



# 10 Year Impact

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We need to get you to fly, because the world can only benefit from you living at the **power of your strengths.**

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# Foreword

## by Judy Singer



Congratulations to Genius Within for all they have achieved in the past 10 years, and full credit must go to Founder, Nancy Doyle, a world-renowned thought leader in the field.

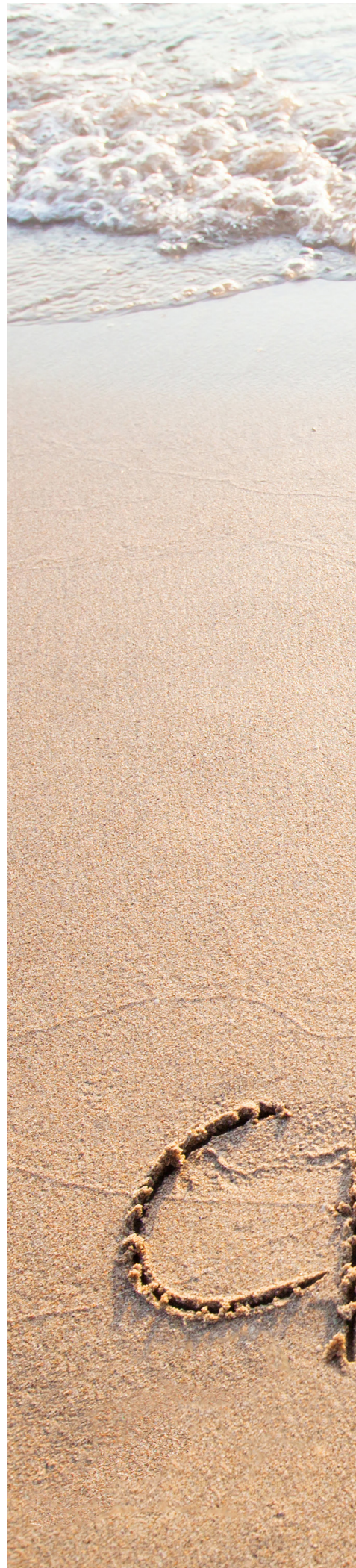
This is an organisation that does more than “talk the talk”. They walk the walk, every step of the way.

Their own processes revolve around constant adjustment, experimentation, critical self-reflection and pushing the boundaries. And importantly being willing to pay the price, to do an about turn if it doesn't work.

To continue to flourish as a society, we must now incorporate all our minorities in order to benefit from the gifts of their cultures and experiences.

I particularly respect GW's work in prisons. We need to recognise that a society that refuses to adequately fund education, housing, and a living basic income for all, pays for it out the back door by warehousing the people it fails.

Space precludes me from listing all of GW's stellar achievements. I commend the report to you in its entirety. May it stand as an exemplar and template for ALL enterprises in the future.



# Welcome to the Genius Within 10 Year Impact report.

On our 10-year anniversary, we would like to share our journey with you and take a moment to reflect on the impact we have had on our journey so far. In this report, we will present multiple, intersecting perspectives – client stories, success statistics and our own personal learning journeys. We will set some goals for the next ten years and aim to inspire collaboration, and competition, to continue moving the field closer to systemic inclusion. To take you on this journey, we would first like to take a moment to tell how it all started...



TIME  
FOR  
CHANGE

# How it started by Nancy Doyle

The Good Ship Genius Within first set sail in 2011, with the support of three colleagues. I had no idea that the company would become my life's work. I knew at that time that I was 'different' and possibly had ADHD. I had a history of difficulties in education, with anxiety, but I was not formally diagnosed.

I knew the word neurodiversity, but only just! We still called our client group 'Specific Learning Disabilities' in the early days and I knew there was something wrong with that, it didn't reflect the balance of strengths with struggles that I associated with my clients. I knew that the clients I saw in unemployment projects



had the same profile as those I worked with on the Access to Work program to support disabled people in work.

People were struggling to achieve their potential because of paperwork, misunderstandings, rigid rules and just not 'getting' the neurotypical

workplace. Talent and ingenuity were thwarted wherever I looked. I knew this was a moral, social and economic problem and I set out to fix it. It turns out that the market was ready for an innovative, professional, strengths-based model of assessments and coaching.

Initially Genius Within had 1 employee (me) and 7 associates. Today, we have over 150 associates and over 50 employees. We have provided a service to tens of thousands of neurodiverse/divergent people across the world, and we have been part of the Neurodiversity Movement's incorporation into the mainstream.





How  
it's  
going

Our team  
of over  
200 people  
deliver  
award-  
winning  
work



“

Genius Within is a supportive company focused on the wellbeing of their staff and helping the staff to achieve their career goals.

Katie Gormley

We have  
moved  
over 500  
people out of  
unemployment

Over 10,000  
people have  
used our  
Screeners to  
explore their  
strengths and  
challenges



“

I enjoy working with Genius Within as we are coaching and supporting individuals who otherwise might not get the support they need to gain employment and sustain employment. In my experience the support has enabled clients to gain confidence in themselves and their skills...It has also enabled them to grow socially and gain interpersonal skills. It makes me happy to enable someone achieve their goals.

Mamuda Conteh

“

It did not take me long to realise that my decision to seek employment with Genius Within was definitely the right choice. Being neurodiverse myself, it was important to me to find an employer who allows my uniqueness to flourish.

Ian Baker



“

Working for Genius Within is exhilarative. A company that walks its own talk. Inclusion is at the core of the company, celebrating individual difference without personal bias or an exclusionary culture. Here I am encouraged to embrace my uniqueness & perspective and that of others, thereby empowering all employees to thrive.

Patience Zengeya



“

I am new to Genius Within and I am loving every moment of working here. It is like no other company I have ever worked for. I think it's an amazing company, that is creating amazing opportunities for those that have previously been left in the dark.

Laura Tomes

Our service delivery is Global

Our coaches have delivered over 80,000 sessions



“

Genius Within are an unbelievably supportive company and I am honoured by the work they do for the community. As an employee, I feel listened to, understood and respected...A lot of time is being invested in both our professional and personal development and I look forward to seeing where my journey with Genius Within will take me.

Hazel Seyitoglu

“

**I didn't get a diagnosis until I was 46.**

**Whilst the diagnosis was brilliant; let me know what my conditions were and how they manifested themselves, it didn't tell the whole story.**

**That didn't come until I had a positive assessment with Genius Within. And from that assessment I learnt what my abilities were and what my strengths were. Since that assessment there has been no looking back!**

Paul Stevenson,  
Genius Within Ambassador



# Genius Within's Identity

Genius Within staff have disclosed that 60% identify as disabled, 43% identify as having ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Tourette Syndrome, or a mental health condition. Our Board include representation of ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and mental health conditions. Our ambition is three-fold:

1

**Deliver the best support, consultancy and projects to maximise neuro-inclusion at work.**

2

**Set an example to the world of a neuro-inclusive company that performs at its best.**

3

**Be the best ally that we can to all equity and social justice endeavours, showing that intersectionality works.**

# Authenticity

We are 100% committed to walking the talk. How can we sell advice and consultancy on matters that we cannot get right ourselves? If we were not employing and promoting neurominorities, we would be inauthentic as experts in our field. If we want to move the Neurodiversity Movement towards the intersectional goals of embracing gender, race, class, and LGBTQ+ equity, then we need to ensure that we can deliver appropriate representation ourselves. We do not promise to get it right every time, but we promise to be accountable, transparent, to learn and to make amends where needed. One recent example of this is where we noticed that our recruitment efforts for our South East UK head office routinely resulted in all-white applicants. We made a strategic decision to disperse back-office functions across the country, in line with our staff team locations, and have since been able to recruit from a more representative applicant pool.

**We believe in co-production** – blending the depth of lived experience authenticity with the breadth of evidence-informed training. Professional training provides learning around safeguarding, maintaining ethical personal boundaries, supervision requirements, and understanding how to synthesize and appraise evidence. Most of all, from within the systems, we develop the power to develop our OWN professional training protocols and improve the way things work for all neurominorities. We also value the carefully chosen institutions with which we ally, such as: Birkbeck, University of London Psychology Department; the Health and Care Professions Council; various British Psychological Society Committees; The Employability-Related Services Association; and the International Coaching Federation, all of whom provide guidance so we can protect our clients from inadvertent harm.

Our staff represent a wide range of professional training disciplines, mainly Occupational Psychology, as well as Clinical, Forensic and Health Psychology, Research based Psychologists, Criminologists, Human Resources professionals, professional workplace coaches, management and business generalists, accountants and marketers. We offer all staff, including associates, CPD throughout the year, investing in new and emerging knowledge and providing forums for safeguarding reviews, supervision and confidential support for staff.

## We have sponsored...



**5 PHDs**



**2 Masters**



**3 Bachelors**



**5 NVQ/  
equivalent  
certification**

## We have won...



**15 Awards  
for our work**

## This takes us to self-care...

For neurodiverse companies to work, we need to lose the corporate commando attitude to productivity that neurotypical norms impose on us. For many neurominorities to work at our best we need to embrace (1) flexible hours (2) performance based on output, not input and (3) a focus on healthy attitudes to rest. We offer all staff six weeks of annual leave to incorporate the neurominority need for decompression time.

We offer an Employee Assistance Programme, health benefits, and generous sickness and compassionate leave policies. As a result, our turnover is less than

# 2% compared with a UK average of 17%.

Not only do we retain ND staff, we also actively support and promote them. For example, four of our seven senior leaders are neurodiverse, two of whom started as employees. ND leadership is the heart of Genius Within; we work like trojans when we are hyper-focused and quid pro quo is to build safety valves into our HR infrastructure that let us rest when we are done with a project. It is a continual learning, self-reflexive structure that does not suit everyone, we know that. It requires independent minds who self-manage and do not need to be monitored. For many, Genius Within is a safe port in a storm.

