlands or outdoors.
- Wind on my face. There are lots of good properties of trees and to being in woodlands.
- I am basically homeless, and I live in Woodlands in the sticks. I struggle to access services because it's a long way to go. I am also scared of services. I suspect a lot of homeless people are autistic, many have PTSD, which is about 4% in the ordinary population but over 40% in the autistic community. It is important to

have male and female spaces, as autistic people are more likely to be abused. 9 out of 10 autistic women have been abused, according to services. If you go to services that have male and female facilities, it is because they are more clued up and have more training. I'd like to see services learn humility as an autistic person and say how is that for you rather than dismiss it or challenge. Being autistic shouldn't be a problem for you when you encounter neurotypical psychological theatres. But there is a lot of ableism about, and undiagnosed autistic people will also be prejudiced until they get it.

Education

Art College Hereford

- Art College - I wanted to do something with fellow neurodivergent filmmakers and struggled to find a group initially. The training at the college was dreadful. I was taunted because of my autism, and I got cross and I hit someone. It was not handled well. I'd really like to teach there with sensitivity to autism.
- Really approachable.

Bishop School Kinder Centre

Kinder centre was great in Bishops school. My child could go there or to a mainstream school. Had educational outings to cafes and shops. They were able to get used to going out.

Kingsland Primary School

Kingsland primary school was good.

Montessori School, Monmouth

The Montessori School in Monmouth suits my children.

School helpers

School helpers- school unspecified. The school helpers vary. Some are not so good. May have less training. They make wrong assumptions. This can be damaging. My child couldn't go out to eat or shop. My child was OCD. It got worse. My child stopped going out and agoraphobia increased. They stopped going in different spaces. The helper was very controlling. My child gets upset if they hears a voice like theirs. My child had to leave the school.

U3A

U3A - joined Ludlow one and struggling with it. Only just managing the philosophy one as the others are weird too.

NHS/ Health

CAMHS

CAMHS Process is a minefield, and both parents have to say yes so I can block the process and stop your child from getting the help that they need. Especially if they don't accept the diagnosis.

CDC Dentist

- **It's difficult. Noise, smells.** They can't help you. They keep on about unpaid bills when you say you'll pay the next day. Certain services are free, but it's expensive.
- Scary. I don't like needles. I see the needle and panic. They don't always explain well. The air blowing is horrid. The waterjet the thing that hoovers in your mouth. I don't recommend because I don't like going to the dentist and staff explanations are lacking.

Dentist and NHS

- I won't go near the NHS or the dentist. Really, anywhere where there are more than two people. I don't cope with the built-up environment.
- Dentists – again find one you like, ask them to turn the lights off and radio off. Dentists should do a survey with you about personal preferences

Hereford Hospital

- The hospital unit for just autism was fantastic with my daughter, too. We were given an orientation and showed us around the ward, etc. I was shown the tools and procedure. Absolutely brilliant with my daughter. Recommend because they understood autism.
- Hereford A&E (Emergency Department) it can be very crowded and very challenging for someone who is autistic. The waiting and the unexpected noises the crowd and the uncertainty are difficult. There is very little space and no quiet area to go.
- There used to be a quiet room in A & E, but don't anymore
- A & E – did have fidget boxes, not sure they are there now

HMG medical Centre and Walgrave

- **Talks to you as though you can't understand. I need to know when you are going to touch me. They speak to my parent and not me. They need to say before they touch me and give me time to think and talk to me not my support person.**
- I find HMG to be huge, when I go with my dad and the form he had to fill was enormous.
- Ones not so good – HMG
- For lots of clients – main barrier is accessing GP appointments and the forms at HMG.

Leominster surgery

- There are very few places that you can go. The hardest thing is people's attitudes. The eye rolling when you say you need a bit more time. I asked the GP

to repeat what they said in Leominster. I will not go back again. Recommend? No because of staff attitude. Yes When I have to, if ill, reluctantly.

- When I asked the GP to repeat themselves, they were annoyed.
- Dr's – they should make you aware there is a quiet space.

Let's Talk therapy

Let's talk therapy – not suitable for neurodivergence.

MIND

- It's different than the Cart Shed. Not the same but you can sit and reflect and staff will pick up on when you are ready to discuss things. Go again? I have to but don't like it.
- MIND is really good – Ellie May Bufton – there is acceptance, they are interested.
- General accessibility is good at MIND – they have dimmer switches which are useful.
- MIND have certain seats where you can sit if you don't want to talk to anyone.

