

CO-DESIGNING INCLUSIVE POLICE SPACES

Easy read report of findings and recommendations



WHO WE ARE

Research team

Alison Jobe

Helen Williams

Janelle Rabe

Durham University and University of Sunderland

WHO WE ARE

Co-researchers

Us Too

Us Too is a team of women with learning disabilities and autistic women with lived experience of domestic violence. The team uses its shared experience to train others and improve outcomes for all women. Us Too is supported by ARC England

DIVAS

The DIVAS Project is based at The Women's Centre Cornwall. The DIVAS are volunteers with learning disabilities and/or are autistic/neurodivergent. The DIVAS are all survivors of abuse and experts by experience. We work together with different communities, including national and local organisations to remove barriers, deliver training, develop collaborative working and support survivors of abuse.

**Lived experience co-researcher
referred by an ISVA**

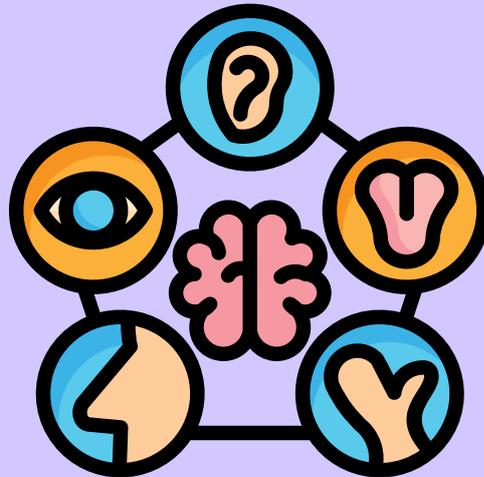
An elected councillor that speaks to survivors

WHAT WE WANTED TO FIND OUT

How do police spaces like interview rooms and waiting areas affect people with learning disabilities, and/or are autistic/ neurodivergent?



What can help make these spaces feel safer and more welcoming for people with different sensory needs?



What can we suggest to the police to make things better for victim-survivors with learning disabilities, and/or autistic/ neurodivergent victim-survivors?



WHAT WE DID



3 online workshops with 10 co-researchers with learning disabilities and/or are autistic/ neurodivergent women



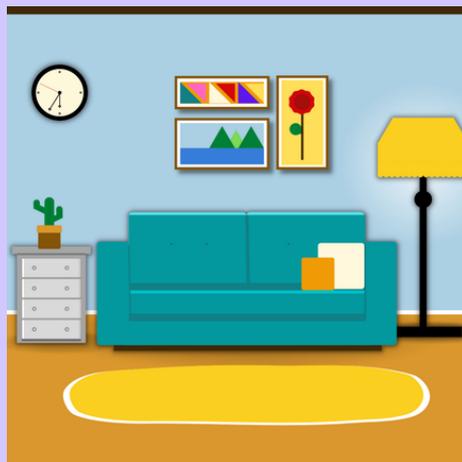
One group visited a interview police space (in a Sexual Assault Referral Centre) and gave some suggestions to make the space inclusive and accessible.

WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT

What topics were important to focus on



What makes a space feel “good” or “bad” (like light, sound, and room size)

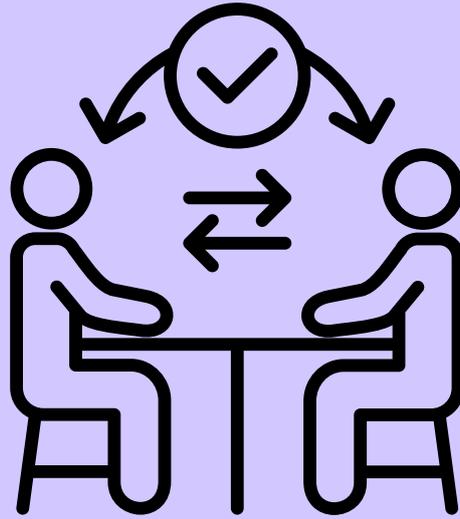


What a better space could look like through drawing



WHY WE DID IT

To help improve how police treat people with learning disabilities and/or autistic/neurodivergent people who report rape/sexual assault