At Genius Within we use a ship as an analogy for our organisation which we call "The Good Ship Genius", we like it a lot! It helps to centre and ground us and reminds us of the values of being good shipmates and the importance of plotting a safe route, especially when we find ourselves in stormy water.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypesadhocs/10685employeeturnoverlevelsandratesbyindustrysectionukjanuary2017todecember2018>



“

**I've been here for five years. I've never had a job last that long before. Being Autistic, working in education, I would leave jobs after a few years because of burnout and not being able to make myself understood. At Genius Within I can work to my own pace and as a result I get a lot more done.**

Head of Criminal Justice and Psychology,  
soon-to-be Dr Tanya Banfield





**Shaw Trust believes in the right of every person to live a decent and dignified life through access to rewarding employment. Over the past 10 years our supportive relationship with Genius Within has supported individuals with learning disability/neurodiversity needs, who are often considered the 'hardest to help' and 'furthest from employment', across our government funded contracts to achieve this right.**

**Our collaborative relationship with Genius Within has provided opportunities to share our organisational insights, expertise and experience to develop innovative approaches to ensuring people enter and sustain employment that meets their needs, for example, Genius Within co-designed our Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) model, in which they are now an equal strategic joint delivery partner.**

**We look forward to many more years of working together for the benefit of the people we support.**

Chris Luck  
CB MBE MA MPhil,  
Chief Executive,  
Shaw Trust



# Partnerships

## A Culture of Collaboration

Right from our early days, Genius Within has believed in the power partnerships, we are proud to still be working with many of those businesses that put their trust in us at the beginning. Together, we have grown to become a global provider and now work with hundreds of employers and thousands of individuals to create and promote inclusive workplaces worldwide.

Our partnerships range from the Employability sector, working with the hardest to reach communities and bringing them back into employment, education or training, to large multi-national corporations seeking support at a systemic level.

Regardless of the size of the business, our aim is always the same, to help people overcome barriers to work, to work at their best and to ensure businesses have the tools in place to create inclusive environments.

As we look to the future, collaboration will continue to be a key element of Genius Within's culture. We have recently launched the U.K.'s first research centre dedicated to Neurodiversity at work, in collaboration with Birkbeck College, part of The University of London. We have also just launched our Blooming Genius Foundation, with an aim to support young, neurodivergent individuals. We are starting by asking our community what they want and need, and we can't wait to hear what they say.

We are always open to partnering with others to amplify the important work of inclusion and we understand the importance of intersectionality in the field of disability.

We support businesses that work in disability, for example, sending gifts from Arthouse Unlimited, a charity presenting artistic talents of adults living with complex neurodiverse and physical support needs. We are committed to on-going anti-racism work and have worked with the brilliant Bilal Harry Khan to guide us on our journey. A journey we are committed to continuing.

As a neurominority and female led business we understand the power that working together can deliver. It has always been a key part of our values, and it always will be.



**Over the past 10 years Microlink has worked in partnership with GW to support thousands of ND people in the employment sector.**

**Our strong partnership has enabled the ND employees to boost productivity and improve their wellbeing.**

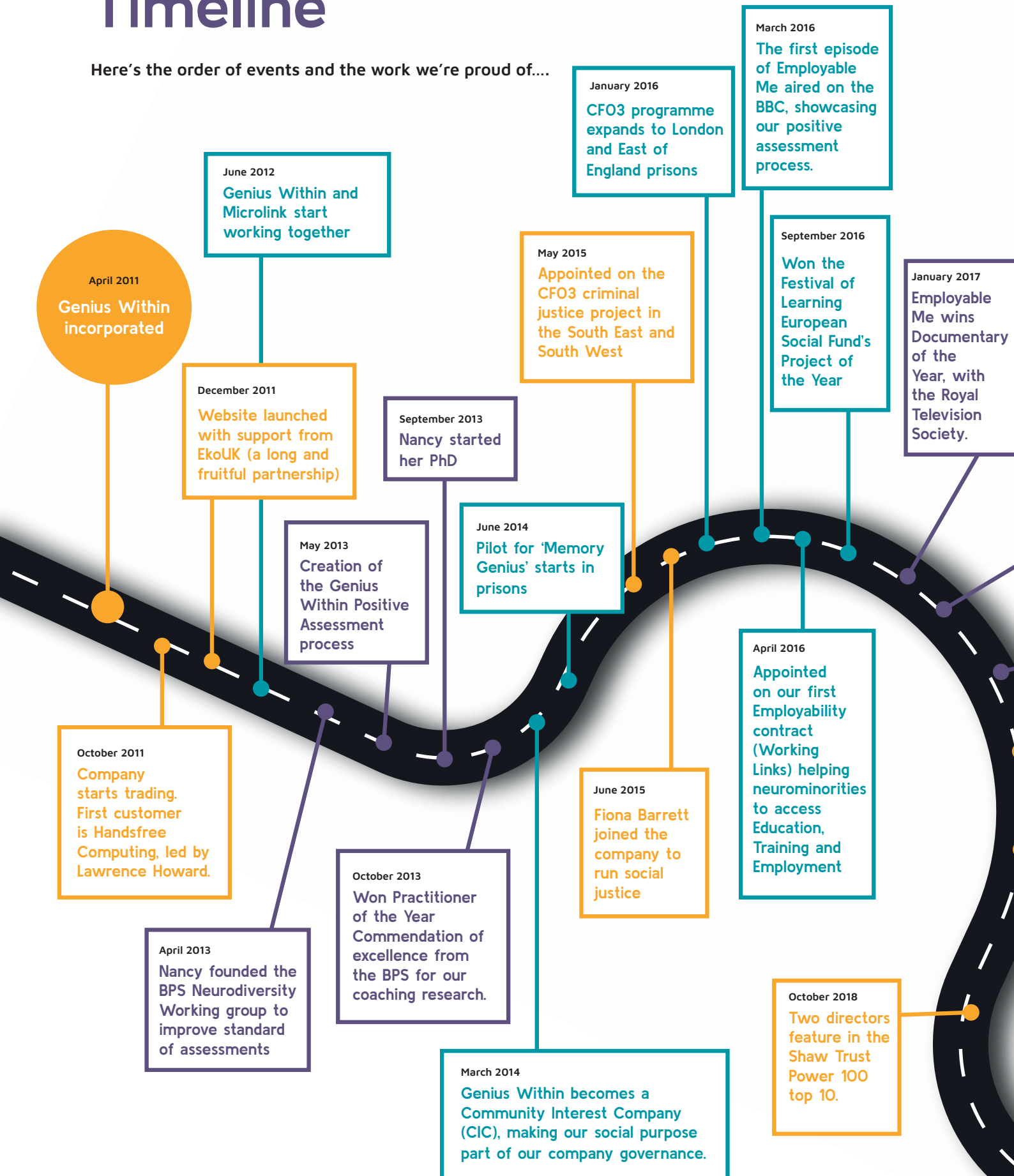
**We are proud of our long association and close working relationship with GW and we believe both parties have benefited significantly from this alliance. We are also excited to be expanding our partnership in other areas of employment such as Apprenticeship, Kickstart and ex-Offenders programs.**

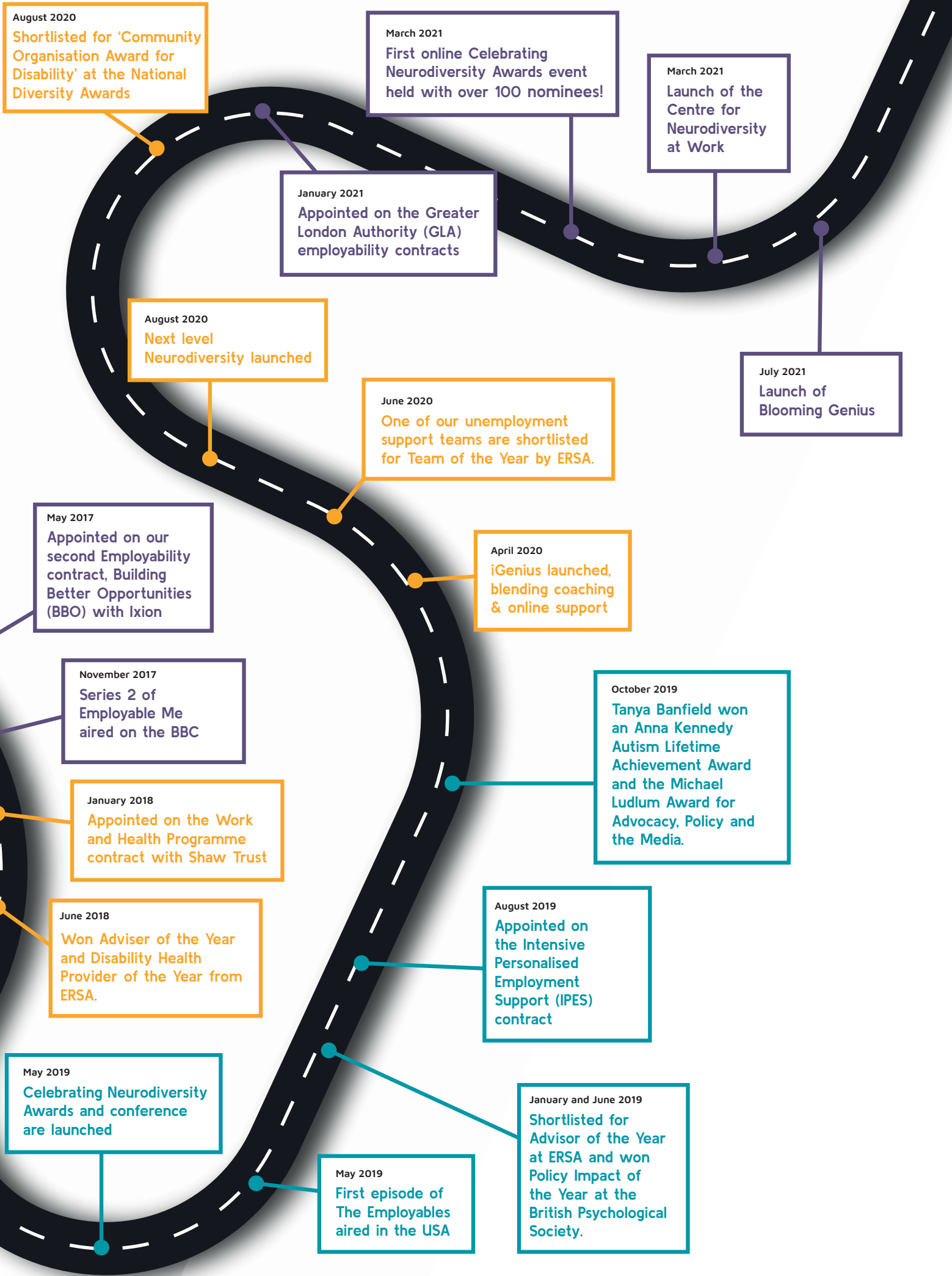
Dr Nasser Siabi, Microlink



# Timeline

Here's the order of events and the work we're proud of....