Oxygen Therapy Centre

Oxygen Therapy Centre in Hereford is amazing. You can go and chat and have a cup of coffee. It is in Mostyn Street in the building that used to be MS Centre. It is an open friendly place where you feel welcome and part of the community.

Presteigne GP surgery

Being at the doctor's is really difficult, even just saying what I am there for.

Rotherwas Immunisation centre

Rotherwas – Immunisation We were not made aware that we could have vaccines from different places and separately. At Rotherwas vaccination clinic we were able to have meningitis diphtheria etc. Brilliant.

Rylands GP

Rylands GP They are frankly very good. We've had very good experiences. Myself and my two children. They are really good at preparing you beforehand what to expect. And when there explaining before doing anything. They are trying. We use our divergent passport.

The health centre near ASDA where they do blood tests

I recommend it as they communicate well. They actually look at me and notice me as a person. This makes me feel much less stressed.

Online support

- Neurodivergent support Herefordshire (The one lady has set up). Purely online / FB page / post interesting things.
- Would like more of a social group – but think it would be better to be online and maybe occasionally in person.

Stadiums, Festivals and Entertainment venues

Alton Towers

I did stick up for people at Alton Towers. They removed the rapid access pass for people who are autistic because they say that they now have quiet spaces, but the quiet spaces are not in the queue. So, to go on any ride, you still have to get into the queue, and that was the whole point of rapid access. Sometimes the whole family is neurodivergent, and you feel they didn't believe this. The rapid access passes were seen as an abuse. There is a lack of understanding. Even if the whole family is not neurodivergent, it is reasonable to stand with your child, which is not cheating; it's just supporting your child.

Courtyard

- The Courtyard are Autism accredited (By the NAS). The Courtyard have Autism friendly viewings. (Lights, sounds lower and if you want you can get up and move around).
- Entrance: Firstly, there is designated disabled parking for my Motability van. It is safe, and free for vehicles registered at reception. The main entrance is open glass and leads almost straight into the reception etc without the need to go through the main cafe area. There is also a 'changing places' toilet outside, accessed via a radar key, which is fantastic as accessible toilet inside is right in front of people sitting in the cafe. For those of us who are extremely sensory aware and self-conscious it is embarrassing to have to go in there! Not being able to interpret people can make us very hyper vigilant (trying to pick up on subtle nuances all the time) so it's exhausting being around people we don't know, and who don't know us. Not to mention the sensory awareness. I love the natural light that comes through all the glass and being able to focus on the trees and sky outside when I'm making my way through crowded areas, instead of looking at all the people. I also wear a wide brimmed hat or baseball cap to block out the bright lights above, and keep focused, like a horse in blinkers!! The reception staff are polite, kind and helpful. It is a place where I would feel able to approach them if I was unwell or struggling or had a problem. The website is easy to negotiate as you can choose your seat and time (important as I also require step free access). Normally my Walker can be folded and kept right by me. This is security, as, if there was the need for a quick exit, I wouldn't have to rely on anyone to get it, or disturb them... Also, people get distracted, and I would worry that, at the end of the film, they would forget and leave me sitting there! But they are very attentive and careful to reassure me and talk and are welcoming without being intrusive. At the end, people tend to congregate and can block the way out, but I can focus on the trees outside and stay calm until I'm outside in the fresh air again. It is a place I feel I can go on my own and feel

safe and welcome without having to divest energy in interacting too much with others! There's also a small park close by for my assistance dog. They show a variety of films, and during the film festival, specialise in films from around the world, which is fantastic.

- **Sound/ Noise:** The floor is wooden, so you can hear people 'tapping' around as they walk, and the volume of the music in accessible toilet inside the venue can be a bit loud. People chatter, but you have to learn to block that out, or you'd end up going nowhere! I wear a hat with a brim to block out any bright lights above me....i may look weird but I have to! I don't think I'd be able to go there if the only entrance was the one which led through the cafe area, as it's always so busy and cluttered where the walkway through is...but I always go in the front entrance. Sometimes there's a coffee and pastry with the morning performances, but people can be pushy and I always feel awkward if there's too many queueing for it, so give it a miss. But when there's no one at the counter, I'll go and 'claim' my free coffee and pastry and they kindly give it me in a takeout cup, so I can take it into the film with me. (But then I am really conscious of 'slurping' and disturbing others, so have developed a way to drink it in the dark without anyone knowing, and sometimes I'm so self-conscious I can't even bend down and put the empty cup on the floor, as I'm always at the very front of the screen, and people may wonder what I'm doing, so I sit with it in my lap throughout the entire performance! And the napkin with pastry crumbs, as I can't see in the dark, and don't want to shake crumbs on the carpet! So I wait for the film to end and the lights to come back up and Then I'll put them in my Walker and throw them in the trash when the film is over) I went to the relaxed screening of the pantomime and it was fabulous to see and be amongst so many other people with autism and things, and to see how the cast interacted with the audience and were in tune with them and noted and responded to the ones who were shouting out, and I didn't feel so self-aware and self-conscious and could laugh out loud freely!) Once, I went to see a film in Swansea with some friends, and I was the only person who kept bursting out laughing loudly, and so I realised I was very different, so have learnt to suppress things altogether and 'mask' instead... I loved the relaxed performance, as I could see a younger generation are growing up able to express themselves freely....and this is just as it should be, and I'm happy for them as they won't have so many issues, growing up, than those of us who have had to 'pretend', all our lives, that we are coping, or understand things, or are 'neurotypical' when the reality can be so very different.
- **Lighting/ Temperature:** I wear my wide brimmed hat...!! They offer blankets and cushions to make things cosy, if people want. (I only use natural materials, so

