

ONE YEAR OF CONNECTIONS

From the soft launch in April 2024 to our public launch in August 2024, the Dundee Connections Team has grown and developed over the past year. We are continually learning from the autistic community in Dundee and the wider Tayside area, and we adapt our service based on the direct feedback we receive.



The Dundee Connections Team deal with a variety of enquiries. The top three themes are:

- Autism Understanding
- Being Social - to reduce isolation and make connections
- Emotional Support

Dundee Connections continues to provide one to one advice and guidance for autistic adults in Dundee and those waiting for assessment in Angus and Perth. We have regular drop-in sessions within our office on Mondays 1pm-3pm and Thursdays 10am-12noon. We are looking to expand on this in the coming year.

470

people have
accessed the
service



257

autistic adults
supported



Over

375

one to one
appointments



Groups
Delivered



38

Autistic Adult Peer
Support Networks

18

Social Connections @
Cake or Dice

6

Connect groups for autistic
adults and their parents and
carers

4

Social Connections @
Showcase Tech Hub

“Very understanding of specific needs and made it very clear that they would do all they can to make accessing their service as easy as possible.”

Scottish
autism

COMMUNITY ASKED FOR:

- A safe, welcoming space for autistic people to connect and share experiences.
- Opportunities to build confidence, practice self-advocacy, and unmask, especially for those diagnosed later in life.
- Access to social spaces in Dundee, with varied venues, dates, and times, including evenings and weekends.
- Interest-based groups and peer-led activities.
- One-to-one support for mental wellbeing, understanding autism, and exploring identity.
- Help to overcome barriers to employment, housing, and financial support.

CONNECTIONS PROVIDED:

- Established a peer-led Autistic Peer Support Network with regular, structured groups focusing on shared experiences and mutual support.
- Running fortnightly evening peer groups, weekend advice drop-ins, and evening social spaces, with plans for a wider social calendar.
- Tried and evening Connect social space and Parent Group running in tandem
- Partnered with local organisations like Cake or Dice and Showcase the Street for activities like video gaming meet-ups and dramatherapy taster sessions exploring feelings through art, music, and storytelling.
- Delivered over 300 one-to-one appointments (in person, online, and by phone), including some evenings, to help build coping tools and reduce distress.
- Mapped local support services in Dundee and Angus, providing signposting, direct referrals, and created a downloadable Directory of Support.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID:

I feel like the peer support group is the first place I have ever unmasked.

The support I received was excellent and helped me greatly in preparing for employment and dealing with stress and change.

It would be nice to try out different public spaces. Like there are some things I won't do on my own because I don't know the rules and then once I've been once I'm fine.

I'm looking for activities that help me connect more with my body and my emotions, chances to express myself and be creative rather than logical.

I enjoyed getting to know other people and doing fun, engaging activities.

FUTURE STEPS FOR CONNECTIONS:

- Expanding the social calendar to include more evening, weekend, and activity-based events, shaped by what participants want, e.g. café visits, movie nights, arts and crafts, board games, snooker, and collaborations with local venues like the V&A.
- "Connections on the Road" to offer advice drop-ins in Dundee and surrounding areas for people unable to visit the city centre office.
- Providing sensory and creative resources, like colouring books, fidget toys, LEGO, books, and games.
- Making peer groups more structured by introducing themed discussions.

MEET THE TEAM

Fiona – Senior Community Advisor

Fiona has worked within Scottish Autism since 2007, working alongside autistic people and their families, through direct practice and management roles. In her current role, she is responsible for the day to day management of Dundee Connections service and supporting the team.

"It has been a pleasure to be a part of developing Dundee Connections over the past year. I am looking forward to continuing to support the Autistic Community within Tayside and developing future steps based on the feedback we have received from those we support."



Fi – Community Advisor

Fi joined Scottish Autism at the launch of Dundee Connections and led the first Peer Support Network group in July 2024. The network has since more than doubled in size, with regulars helping shape it into the supportive community it is today. Previously, Fi worked in the NHS as a Nurse Specialist in Family Liaison, then ran various community wellbeing projects as a Bibliotherapist, Coach, and Counsellor.

"I've enjoyed listening to the voices of the autistic individuals visiting Dundee Connections attending groups and one-to-one appointments, and capturing what it is that individuals want and need most from the service."



Orla – Community Advisor

Orla joined Scottish Autism in September 2025, in her role as Community Advisor. Orla has previously worked in a variety of jobs and sectors including health care and third sector roles. Orla is passionate, open minded and keen to learn and develop in her role as Community Advisor.

"I am very excited to be joining the Dundee Connections team. As an advocate for the neurodiverse community, I am passionate about creating accessible, fair and safe environments where autistic individuals can thrive."



Zofia – Community Advice Services Manager

"It's been lovely to watch Scottish Autism's newest Community Advice Service grow and evolve since the launch, based on local autistic community feedback."

I'm excited to see our plans for the next year unfold as the team look to extend the service's reach and explore new collaborations across Dundee and Tayside, all rooted in the feedback we receive."

Soon, Connections will also recruit volunteers as Peer Group Mentors — a pivotal step in providing authentic peer support and ensuring the safe spaces we've developed continue."



CONTACT CONNECTIONS

The Connections service is here for autistic adults, with or without a diagnosis, and who live in Dundee or are on the TAACT waiting list for assessment in Perth or Angus.

Our Community Advisors can provide you with:

- Advice and support via phone or email
- One-to-one appointments in person or virtually
- Peer support groups
- Drop in sessions
- Social activities
- Signposting and support to access services in the community



CONNECTIONS

Dundee Adult Information, Advice and
Support Hub



Phone Line Open: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm



03030 034 020



dundeconnections@scottishautism.org



scottishautism.org/dundeconnections



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autism

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