autism
a hands on approach

Annual Conference

5th November 2025

speaker biography



JO BROMLEY

Jo Bromley is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist who has worked in the NHS with children with disabilities for over 30 years. She is the Strategic Lead for LDA CAMHS at Manchester University Foundation Trust. Along with colleagues Sam Todd and Christine Mellor, Jo is one of the clinicians who have developed Riding the Rapids, a group to help parents understand behaviour through a neurodivergent lens and she is one of the directors of Encompass Psychology who train facilitators to deliver RTR. Jo, Sam and Christine are course leads for the PG Cert in Learning Disabilities and Autism run by the North West Psychological Therapies Training Centre (IAPT). Along with Cheryl, Jo has recently been part of a GM wide group helping to develop a neuro-profiling tool that can help structure conversations about strengths and needs between families, young people and the team around them.



LISA BROWN

After a long nursing career in both the Emergency Department and as a Health Visitor, Lisa began property investing. She initially developed heritage properties and then a chance encounter led her to discover supported living. She realised this was a powerful way to invest in property while creating homes for people with support needs.

Lisa set about discovering why property investors struggle to let their properties to supported living providers and why providers struggle to find property to let. She has been educating people, raising awareness and working on solutions to this problem ever since. Lisa is the founder of Supported Living Property Network, the host of the Supported Living Property Podcast and YouTube channel. She is regularly asked to speak about supported living property and educates both providers and property investors about supported living property.

Lisa lives in South Devon with her teenage boys, dogs and cats. When Lisa is not discussing supported living property, she can be found attempting to tame her garden, or swimming in the sea all year round.

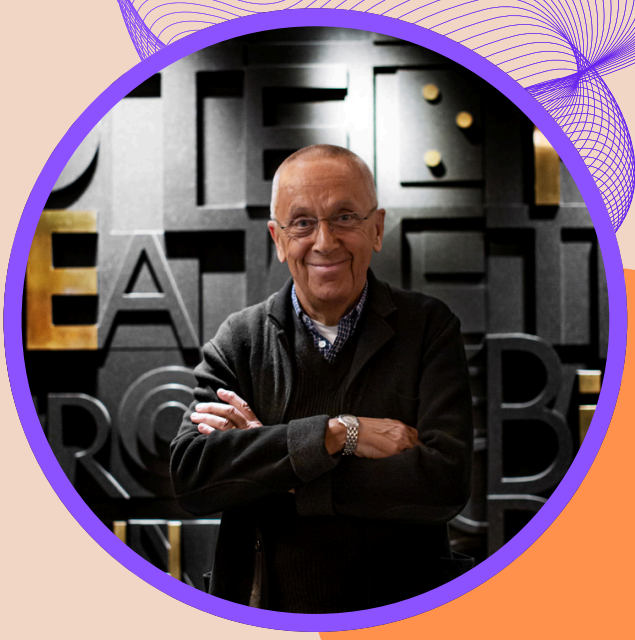


KATE DUGGAN

Kate became Chief Operating Officer in November 2024, after joining Seashell 2017 as Lead Speech and Language Therapist.
Kate joined Seashell in 2017 and established Seashell's Health Service, registering the service with CQC and acting as the first Registered Manager. Kate has more recently joined ELT, acting as Director of Strategy, Health and Wellbeing. In November 2024 she moved into the role of Chief Operating Officer, overseeing all areas of Seashell's operations including Education, Health, Active, Care, Family Services and Sensory Support.

Kate has completed research and presented findings at national and international conferences into topics such as the challenges faced by therapists in evidencing the impact of their support, use of telepractice for delivering health services and functional communication training for individuals with autism and learning disabilities.
Kate is passionate about promoting holistic outcomes for children and young adults through the delivery of integrated support. She has acted as a consultant to advise specialist providers on development of health services to provide maximum impact.

CHRIS GILLBERG



Christopher Gillberg is Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, since the mid-1980s. He heads the Gillberg Neuropsychiatry Centre since 2010. He is also a Chief Physician at the Sahlgrenska University Hospital and one of the world's most experienced, clinically active child- and adolescent psychiatrists, with more than 45 years of extensive clinical work in treatment of patients and families with complex psychiatric/neurodevelopmental problems.

In 1993 he was Fulbright Visiting Professor at New York University Medical School. He is also Visiting or Honorary Professor at the Universities of London, University College London (Institute of Child Health), University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh, the Pasteur Institute, and Kochi University, Japan (where he is involved with the Japan Environment and Children Study/JECS). In the past he has been a Visiting Professor at Odense, Bergen (where he started and was PI on the Bergen Child Study), and San Francisco.

Christopher Gillberg has published more than 800 peer-reviewed scientific papers (of which 733 are currently on the NIH PubMed website) on autism, Asperger syndrome, ADHD, Tourette syndrome, intellectual disability, epilepsy, behavioural phenotype syndromes, depression, reactive attachment disorder, anorexia nervosa, and other areas relevant for children's and adolescents' mental and neurological health. His research ranges from genetics and basic neuroscience through epidemiology and clinical phenomenology to treatments/interventions and outcome. He has written 36 books, which have been published in more than a dozen languages, several of which are standard textbooks in the field of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Autism.