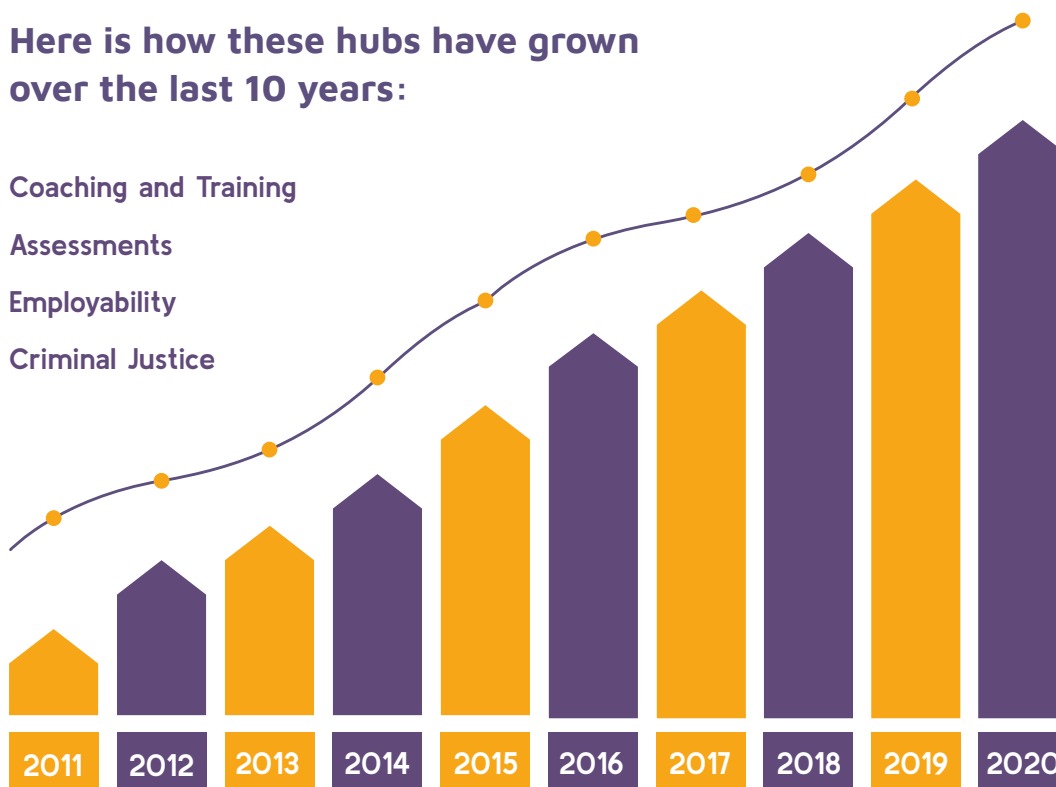


# Genius Within Hubs

Genius Within is arranged in “hubs” that centre around the service provided. Arranged around a Central Hub, we have four specialist hubs:

- The Coaching and Training Hub, where we provide coaching support and training workshops for individuals who are in work and their employers.
- The Criminal Justice hub, where we provide services for people in the Criminal Justice System.
- The Employability Hub, where we provided services to support long-term unemployed people.
- The Psychology Hub, where we support the delivery of all the above hubs but also provide diagnosis, assessment, leadership support and HR consultancy.

**Here is how these hubs have grown over the last 10 years:**



**I once used to see dyslexia as something that I suffer with but with the help from (my coach), I can now say that it is part of me.**

Alan Deeney, Coaching client

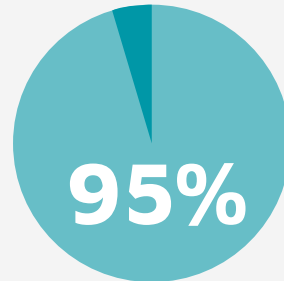
# Coaching and Training

Coaching and Training was where it all started for Genius Within back in 2011. Working with our partners at Handsfree Computing, and also with Microlink PC from 2012, we set out to transform neurodiversity coaching services, particularly those offered through Access to Work. We noted that services were not evaluated or regulated, that there was no 'common quality standard' for good coaching and training in this field and that it was down to chance whether you got a good coach or training. We needed some reassurance for clients and their employers than an investment in coaching would be worth their while, so we set out to evaluate the impact of coaching and provide some guarantees. We offer:

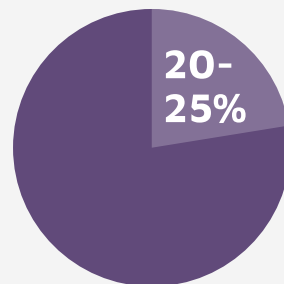
- **A replacement coach if you do not match well to your assigned coach.**
- **Before and after self-assessment of performance, with a 3-month gap so that we know the improvement is a lasting change, rather than disappearing when the support ends.**
- **Manager ratings, to check that our clients' hard work is being noted by their boss.**
- **1 year follow up sampling, so that we can track the long-term impact of our work.**

In this time, we have found that the top four topics that our clients want to focus on are memory/attention, time management, organisation skills and stress management. This is from an extensive range of conditions that are referred to us including: ADHD, Autism, Acquired Brain Injury, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Tourette Syndrome, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis and more.

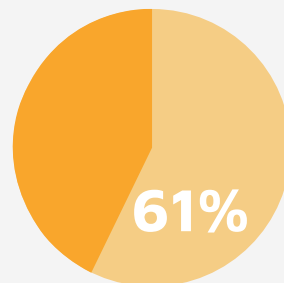
## Our coaching in numbers:



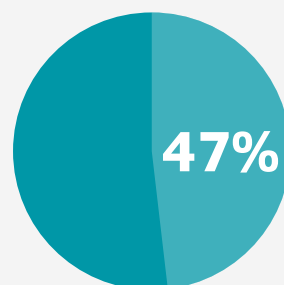
**Over 95% of our clients retain their jobs one year after a coaching program**



**20-25% of our clients are promoted within one year of a coaching program**



**On average our clients report a 61% improvement in their topics of focus**



**On average their managers report a 47% improvement in the topics of focus\***

\*this was because the clients rated themselves lower than their managers in the first place!

# How has remote coaching affected the impact?

For many of our in-work clients, coaching has proved to be the most effective reasonable adjustment. Whether it is on a group or individual basis, it has traditionally been delivered face-to-face.

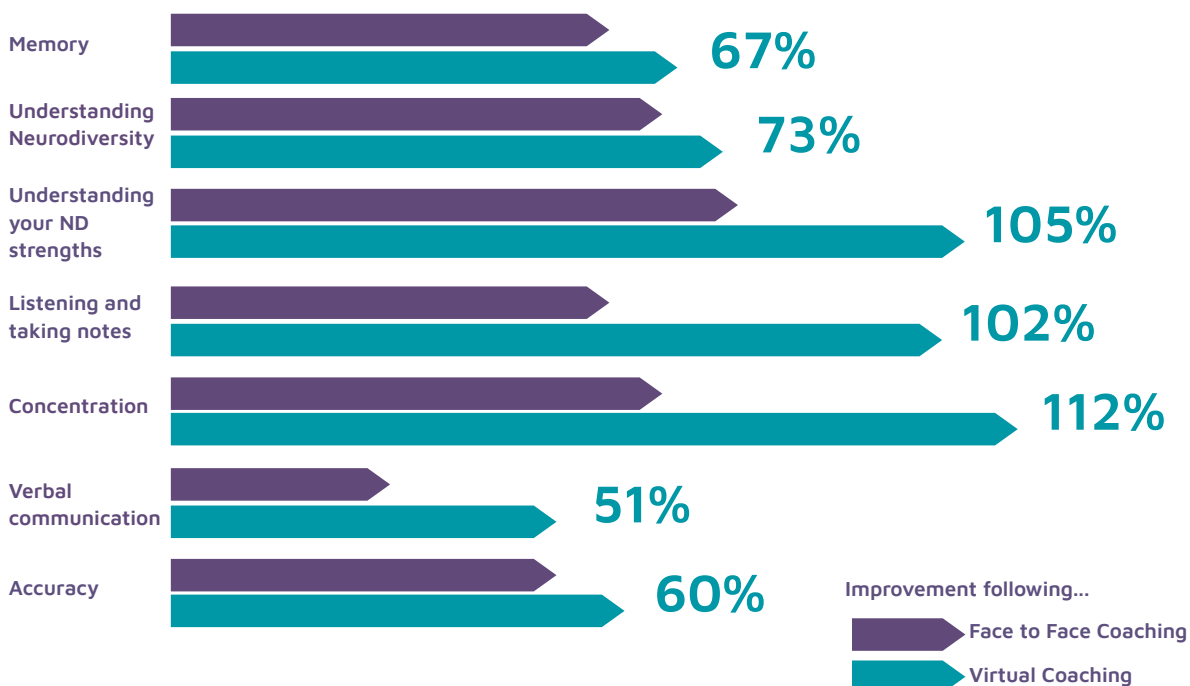
The challenge we faced, like every other business, was that from 23 March 2020, our face-to-face delivery model had to immediately flip into virtual delivery and our concern was how could we continue to support neurominorities during such a period of change.

