



divergentthinking

2024

DIVERSE MINDS CONFERENCE: POST-EVENT IMPACT REPORT

"This event was brilliant and a goldmine of information that should be spread far and wide. This should be a regular event that is funded and put on and also advertised to a wider audience to capture employers so they can see things from a Neurodiverse perspective."

- Participant

"Thank you for creating online events, as they allow knowledge to be accessible from anywhere."

Event Overview

The Diverse Minds Conference aimed to create an inclusive and empowering platform for neurodivergent students, researchers, and professionals in biological sciences and academia. This one-day event brought together leading voices from the field, providing attendees with valuable insights into self-advocacy, leadership, workplace inclusivity, and practical tools to succeed in academia and beyond.

The event saw **779 sign-ups via Eventbrite**, with **624 participants** joining throughout the day. The event lasted for a total of **8.5 hours**, resulting in **65,366 participant minutes**—demonstrating a high level of engagement and interaction.

Out of the total attendees, **151 were PhD students**, with **67 attendees enrolled in a BBSRC Doctoral Training Programme (DTP)** and **84 PhD students not part of a BBSRC DTP**. The diversity of participants highlighted the importance of discussing neurodiversity across various doctoral programmes and research settings.

Attendees from **54 countries** across six continents, highlighted the global interest in neurodiversity in STEM. The continental breakdown was as follows:

- **Europe:** 18 countries
- **Asia:** 15 countries
- **Africa:** 8 countries
- **South America:** 7 countries
- **North America:** 4 countries
- **Oceania:** 2 countries



"This event was amazing..."

Key Objectives



- **Raise Awareness:** Promote a greater understanding of the challenges and strengths of neurodivergent individuals in academic and professional settings.



- **Empower Neurodivergent Individuals:** Provide practical strategies for self-advocacy, leadership, and career progression.



- **Foster Inclusive Practices:** Equip organisations and educational institutions with tools to create more inclusive environments for neurodivergent students and professionals.

"...Loved that the speakers are neurodivergent themselves—it just makes their perspectives so much more relevant. Their lived experiences. Loved that you made this available for those from other universities or fields. So, happy with this event. I felt seen, informed, and a sense of community. Thank you!"

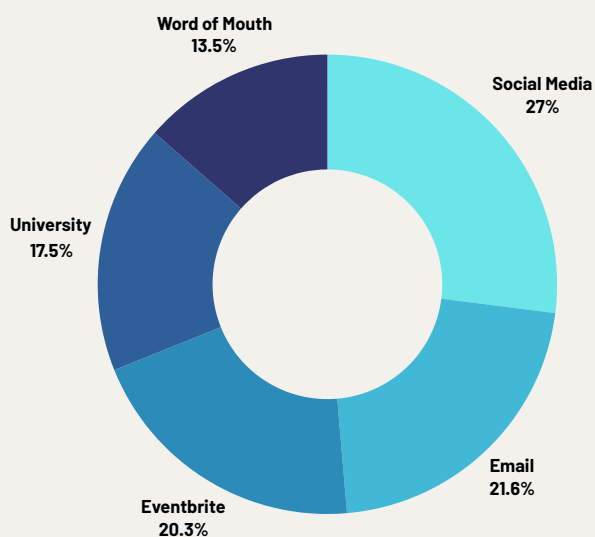
Participant




"I saw this at the very last minute and was very pleased to be able to join. The presentations were very interesting and insightful."

Event Outreach

How Attendees Heard About the Event:



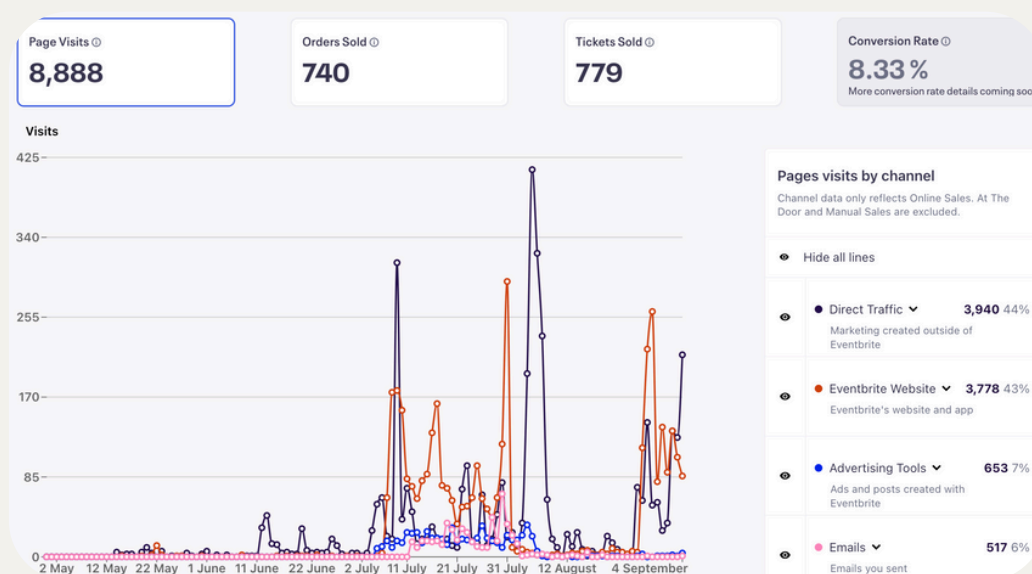


James Cavanagh • 2nd
Creator of RAWesome™ ...
[Visit my website](#)
1mo • 🌐

+ Follow

I'm attending Diverse Minds: Empowering Neurodiversity in Biological Sciences & Academia. Join me on September 4.

Word of Mouth



Ticket sign-up (Eventbrite) analytics

04

"Really appreciate your conference and especially liked the length of the conference. Often some are much too long. This was just right!"

Feedback & Attendee Demographics

A post-event survey was distributed to assess the impact of the event, with 63 responses providing insightful feedback.

Attendees' Educational Background:

- Master's Degree: 25.8%
- Bachelor's Degree: 22.6%
- Doctoral Candidate: 16.1%
- PhD or Equivalent: 16.1%
- Postdoctoral Research Fellow: 14.5%
- No degree: 4.8%

Neurodivergent Representation:

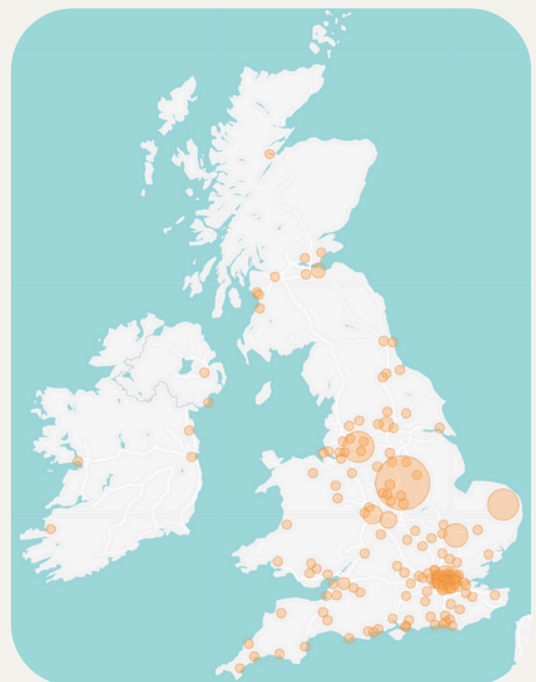
- ADHD: 52.4%
- Autism Spectrum Condition: 42.9%
- Dyslexia: 22.2%
- Dyspraxia: 12.7%

Primary Reason for Attending:

- To learn more about neurodiversity in academia: 61.9%
- For professional development: 28.6%

Event Satisfaction:

- Average rating for meeting expectations: 4.4 out of 5
- Overall experience rating: 4.6 out of 5
- Inclusivity rating: 4.4 out of 5

