

Autism Partnership Board Meeting
11am-12:30pm 9th February 2021
Venue: Zoom

Attendees	Organisation/ Role
Valerie Fitch	Chair/ Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Debbie Hobbs	NAS Herefordshire
Mary Simpson	Healthwatch Herefordshire
John Gorman	Herefordshire Council
Paul Choppen	Herefordshire Council
Laura Ferguson	Herefordshire Council
Helen George	Herefordshire Council
Zoey Groves	Herefordshire Mind
Anna Wainwright	HVOSS
Michelle Baillon	Parent Carer / Crossroads
Julie Walker	Herefordshire Council

Apologies	
Jenny Dalloway	Herefordshire and Worcester CCG
Fiona Goodwin	Wye Valley NHS Trust
Lisa Masters	Clinical Psychiatrist
James Baker	Person on the Autistic Spectrum / Hereford Make
Alexa Heath	Herefordshire Council
Les Knight	Herefordshire Council

Introductions and Apologies

Valerie welcomed everyone and Paul listed the apologies.

Matters Arising

Autistic Experiences - James and Mary meeting has been postponed regarding James sharing his experience of what it's like to live with autism.

Social Convention - James, Josh and Valerie have had again to delay meeting again due to the latest lockdown.

Police Report - Valerie

Valerie said the police said they were very busy due to Covid and wouldn't be attending future Partnership Board meetings unless specifically needed. The Police have asked Valerie to report back to the Board on their behalf.

Valerie did run through a Hate Crime case concerning a 15 year old boy who had started to become abusive to others. This was, in part, down to being taken off some medication by his new psychiatrist against the wishes of his family. Police have referred the boy to social services.

Action 1 - Valerie, Laura and Alexia agreed to liaise about what action to take including referring the case to the safeguarding board and children services after the board meeting.

Valerie also highlighted that NAS has produced a guide to police officers and staff.

[Autism: A guide for police officers and staff](#)

Valerie also raised concerns around the lack of Autism Awareness training for police cadets since the coronavirus pandemic.

Left Stranded Report and Round up of results - Debbie

[Left stranded: The impact of coronavirus on autistic people and their families in the UK](#)

Debbie ran through the recommendations for England in the report. The report mentions that they will roll out a national public understanding campaign, as announced in World Autism Awareness Week 2019. World Autism Awareness Week this year runs from 29th March to 4th April.

Debbie will send more details on this in due course.

Debbie also mentioned she had been asked to mentor the Worcestershire NAS branch. Debbie mentioned they are currently developing their children's and young people's mental health pathway which will be reviewed by the NAS Policy Team in London.

The Policy team has also looked at Herefordshire's Children's Strategy and feel it needs improvement. Specifically regarding not meeting the NICE guidance of offering a first assessment within 3 months of referral.

Action 2 - Debbie will discuss this with Maria Hardy and members of the SEND Strategy.

Debbie is also going to start piloting the Understanding Autism training sessions with a few volunteers. If you would like to be involved in the zoom session please drop Debbie an email at NAS.Herefordshire@nas.org.uk

The Autism at Work seminar is on the 4/5th of March. This is open to any employer who employs a person on the autistic spectrum. For more details please see: <https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/employment/autism-work-programme>



RA Introduction
(3).pdf



1. RA Autism
Infographic.pdf

Reasonable Adjustments - Mary

Mary showed the Board a quick overview of the reasonable adjustment infographics she had created for different disabilities and mental health conditions. Mary has asked for feedback from various disability organisations about specific disabilities and conditions. Once the infographics have been finished and signed off by Public Health they will be put on WISH as part of MECC Plus training modules. The modules will help employers/organisations understand what adaptations they can make to make their service more inclusive.

Mary said Healthwatch wants to have conversations with senior staff within health and social care about how they can use the infographics with their staff, to raise awareness, use as training aids and how employers or services can imbed reasonable adjustments into everything they do.

Action 3 - Alexa said she could distribute the infographics to post 16 education and training providers and the education development team including Marches growth hub.

Action 4 - Anna said she could distribute the infographics through HVOSS members and the talk communities' hubs.

Action 5 - Laura and John agreed to organise a meeting with Paul Smith (Assistant Director of All age Commissioning, Herefordshire Council) and Public Health about the next steps around the Reasonable Adjustments MECC training and promotion of the Infographics.