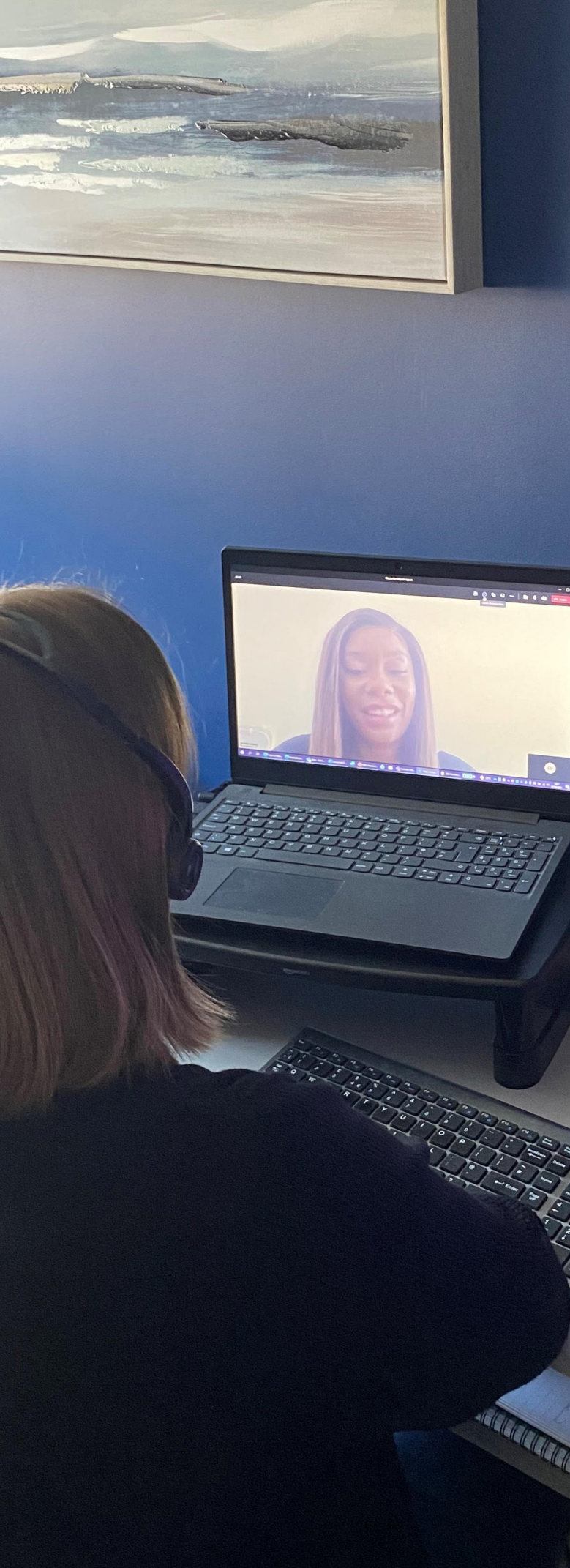
We worked quickly to create new support materials to aid all our remote teams. We ran training for our coaches to work on virtual platforms, increased our corporate subscription for Zoom, and held daily drop-in sessions for everyone to get used to working in this new way.

We have just completed a full analysis of over 5,000 sessions from June 2019 to February 2020 and compared the data from the same period one year later. We found that not only did virtual coaching work just as well, in most instances, it was more effective.

The effectiveness of the virtual coaching sessions saw an overall improvement of 11%, across the four top combined criteria of memory, organisation, stress, and time management coaching improvement.

Examining the individual coaching areas highlights that more than half the strategies saw an improvement in impact – in some cases by more than 75%!





Understanding why virtual delivery works better for many clients we received qualitative commentary as well that clearly indicated our clients found virtual sessions allowed them more control. The main themes were:

- **Environment** – virtual environments gave the client more control over the space they chose to receive their coaching in
- **Session length** – clients are able to more easily adapt the length of the session to meet their learning requirements, for example, they could split longer three-hour sessions into two ninety-minute sessions
- **Frequency of session** – clients were able to select a higher frequency of sessions or a lower frequency of sessions according to the way they preferred to learn best
- **Flexibility** – clients were able to schedule their sessions with either longer or shorter gaps between them, more easily, and so able to adapt the coaching sessions to meet their individual processing and reflection needs

It is clear from the feedback we have received that virtual delivery gave every individual the opportunity to have more control over how they received their coaching sessions.

Our clients are now saying that would like to meet their coach, face to face, but mainly this will be limited (for example to a first and last session). The benefits of virtual delivery, however, have been clear and as a proven way to access in-work coaching with exceptional results, we believe it is a method that will stay with us for a long time to come.

“

**Our contracts outperform the average employment rates and our job sustainability rates are very high – around 95% on average.**

**We've supported an inventor with a device to help Deaf and Blind people, a comedian starting his own Stand Up routine, as well as more typical careers.**

**We don't laugh when our clients divulge their dreams, we focus on the practicalities and cheerlead them along the way. Our clients have unusual thinking skills.**

**Why shouldn't they seek unusual careers?**

Kate Omonigho Pearson



## Employability

Our employability contracts run like the BBC series 'Employable Me' – we look for neurodiverse strengths and build careers around those. Kate Omonigho Pearson, our Head of Employability, reports that the team think creatively with their clients about what is possible.

Despite national contracts averaging around a 7-11% employment success rate, Genius Within consistently achieves around 20%, as part of the specialist disability support offered by our partners, Shaw Trust. This means that...

**over 500  
neurodivergent  
clients  
have found  
employment  
after working  
with us.**





“

I had been receiving help with some quite difficult life changes during the Covid-19 pandemic, experiences which had left me unemployed and severely lacking in confidence. Feeling this way and wanting to go out and find work again can be daunting but I found the team at Genius Within to be genuinely kind and caring people with whom I felt at ease with straight away.

I felt like I needed a change in career and when working with Kay, she immediately identified what was needed to put me on the right path but most importantly, she gave me confidence in myself to believe that I could achieve my goals. The sessions we had were perfect and gradually I began to gain confidence in myself and have a clearer picture in my head of the direction I should take to move myself forward to a career path that I wanted.

Overall, I couldn't recommend Genius Within enough. They are experts and leaders in the field of neurodiversity but most importantly, I believe, they genuinely care.

Chris Smith,  
Employability Client



## Our support in action...

Our Case Manager and Assistant Psychologist Michelle Stephens, explains the kind of things we do to support our clients and the long road many people take.

“My first ever participant was a young man lacking in confidence with overlapping neurodiverse conditions. I found it incredibly difficult to engage him in conversation as he did not like to open up to new strangers. I found out we shared a common interest of fitness, which was the topic which finally allowed us to connect.

He was affected by agoraphobia and anxiety and if he were ever to work this was going to be a huge hurdle for him. He particularly struggled with public transport so was trying to pass his driving test. He struggled with retention and so we worked on practice questions and lessons each week to aid his learning. He also obtained a GP letter to give to the DVLA to allow him extra time for his theory test. It was through these early interventions he built up trust and confidence in himself.

His goal was to enroll on a GCSE English course which I supported him with. We worked together to draft the entrance essay and he has since got on this course. This gave him more confidence to work on his CV. We did a strength building session and he was able to identify lot of personal skills and strengths he was not aware he possessed which we added to his professional CV.

His dream goal was to work on stage, and he had a background of work experience and qualifications in this field. I researched opportunities for him and we came across the Project. After some gentle persuasion he made a very strong application for a place but was unsuccessful. He then started a comedy group in the evenings called caddies and is making great progress with his stand-up comedy skill on stage.

Most recently, he made an application for job as a Game Master for an escape room; a great paid role which would still enable him to build his theatrical confidence, whilst remaining in a slower paced and not too busy of an environment. After a long wait the employer got back to him and offered him an interview. He had just two days to prepare to ensure he would showcase his abilities. We held a mock interview with verbal and written feedback. He took this on board because at the second mock interview he surpassed expectations. Now the long wait to see if he has gained paid employment.

Despite his initial lack of confidence, he has also completed a presentation to the Shaw Trust team on the impact of Covid 19 on the theatre industry.”



# jobcentreplus

“

I felt like giving up but since working with Michelle she's sent me stuff that I haven't thought of myself and thanks to Michelle I've done a two day beginners course doing stand up comedy and planning to do the intermediate course. Also during a difficult time late 2020 Michelle was checking up on me even on my days off and I'll always be grateful to her for that.

Jonathan Caley, Employability Client



## Our support in action...

We have been supporting Marcus for several months, and he has made so much progress with his creative cards business. At our first meeting (supported by his father), we discussed his goals and aspirations and we concluded that he would benefit from self-employment.

Despite ups and downs, he remained passionate about his creative arts and illustrations. In 2020, fast approaching Christmas, we decided that it would be a good idea to test the business idea and allow him to use his creativity for Christmas cards and greetings cards, and if successful for events and occasions throughout the year.

Since then, Marcus has gone from strength to strength. With his father's support, they have gained customer orders and partnerships/support from many established charities and organisations. Marcus has also set up his own Instagram page: cool.art2021 and Facebook page: CoolArt, to reach a wider audience and has slowly gained interest through these platforms. This has boosted his self-esteem, and he has started to enjoy the fact that he can use his creativity and talents for himself and do something he loves. The business is being received well; we are optimistic and excited about the business's future.

