

Social Navigator (part-time)

Organisation: Autism Independence

Programme: Shout! – Transitions to Adulthood

Location: Bristol (community-based, with some office/home working)

Contract: Fixed-term (4 years), subject to funding

Hours: Part-time (flexible and some evening/weekend work required)

About Autism Independence

Autism Independence was established in 2013 to support families from ethnically diverse communities in Bristol who have an autistic young person and/or a learning disability.

Our vision is to educate and empower autistic people and people with a learning disability, as well as their families, while challenging taboos and stigma around disability. We specialise in supporting families whose first language is not English to access mainstream health, social care and education services through culturally competent, tailored advice and advocacy.

Our work includes:

- Overcoming language barriers
- Running support groups
- Supporting families through the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process
- Providing targeted Transition to Adulthood support
- Creating spaces where children, young people and parents thrive, connect and build community
- Raising awareness of the learning disability register and annual health checks for people with a learning disability from ethnically diverse communities.

(Please note this is not an exhaustive list of our services.)

Role Purpose

The Social Navigator will play a central role in delivering Autism Independence's *Transitions to Adulthood* work with autistic young people and/ or with a learning disability aged 14–25.

This role delivers person-led, independent support to young people, where the young person sets the priorities and level of involvement. The post-holder will work alongside young people to identify goals that are meaningful to them and provide practical support to help them make progress, including securing housing, accessing services, building confidence, or addressing barriers within systems.

The Social Navigator will provide ongoing, non-time-limited support through regular contact, enabling the development of consistent, trusting relationships over time. Progress will be evidenced through agreed outcomes with each young person, demonstrating steps taken towards their stated goals.

The post-holder will support young people to:

- Understand their rights and available options
- Navigate services and systems (e.g. housing, health, education, justice)
- Access activities in their local community
- Actively participate in decisions that affect their lives
- Challenge decisions or treatment they experience as unfair
- Develop the skills and confidence to communicate their needs and preferences

Support will be delivered in a way that is accessible and tailored to individual need, including adapting communication styles and approaches to reflect cultural background, identity, and lived experience. All work will be trauma-informed, gender-informed, and inclusive.

The role promotes a clear progression in advocacy, supporting young people to move from advocacy provided on their behalf, to advocacy delivered with them, and ultimately towards self-advocacy where appropriate.

The service operates independently of statutory care or treatment provision, enabling the post-holder to represent the young person's views and wishes without conflict of interest.

The overall aim of the role is to support young people to build the skills, confidence, and agency needed to manage their own lives and maintain meaningful connections within their communities.

Key Responsibilities

1. Deliver person-led support

- Build and maintain trusting relationships autistic young people and/ or with a learning disability aged 14–25.
- Provide one-to-one support in community settings, supporting young people to identify goals and make informed choices
- Adapt communication and approach to meet individual needs

2. Support advocacy and independence

- Work alongside young people in meetings and key decisions (e.g. education, health, employment)
- Help them understand their options, express their views, and build confidence to speak up for themselves over time

3. Facilitate group and peer activities

- Support the delivery of workshops, group sessions, and informal activities that build confidence, skills, and social connection
- Encourage participation, including for those who may not yet be ready for education or employment

4. Involve young people in shaping the service

- Actively listen to young people's feedback and involve them in developing activities and approaches
- Support opportunities for young people to share their views and influence the project

5. Work with families and communities

- Engage with families and carers where appropriate
- Help young people build connections in their local communities and reduce isolation

6. Promote wellbeing and inclusive practice

- Support young people's overall wellbeing using trauma-informed, inclusive and culturally aware approaches

7. Work collaboratively and keep records

- Work as part of a team and with external partners
- Keep clear, accurate records and contribute to monitoring and learning

Person Specification

Essential

- Experience working directly with young people, particularly those who are autistic, and/or have a learning disability from ethnically diverse communities. This can either be through professional or lived experience.
- Strong commitment to person-led, strengths-based and rights-based practice.
- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to adapt approaches to individual needs.
- Understanding of safeguarding and professional boundaries.
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Willingness to work flexibly, including some evenings or weekends.
- Experience using IT (Outlook, Word, Excel etc)

Desirable

- Knowledge of SEND systems, including EHCPs and post-16/post-18 pathways.

- Experience of group facilitation, workshops or peer support models.
- Driving licence
- Ability to work bilingually or across cultures (Occupational Requirement under the Equality Act 2010)

Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

Autism Independence is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

- This role is subject to a DBS check.
- The successful candidate will be required to complete safeguarding training and follow Autism Independence's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Autism Independence is an equal opportunity employer. We actively encourage applications from people with lived experience of autism, learning disability, neurodivergence, caring responsibilities, and from under-represented and marginalised communities.

We are committed to creating an inclusive working environment where differences are valued and respected.

- 20 hours per week
- Annual Salary of £13,218.40 per annum/ £12.71 per hour (20 hours per week; equivalent to £24,791.50 FTE) in Year 1, with a salary increase in line with inflation in Years 2, 3 and 4
- Flexible Working Hours with occasional weekend work
- Working from the office
- Training and supervision provided
- Holidays and pension contributions
- Closing Date: Friday 12th June 2026
- Interview Date: date to be confirmed
- Start Date: date to be confirmed