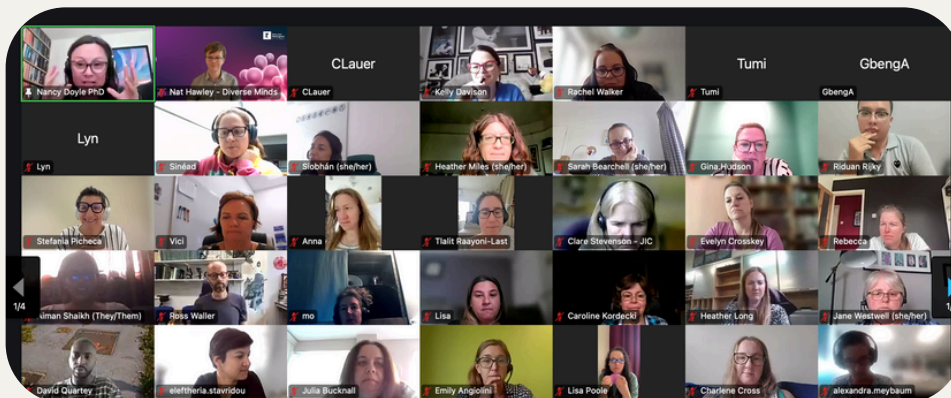


The orange dots represent the main UK cities where sign-ups occurred.

"I have come away with some useful ideas for the workplace and will strongly encourage students to attend future events."

Impact Highlights

- **Increased Awareness:** 90% of participants reported that the event enhanced their understanding of how to support neurodivergent colleagues and students.
- **Actionable Insights:** 85% of participants indicated they would implement new strategies for self-advocacy and leadership learned during the event.
- **Networking & Collaboration:** 75% expressed a desire to engage in future collaborative projects on neurodiversity in STEM, highlighting the value of the community fostered during the event.



- **Session Attendance:**
 - Professor Nancy Doyle's session on Rethinking Neuroinclusion: 82.5%
 - Jessica Dark's session on Wellbeing for Neuro-Inclusive Research Teams: 81%
 - Professor Sara Rankin's session on Navigating a Career in Biological Sciences: 79.4%

Programme Breakdown AM



Keynote Speaker: Tumi

Tumi shared his personal journey as a neurodivergent researcher, addressing the lack of support in higher education and emphasising the importance of aligning one's career with individual strengths and passions. His speech resonated deeply with attendees, encouraging them to embrace their neurodivergence as a strength.

Leadership Development Workshop: Dr Tiffany Jameson

Dr Jamieson's session focused on the challenges neurodivergent individuals face in leadership roles and provided actionable steps for overcoming these hurdles. Her emphasis on mentorship and flexible leadership models received positive feedback, with 76.2% attendance.



Neuroinclusion in the Workplace: Professor Nancy Doyle

Professor Doyle's interactive workshop on sensory awareness and neuroinclusion in professional settings was another highlight. 82.5% of participants attended, reflecting strong interest in creating neuroinclusive workplaces.

"Hearing the experiences of so many different people (speakers and attendees) was invaluable. [...] Very many thanks for organising the day; really wonderful."

Participant



Programme Breakdown

PM

Neurodiversity in Research Teams: Jessica Dark

Jessica's workshop offered participants tools to integrate a neurodiversity-centred approach within research teams. Her session was attended by 81% of participants, many of whom reflected on the importance of flexible work arrangements and clearer communication protocols.



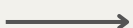
Navigating a Career in Biological Sciences: Sara Rankin

We had the celebrated Sara Rankin, a Professor of Leukocyte and Stem Cell Biology at Imperial College London, who shared her experiences as a dyslexic and dyspraxic academic working in the biological sciences. With a distinguished background in pharmacology and interdisciplinary research, Professor Rankin's career exemplifies how neurodivergent individuals can thrive when given the proper support. She has worked across fields, collaborating with physicists, material scientists, and clinicians, all while advocating for greater inclusivity in STEM.



Assistive Technology & Workplace Support: Deborah Leveroy

Jessica's workshop offered participants tools to integrate a neurodiversity-centred approach within research teams. Her session was attended by 81% of participants, many of whom reflected on the importance of flexible work arrangements and clearer communication protocols.



Participants



Mar Rodríguez. MarTraduce • 1st

EN-ES translator. Esp.: oncology, sustainability, SEO, maritime, marke...

2d ...

This was such an enjoyable event.

And I have to say a lot of the tips for adaptations and accommodations could be applied to neurotypical people too; not everybody is the same, feels the same and needs the same all the time.

I am looking forward to next years'.

"I found the event extremely informative and inspirational."