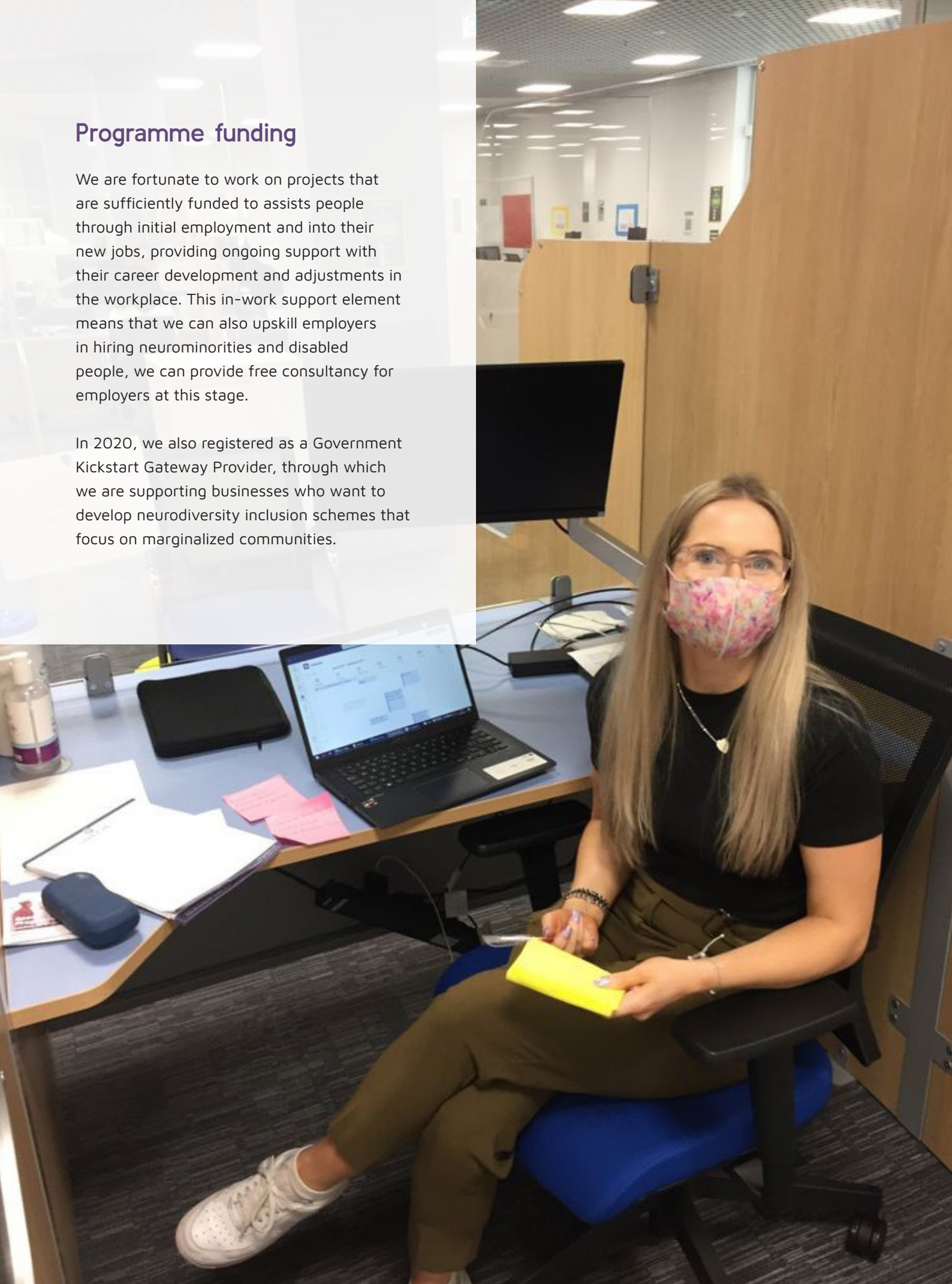


**WCID**  
April 21

## Programme funding

We are fortunate to work on projects that are sufficiently funded to assist people through initial employment and into their new jobs, providing ongoing support with their career development and adjustments in the workplace. This in-work support element means that we can also upskill employers in hiring neurominorities and disabled people, we can provide free consultancy for employers at this stage.

In 2020, we also registered as a Government Kickstart Gateway Provider, through which we are supporting businesses who want to develop neurodiversity inclusion schemes that focus on marginalized communities.



# Criminal Justice

In prisons, we have worked on projects co-financed by the Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and the European Social Fund to provide targeted support for prisoners who are considered "hardest to help." This label refers to people who have not engaged in standard prison activities such as work, work experience and/or education. Their neurodiversity may or may not have been diagnosed; however they have often been disengaged since early education and have found mainstream institutions overwhelming and discriminatory.

Sadly, some of our clients report liking the prison system, they feel safe and protected by the routine and the certainty of limited interactions. In such a system, it was clear to us from the start that if we stuck to traditional routes, we would get traditional results. We were tasked with getting 9% of our prisoners into work upon release (this figure seems low, but reflects the multiple challenges faces by the client group and is based on similar programs).

However, we know that the best way to approach such goals is to forget about them and focus on building rapport. Through strong alliances and relationships, we have found confidence and ambition restored, this is our focus and our clients do the rest themselves.



## Thinking differently

When she was still a team leader, our [#ActuallyAutistic](#) Head of Criminal Justice, Tanya Banfield, identified that her neurodivergent/diverse clients needed a way to manage their anxiety and hyperactivity when workshopping issues like career and confidence. One of the group was an origami expert, so she arranged for him to teach the group origami as a way of building rapport and giving them something to do with their hands while they worked on their personal ambitions. As a result the HMP Dartmoor Origami group was born.

## Criminal Justice in numbers

In addition to some amazing origami, Tanya and her team have achieved 88 Job outcomes for their clients, of which 87% have sustained their jobs and only two have reoffended. They have been able to re-engage 56% of our 535 clients in education or training – a huge impact for a group who start with us too anxious to leave their cells and a real success when compared to an average for the client group of 16%.

True to Genius Within form, we don't hold back on unusual career ambitions and have placed a Tattoo artist, a frame maker and guildler, and a tree feller in this cohort.



**You have made what would have been a very stressful transition a lot less stressful. I truly do appreciate the personal support that you have offered and I cannot praise the work that you have done enough. Thank you. I am truly grateful.**

Ex-Offender Client (following release)

## Our support in action....

Mark\* had been in the community for 9 months when he enrolled him on the project. He has numerous mental health issues, Autism and Dyslexia and reported that he struggled to engage with others and did not think anyone would employ him.

Mark's ideal job was to be an LGV driver. He already had part of the qualification however his confidence was affecting his ability to pursue this career. His neurodiversity was affecting his communication skills which, in turn impacted on his ability to learn and engage in interviews.

With support, Mark was able to attend and successfully complete the final 3 modules of the LGV course. Our team supported him during his job search, providing coaching on understanding his neurodiversity and building confidence in his abilities.

Upon completion of the LGV licence, Mark conducted cold calls to companies he wished to work for, using the skills and techniques we developed in our sessions. Six weeks later he secured himself a night shift driver job which fits around his caring responsibilities.

\*Not his real name

# Psychology Hub

In the psychology hub we have revolutionised the purpose of psychometric assessments and diagnosis for neurominorities. We know psychological testing has questionable historical roots and has been used to marginalise and justify exclusion.

We set out to do the opposite by asking ourselves, what if psychometric testing could be used to light a spark of hope? We started with a review of the standard reporting structure used in psychology and a simple question: "Is this report something that would make us feel good, if we read it about ourselves?" The answer was a resounding no. So, root and branch we upended the process. We know that the hallmarks of neurominority is the spiky profile, so why write reports that focus all the attention on the problems, and ignore the strengths? Here is where we have innovated:

- **We start with the strengths, summarising and contextualising abilities that are competent and exceptional, so that clients feel good when they read the reports and have hope and renewed confidence.**
- **We sought to make psychology reports cathartic and vindicating, by acknowledging and explaining difficulties. We include real life examples of where scores affect work performance, so that our clients can understand themselves better and avoid self-reproach.**
- **We evaluate the language in our reports and have reduced 'psycho-babble' using the Flesch-Kincaid readability score analysis to make sure the language is accessible and will not put people off.**
- **We add graphs and mind maps to the reports to explain key concepts in neurominority friendly style, avoiding blocks of justified, inaccessible text.**
- **We connect our clients to their psychologist, making sure that they can review and understand their reports before we let anyone else (like an employer, or exam board) have a summary.**



**I have had clients breakdown in tears when they have realised for the first time in their lives that they have strengths and talents. Some had scarring experiences in education and spent decades believing they were worthless. It is amazing watching them leave taller; it's why I go to work.**

Charlie Eckton, Psychologist and Assessor



This reporting style was so different that many of our clients with existing problem-focused diagnostic reports approached us for retesting just so that they could understand their strengths. Indeed, for many, this created such a positive shift at identity level that it changed their lives.

We have volunteered with the British Psychological Society to make sure that professional practice guidelines include reference to the above standards, in the hope that all neurominorities will find diagnosis a psychologically edifying experience.

## Finding solutions

Genius Within's assessment impact does not end at diagnosis. Our strategy profiler represents a key step forward for hidden disability, flipping the process from labelling to support.

Historically, neurominorities had to be diagnosed before flexibility would be provided. However, evidence suggests that many are excluded from this process due to a lack of resources, or because of the white, male bias in diagnostic criteria. At Genius Within we realised two things: (1) disability legislation does not include a requirement to diagnose, it instead refers to functional difficulties and (2) most adjustments and accommodations are cheaper than diagnosis.

Therefore, by screening people for the difficulties they experience and matching these to potential solutions, we are making a straight line to the right outcome and saving people weeks of expensive assessments. It is a triage model, and while some of our clients progress to a full diagnostic assessment, others find that the initial online assessment, with a psychologist debrief can signpost them effectively.



**My positive assessment has validated my strengths and given me the ability to truly understand my skills and how best to use them. I can now appreciate the unique talents my neurodiversity has given me.**

Stephanie Dalrymple



“

**I am so grateful for all you have done as it essentially meant a 2-year waitlist was reduced to a matter of weeks. It's a brilliant service and I feel hopeful that I will get on top of my workload and get my confidence back.**

Assessment client



We have delivered a lot of assessments since 2011; the average time taken for a Genius Within report is 12 working days, in which time a draft will have been sent to the client, checked, commented on, reviewed and updated before the final version is made available. This is a significant improvement on what was an industry standard of approximately 4 weeks.

## Flexibility in a crisis

During the pandemic, when assessments could not be conducted, we lobbied the British Psychological Society to update guidance to allow for a remote assessment of need. This ensured that the community could still gain access to support and exam adjustments while testing could not be conducted remotely. We then lobbied exam boards and Royal Colleges directly to make sure that no students were directly affected.

Our psychology team consists of research practitioners, and adjustments recommended through workplace needs assessments are research-based. This allows us to offer extensive bespoke recommendations beyond those reflected in many reports elsewhere in the field. We have seen this as very necessary following less considered reports not meeting client needs and this ending in tribunal for companies other than ourselves.

Many of our psychologists are also trained expert witnesses and so can support clients in the courtroom if things go wrong. This reflects the fact that whilst many organisations are trying to move towards systemic inclusion, others do not even meet the minimum compliance requirements of the Equality Act (2010) and that there is still much work to be done.



“

I am genuinely thankful for all the support and guidance that I received and it is times like these that you see what kindness means in day to day life. Once I received my results, I still received continued support and found many great resources via Genius Within. Thank you so much, Genius Within, for all your help.

Akoua Opong

# Celebrating Neurodiversity

With our purpose over the last 10 years aimed at helping neurominorities to identify their underlying strengths and achieve their potential, it was a natural progression to start recognising people's achievements in a more formal way. So, in 2019 the Celebrating Neurodiversity Awards were born.