To work with the police to make things better for others



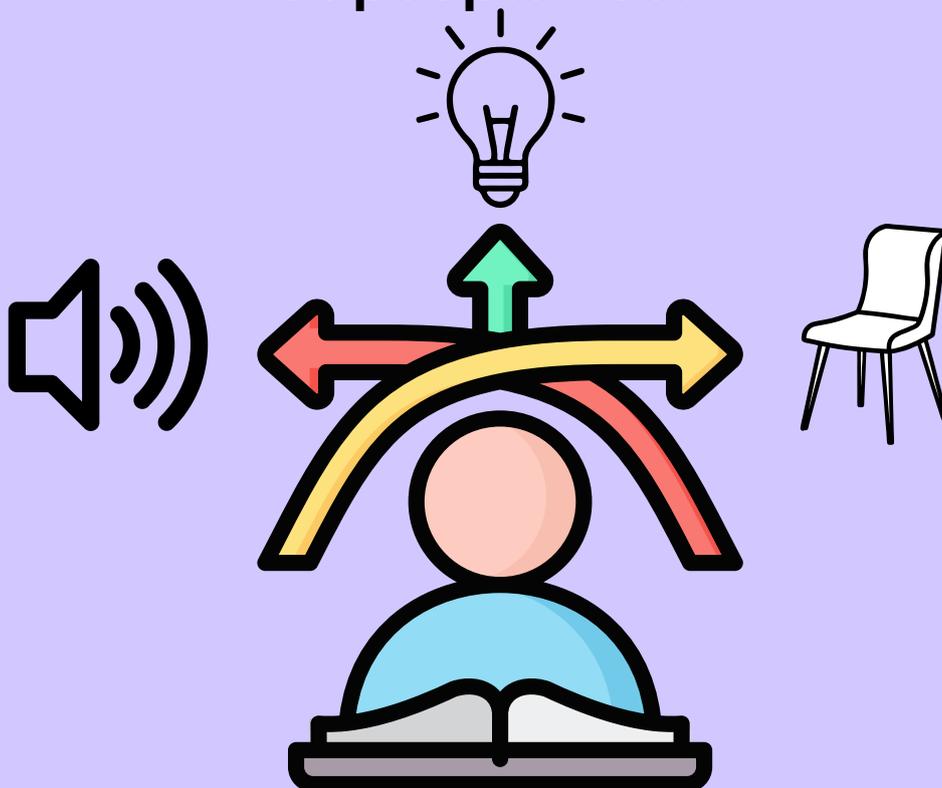
WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Everyone is different

What feels safe or comfortable for one person might feel stressful or wrong for someone else.



Spaces should allow changes based on what people need.



WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Ask people what they need

It helps when the police ask about needs before things start and when people arrive.



Some people might need hearing loops, interpreters, or a support person, which would need to be arranged before they arrive.



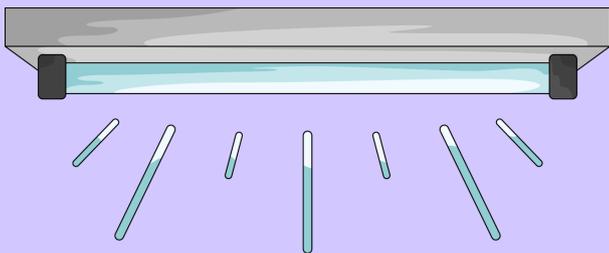
WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Spaces can make things harder

New places can feel confusing, especially when someone has trauma or sensory differences.



Strip lights, strong smells, and distracting noise can make it hard to focus or speak.



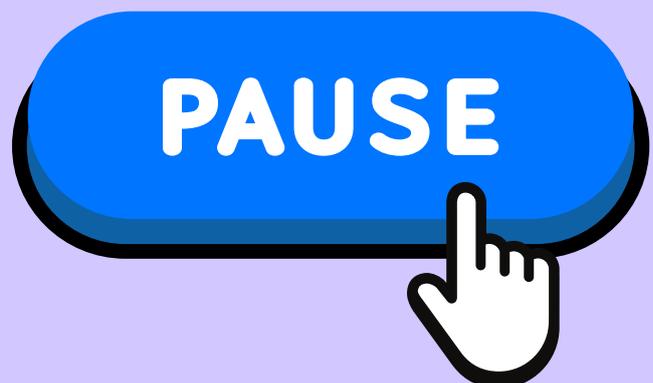
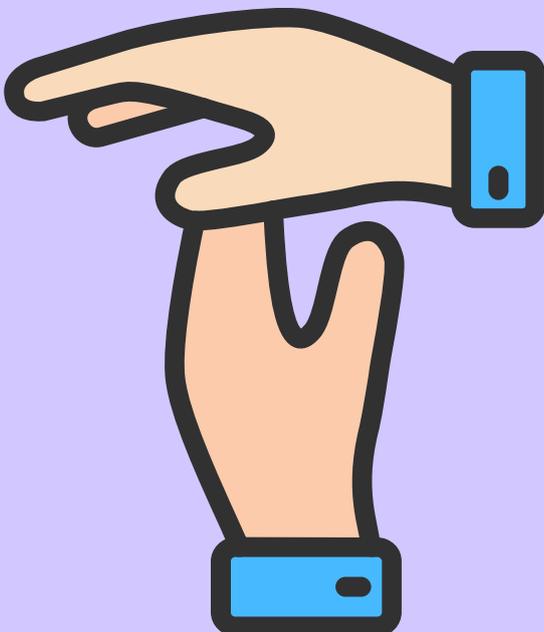
WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Spaces can make things harder

