



National Autistic Taskforce  
Bolder Voices, Better Practice



## Recommendation 1 – what did stakeholders say?

- “broadening our idea about what representation looks like, and wonder if we are stuck in a normative view about that” (SA senior staff)
- “that was basically just facts-driven, normal autistic communication. And they told me I was being disrespectful, and not to speak to them in that way.” (Family member)
- “I think then a lot of the decisions that get made for Scottish Autism will be not just somebody business-minded, it will be somebody that maybe thinks, ‘Well, I've worked at ground level, I know what’s needed, I know what’s involved’” (SA Staff)
- “I feel like a lot of the decisions made by Scottish Autism are often, like, the staff and individuals that we support are not consulted a lot of the time.” (SA staff)
- ““It is the systems – they are very stiff. Minutes are all written, debate at Board is inaccessible. Finances are inaccessible. You need to have a certain level of skill to understand how the money is spent. None of the people we support would be able to interrogate that in its present form.” (SA senior staff)

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- “I think, if data, and the right data, isn't being collected, then that is a bit of a problem. Because how do we measure how things change?” (Wider autistic community)
- “I like it, particularly autistic advisory panel” (Wider autistic community)
- “it is a nice idea in my opinion” (Supported Individual)
- “I think that's a good idea... I would strongly agree with that.” (SA Staff member)
- “I'm not sure really they are ready to listen and to, kind of, support my participation.” (Wider autistic community)
- Empathetic autistic experience of sensory challenges in SA environment when visiting non-speaking Supported Individuals highlights the need for accessible environments and an autistic presence in services
- “Representation and governance are important because they help ensure that all individuals and groups in a society are able to have a say in the decisions that affect them.” (Wider autistic community) © NAT 2023



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## Recommendation 2 – what did stakeholders say?

- “I feel like the leadership programme is important because they help individuals develop the skills and knowledge needed to effectively lead others.” (Wider autistic community)
- “I think it’s always a good idea to promote decision making as much as possible for the individual” (SA staff)
- “it's important to ensure that the program is tailored to the specific needs and goals of the participants” (Supported Individual)
- “Supposed to have experience to be on board, but how do you get the experience. Induction to board can be difficult. Would be good to get younger people and understand what the board is and what they do.” (SA Senior staff)
- “I’m not sure, I don’t see how that would work, given the individuals that I know.” (SA staff)
- “something that would actually potentially create more benefit [than the other ideas is] ... the actual leadership development programme” (SA staff)

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- “obviously it’s making sure that people are getting to a point where they're comfortable and not feeling that they have to get to the end here” (SA staff)
- “when you start thinking about the reality and actually it happening, it does feel like woah, yeah, that is going to be something that to do this, which is amazing, it’s going to take a lot of work from everybody to enable it.” (SA staff)
- “There must be a way of not making it look like a hierarchy.” (Wider autistic community)
- Observed interest and engagement in interacting with unfamiliar representative from autistic DPO, despite only one encounter (3 different non-speaking Supported Individuals)
- “I think it’s quite aspirational, inspirational, and gives individuals a chance to see what's possible for them” (Wider autistic community)

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## Recommendation 3 – what did stakeholders say?

- “I like the neurodivergent talent pool idea a lot.” (wider autistic community)
- “I dislike uncertainty and would struggle with staff around me changing. This is a great idea.” (Wider autistic community)
- “we do try and match people, where possible, with people where we think their skills will suit.” (SA staff)
- “neurodivergent individuals can bring unique strengths and perspectives to the workplace” (Supported Individual)



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- “the idea of the staff bubbles breaks down when there isn't the staff to cover it.” (SA staff)
- “it doesn’t have to be massively expensive or time-consuming. But just some of the blockages and some of the ways things do work, don’t work, these sorts of things” (SA staff)
- “so [Supported Individuals] need to have the better say than HR saying this should be” (SA staff)
- “I think this is a good idea because I started a job with Scottish autism and told the service manager (or the manager of the place) [that I’m autistic] and she seemed surprised and I felt insecure after that.” (Wider autistic community)

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## Recommendation 4 – what did stakeholders say

- “I have such a, it feels like a very blinkered view that I have of my small input.” (SA staff)
- “I have very little idea or practically no idea of how Scottish Autism works” (Wider autistic community)
- “I would agree that the management style at [SA service], and probably throughout Scottish Autism, is very top-down” (SA staff)
- “But in our experience, there’s been a lot of tokenistic drive for [Supported Individuals] to have their voice heard. I don’t feel that’s anything more than a surface-level lip service.” (Family member)
- “And I feel myself, personally, I don’t feel that our management always listens to what the staff are saying. Because what our job is, is to advocate for those individuals, and have their needs and wants met.” (SA staff)

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- “One of the things that we do have in our new annual appraisal, because they have actually just reviewed that for all staff, is that there is feedback within that from supported individuals and their families and/or other stakeholders.” (SA staff)
- “I feel like a lot of the time, decisions are made by management that aren’t in the best interests of the individuals.” (SA staff)
- “it can help improve the quality of the services being provided, as the people responsible for them have more control over their operations and are accountable for their successes and failures” (Wider autistic community)
- “I think this is only a good idea if the services are held accountable for their standards” (Wider autistic community)

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