The awards are held annually in March during Neurodiversity Celebration week. Through 7 categories, we formally recognise individuals, businesses & projects that have gone above and beyond to promote accessibility and inclusion for neurominorities. The categories in 2021 were:



- Neurominority Achiever of the Year
- Stereotype Buster of the Year
- Inclusion Project of the Year
- Most Inclusive Education Provider
- Genius of the Year
- Neurodiverse Research of the Year
- Assistive Technology Implementation of the Year

In 2022 we will be introducing a new category to celebrate employees who are going above and beyond to create a truly neuro-inclusive culture.

Growing year-on-year, the 2021 awards were our most exciting yet. Despite (or possibility in response to) the challenges of a global pandemic, we had a massive response in our call for nominations, receiving 45% more entries than in 2020. With over 200 attendees for the online awards ceremony, we were delighted to recognise some amazing winners. Feedback from our nominees includes:

**"This award means more to me personally than I could ever express, so Genius Within thank you, thank you, thank you."** Ron Cole of SuperReading (Assistive Technology Award Winner)

**"Thank you to Genius Within for harnessing the potential of neurodiversity in the workforce. We're honoured to be recognised as the Inclusion Project of the Year from a global pool of applicants."** Mentra (Inclusion Project of the Year Winner)

**"I'm just ecstatic to be nominated and I want to say thank you. Honestly, I think its really important to highlight the strengths of just generally being neurodivergent and celebrating creativity and innovation and the ability to think outside the box."** Sab Samuel aka Aida H Dee (Neurominority Achiever of the Year Runner-up)

Our 2021 sponsors were...



# The 2021 awards in figures:



Nominations



Sponsors



Winners

(Including joint winners)



Categories



Runners-up



Judges

# Taking it to the Next Level!

In the past decade, we have evaluated the impact of individual accommodations and we have noticed patterns that make us think it is time to shift the focus from individual interventions to helping organisations embed organizational, systemic changes.

Typically, businesses invest more in individual adjustments. Inclusion is delivered one person at a time, repeating individual actions in isolation or business silos. Often these interventions are only sought when a problem occurs and then we fix it in isolation.

The big issue is that if we do not change the conditions that created the problem in the first place, we will not thread those changes throughout the business or extend the learning beyond the individual case.

So, we have created a programme based on the principles of Universal Design, which extends right across the workplace, creating neuro-inclusive workspaces, recruitment, onboarding, appraisal delivery, training, and progression.

By shooting for systemic inclusion, we create cultures where individuals do not need to be separated or buffered for them to succeed at work and feel part of the team.

## What does next level look like?

Next Level Neurodiversity uses tools to track what is happening at the individual level, identifying weak spots and obstacles in the employee journey. We roll that up to identify organisational level patterns and themes, at every level and through every department, which informs the design process.

We have developed workshops and environment strategies at an organisational level, based on ROI data and knowledge gathered over the last 10 years. Great cost efficiencies and more proactive solutions are increasingly achievable at scale, which in turn leads to more successes at work and fewer isolated problems. In essence, by clearing a path for one, you open the way for all employees to be at their best!



**At Flutter International we are committed to furthering our journey in Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB). Genius Within delivered a brilliant webinar for us, and it will go down as one of our best awareness and education series yet. We received remarkably positive feedback and we are delighted to be working with them as we progress on our inclusion journey. We are looking forward to continuing to work together on this important subject.**

Rabi Atiti, Flutter



# The Genius Within Operating System

## Culture and Communication

We try to operate in an open, agile structure whilst retaining appropriate remits and reporting lines. This is not easy and is always a work in progress! However, we use techniques from organizational psychology to regularly de-brief, invite feedback in multiple directions and check our assumptions and biases. Genius Within staff report that our culture is unique and we think it reflects the systemic level of inclusion we want to see in the world: if you want to be inclusive, you have to invest time in developing shared understanding and breaking down barriers.

We ascribe to the principles of 'double and triple loop learning' (Argyris, 1977), of 'anti-fragile systems' (Taleb, 2012), where problems are embraced as potential learning events. Antifragile systems go deeper into problems, rather than ignore or gloss over them. Antifragility as a principle of inclusion work can be embraced for all company processes, which then makes it easier and more congruent to address inequities and conflict.

Genius Within take an annual survey each year which is anonymous, to ensure that we are not missing anything with our feedback loops and to find out the demographic balance in our staff. We report on this to the whole company (transparency) and we analyse our ethnicity pay gap data by ethnicity, disability, LGBTQ+ and gender.

## #Team\_Genius



# Pay Analysis 2021

## Race / Ethnicity

### Employees (84% white, n=23)

For employees of non management grades, white employees earn slightly less, at 97% of their Black, Asian, mixed heritage or other ethnicity colleagues, showing equity at entry levels to the business.

Looking company wide however, the average salary for white people is 14% higher than the average salary for Black, Asian, mixed heritage or other ethnicities.

Analysis of all employees within different Black, Asian and other ethnicities highlighted no specific differences.

### Team of Hub Managers (74% white, n=15)

The average earning of a manager at Genius Within is 12% higher for white employees than for their Black, Asian, mixed heritage or other ethnicity colleagues.

This differential is due to the lack of diversity in the 'Head of' role, where all six middle managers are white and the average pay is 14% higher than team leaders.

At the team leader level, where representation is better, the pay gap is smaller, with 99% match on average earnings.

### Directors (89% white, n=9)

Seven directors of Genius Within are paid equitably and there is no difference between the majority white Directors and the director of mixed heritage.

The CEO and Chair however are both white and receive 16% higher rate of pay than the other Directors.

Since this analysis, we have taken positive action to address the representation with our Directors, we now have representation from the Trans community and increased our BIPOC representation from 11% to 20%

## Mission and Money

Genius Within is a social enterprise, incorporated in the UK where the laws facilitate a structure that bridges the private sector with the non-profit sector.

We are not a charity, we get paid for delivery of services and do not take donations. This is important to us, because we add value to businesses and save the taxpayer money with our services. However, as a disability consultancy, we think it is important to act in the best interests of our community, not just our shareholders, and so as a Community Interest Company we reinvest 65% of distributable profits back to our neurodiverse community each year.

**50% of our income** comes from business-to-business sales, but this equates to 80% of our profits. It is important to us to ensure that we work with the full range of neurominorities, wherever they may be in their lives, and that our services are not restricted to those who can afford to pay. As such, we also work in less profitable areas, where social justice is the main purpose of our endeavours.

**Around 30% of our income** comes from being a specialist provider for Employability projects, working with neurodiverse/divergent people who are marginalized by poverty, have been out of work for many years and often have complex, overlapping disabilities.

**Around 10% of our income** comes from similar projects in prisons.

The rest of our work is focused on community projects, developing new and innovative services and research. We are the seed funding sponsor of the new Centre for Neurodiversity Research at Work at Birkbeck, University of London... more on that later.

## What has worked well?

- **Being a major part of the strengths-based model of neurodiversity – promoting the word, the movement, the values of inclusion.**
- **Having a neurodiverse workforce role-models that neurodiversity and disability staffed and led businesses, can be successful.**
- **Demonstrating that female owned and disability led companies can be successful.**
- **Demonstrating that you do not need to choose between social purpose and financial sustainability and growth.**
- **Charting our own course, not doing things because they have 'always been done' but rethinking structure, HR rules, CPD and making up what works for us.**
- **Flexibility and change when things do not work out.**
- **Walking our own talk, even though that is not always easy.**
- **The hub model - drawing on separately defined but overlapping 'hubs' of activity, which connect into the Central Hub through the leadership team**
- **Psychology core training.**



## What has not worked well and what did we learn from that?

- **IT transition without adequate preparation can have considerable financial impact and affect staff goodwill.**  
For example, we will never forget the support we received from our IT partners Eko UK in 2017 in taking over a Database project at the last minute and working extra hours to ensure that back-office difficulties did not have an impact to our service.
- **It is hard to manage remote workers, especially when they are embedded in other teams, and other team cultures.**  
We have learned the value of CPD here as a critical connecting event, a chance to network and develop shared identity.
- **As an inclusion focused company, we should be more proactive on racial equity and up our allyship game.**  
We were worried about straying out of our lane and speaking on things which we did not have the right to speak on, but now we realise that we can use our position to “share the mic” and do so regularly in our Forbes column and conference attendance.
- **The challenges that growth presents, particularly regarding infrastructure.** We learned that sometimes it is best to pause growth and catch up, which is what we did in 2019 and then inadvertently in 2020 due to the pandemic. However, these two years have been amazing in terms of team solidifying and everyone is now ready for the next phase.
- **It is never too early to invest in a finance team!**  
How close we used to sail to break even before Danielle and how much more profitable the business became when we expanded her team to include a “Head of” role and a Finance Officer.

“

Knowing that what we do makes a real and positive difference to companies and individuals is what gets me up in the morning; knowing there are thousands more we could help, keeps me up at night! I am so excited about the next stage of Genius’s growth and sharing our work around the world.

Jacqui Wallis,  
Commercial Director and  
one of our Neurodiverse  
Leaders



# A year that no one will ever forget....

No report would have been complete without a look at the challenges of the 2020/21.

When we started 2020, no one could have foreseen the year that we were about to embark on. In March everything changed overnight and as a business, all our immediate priorities changed. Our focus was immediate on the welfare of our staff, our Associations and of course, our clients.

We created three new workshops to provide immediate support to our community, who found themselves suddenly having to navigate 100% remote working, whilst experiencing deep emotional trauma evoked by a very real, but invisible, danger.

Genius Within's psychologists began offering free webinars on remote working and looking after your mental health, as well as running online, drop-in support sessions for NHS workers.

Foreseeing a possible 70% drop in revenue due to Covid-19, Genius Within CEO, Dr Nancy Doyle worked quickly to create a crisis plan; "Knowing that the wheels weren't going to come off was reassuring," she says.

We knew that to continue supporting our community, cash flow had to be a priority. "Because we knew our finances were sound, we were well resourced to take care of everyone's fears." The focus on revenue is one that some social entrepreneurs shy away from, she says, but that shouldn't be the case. "We don't spend enough time as female leaders talking about finance," she says.

As well as continuing to support their existing beneficiaries by delivering remote assessments, coaching and training, The Genius Within team also pivoted to support other businesses during lockdown.

In terms of our internal teams, we create different tactics to ensure that we avoided feelings of isolation and created a sense of continued camaraderie, even in the face of long-term remote working. We built in virtual coffee breaks, created circles of support, and encouraged teams to meet to chat – not just for work.