Dr Sarah Bearchell (She/Her) • 2nd

Science Writer, Presenter and Trainer

2d ...

A really excellent event with engaging, experienced and knowledgeable speakers. Not forgetting the enthusiastic attendees who shared their lived experiences so openly. Thank you for bringing everyone together **Nathaniel W. Hawley**! If you run another next year, I'll be recommending it to colleagues :)

"Thank you very much for the event. I learned a lot and it was really enjoyable."



Olga Zilberberg • 2nd

Designing and delivering bespoke Neuro-Inclusion and Men...

[Request services](#)

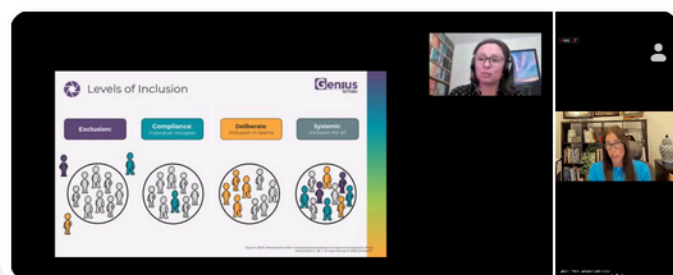
3h •

[+ Follow](#)

Thank you **University of Nottingham** and the **THE BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL** for a fantastic conference on Diverse Minds.

I had the pleasure to listen to great minds such as **Dr. Tiffany Jameson, MBA, PHR**, **Nancy Doyle**, **Jessica Dark ND**, **Sara Rankin Deborah Leveroy PhD**, **Tumi Sotire** who shared their wisdom and expertise. I have learnt and grown and I feel energised although a little tired now.

Thank you to **Nathaniel W. Hawley** and Zoe Chen for hosting the event.



Florence Neville PhD (She/They) • 2nd

Neurodivergent researcher, teacher and trainer. Neurodiversity, environment, education, wellbeing.

1d ...

This was a great event. The speakers were fab, the day was well structured, you stuck to time... Thank you, I hope you do more of these in the future!



Anna Dushenkina • 3rd+

Current MSc Conservation Biology

13m •

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This was a great collection of presentations, some very usefull tips!



Debbie Miller, A&U, PhD (She/They) • 1st

Research Methodologist

18h

I heard this was great. Can wait to learn more about it....says a person who only gets excited about divergence and special interests.



Sandra Kling (She/Her) • 1st

2d (edited) ...

VA für neurodivergente Unternehmer*Innen, Autor*Innen, Verlage, Nerds & Co. 🐦 Backoffice, Social Media Mgmt, Personalservice & Multimedia 🧠 Psychologie mit Fokus auf Neurodivergenz, Entspannung & Stressmanagement

Congratulations to this amazing event! Not just the speakers and lectures were wonderful, but also the atmosphere. The space felt safe.

I learned, related, and realised I'm not alone in this world with how I feel and how difficult things often are. That was really empowering.

Thank you so much! I'm really hoping for more of these events :)

"It was great to hear from someone in Academia who was neurodiverse."

09

Speaker Feedback



Jessica Dark ND (She/They) • 1st

Founder of ND Perspective, Neurodiversity Rights Advocate, Psychol...

It was such an awesome day 😊



Tumi Sotire (He/Him) • 1st

Multi award winning 🏆 Dyspraxia Advocate | Founder of The Black Dy...

I was honoured to be part of it . Thanks again. For having me



Nancy Doyle (She/ gender nonconforming) • 1st

Visiting Professor Birkbeck, University of London, Founder Genius Wi...

Had a great time with you all! Hope the rest of the day was fun. :)



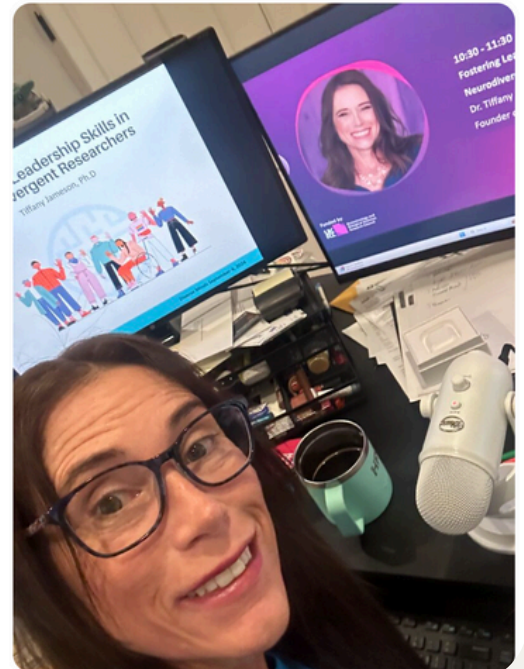
Dr. Tiffany Jameson, MBA, PHR (She/Her) • 1st

