

## **ACCT Member Survey 2025: The Results**

Many thanks to the 105 people who responded to our membership survey this year, which is about 9% of the ACCT membership.

Our annual questionnaire is vitally important for ACCT's continued work. We use it to help measure the impact of our activities and to receive feedback and suggestions from the people who benefit from those activities.



### ***Why have a survey?***

As you probably know, all charities need to be able to describe the ways in which their work helps people, and to have some way of measuring the benefits their work produces (the outcomes). There are three main reasons for this:

- For the trustees and core staff to set the charity strategy and decide the activities to deliver for the future
- To demonstrate to funders that the money they provided was spent wisely in order to achieve some good and to help provide evidence for future funding applications.
- To justify to the Charity Commission that the organisation is delivering its charitable purpose.

### ***ACCT's outcomes***

ACCT aims to achieve three key outcomes from our work: that autistic children and young people and their families can become emotionally resilient, engaged and empowered. There is a longer description of our outcomes at the end of this report.

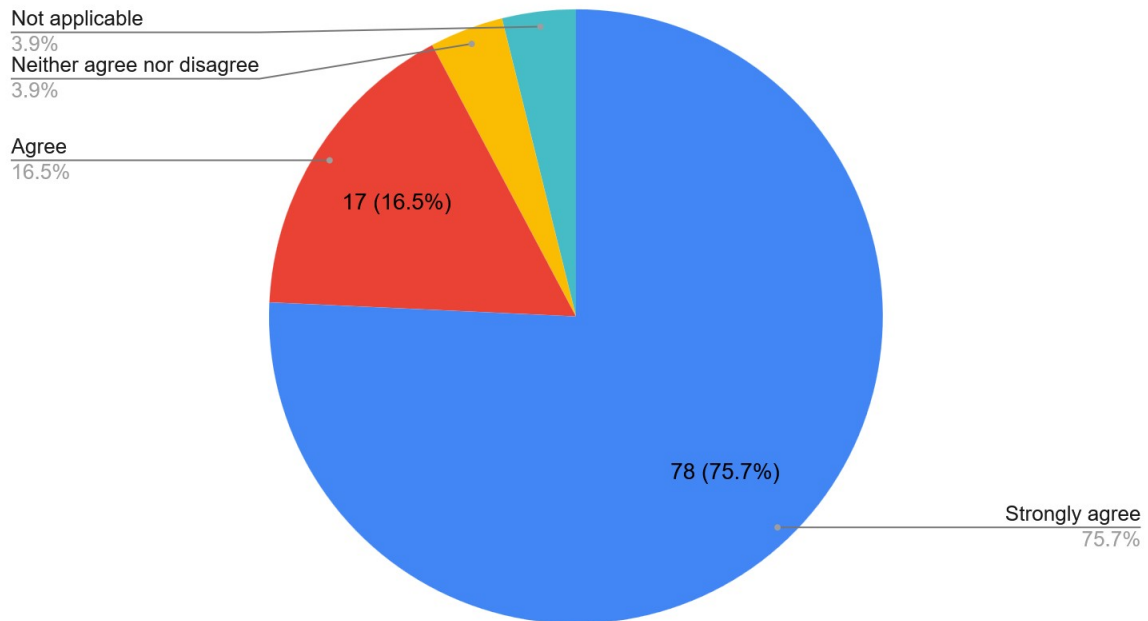
To help us figure out whether we are meeting those three outcomes, we look for indicators of those changes, things like confidence and well-being, participation and interaction, parent-carers feeling better informed and having better connections to sources of help.

So the questions we asked in our survey aim to find out whether you think that participating in ACCT activities or being a member of ACCT in general has helped you with any of these indicators that show ACCT is achieving its outcomes and therefore having a positive impact.