don't use them, but it's a nice thought!) I love the way cafes that have seating outside have sheepskin on the chairs!

- Space: I go into the cafe to get a seat in the quiet.
- They are not good with panic attacks always. An incident where somebody wanted to use their telephone app that helps them hear with their hearing aid. They were told to turn their phone off and struggled to explain. They showed the app. But they wouldn't let them use it. They had a panic attack, and it wasn't understood. The people thought they were making it up.
- Not recommended because: Staff attitude towards panic attacks and use of hearing apps.
- You have to sit at the front, and it hurts your neck if you are in a wheelchair and it is cold.
- Courtyard – they have ear defenders you can borrow.

Glastonbury

I did go to Glastonbury once! I had to cry out with sensory overwhelm and had to head off. I was able to find a calm space and wear noise-cancelling headphones, and I was able to sit on bean bags.

Live Music

- I used to go to Sheep music in my 20s and 30s but I drank a lot. I don't really like being around people I feel exposed, but I seem to be able to do that but only if I drank a lot.
- I do love live music, especially small, obscure folk or rock festivals. You are overall stimulated, but it's often in the dark, and everybody is there for the same reason. You know what is going to happen and what is expected of you.

Odeon Cinema, Hereford

- I like the nice oak inside. The adverts and the noise can be a bit difficult It is quite hard to walk around with headphones on.
- I find the cinema OK when I went to see the Fantastic Four and Marvel's Genius Comics with Robert Downey Jr., and Spiderman at the Odeon, the chocolate brownies are great.
- Odeon – do have quiet showings which are good
- Odeon has Autism friendly viewings. (Lights, sounds lower and if you want you can get up and move around).

Stadiums

They were doing sensory spaces in stadiums and other places, which seems like a good development.

Other

Family Court System

I'd like to talk about the family court system. My experience was horrendous with my child years ago, who does not wish to stay with my spouse, who wants to fix them and make them better, not accepting that they are autistic. My child is older now and has a three-day final hearing, which is nearly a month away. When they stay with my spouse, they are exhausted from having to mask all the time to satisfy them. We were supposed to have free legal representation, but it didn't happen, and my spouse had paid for their own legal representative and then turned up 17 1/2 hours late, and we argued the whole thing over again. There is so much waiting, and it's very wearing. We were told on another Friday at 2:00 PM, with no notice, to get everything together. It was short notice, but we made it to court so that we wouldn't lose the date. But because my spouse decided they couldn't turn up because the barrister they wanted couldn't come, they cancelled the hearing without even talking to us. We had to wait again, and my child became very anxious. Later, because the barrister said that they can't make that date, it was cancelled again. There appeared to be no adaptations for people who are autistic, and people have to represent themselves if they have no money. There is no support. You can't do it on a screen remotely. They just handed down the judgment and seemed to have all rearranged the Diaries without consultation. It is not a level playing field, as we couldn't get legal aid; at least my child has legal aid, but I, as one of the parents, cannot, and the other parent can afford it. That doesn't seem fair.

Home

Many people said they did not go out and felt most comfortable at home.

Nowhere

My children have not coped with going pretty much anywhere, so we haven't gone anywhere, not even the library. The lockdown was brilliant!

Transport

Beacon College minibus

Beacon College bus to Malvern. The Malvern visit was difficult because it was jam-packed and took two hours to get there, and the floor was slippery. We got off and almost immediately had to get back on again to come back.