Consultant | Keynote Speaker | Researcher | Retention Specialist...

[Request services](#)

1d • 🌐

Here we go! It may be 2:30 am for me, but I am so excited to be speaking to about Fostering Leadership Skills in Neurodivergent Researchers at the Diverse Minds Conference! ...more



Dr. Tiffany Jameson, MBA, PHR (She/Her) • 1st

Consultant | Keynote Speaker | Researcher | Retention Specialist | Neurodiversity | Master Traine

Thank you for inviting me to speak! I am proud to be a part of this amazing event!



Dr Deborah Leveroy

to Nat, Zoe ▾

Hi there,

Well done for a fantastic day yesterday 😊 So original and thought-provoking!

Key Areas for Improvement

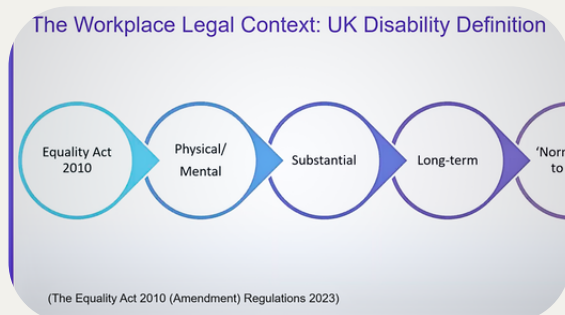
The survey results revealed several suggestions for future events:

- **More Focus on Practical Strategies:** 66.7% of respondents requested more emphasis on actionable strategies in future events.
- **New Topics and Speakers:** 39.7% expressed interest in different topics or new speakers.
- **More Time for Q&A:** 22.2% of attendees requested additional time for discussions and Q&A sessions, highlighting the desire for deeper engagement during the event.
- **Improved Accessibility Features:** 15.9% suggested enhancements in accessibility features to ensure a more inclusive experience for all.



Preparing to transition:
Reflecting on where you are now?

- Where are you now?
- Disabled Students Allowance?
- What's worked / what hasn't worked so far?
- What can you take with you?
- What resources/support do you have?



Screenshots from the speaker's presentations

"There is so much more possible than I ever knew."
Participant

Next Steps

- **Continue the Conversation:** The success of this event has highlighted the need for ongoing dialogue on neurodiversity in academia and STEM. Plans for a follow-up event in 2025 are underway, with a focus on expanding the conversation to include more interdisciplinary perspectives.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Presentation slides and resources are available for download to ensure that the knowledge shared at the event is accessible to all.
- [Presentation Slides](#)
- **Participant Survey:** We encourage attendees to provide further feedback through our post-event survey, as your insights are essential for refining future events.
- [Post-Event Survey](#)

Key Areas for Improvement

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- **Improved Accessibility Features:** 15.9% suggested enhancements in accessibility features to ensure a more inclusive experience for all.

"I thought all the speakers were great and offered different perspectives. I understand now that I need to be a better advocate for myself and how to approach it."

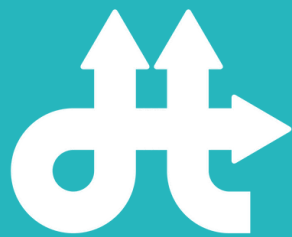
Participant



Conclusion

The Diverse Minds Conference has left a lasting impact on participants, equipping neurodivergent individuals and their allies with tools for personal and professional growth. By fostering a community of support and understanding, the event has laid the foundation for future initiatives that will continue to champion neurodiversity in biological sciences and academia.

Together, we can create a more inclusive future where neurodivergent minds are not only recognised but celebrated for their unique contributions.



Thank You