### **Outcome questions – the results**

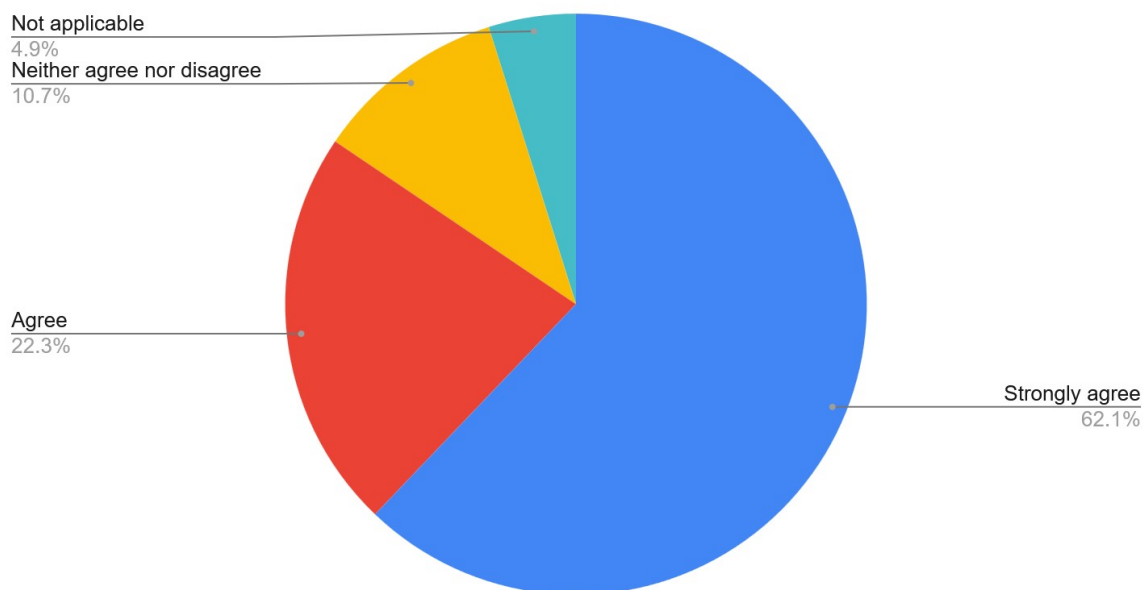
We asked to what extent you agreed with a series of statements related to these indicators; these were the results:

My child can be themselves during ACCT activities



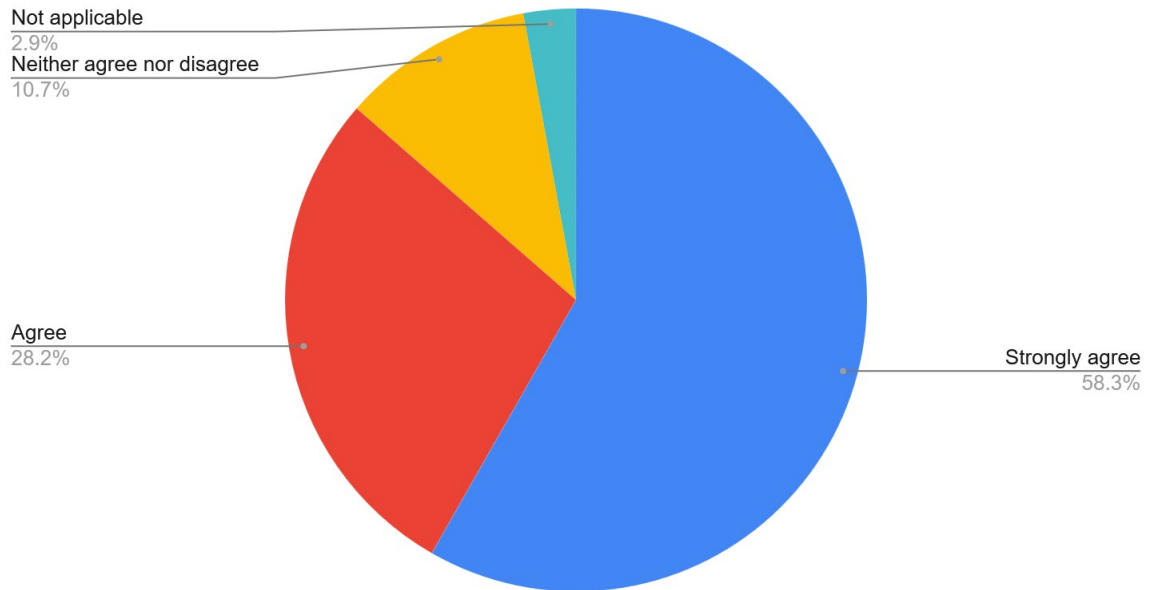
(2023 survey: 77.6% strongly agree; 20.7% agree; 1.7% neither agree nor disagree)