When too many things are affecting someone's senses, some might shut down and need support.



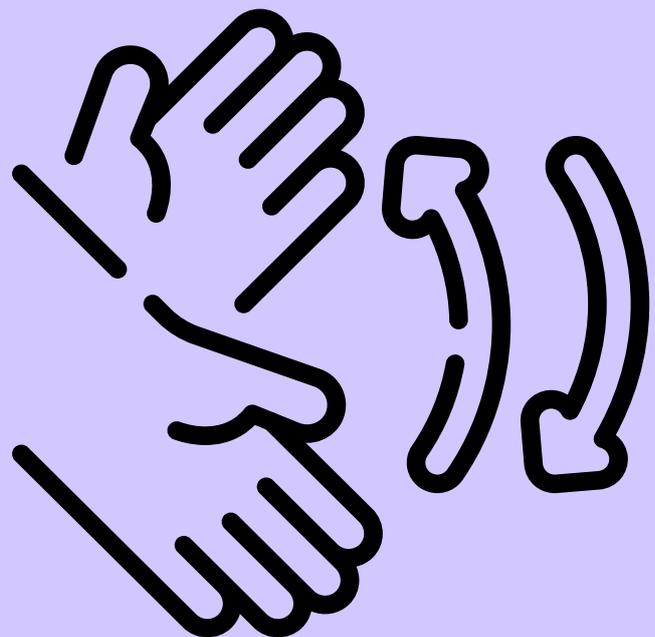
It helps to have options when they want to pause or stop.



WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Spaces can make things harder

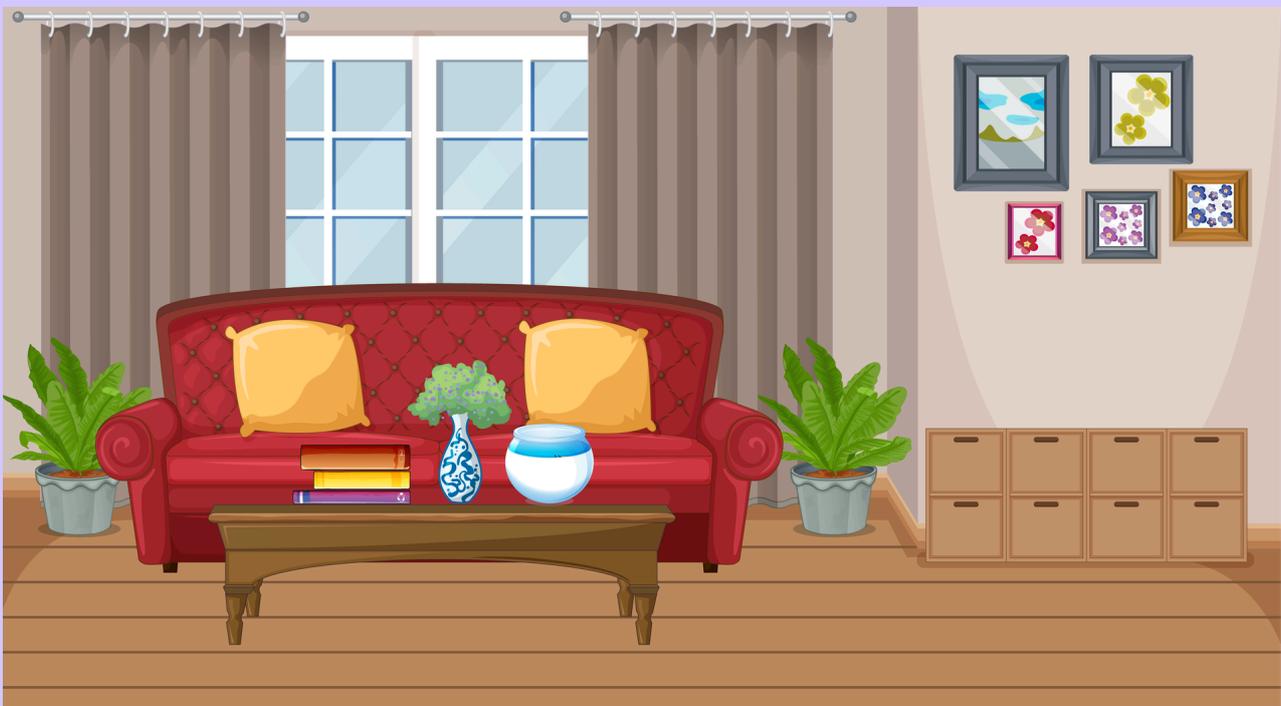
Some might need space to stim, pace around, or bring their own sensory items.



WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Make spaces more welcoming and comfortable

Many people said they wanted the space to feel like a living room: safe and comfortable.



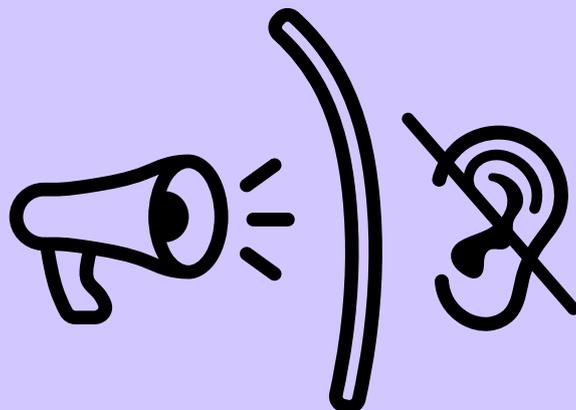
WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Make spaces more comfortable

Light: Let people change how bright it is



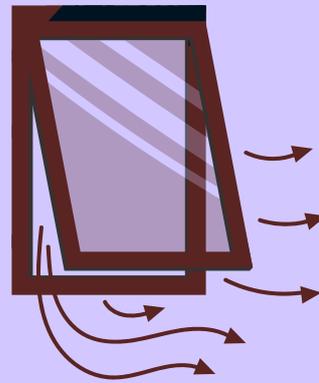
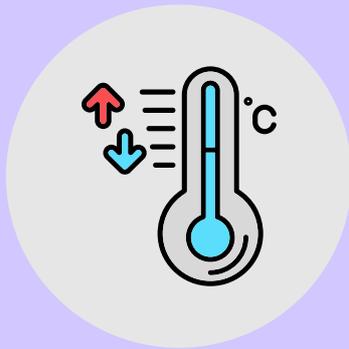
Sound: Make rooms quieter with soundproofing



WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Make spaces more comfortable

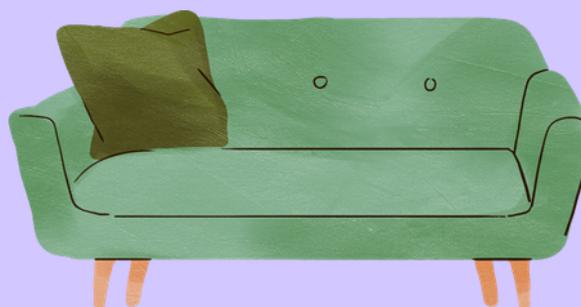
Temperature: Let people open windows or change how cool or warm it is



Smell: No strong smells



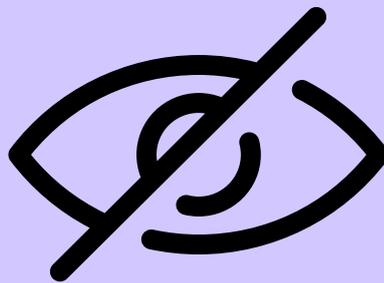
Furniture: Let people choose the chair they want to sit and make different seating options available



WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Make spaces more comfortable