Christopher Gillberg is the most productive autism researcher in the world and is on Thomson Reuter's 2014 list of the world's most influential researchers (all fields).

LAUREN GREGORY



Lauren is a highly experienced SEND teacher with over 14 years of expertise supporting children and young people with complex needs, including autism, learning disabilities, and behaviours that challenge. In addition to her extensive professional background, she brings valuable insight from her personal experience as a family carer. Lauren's work is rooted in developing practitioner knowledge and practice, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for individuals with the highest support needs.

MARTIN HANBURY



Martin has worked with people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for over forty years in a variety of roles including teaching assistant, domiciliary carer, teacher, headteacher and chief executive officer. He retired from his role as Chief Executive Officer of the Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust in August 2024 and now works as an educational consultant and speaker. Martin serves as a trustee of The Tutor Trust and Leisure for Autism and is an active member of the Coalition of Senior Professionals in Autism.

Martin has a Ph.D. focused on Leadership in Special Education and holds Masters degrees in Special Education (M.Ed), Educational Management (M.Sc.) and Research Methodology (M.Res.). Martin has published Educating Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders: A Practical Guide in 2005 (2nd. Edition 2012) and Positive Behaviour Strategies to Support Children and Young People with Autism in 2007. Educating Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders: A Practical Guidehas been translated into Korean and Polish and is available internationally.

Martin is currently working as an educational consultant, trainer and school improvement partner working with schools and organisations across the U.K. and Europe to develop practice and processes to support better outcomes for pupils.



DAVID HUMPHREY

David is a late-diagnosed autistic person with over a decade of experience working in mental health and supporting autistic adults. His professional journey has included roles at Pharmacist Support, the Department for Work and Pensions, Manchester Mind, and Disability Stockport, where he has been committed to advocating for and empowering neurodivergent individuals.

David's passion for autism support was sparked by his own diagnosis, which was a largely positive and transformative moment. This personal insight continues to inform his work. Currently based once again at Manchester Mind and Gaddum, where he provides welfare rights advice to people transitioning out of hospital care.



CHERYL KNUPFER

Cheryl Knupfer is the Strategic Lead for Autism in Stockport. Cheryl has over 25 years of experience in working with autistic individuals and their families from pre-school children to adults and is currently leading on Stockport's first all-age autism strategy.



JANE MACKENZIE

Jane is a 65-year-old autistic woman, mother and full-time inclusion practitioner.

From an Arts degree in London in the mid 80's, she went into Corporate Management for over 20 years where she was responsible for a large team.
She moved into teaching with responsibility for using art as Therapy for 15 years, followed by a little time in the third sector and local government. She is now an inclusion practitioner in H.E.
Her specialist interest is inclusion, stemming from intense emotion motivated by injustice.
She would like to share with us some of her underpinning thinking around inclusion and being Autistic.

This understanding comes under the banner of ''Nothing about us without us''.



CHARLOTTE MOORE

Charlotte Moore is an author and freelance journalist. She has written widely on autism–related issues and has spoken at many conferences and other events. ‘George and Sam’ her account of life with her autistic sons, is published by Penguin. She lives in Sussex with George and Sam, now both in their twenties, their neurotypical brother Jake, and her partner Simon.

NICOLA MUSGROVE



Nicola Musgrove, was formerly an early years practitioner, further education teacher, and currently a PhD student researching the lived experiences of autistic children in mainstream primary settings. Alongside studying, she delivers webinars for an education company, works as a parent trainer for a charity and contributes to the work of the Foundation for Education Development. She has been fortunate to be a guest on the Early Excellent Podcast, contribute to government projects via a national autism charity and be a member of the co production team within West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnerships, supporting their work around neurodiversity.
Most importantly, she is a parent to 2 autistic children.

SHIRLEY WOODS-GALLAGHER



Shirley is an unapologetic, empowered Autistic leader in public services in the UK. She has 30 years' service in local government, early years, homelessness, domestic abuse, social care, commissioning and schools.

She is currently an Executive Director of Leadership and Governance at a specialist multi-academy trust where vast numbers of children are neurodivergent and teaching and support staff are out about their neurodivergence at work.

Her openly neurodivergent leadership has been recognised by UNESCO/ International Federation of Inclusive Practitioners Global Inclusion Awards in both 2024 and 2025: acknowledging her impact in creating inclusive education, work and skills policies and practices.

Her leadership is not confined to paid work. She is deeply engaged in shaping inclusive practices across multiple sectors including being on an international advisory board of Invest In Play which is developing neuroaffirmative parenting programmes; ensuring inclusive support for neurodivergent children and families around the globe.

She has led a campaign in Greater Manchester in 2023-25 called Bee Neuroinclusive with GM Mayor Andy Burnham and the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. The Bee Neuroinclusive Charter code launches on 10th October 2025. It will change this for the better for countless generations to come.