My child's confidence has grown because of our involvement with ACCT activities



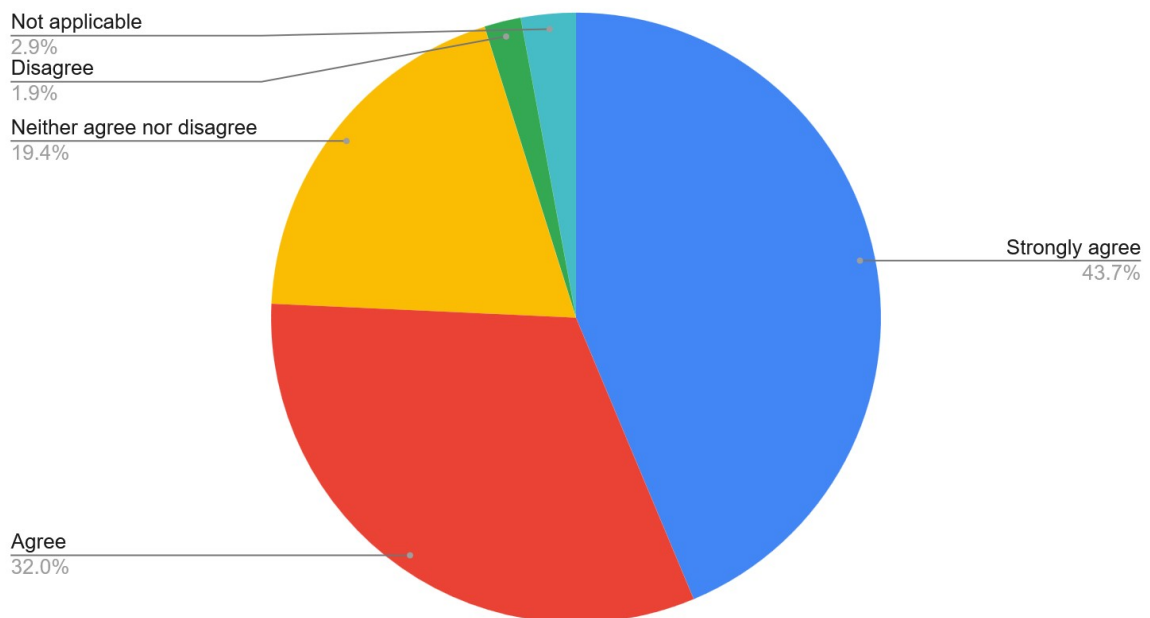
(2023 survey: 69.5% strongly agree; 20.3% agree; 10.2% neither agree nor disagree)

My child's well-being has improved because of our involvement with ACCT activities



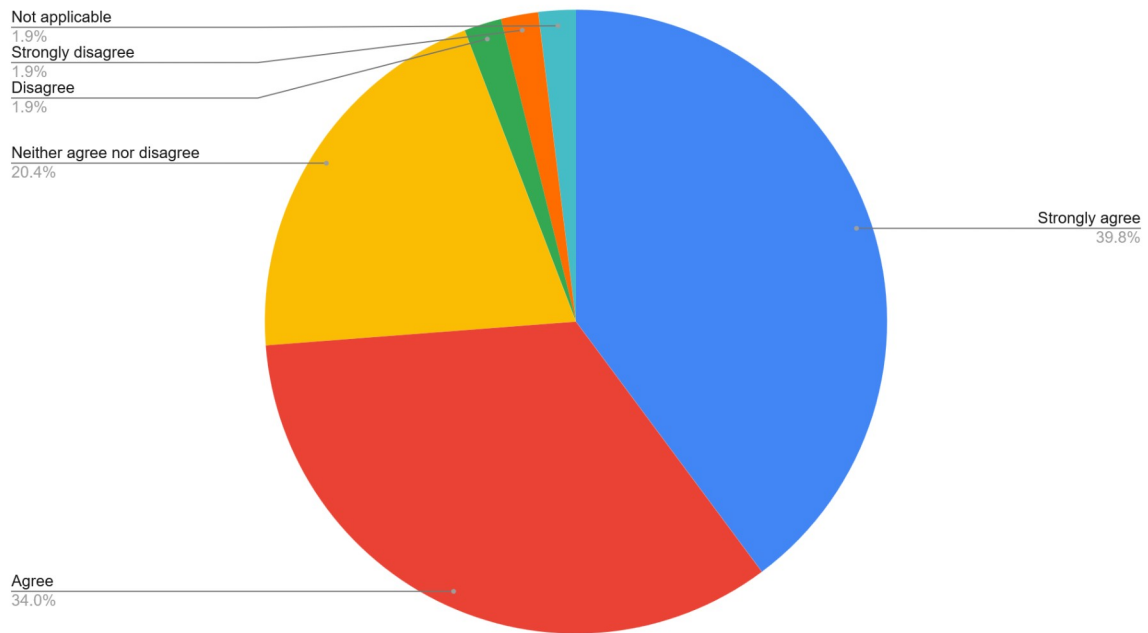
(2023 survey: 66.7% strongly agree; 21.7% agree; 11.7% neither agree nor disagree)

My child has explored new interests and activities because of ACCT.



