

## AT-Autism Conference 2025

# Embracing Change: The Art of the Possible

Family Law Advice for the Neurodivergent Community

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Family Law Advice for the Neurodivergent Community

# Introduction to FLANC

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgJ-E-1pTRM&feature=youtu.be>

# FLANC's Journey

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- **2017:** The journey begins
- **2023:** FLANC's inception and creation of Autism & ADHD team
- **February 2024:** Website launched (cross firm, non-profit working group)
- **April 2024:** FLANC launch – At our Inaugural conference FLANC's work is endorsed by The President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane, embracing change
- Core aims:
  1. Mandatory training
  2. Best practice guidance
  3. Systemic change

# FJC Best Practice Guidance on Neurodiversity

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- **January 2025:** BPG Published for practitioners
- First ever BPG on neurodiversity in family justice
- FLANC and AT-Autism contribute
- FLANC concurrently publish bespoke 'All About Me' documents
- Judicial BPG due to be published



## All About Me

### Section 1: About Me

Name (preferred/chosen name):

My pronouns:

My diagnosis/neurodivergence:

If you need an interpreter, please confirm which language:

If you have a go-to person to help you, please confirm who:

#### How my diagnosis/neurodivergence affects me:

In this section, write about how your diagnosis influences how you understand language, communicate with others, if it affects your wellbeing and whether there are any specific medical needs resulting from your diagnosis.

### Section 2: Communication

#### How you should communicate with me:

In this section, write about how you would like others to communicate with you. For example use visual aids, give me extra processing time, writing things down for me to refer back to, use clear and unambiguous language.

#### Common mistakes people make communicating with me:

For example, assuming I don't understand because I don't use mouth words, giving me too much information in one go, saying things that you don't mean (like sarcasm), not using every-day language, use loud voices.

### How I communicate with you:

In this section, write about how you communicate with others. For example, I prefer writing over talking, I like to use visual aids like rating scales, I find it hard to communicate in big groups, I prefer 1:1 conversations, I use clear and direct language, I look away when I am concentrating, I like/dislike eye contact.

Insert text here

### Section 3: Sensory Profile

A sensory profile is really useful because everyone has sensory needs and preferences, and these can impact how we communicate, feel and behave. Everyone experiences the world differently, and it is important to be mindful of this. With many neurodivergent conditions, sensory processing is often affected. A person can become dysregulated due to sensory overload (too much sensory stimulation) or exhibit sensory underresponsivity (not enough sensory stimulation). When a person's sensory needs are not appropriately met, this can lead to states of distress.

#### My sensory needs:

In this section, write about any sensory needs. For example, are there any textures or sounds that you find comfortable or uncomfortable? Do you like bright lights or dim lights? Are there any environments that are supportive or unsupportive for your sensory needs? Do you have any stimming behaviours you want other people to understand? How do your sensory needs affect your wellbeing? Are there any actions you do that show other people you may need support? Do you have any sensory aids or strategies that you use to help?

Insert text here



#### Section 4: Help at Court and in Meetings

In this section, write about how others can support you in a way that is respectful of your needs. The world is largely set up for neurotypical people, so lots of neurotypical people don't require adjustments to this. Adjustments can help make everyone's access to services more equal and fairer. Use this section to tell others what they should and shouldn't expect from you. For example, I need routine and to know what to expect. I would benefit from knowing what questions I will be asked in a meeting beforehand, or what we will be talking about. I might need to take some time out or go for a walk. I need others to know that if I have my eyes closed it is helping me to listen and concentrate and does not mean I'm not listening.

I prefer to have meetings:

In Person ☐ Video Call ☐ Telephone Call ☐

I prefer information to be given to me:

In writing ☐ Verbally ☐ Both ☐ Other

Are there any specific fonts or colours that you find helpful?

How often do you require breaks?

Other adjustments:

#### Section 5: Other Things To Know

##### Special Interests / My strengths:

In this section, write about any special interests you have and your strengths. This helps people learn about you and things that you like / are good at, to help them tailor how they interact you. For example, I'm very detail focused, I know a lot about a certain topic, I can focus really intensely on specific topics.

##### Things that cause me distress or increase anxiety / Triggers:

In this section, write about any specific things that you struggle with, cause you distress, increases your anxiety or depletes your energy. What does this look like for you? How do these things impact you? For example, when people expect me to mask – like telling me to look at them and sit still when they're speaking – It makes me feel exhausted and irritable. I might shut down and stop listening because I don't have enough energy to be still, look at them, and listen to what they're saying properly.

