

NOW

**THAT'S WHAT
I CALL AUTISM**

2025

EVENT REPORT



2nd April 2025



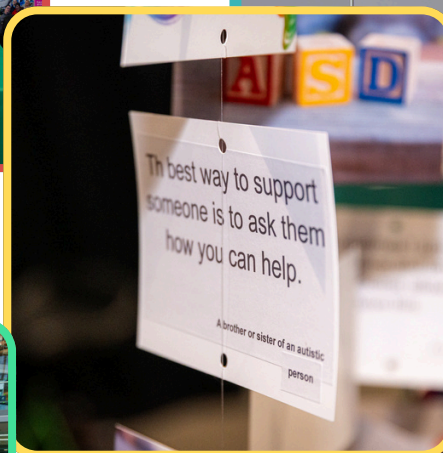
**NORFOLK
AUTISM
PARTNERSHIP**

Contents

Pg. 2	Introduction
Pg. 3	Why the event was held
Pg. 4	Event planning and Co-Production
Pg. 5	What happened on the day
Pg. 6	Attendance and Reach
Pg. 7	Feedback and Impact
Pg. 8	Budget and Delivery
Pg. 9	Looking Ahead
Pg. 10	Acknowledgments

Introduction

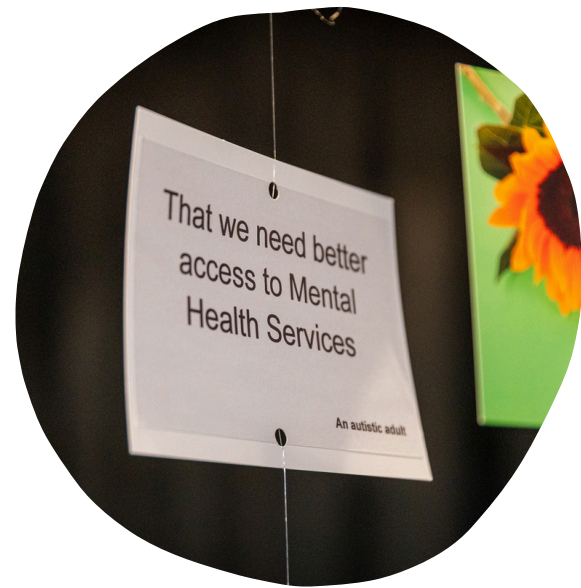
Now That's What I Call Autism 2025 was a one-day celebration of autistic identity, creativity, and community. Held on Wednesday 2nd April 2025 at The Forum in Norwich, the event took place during Autism Acceptance Week and was organised by the Norfolk Autism Partnership in collaboration with ASD Helping Hands.



Designed by and for autistic people, the event aimed to create a space where voices from the autistic community could be heard, seen, and celebrated.

Why the event was held

The event responded to the growing call for more inclusive, empowering spaces that focus on acceptance rather than just awareness. Its aim was to shift the narrative around autism by highlighting the strengths, stories, and talents of autistic individuals.



It also supported the goals of the Norfolk All-Age Autism Strategy (2024–2029), particularly around improving understanding, encouraging leadership from autistic people, and celebrating their contributions to society.

Event planning and Co-Production

Planning was guided by a Task and Finish Group made up of autistic adults and parent/carers, who helped shape everything from programming to accessibility. This co-productive approach ensured the event reflected the real needs and priorities of the autistic community.



Accessibility was a key consideration, with quiet spaces, breakout cards, and volunteer support provided throughout the day.

What happened on the day

The event took place across three key spaces at The Forum:

- The Atrium hosted the Makers Market and information stalls.
- The Gallery was a space for performances by autistic artists.
- The Auditorium held three themed panel discussions.



The Makers Market



Information Stands



Performance Space

The programme featured powerful talks on overlapping identities, mental health, and thriving as an autistic person. Performances included music, poetry, and spoken word. Creative activities like the Affirmation Wall and drop-in art sessions gave people a chance to engage and express themselves.

A total of 7 autistic speakers, 4 performers, 12 market stallholders, and 15 information stalls took part.

Attendance and Reach

An estimated 250–300 people attended, with many more accessing content via the event's online portal

The digital platform featured speaker profiles, an event guide, and recordings of panel sessions, allowing broader and ongoing engagement.



Feedback and Impact

Feedback from speakers, stallholders, and attendees was overwhelmingly positive. Many praised the welcoming, affirming atmosphere and the opportunity to be part of something truly centred on autistic experiences.

Contributors said they felt respected, supported, and empowered. Suggestions for future improvements included clearer signage, more promotion throughout the day, and a slightly larger layout to allow more space around busy areas.

"The team were amazing and very helpful – such a warm and positive atmosphere throughout the whole day."

Speaker Feedback

"Brilliant event. Great turnout, friendly, welcoming, and lots of variety. Thank you for having us."

Information Stall Feedback

“

"I really appreciated how safe I felt and how welcomed I was... it was a real pleasure to perform and feel like I was being truly seen for who I am."

Performer Feedback

”

Budget and Delivery

The total budget for the event was £2,500, funded by the Norfolk Autism Partnership Board. No additional sponsorship or external grants were used, due to time constraints.

Despite this, the event was delivered under budget through the help of volunteers, in-kind contributions, and efficient planning. Costs covered venue hire, performer fees, volunteer expenses, and promotional materials.

In-kind contributions played a significant role in extending the impact of the event without increasing financial cost. These included:

- Volunteer time for planning, coordination, and on-the-day support
- Social media promotion and web hosting via Norfolk Autism Partnership channels
- Stallholder and performer contributions offered without a fee
- Visual design and accessibility consultation offered informally through partner expertise



Looking Ahead

The success of Now That's What I Call Autism 2025 has built strong momentum for future events. Lessons learned will guide planning for 2026, with improvements expected in signage, promotion, and layout. With further funding, the event could expand its accessibility features and reach an even larger audience.



“A map or programme leaflet would have been useful so visitors knew what was on and where.” – Vendor Feedback

“I think next time the performances and talks could be more central to help more people see and hear them.” – Speaker Feedback



Acknowledgements

This success would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of the Norfolk Autism Partnership, the Task and Finish Group, ASD Helping Hands, and our wider network of partners and supporters. We would particularly like to acknowledge:

- Our autistic contributors and parent/carers who co-produced the event
- Our volunteers, many of whom are autistic, who gave their time and energy
- The panelists, performers, stallholders, and vendors who brought the space to life
- Our partners and organisations who provided resources, information, and in-kind support
- The Norfolk Autism Partnership Board, for its funding and strategic support
- And the entire planning team — with a special thank you to Laura, Joseph, and Trevor — whose dedication, creativity, and care made this event possible

As we look to the future, the feedback and lessons from this year provide a strong foundation for planning Now That's What I Call Autism 2026. We are proud of what we have achieved together, and even more excited about what comes next.