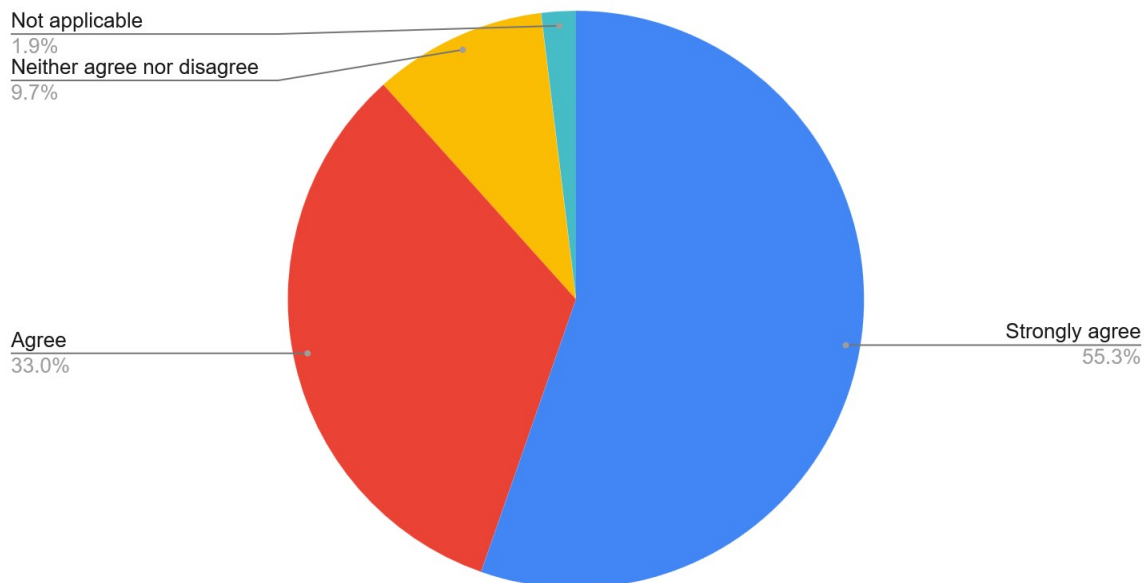
(2023 survey: 49.2% strongly agree; 27.1% agree; 23.7% neither agree nor disagree)

My family is connected to an Autism community because of our relationship with ACCT.



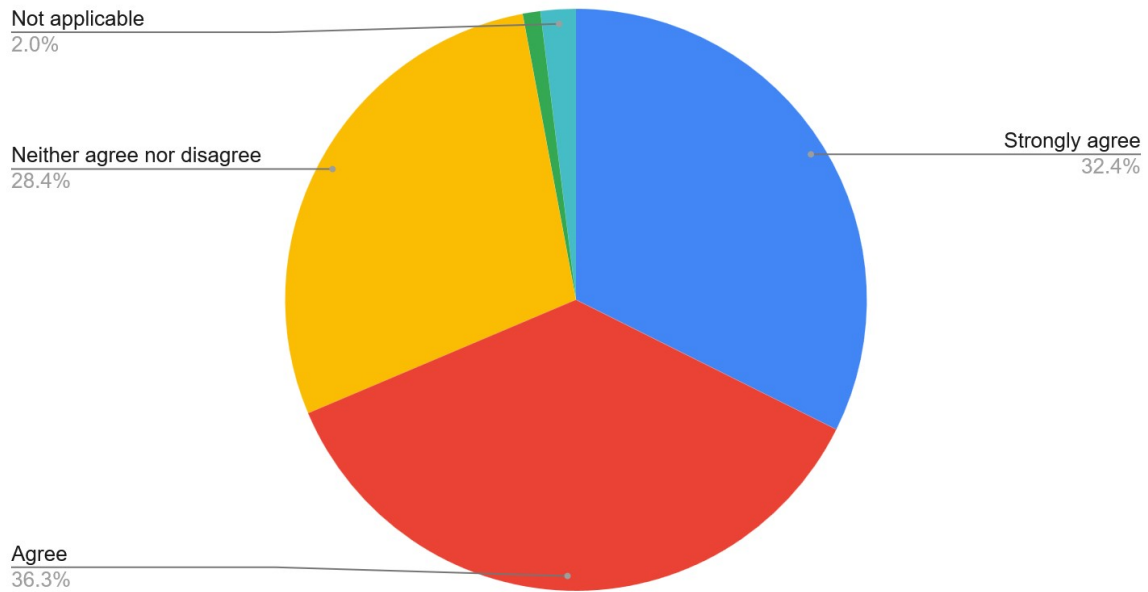
(2023 survey: 39.7% strongly agree; 27.6% agree; 27.6% neither agree nor disagree; 3.4% disagree; 1.7% strongly disagree)

