

# COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR CARLISLE

**Meeting date: 5 January 2022**

**From: Christine Bowditch – Champion for Autism**

## **AUTISM CHAMPION UPDATE**

Since the last report I have been contacted by two parents regarding their children's education and by two new Autism support groups for adults run by autistic adults for support.

The children's concerns are complex and extremely worrying for the families concerned. The two adult groups are being formulated by autistic adults with a view for offering support and in one case campaigning for more awareness and consideration for all people with a neurodiversity status. Some of the problems highlighted by the latter group make sad and concerning reading two quotes from the group

'after 18 months of trying to find work I became ill, upon seeking help for my mental health I was told that I may not be taken on because I was autistic '

'I find it really hard to find work because I don't have two professional references, this is because I have been sacked from every job I have ever had, not because of what I have done but because of who I am'.

*(published with permission.)*

This leads me to announce next year's World Autism acceptance week (changed from Autism awareness week after consultation with autistic people) 28 March-3 April 2022. No one should be judged for being autistic or have to wait for many months even years for a potentially life changing diagnosis, vital help and support. Their view, as indeed mine, is that society has to change. Autistic children, adults and their families just want to be accepted in their communities, schools and workplaces.

Looking forward to 2022 I hope that life improves for us all, and that the determination of Autistic groups, their families and friends to ensure awareness and acceptance for all neo-diverse groups, indeed all disabilities continues to grow.

**Christine Bowditch  
Autism Champion**

*December 2021*