### Anything else?

Use this section to tell others if there is anything else they should know about your or your support needs that you haven't already written down for example trauma, mental health etc.

Insert text here

We are always looking to improve our resources.

If you have any feedback on this form, please email us at [FLANCteam@outlook.com](mailto:FLANCteam@outlook.com)



# April 2025: Mediation Toolkit

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- Created in conjunction with Family Law in Partnership (FLiP)
- Screens the client for neurodiversity
- Identifies adjustments required to overcome barriers
- Agreement of process is signed by all parties

# Agreement of Process

|                                           |
|-------------------------------------------|
| Are there additional participation needs? |
|                                           |
|                                           |
|                                           |

|                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What adjustment(s) are needed to meet the additional participation needs? |
|                                                                           |
|                                                                           |
|                                                                           |

|                                                                                                               |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Is a roadmap needed at the outset of the NCDR process?                                                        |  |
| What is the timeline for this NCDR process?                                                                   |  |
| What is the roadmap to bring matters to a conclusion if this NCDR process fails? Eg Mediation to Arbitration? |  |

|                                                                                                 |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Sessions/Meetings/Hearings                                                                      |  |
| Location of [session] (in person address or remote online platform)                             |  |
| Is it important to see and review the session room in advance and seek appropriate adjustments? |  |
| Arrangements for arrival (e.g. separate room)                                                   |  |
| Set up of the room and arrangements for sitting or standing/moving around the space             |  |
| If online - arrangements for circulation of meeting joining instructions                        |  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Are separate, quiet spaces needed for breaks during sessions?                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| Length of session                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
| Who will be present at sessions (to include anyone that is needed to provide support)<br>How is such support to be funded?                                                                                                             |  |
| Will there be planned breaks during sessions and how long will these be for?                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| How can unplanned breaks be requested during sessions?                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| How frequently will sessions take place?                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
| When and how will any further appointment dates and times be agreed?                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| What other ground rules might be needed? Specifically, what ideas are not 'signed off' in the meeting but raised for consideration and then reflected on? If so, how much time will be needed and how are decisions then communicated? |  |
| Language and respect                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| Is there language/terms that should be avoided? (e.g., metaphors or 'turns of phrase').                                                                                                                                                |  |
| What language/terms should be used? (e.g. short sentences)                                                                                                                                                                             |  |

|                                                                                                                |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| How will participants indicate they would like words or concepts to be repeated or the pace to be slowed down? |  |
| What is the expectation about the timing for providing responses during the session?                           |  |

| Numerical concepts and financial information                                                                                                                       |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Is additional support needed and in place to help with completing form E or collating financial information                                                        |  |
| Are there additional requirements about how financial information will be presented during the session?                                                            |  |
| How will an asset schedule be presented? Are specific colours easier for assimilation?                                                                             |  |
| Written communication                                                                                                                                              |  |
| Are there specific requirements for written communication between sessions or during sessions? Email or could recordings (voice memos) be used?                    |  |
| What assistance is required for the preparation of written material? Will speech to text software be used to assist with the preparation of written communication? |  |

| Written material will be provided in [ ] font and with coloured background                                                                                                                                                       |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How can it be indicated that something is not understood?                                                                                                                                                                        |      |
| End of the NCDR process                                                                                                                                                                                                          |      |
| Are there requirements about the recording of the outcome of the Mediation or NCDR process?                                                                                                                                      |      |
| What are the next steps on the roadmap if there are outstanding issues at the end of an NCDR process?                                                                                                                            |      |
| Reviews and troubleshooting                                                                                                                                                                                                      |      |
| How can a review of this document be requested?                                                                                                                                                                                  |      |
| How should any concerns or issues about this process be raised?                                                                                                                                                                  |      |
| Signatures                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |      |
| <p><i>By signing this document you indicate that you agree with the contents of this document and agree to abide by the expectations set out in this document</i></p> <p><i>Mediators, Lawyers and Participants to sign.</i></p> |      |
| Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Date |
| Signature                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |      |
| Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Date |
| Signature                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |      |
| Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Date |
| Signature                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |      |

# Awareness Raising & Industry Collaboration

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- Presentations to thousands of professionals across the UK
- Training across a variety of sectors within family justice including for the judiciary, lawyers, mediators, Cafcass and social workers
- Podcasts
- Articles
- Published case reports
- Family Law and Resolution awards for Innovation
- Multiple workstreams
- Collaborations in the pipeline

# FLANC: The Art of the Possible

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