A conversation ensued on how to obtain more accurate figures around the number of people who are autistic in Herefordshire. Several members raised the point that people will only declare themselves as autistic if they see a tangible benefit in doing so such as being able to get reasonable adjustment rather than being discriminated against.

Valerie asked Laura to find out the number of employees at the council who disclose themselves as autistic. During the meeting Laura said the diversity team clarified that they do not capture this data but could do so.

Action 6 - Laura will liaise with Harriet Yellin on this.

Debbie said the NAS has reported the CCG to the NAS Policy Team in London around using COVID as an excuse to turn away 12 individuals for the diagnostic pathway and referring them back to their GP. Debbie said the CCG will receive a letter shortly that this action is against the law. Anna mentioned that she had been struggling to get 4 of her clients referred onto the children's pathway with one even put on the ADHD pathway instead.

Valerie mentioned it was coming up to a year since the service had started and she had been unable to get a response from Rachael Johnson (The Family Psychologists) on the state of the service and what has happened during their first year of carrying out the service.

Action 7 - Valerie said she will contact the CCG for an update for the next meeting.

Debbie highlighted that the NAS now have "I am autistic" cards and lanyards available. [I am autistic card \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk)

Discussion of the training proposal on autism in Herefordshire Council and the Autism Offer for Social- Ruth

Ruth said she and Laura had met and had taken the feedback from the Board and submitted a paper for the DLT (Directorate and Leadership Teams) around doing an in-depth scoping exercise for the delivery of training and awareness raising for the practitioners. Ruth has stressed the legal obligation for this and a need to inform best practice in assessment and support planning. She has also asked DLT to come up with a structure to include what would be the priority areas of the workforce to target and what different levels of understanding and awareness will be needed. Ruth has yet to receive feedback from DLT. She said the timeframe was quite tight as it needs to have budget agreements in place to feed into wider directorate training plan for April 2021.

Ruth had asked that resources to be built into the training include Healthwatch and the NAS as well as input and contributions from lived in experiences from the Board or autistic community.

Ruth said her team would like to collaborate with the Autism Partnership Board around doing something for National Autism Week.

Next Meeting and subject - Tuesday April 13th 11am-12:30pm

Taskforce Group - Valerie has said she will send out an invite to the taskforce group to discuss what they think the Board should concentrate on in the next financial year.

Valerie asked the Board what they think the board should discuss at the next meeting.

Data capture - Laura suggested inviting a member of the diversity team to the next meeting to discuss the process in capturing data around the number of autistic individuals employed at the council.

All age Autism Strategy - Debbie mentioned that the All-age Autism Strategy is going through parliament which is an update of the Autism Act. The all party parliamentary group for autism is pushing it and it may be published before the April Autism Partnership Board meeting.

A.O.B

Anna mentioned that there was a lack of provision for the 16-25 year old autistic adults who had dropped out of college or training provider. She stressed these were individuals who were not going to move into the adult and social care pathway and that those who had had an education and health care plan had had it cease because they were not in education.

Alexa mentioned they could always reapply for an education and health care plan and there may be work streams in the children and young people SEND Strategy that could be used.

Action 8 - Alexia will liaise with Anna around what extra provision could be provided.

Debbie said the key worker bid for admission avoidance for mental health will be submitted tomorrow (10th February). The bid is focusing on autistic adults not having to go to imbed for level 4 beds. Debbie sits within the parent carer voice and they have given their feedback.

Actions

Valerie, Laura and Alexia	Action 1	To liaise around the Hate Crime Case
Debbie	Action 2	Debbie will discuss issues with the Children’s Pathway with Maria Hardy and members of the SEND Strategy
Alexia	Action 3	To distribute the infographics to post 16 education and training providers and the education development team including Marches growth hub.
	Action 8	To discuss with Anna what extra provision could be provided for 16-25 year olds who have dropped out of education or training.

Anna	Action 4	To distribute the infographics through HVOSS members and the talk communities' hubs.
Laura & John	Action 5	To organise a meeting with Paul Smith (Assistant Director of All age Commissioning, Herefordshire Council) and Public Health about the next steps around the Reasonable Adjustments MECC training and promotion of the Infographics.
Laura	Action 6	To liaise with the diversity team around capturing the data of autistic adults employed at the council.
Valerie	Action 7	To continue to push The Family Psychologists and/or the CCG for an update on the service provided for their first year of funding.