Our Deputy Commercial Director, Royston Collins held Friday night quiz night to create fun virtual events, that kept everyone spirit's up. With the combination of Government furlough and some very hard work from a dedicated team, we made it through the Covid year.

We have learnt from our lockdown experience and we will keep some of our new ways of working. Remote team meetings have meant we have input from a wider geographical team.

We are looking forward to seeing each other again and having all our hands on deck, because a ship sails best when all the shipmates are aboard!



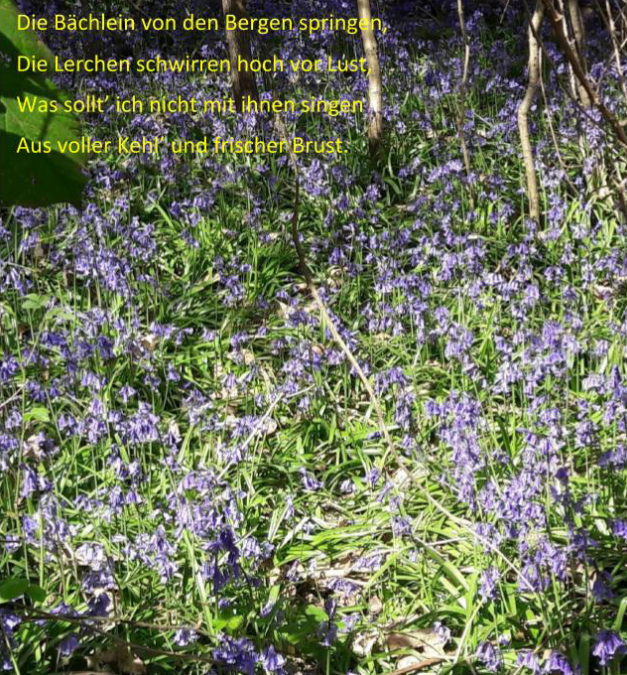
“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness”  
 Desmond Tutu

when will things be normal again?  
 help me I don't know what's happening  
 confused  
 scared what's going on?  
 now what?  
 take this opportunity to be your best

it's okay - just breathe  
 take your time - we'll get through this  
 try this...notice this... now what

my son.. my life  
 calm ...bubble....chaos  
 no social processing  
 but processing processing  
 processing

Every stitch a thought, every knot a moment of realization



'Genius Within has a wonderful company structure infographic that presents it as a tree with many branches. With all the support and connectedness that has been present during the pandemic, I came up with a metaphor of an oak tree (that symbolises strength) in a field of chamomiles (as apparently these flowers symbolise patience in adversity)'.

# What's next?



## Launching the Blooming Genius Foundation!

Spearheaded by our Board Members Justin La Hood and Whitney Iles, and young ND-er woman, Naz Senoglu, we are launching the Foundation. The purpose of the Foundation will be to develop advocacy, services, and systemic interventions to support ND youth. The Foundation will receive funding from the 65% of distributable profits that Genius Within must donate each year as our CIC legal commitment. We will also raise funds from our commercial endeavours.



**At Genius Within, we are aware that many neurodivergent children and their families are not getting the assistance that they need. As part of our goal to bring about systemic change, we are excited to be launching the Blooming Genius Foundation to provide the community with this much needed support.**

**Our first step is to find out about the current needs of neurominority children/young people and their families, and the intersecting factors that influence their access to existing resources and opportunities. Only with this information can we develop an approach which truly benefits the neurodiverse community.**

Whitney Iles and Justin LaHood,  
Non-Executive Directors





# Research Centre

We're consolidating our ambitions for cutting edge research with a partnership with Birkbeck, University of London, where we have launched the Centre for Neurodiversity Research at Work.

We want to know what works in terms of supporting ND employees and leaders to achieve their ambitions, we want to understand how to build inclusive cultures and HR processes and we want to help put Neuroinclusion on the Diversity and Inclusion agenda with evidence and best practice advice.

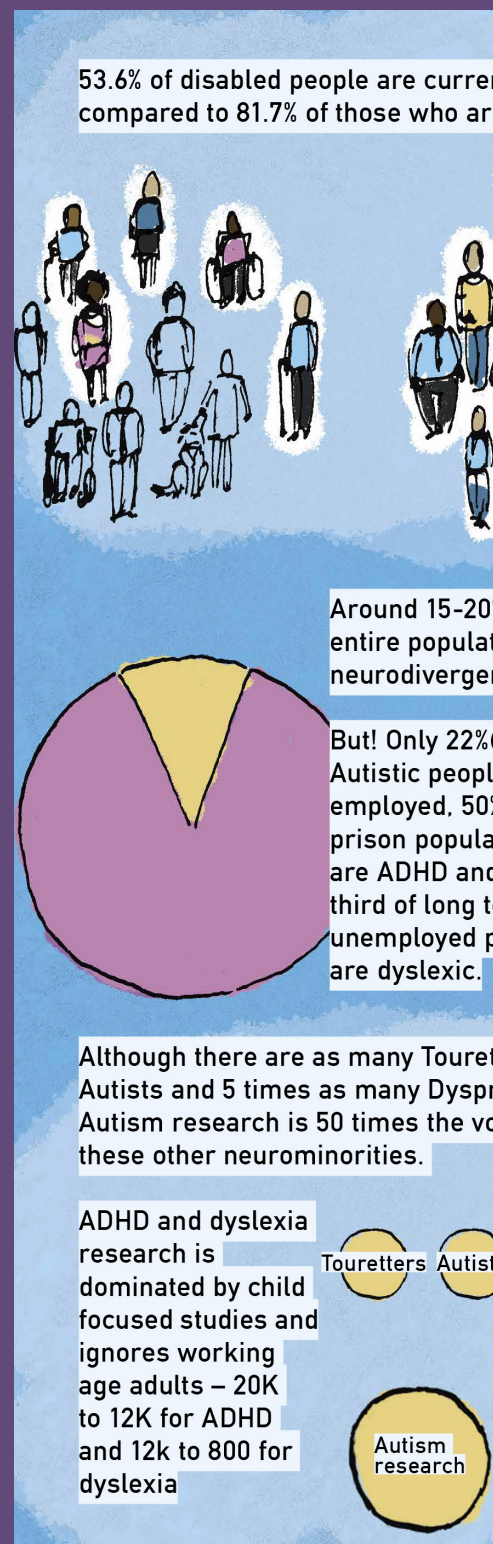
By supporting our staff with their studies and by their studies supporting the growth of our company knowledge, we can make sure that we can go where there is no path, but leave a trail.

“

**Working with Nancy and colleagues from Genius Within on the topic of neurodiversity has enriched my understanding and commitment to future research beyond measure.**

**We want to make the world of work a better place by building an evidence-base to facilitate genuine inclusion rather than lip service and tokenistic initiatives. We collaborating to combine our expertise in understanding of human difference, wellbeing at work and diversity to achieve this aim.**

Professor Almuth McDowall



ntly in work  
e not disabled.



Many more disabled and neurodiverse people could work and succeed with easier access to reasonable adjustments like text to speech software



Qualities people in neurominorities bring to the workplace:

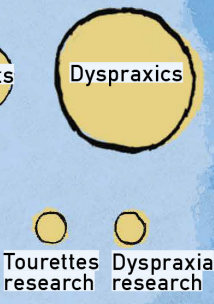
- Creativity
- Focus
- Strategic Thinking
- Innovation
- Problem solving



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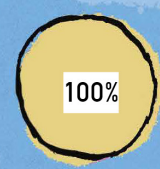
# Neurodiversity at Work



Coaching works as an adjustment! 75% improvement in self-rated work performance. 47% improvement in manager-rated productivity

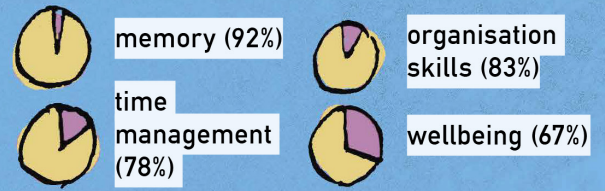


Dyslexia misconceptions



What people think dyslexia is: difficulty with reading & writing

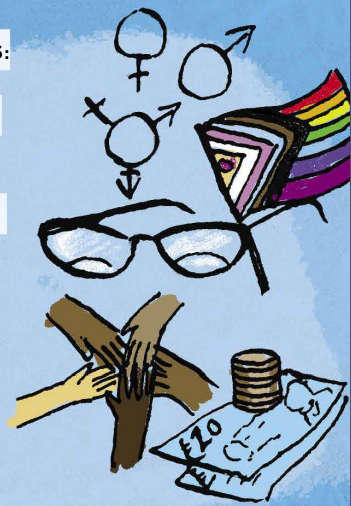
What dyslexic people actually struggle with at work:



Urgent research questions:

How are gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and socioeconomic status linked to the experience of neurominorities?

What effects do standard HR policies have on neurominorities and how can we make HR more systemically inclusive?

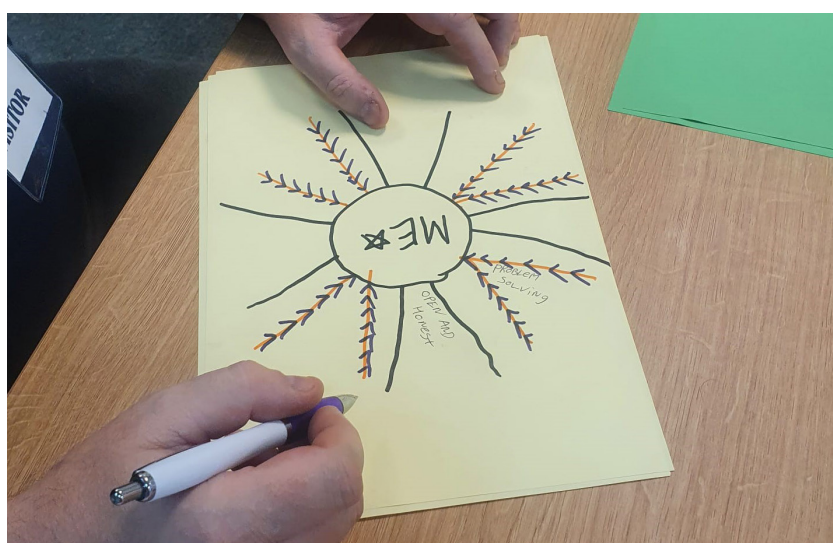


# So here's to the next **10 years...**

Over the last 10 years, we have witnessed the changes taking place in the Diversity and Inclusion space. Organisations are starting to address neurodiversity as well as wider disability inclusion as part of their D&I strategy. However, these changes will only become truly effective when neurodiversity is given a seat at the table in every organisation. So, we will continue to deliver change-making solutions to every size of business and for every type of neurodivergent condition.

