

AMPLIFYING NEURODIVERGENT VOICES IN CAMBRIDGE

7 June 2024



Sensory Guide

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Introduction

As you join us for the Amplifying Neurodivergent Voices in Cambridge event, this guide offers insights into the flow of the event, highlighting the social interactions, sessions, and the sensory environment you will encounter. Our goal is to facilitate an inclusive and comfortable experience for all attendees.

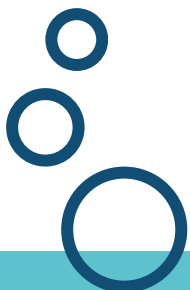
Key Locations

1. Main Venue – East 2 (First Floor):

- Function: This is the primary space for our welcoming remarks and panel discussions.
- Layout: The room is set up in a lecture style, accommodating up to 50 people. Chairs are arranged in a gentle semi-circle around the stage area to facilitate easy viewing and interaction.
 - At the front, you will find five comfortable chairs and two to three coffee tables, alongside a podium for speakers. This setup is designed to create a relaxed and engaging atmosphere. The back wall features two sofas and a small table with four chairs reserved for staff.

2. Breakout Rooms – West 1, and South Room (First Floor):

- Function: These rooms are designated for smaller group discussions and interactive sessions.
- Layout: Each room features comfortable seating arranged in two circles, supporting group sizes of 10–15 people.
 - The setup in these rooms is intended to foster open communication and comfort, allowing for more personalised interaction and less overwhelming group sizes.



3. Quiet Room – Contemplation Room (Second Floor):

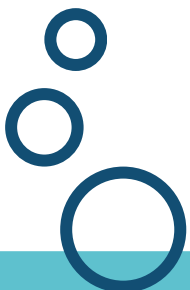
- Function: This space serves as a quiet room for attendees who may need a break from the event's activities and retreat in a space where sensory input is minimised and comfort is maximised.
- Layout: The room is furnished with comfortable seating or a sofa, creating a tranquil environment for relaxation or solitude.

4. Lunch Area (Adjacent to East 2, First Floor):

- Function: The designated area for lunch and refreshments during breaks.
- Layout: Conveniently located next to the main event room, this area allows for easy transition between sessions and meals.
 - The lunch setup is spacious and open, reducing the likelihood of crowding and ensuring that attendees can navigate the space comfortably and safely.

Key Accessibility Details

- Navigational assistance: Directional signs, ushers, and an information desk staffed by ThinkLab members will ensure easy navigation.
- Physical accessibility: All event spaces are accessible. Lift access and accessible toilets are available nearby.
- Quiet room: A room is designated for low-stimulation breaks.
- Sensory aids: Fidget toys will be available.
- Coloured bracelets: Ribbon coloured bracelets will be provided to all participants to help indicate their communication preferences.
- Team support: ThinkLab team members are always ready to assist with any concerns.



What your day will look like

10:00 – 10:30: Morning Arrivals at the West Hub

Begin your day at the West Hub's first floor, where you will be greeted at the registration desk located by the main room (East 2). The area will be lively, with a moderate noise level due to mingling attendees. For those preferring a quieter environment, the Quiet Room on the second floor is accessible via stairs or lift. Upon arrival:

- Collect your name badge.
- Choose a bracelet at the registration desk:
 - Red: Opt-out of filming.
 - Green: Indicate you are happy to chat.
 - Yellow: Indicate you prefer to stay quiet or would like to initiate the conversation first rather than being approached.

10:30 – 10:50: Welcome Session (East 2)

The event kicks off with a welcome speech in East 2, featuring AV support for clear audio and focused lighting on the speaker area. The session will host approximately 50 attendees and will be lively with active participation. Should you find the sensory input overwhelming, the contemplation room will be available.

- Opening remarks by ThinkLab, highlighting the event's goals and acknowledging partners.
- An overview of the day's agenda will be provided.

10:50 – 12:15: Panel 1 – Neurodiversity & Navigating the Workplace (East 2)

This panel brings together neurodivergent professionals and advocates to discuss personal journeys and challenges in professional settings, effective coping strategies, and the impact of workplace neurodiversity initiatives. A 15-minute audience Q&A session will follow.



What your day will look like

12:15 – 13:15: Lunch Break (Adjacent to East 2)

Enjoy a networking lunch in a well-lit area with natural lighting. Moderate noise levels from conversations are expected.

13:15 – 14:15: Panel 2 – Neurodiversity & Navigating Education

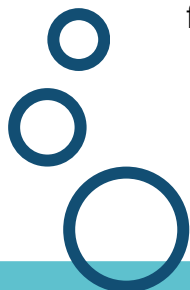
This panel features neurodivergent experts and educators discussing:

- Personal and professional experiences in overcoming educational challenges.
- A 15-minute audience Q&A session will conclude the discussion.

14:15 – 15:00: Group Discussions Part 1 (West 1, and South Room)

Participants will engage in facilitated group discussions on navigating education and the workplace as neurodivergent individuals.

- Each session will be led by a ThinkLab team member, who will use pre-shared discussion questions to guide the conversation. These questions are designed to elicit insights and experiences related to neurodiversity in professional and educational settings (see the Participant guide for questions).
- The sessions will be dynamic, with low to moderate noise levels due to group interactions. The contemplation room is available for breaks.
- Additionally, participants can engage through Miro online for non-verbal communication or use the coloured post-its and flip charts provided in the rooms.
- Participants are encouraged to bring their own sensory aids or use the fidget toys provided to enhance their comfort during the discussions.