Recording camera: put somewhere that is not easily seen



Design: nature paintings; plastic plants



WHAT WE FOUND OUT

Make waiting rooms more welcoming



Tea, coffee, biscuits



Water coolers



Charging ports



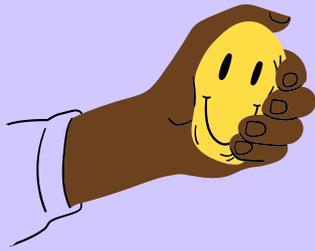
Reading options



Lessen waiting time

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

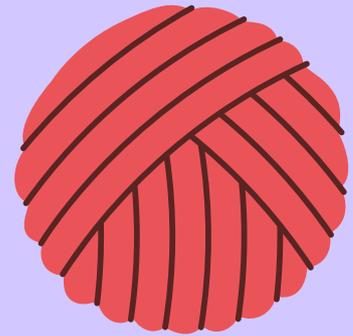
Offer different options for the sensory box



Stress balls



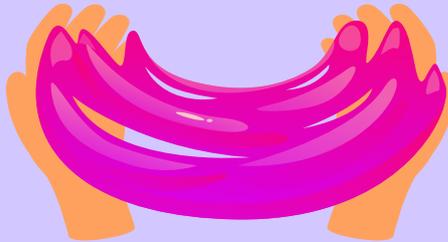
Bubbles



Soft and smooth items



Fidget and spinning items



Stretchy items
Clay



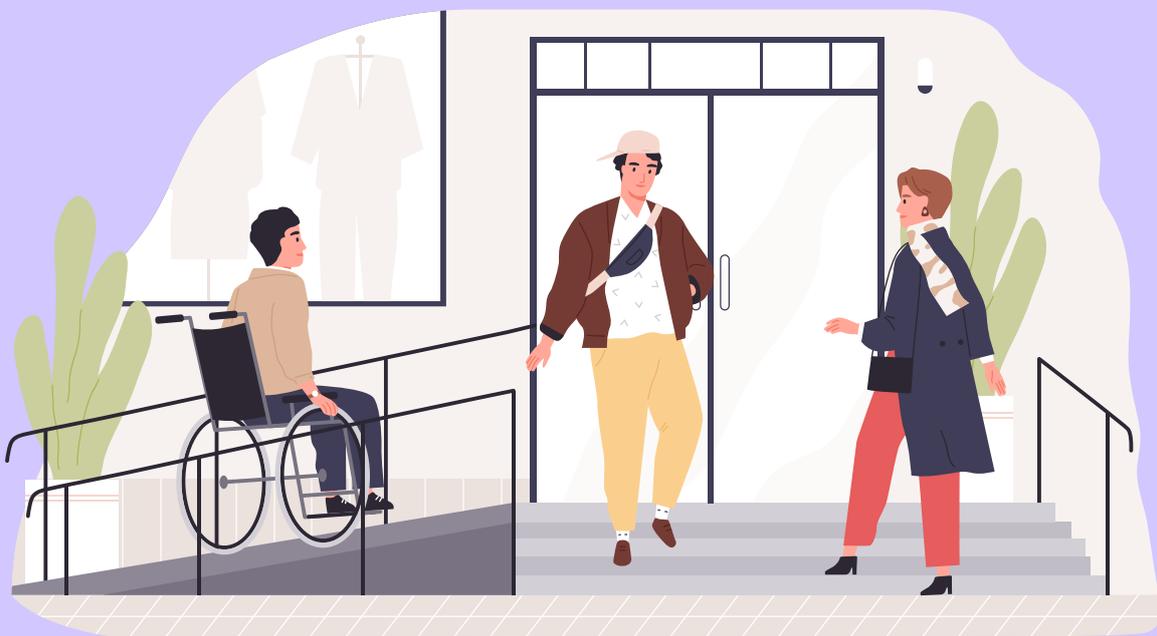
Spiky toys

WHAT WE THINK SHOULD HAPPEN NOW

Police should get training to understand trauma, learning disabilities, autism and neurodiversity.



Police spaces could be made more welcoming and able to change based on different needs



WHAT WE THINK SHOULD HAPPEN NOW

Police should be sensitive when someone might find it difficult to communicate when too much is happening to their senses.



Police should offer options and support to everyone, thinking of their different needs



WHAT WE THINK SHOULD HAPPEN NOW

Police should work with people with learning disabilities and/or autistic/ neurodivergent people to make spaces better for everyone.