Bus 492

Bus stops all good. Visually feels bad. Noise level good. Smell good. Space No calm space which is bad and no escape. Not so good that there is no space to move about. Staff communication not available at bus stop. Staff attitude can be not so good. Temperature - Windows open drives me mad in winter. Not very accessible. Signage - The timetable is tiny, and I am partially sighted. I would recommend purely because I need to get places, I also use taxis and trains. My recommendation

is I need bigger print please and lighter at bus stops to read. I'd like transport to be on time especially taxis.

Bus Ross to Hereford and Ross to Gloucester

I'm OK with buses if I get used to them. I have to have help to check bus times to work out times that give a leeway. Buses don't always turn up at right times which can be difficult. I do not travel in the dark as I feel vulnerable. I mostly travel with someone but not always. If I am used to the journey I can go alone. I am anxious if there is change or they don't turn up when expected.

Bus station café

Good all on one level and floor even. Good food, Lovely staff, on one level with even floors.

Buses and Trains

- Buses and trains. The unpredictability and crowds are too overwhelming for me I have autism and OCD. Delays are very difficult. All my family have the travel element of PIP. We use it for petrol. I also have a blue card so I can park close to our destinations.
- I would have to say no to buses or trains. They are difficult, and in any case, from where I live, I would need 3 buses to get anywhere, which makes it worse.
- Buses and trains I rarely use because of the crowds and the noise.

Community Transport

"Community transport – Can't get it when they want. Too much advanced planning (some need to see how they are on the day). The drivers talk too much

Planes

I did go on a public bus last September and a minibus and I found it really difficult. I can do it but I'm very anxious before and I don't function and it makes me not able to concentrate and I take a while to recover often a couple of hours. I have done a plane it can vary. Although it's confined and I can't escape there are systems that can be supportive. So, for example, in order to get through the plane trip, I disassociated and that is a survival tactic to get through. But it ends a lot of sensory stuff so I couldn't speak when I got out of the plane and went through passport control. They asked where you're born and where you have flown from and I couldn't answer. I couldn't speak. My friend appeared and she could see I was struggling and tried. Then I had a very anxious trip back it can be a result of too much sensory to cope with and I lose the ability to speak.

Trains

- Ok on the train.
- Entrance: At the station It does not feel welcome no. No places to sit down. I cannot choose where I sit. It is too noisy. Inside the train It is welcoming on entering, yes. There is not a separate quieter entrance everyone uses the same

door. I can choose where I sit in the morning in the afternoon no, there are no seats left.

- Sound/ Noise: Bad, It is too noisy: Lots of people, tannoy, train noise.
- Smell: Not so good. At the station, it's not nice, just yuck. On the train, ok.
- Space: Good. I go into the cafe to get a seat in the quiet. Ok on the train.
- Staff communication and attitude: Good
- Lighting and Temperature: Sometimes it is too hot. There are old buzzing lights.
- Accessible: Not so good. The big step on and off is scary.
- Extra Considerations: None
- Signs: There are not really signs to say what the different areas are for. I don't think there is a map or plan to find your way around. There may be quieter times, but you can't change the times of trains. You have to catch the train you need. I have not been on the website.
- Overall I would recommend because: Train staff are nice and it is quicker than the bus.
- Recommended improvements: The train aisles get blocked with bags and people so more seats are needed. The afternoon train is very crowded with students every week. They should know that it is busy and put on extra coaches.
- I got stuck in the toilet on the train because the buttons were confusing. They are different at each train. People don't move their bags to let you sit. I travel with my sister, so I don't panic - I never travel on my own - too scared to.

Train from Hereford to Leominster

- Entrance: Welcoming but can be too crowded.
- Sight: More seating would be good.
- Sound/Noise: Recently they upgraded announcement system which is clearer. That was good.
- Smell: Good
- Space: No escape. Can be bad when trying to get off of the train when people are blocking the exit. Mostly can choose where to stand on the platform to find a comfortable space.
- Staff Communication and Attitude: Good. The staff know me and I know them by first names. Staff are friendly and kind.
- Lighting and Temperature: It can be cold. There is a waiting room but only on one platform. Can't do anything about outside temperature!
- Accessible: Good. I've experienced special assistance when going to unfamiliar station in Worcester. Service was great. Easy to book and use.
- Signs: Good
- Recommended: because Friendly staff and good train journey.
- Recommended improvements: Another waiting room. Men's toilet a long walk around the corner.

Zipper buses

- You can only have one wheelchair or one pram. If I go out with my friend who is also in a wheelchair, we can't catch the same bus.
- I caught the bus to the cathedral, and it was OK I had to stand and it was a bit wobbly so I felt a bit scared.

Taxis

I'd like taxis to be on time.



healthwatch

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