What your day will look like

15:00–15:10 - Comfort Break

Those who would like to take a break from the discussion can step away and enjoy tea and coffee which will be served in the lunch area.

15:10– 16:00: Group Discussions Part 2 (West 1, and South Room)

The participants return to their breakout rooms to resume their discussions.

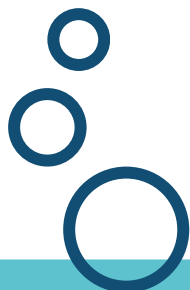
16:00–16:20: Closing Panel- The Way Forward

This session is dedicated to reflecting on the day's activities and insights gathered throughout the day. We will discuss our experiences so far and actionable steps to support neurodiversity in the community and beyond.

It's also an ideal moment for participants to raise any additional questions or share insights and any concerns with us. We encourage everyone to communicate in the manner that feels most comfortable, whether it be written or verbal.

16:20–16:30 PM: Closing Remarks

The day will conclude with final reflections, acknowledgements and feedback.



Additional Notes

Timing notice

We appreciate that everyone has different preferences in regards to timings, so whilst specific timings are listed on the agenda to help structure the event, latecomers are welcomed. We fully accommodate people coming and going from the rooms as needed and encourage people to attend the sessions when they are able to. For instance, in the East 2 room, we will provide some seating near the door so that anyone entering or leaving throughout the event may do so easily.

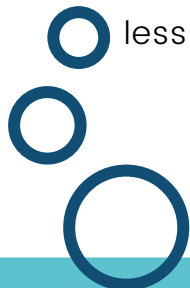
Additional venue access: Navigation

A map of the venue is available in the 'Neurodiversity Inclusion and Access Plan' document or visit: <https://www.westcambridgehub.uk/visit>. There is also a map available upon entering the main entrance, and our ushers will be at the venue entrance to greet you.

Additional venue access: Travel recommendations

Due to the nature of the public transport system in Cambridge, buses sometimes do not arrive at the times listed online or on the timetable. If you are planning to take the bus, we recommend giving yourself plenty of time to arrive.

There is currently construction occurring by the 'William Gates Building' bus stop. If you would like to avoid any potential construction noise, we recommend using the 'West Hub' or 'Veterinary School' bus stop, both less than a 5 minute walk to the event venue.



Additional Notes

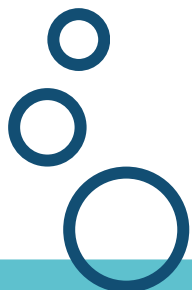
Videography

To make our event as accessible as possible, there will be filming throughout the event and our panel sessions will be uploaded to our website. There will be red ribbon bracelets available to wear if you would like to signal that you do not want to be filmed.

Cafeteria and restaurant

During the event, participants will have access to the West Hub cafeteria and restaurant. We encourage you to explore these facilities as per your comfort and convenience, keeping in mind the varying levels of activity and social interaction you might encounter as this area can become busy during the lunch period. If you would like to exit the building during this period and prefer to avoid high traffic areas, we recommend that you use the lifts by the East 2 room (conveniently also located by the quiet room).

Although the teaching term is over, resulting in fewer students, these areas may still host a mixed and potentially lively atmosphere as they are open to everyone and might be frequented by Cambridge residents, staff and students.



Additional Notes

Facilities

There are accessible toilets available directly opposite the East 2 room and the breakout rooms. All of the toilet facilities at the West Hub venue are single stall and gender neutral.

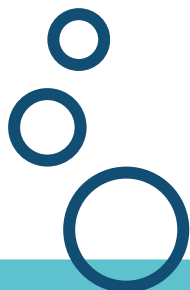
There is a water filling station available next to the lifts, conveniently located on the way to the East 2 room.

Awareness of other events and potential disruptions

During the event, please be aware that there may be other events or meetings occurring within the vicinity of our designated areas. These events could potentially create minor disruptions or changes in the usual environment:

- You may encounter university staff or students in the vicinity, using the workstations.
- You may hear noise from the common areas between the breakout rooms and East 2, or noise from the cafeteria during lunch hours.
- Building works outside the building: Nearby construction or renovation activities might result in occasional noise or a slight disturbance.

We aim to ensure these events cause minimal disruption to our event. However, if you find these additional activities overwhelming or distracting, please feel free to visit the quiet room, or the garden for a peaceful break. ThinkLab team members are also available to assist and guide you should you need any help navigating these situations.



Additional sensory information

Sensory information

Whilst we strive to make our event venues as accessible as possible, there are some limitations due to the nature of the venue.

- Seating Options: There will be a variety of seating available to give attendees the most comfortable options for them. Please be aware that some seating has a felted material.
- Whilst there will be natural lighting within the rooms, please be aware that there are no blinds available. There will be seating available away from the windows to minimise any discomfort. If you have a visual sensitivity or impairment and would prefer overhead lighting, please get in touch to discuss alternative options.
- Whilst there will be natural lighting within the event spaces, please be aware due to venue restrictions, communal areas, walkways and the lunch area may have overhead lighting. Whilst this will be avoided when possible, please get in touch if this is a cause for concern.

The ThinkLab team wish to make everyone feel as comfortable as possible, so if there is anything we can do to help, please let us know! Speak to us at the venue, or email us at thinklab@admin.cam.ac.uk.