Being involved with ACCT helps my child and our family to feel more positively about Autism.



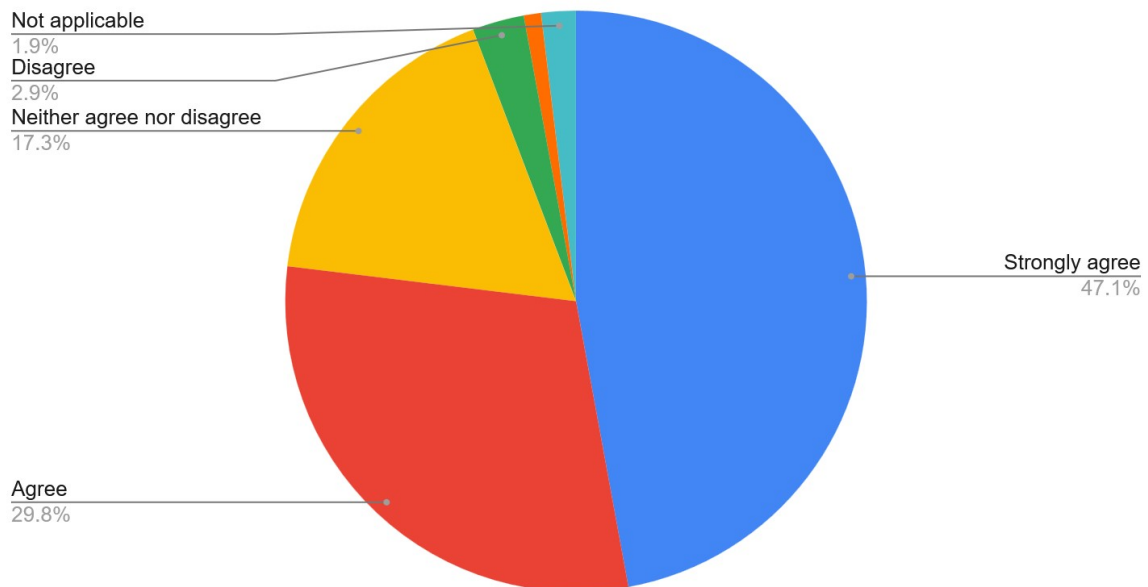
(2023 survey: 61.7% strongly agree; 26.7% agree; 11.7% neither agree nor disagree)

I feel more confident in parenting my child because of our involvement with ACCT



(2023 survey: 44.1% strongly agree; 28.8% agree; 25.4% neither agree nor disagree; 1.7% not applicable)

I receive information and support from ACCT that helps me to feel informed and confident in advocating for my child



(2023 survey: 44.1% strongly agree; 30.5% agree; 20.3% neither agree nor disagree; 1.7% strongly disagree; 3.4% not applicable)

Overall, it's great to see that so many families are benefiting from being part of ACCT, though we know that these figures are only a snapshot of the total number of people who have accessed ACCT groups or activities so can only give a partial picture.

### ***Comments and feedback***

After those questions about our outcomes, we also asked for any comments, feedback and examples you would like to share.

There were many, many lovely comments on the ways that ACCT has been a positive force in your lives, and we are honoured to read them.

Many of those comments will have a tangible benefit to ACCT; they will provide evidence and anonymised quotes that will go into ACCT funding bids and other reports. It helps us to know which parts of our activities are working well as we develop and deliver our services in the future.

