

Charter of Inclusion

At Fighting Words, we are on a journey to make our centres autism-friendly places to participate and to volunteer. We have put in place the following measures following a review of our practices supported by AsIAM, Ireland's National Autism Charity:

Sensory Environment

- At all our locations, we endeavour to ensure that all locations reduce the lighting and arrange seating to try to create a calm, creative environment.
- At all our locations, participants and volunteers have access to sensory boxes. These boxes contain simple tools to allow participants to curate their sensory experience such as ear plugs and hand fidgets.
- At all our locations, we endeavour to provide a quiet space for participants and volunteers.
- As we establish Fighting Words programmes in additional locations, we will work with partner organisations, e.g. libraries, theatres, cultural centres, to monitor the lighting, increase noise absorption and provide comfortable, quiet seating as far as possible.

Communication

- Key staff and location coordinators have been trained in Autism Understanding and Awareness.
- All volunteer tutors receive training in supporting autistic participants in creative writing.
- AsIAM Autism ID cards are accepted and the participant/volunteer who presents this card will qualify for access to a trained staff member, access to a quiet space or other accommodations as may be required.

Predictability & Control

- An information video for visiting our centres in Dublin and Wicklow are included on the Autism Friendly section of the Fighting Words website.
- A social story is available for visiting the Dublin centre.
- A visual guide will be available onsite and online which explains clearly the format of Fighting Words workshops.
- A social story is available explaining the volunteer recruitment process.
- A social story will be available for visiting the centres in Wicklow and Belfast by the end of 2020.
- Internal and external location photographs of every Fighting Words location can be viewed from our website. This section will be updated as new locations are established.
- Photographs of Fighting Words staff and all location coordinators will be available on the Fighting Words website by the end of 2020.

- Fighting Words will work with third level education institutions to provide work experience placements to autistic people. We will provide information in advance and arrange for visits and training in advance of the commencement of placements.

Judgement & Attitude

- All staff and location coordinators will be trained in Autism Understanding and Awareness
- We will use our locations and social media to promote autism acceptance amongst students, teachers, parents and the wider Fighting Words community and explain the importance of our autism-friendly initiative to our organisation.
- We are an assistance dog friendly organisation.