At the very heart of neurominority inclusion is the issue of Intersectionality, we know that our community are often further disadvantaged by any number of other characteristics including race, gender, LGBTQ+, and socio-economic barriers. We know that even having a diagnosis is a privilege and, through our social justice work, we know how many individuals face unemployment because of a failed education system. Our Board provides a vital cross section of voices that are united in a drive to ensure the work of Genius Within reflects the needs of the community we serve and provides strong governance and guidance to the Directors.

Going forward, we look forward to continuing our drive for systemic inclusion within organisations, and we are proud that Genius Within has launched a new initiative, Blooming Genius Foundation, providing seed funding to support young people in education.





# A final note from Dr Nancy Doyle

I've always had two ambitions for Genius Within. The first, was that we would provide a top quality service to, and professional focus for neurodiverse adults. Prior to our inception, neurodiversity research and practice was focused mainly on children and tended towards a medical, clinical approach. Diagnostic reports were unreadable and inaccessible, focusing on the negative. Coaching provision was based on special needs tuition, not professional workplace coaching. We led by example here and I'm pleased to say that even our competitors now offer the "positive assessments" that we made famous in the Employable Me series. We've professionalised the neurodiversity coaching market and raised the bar for all.

My second ambition for Genius Within was that we would be a role model at the organisational level as well as for individuals. I wanted to us to be a business which is female-led, majority neurominority, appropriately represented by LGBTQIA+ and racially/ethnically diverse. I wanted to show the world that neurodiverse, female led businesses can be ethical AND successful, that being a social enterprise that gives back and isn't profit-greedy doesn't have to be poor and needy. That we can show the next generation how to balance growth for success and sustainability without going corporate commando and compromising our internal wellbeing or values.

Whilst we've been fairly consistently at the top our game with our service provision, I will admit to frequent failure at goal two! For a long time, Genius Within was dependent on a few people who would overwork to the detriment of their health. We didn't always live our values in terms of race representation and we are still working on some areas of the business to correct this, although as a whole we've made improvement. We've used tools such as anonymous staff surveys, gender / race / disability pay gap analysis. We've consulted in our own business, many times I've had to be the Organizational Psychology consultant, working on my business as well as in my business. We've also brought in a range of my external OP and Management Consulting colleagues, regularly investing in CPD and team development, using tools such as Clean Language and Systemic Modelling, reflective practice, Anti-fragility, Anti-Racism, Imposter Syndrome and more.





Despite having my best attention on the who and how of Genius Within, we have made errors and mistakes. I have personally found it hard to know when to leave people to it and when to intervene – one person’s micromanagement is another person’s support! In getting that balance wrong I have allowed colleagues to feel like they are failing or are disempowered, some have made mistakes with their own work that I could have prevented but didn’t see until too late. We’ve had to make up the rules by which we operate in order to stay truly neuroinclusive because standard HR protocols don’t work for neurominorities – we know this because we see it every day. So for many years we have laboured to find the right balance of explaining unwritten social rules vs policing behaviour; giving people decompression space for sensory overwhelm versus getting the job done on time; giving leeway to people who don’t always communicate brilliantly when stressed versus letting unspoken issues fester. We’re still working on this. We are going where there is no path and leaving a trail, because I don’t know any company yet which is able to hold the myriad of opposite and complementary neurodivergent and neurotypical thinkers in one space and have no need for adjustments, accommodations and flexibilities at the individual level. The systemically inclusive business still needs bottoming out at the rules, processes and behavioural levels. A hard learning for me is that having a team full of people who share the values and the dream does not remove the conflict. Instead, you need a congruent set of policies and processes, core training and onboarding, and regular reflective space.

Now that we’ve grown too large for me personally to buffer company practices for neurodivergent thinkers, how can the system itself hold the values? Knowing that the rules will always fail someone at the individual level sometimes, will staff needs be escalated instead of ignored? Will Genius Within shipmates begin to feel systemically excluded or depersonalized as we grow? Will my managers feel secure enough to implement the inherently neuroinclusive flexibility that there are will always be some rules that don’t work for all?

So, with this goal in mind, the following story, shared with me by one of our employability Case Managers, was a welcome green shoot, showing me that we are getting there. It gives me a lot of hope for the future to know that I have neurodiverse managers who are implementing neuroinclusive policies in such a way that my neurodiverse team can feel welcome, safe and able to work at their best aboard the Good Ship Genius. It’s only a sustainable working model when it starts to work independently. How we do what we do to role model inclusivity in business is a story best told by the participants of the process.....

# Testimonial from Catherine Russell, MBPsS, Assistant Psychologist and Case Manager.

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused many more employees to be working remotely, or more so remotely than usual, using video-conferencing software in order to retain the ability to hold meetings with other colleagues and service users. BBC news reported in March that a major American bank had launched the idea of video-conferencing-free Fridays after many employees appeared to be experiencing what has become oft-referred to as 'Zoom-fatigue' (other video-conferencing software is available).



However, for some people the challenge around using video-conferencing software is more pronounced and distressing than a mere fatigue. In the following piece I will detail my experience as an employee at the world-renowned specialist in neurodiverse employment services, Genius Within, as someone with clinical presentation that often creates a barrier to use of video-conferencing communication.

One of the fantastic aspects of Genius Within approach to assessing and coaching is their

pioneering strategy in identifying strengths and development areas in employees, that focuses on a selection of cognitive areas oft used in the workplace. As opposed to being curtailed by the idea of fixed diagnoses which can take years to be made, are not always accurate and do not always identify co-morbid conditions or indeed outlier symptoms not fitting these 'boxes.' Genius Within prize the idea of self-diagnosis just as highly as they do official diagnoses with regard the solutions and support used in work with clients and employees alike. A cornerstone of their 'walk-the-talk' philosophy.

Like many individuals who have experienced early-life trauma I was given a plethora of diagnoses in my youth and young-adult life. Since then I have re-evaluated, researched, and surmised, with the unprovoked opinion of therapists that pre-diagnosed CPTSD with the possibility of Autism is where my presentation now lies. None of this matters as much as the capacity and consequence for humans to oscillate between feelings, thoughts, mindsets, and emotions dependent on environment, familial and social circumstance, the weather, etc. ad infinitum.

Somewhere between the advent of lockdown, after the Coronavirus took hold of the world in a myriad of ways, and the present day, I experienced increasing social and generalised anxiety surrounding the use of video-conferencing software for meetings and training at work. Genius Within is the first employer, of many that I have experienced working for, where I have felt totally at ease in expressing any anxieties, wants, needs, or disagreement with any aspect of my role, knowing that the issue will be contained, supported and resolved without judgment, unprofessional repercussion, or being unaddressed. Genius Within use a psychotherapeutic

coaching communication style called 'Clean Language', developed by David Grove in the 1980s, as a core basis for communication that serves to cut out personal construct 'noise' that can lead to misinterpretation, lack of clarity, and drama. It has extended functionality in the business and workplace context, but this is its most relevant to this situation.

The issue as it presented itself then was that I did not feel able to attend meetings and training that involved being placed in a 'breakout room' with colleagues and expected to work together on a group exercise without explanation prior to the meeting / training of what that exercise would be. The key issue for me was lack of preparation and a requirement to 'think on my feet'. Something I experience to be almost impossible at times. The response from my line manager was impeccable. Going forward all meetings and training detailed within their pre-information what the breakout exercise would entail. This meant that I was able to think about and make notes on exercises that would occur within training, beforehand, and I could use that preparation to retain confidence and communication during the exercise.

Some months later, for some reason or another (my experience is that it isn't always advisable to create a story and attach oneself to it, for the sake of progress) it became that I was experiencing increasing stress and anxiety around:

- 1. Having conversations that I had not prepared content for.**
- 2. Having my camera switched on.**
- 3. Answering any questions that I had not seen prior to the date of training / meeting.**

It became that I would constantly be looking to see when the next video-conferencing requirement would take place, with anxious dread. Trying to get myself into a state of mind where I could robustly and effectively get through it, failing, experiencing emotional dysregulation for the rest of the day. I went through a phase of joining as many video-conferencing events as I could, but then leaving via the fight or flight state, and experiencing an

onslaught of the infamous self-critic and its trusty emotional malaise.

It was all very disruptive and not conducive to a productive and stable working day, thus unhelpful to both myself and Genius Within. As per my initial issue, I informed my line manager that attendance to video-conferencing events was having a negative effect on my emotional health. I was invited to create a piece of Clean Feedback (spontaneous feedback using the Clean Language model comprising 1. What has worked well. 2. What has not worked well. 3. What would work better.) When this was written it was the same day as my latest 'reaction' and I think it's important to point out that I was in a rather emotionally dysregulated state when I wrote it. Despite the perhaps imbalanced amount of negativity in my feedback, it was taken on board, not judged, not seen as inappropriate, ungrateful, excessive, or 'wrong.'

The result was that my line manager, during a meeting with the Genius Within leadership team, presented this feedback – who simply responded that I do not have to attend any video-conference-based meetings or training sessions, neither do I have to provide explanation as to why this is. News of this for me occurred today, and I can report that I'm still processing it on a physiological level. I'm expecting my blood pressure to be at an athletically low level by tomorrow morning. I'm able to breathe easier and what feels like an actual physical weight, has been lifted from my mind.

It has provided such a relief to know this is even possible and that all the anxiety surrounding the issue has been removed in an instance. That I am trusted to perform in my role and supported beyond previously understood limits to feel as comfortable as possible in doing so. Genius Within has repeatedly demonstrated to me the capacity to supersede workplace cultural programming in its response to difficulties by challenging the philosophy of required 'norms' such as meeting attendance and I have, especially recently, wondered how I managed to be so lucky as to have achieved a place as an employee within their organisation.

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## **With thanks to:**

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Get in touch today! We'd love to talk about how we can help you, or your organisation, be at your best.

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