It's great to know about some of the specific ways that being involved with ACCT has helped. Some comments made the point that ACCT groups were the only out of school activities that their young people were able to access. Some talked about the positive impact on confidence, and the friendships made. We read about some of the other school and community activities that young people have been able to try as a result of the progress they have made at ACCT. Some comments related to how being part of ACCT has helped young people to cope better with changes in their lives such as starting a new school.

For parent-carers, some answers talked about the benefit of the parent-carer meetings as a way of getting information, advice and support. Others mentioned the family swimming, Air Haus trips, summer days out and panto as opportunities to take part in activities that might otherwise be inaccessible. Some mentioned the time their children were at ACCT giving them the time to run errands or socialise together.

### ***Suggestions and Improvements***

There were also some suggestions for ways to improve. These comments are also incredibly valuable. They help direct trustee and staff attention to things that aren't working as well as they could so we can implement plans to improve.

The most common suggestion this year was around the frustration of **swimming** getting booked up so quickly. You may have seen an email sent from ACCT to all members that sets out what we're doing about that.

Several people also asked about **summer holiday activities**. As you probably know, we continue to run our regular activities through the school holidays as well as putting on a small number of day trips and Air Haus trips. This is one area where we do as much as we can, but we don't have specific funding for summer outings and only a small number of participants donate towards the costs, so it's always a bit of a struggle.

Generally, we are reviewing our **parent and family offer** and looking at how it can be improved and where we might be able to attract more external funding towards it. It's part of our work that has developed over the years and trustees and staff want to make sure we've got a clear idea of what we're trying to achieve with our support for parents and families.

There were a lot of great suggestions. Some would need a lot of work and a lot of funding to achieve! We are reviewing them all as a team and they feed into our planning, so thank you all for sharing your views.

It's really important for ACCT that we have an active membership, where young people, parents and families feel able to speak up and share ideas about what we should do, that our activities are delivered in ways that you want and that meet your needs.

We rely on things like the responses to this questionnaire, the views shared in clubs or at parents' meetings, or online.

We are always open to your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to share your views anytime. You can email us at [enquiries@acctsheffield.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@acctsheffield.org.uk) or send us a comment via our [online form](#).

Thank you!

## **Appendix: ACCT's Outcomes in detail**

As a result of participating in ACCT activities, autistic young people and their families in Sheffield can become more:

### *Emotionally resilient*

Young people are able to be themselves at ACCT activities without feeling the pressure to mask their autistic behaviours in order to fit in. They can relax and take part in a wide range of fun activities amongst peers, staff and volunteers who understand autism and neurodiversity. As a result, young people can grow in confidence and be supported to develop emotionally, identifying their sensory needs and learning how to manage behavioural triggers.

Parents are able to access peer and expert support from ACCT parents meetings and workshops, helping gain knowledge, skills and confidence around parenting autistic children.

Families are able to develop the emotional resilience to address internal and external challenges related to autism, such as managing stressful times of transition and change.

### *Engaged*

Through feeling motivated to take part in fun activities, young people are able to learn and practice social communication in a safe environment, develop friendships with peers and develop the skills needed for social interaction in the wider world.

Young people are encouraged to try new things and participate in activities alongside others. We celebrate and support young people's existing special interests and encourage getting to know friends and peers and other opportunities in the community that fit with those interests.

Young people get to see autistic adults and other autistic young people as positive role models and engage with the ways that autistic people have embraced the benefits of autism and learned how to manage the challenges of their neurodivergence.

ACCT member families are supported as part of a citywide autism community. Our parent and family activities are designed to enable stronger mutually supportive peer relationships between young people, between parents and between families that can continue outside of ACCT.



## *Empowered*

Young people are empowered to celebrate the positives about autism and explore how autism can help young people achieve their goals. Participating in ACCT activities alongside autistic and neurodivergent peers help young people develop their identities and better understand the role their neurodivergence plays in their identity. Similarly, families are able to embrace the fun and the benefits of having autistic people in your life.

Young people and their families can access support to develop the skills and confidence to challenge the access barriers in wider society, e.g. pursuing the statutory and other support available to young people such as EHCPs, challenging unsupportive school leaders and demonstrating resilience in the face of statutory bureaucracy, delays and intransigence.

By supporting a growing and empowered Autism community in Sheffield, we can increase autism awareness in wider society, improving outcomes by helping families identify neurodivergence and seek support at an earlier stage.

Through engagement with ACCT and the autism community, venues and activities in Sheffield are empowered to make reasonable autism-friendly adjustments to their spaces and delivery models, helping achieve a city that is more open and accessible to autistic and neurodivergent people.