

Autism Partnership Meeting

25/04/23 at Noon – 2.00 p.m.

Venue: Mordiford Room, Plough Lane Offices & Zoom

Attendees

Name	Role
Valerie Fitch	Chair / Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Paul Choppen	Partnership Board Assistant, Herefordshire Council
Emma Jones	Social Prescriber, for the North & West Herefordshire Primary Care Network (N&W PCN)
Sally Wilson	Head of Care Commissioning, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Anna Swift	Children and Young People Autism Lead, (NHS HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE ICB - 18C)
Zoe Cotterell	CarerLinks Team Manager
Sylvia Nicholls	Hereford Disability United
Michelle Baillon	Social Prescriber, Taurus Healthcare
Helen George	Accommodation Support Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Roz Pither	Head of Additional Needs, Children and Young People
John Gorman	Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Debbie Hobbs	NAS Herefordshire and Worcestershire / Parent Carer Voice
Ruth Clark	Operational Support Manager, Emergency Department, Wye Valley NHS Trust
Julie Kerin	Social Worker, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Brigid McGrath	Brightfire CIC, Expert by Experience
Glen Crosier	Senior Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Mary Simpson	Healthwatch
Emma Kelly	Commissioning Officer, SEND Market Development and Engagement, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
James Baker	Hereford Make / Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Alexia Heath	Senior Advisor Post 16 Learning and Skills, Herefordshire Council
Bryn Brooks	Parent Carer
Judy Brooks	Parent Carer

Apologies

Name	Role
Rachel Oakley	Walsingham Support
Laura Ferguson	ADASS, Vice Chair
Zoe Backhouse	Specialist Autism Advisor, Autism West Midlands, Herefordshire and Worcestershire
Katie Eastaugh	Cart Shed
Christine Price	Healthwatch
Hilary Hall	Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing
Richard Clark	Senior Practitioner, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Bernadette Louise	Autism Champion

Name	Role
Richard Keble	ICB

Introductions and Apologies

Valerie welcomed everyone, apologised for the technical issues that had delayed the start of the meeting before going through the actions from the previous meeting.

Conflict of Interest

Valerie asked members if they had a conflict of interest to declare, which no one did.

Minutes and Actions from Previous Meeting – Valerie Fitch

Attendee	Action	Detail	Update
Michelle/Paul	1	To email the proposed questions for the Experience Questionnaire to Paul who will disseminate with board members and collate feedback. Michelle will then set up a Zoom meeting with members interested in collaborating further in the engagement process. Paul will also add the questionnaire to the Autism Partnership Webpage.	Completed.
Paul	2	Add information on the Autism West Midlands and Brighfire services to the Autism Partnership Webpage.	This is ongoing.
Glen	3	To double check the governance process for the strategy, noting it being down on the presentation as a record of officer decision rather than the more thorough time intensive key decision process.	Glen explained they are working through the governance process with regards to the Strategy and has been in contact with Democratic Services Management to discuss what is going on including consultations and questionnaire and have some options but will decide on the governance process once the engagement period is over.
Laura F	4	To email details of the Disabled Facilities Grants to Valerie.	Valerie will chase with Laura once she returns from her holiday.
Brigid, Paul	5	Brigid to send out the questionnaire on how autistic people would like to engage in peer support to Paul who will forward to board members.	Paul will chase with Brigid as he has not received anything from Brigid.

Police reports

Valerie mentioned that there have been two police reports since the last meeting involving the same individuals discussed at the last meeting. These incidents involved individuals with autism who struggle to make friends being befriended, abused and getting into trouble with the police unwittingly.

The two individuals concerned have been given advice along with their parents. One of the individuals has been advised to move home but is unwilling to do so.

Emergency Department: How we made Positive changes - Ruth Clarke (Operational Support Manager, Emergency Department, Wye Valley NHS Trust)

She explained that an Operational Support Manager helps improve the experience for patients and staff and make sure the department has all the resources and equipment needed.

Ruth has been working with Valerie since December on a project to improve the experience for patients who have autism and sensory needs. Valerie has run eight training sessions on how to spot a person with autism or sensory needs. So far 51 members of staff out of around 270 within the emergency department have received the training. Dates have been arranged for a further four training sessions across May and June.

Changes have been made include:

- An infinity icon that can be used on the IT system to show a person within the emergency departments that has identified as having autism so staff can make the adjustments needed.
- Sensory Boxes placed in the ED reception and paediatric area. Sensory boxes contain items such as ear defenders, squeeze balls and weighted blankets.
- Communication folders have been placed in the department. These folders have pictures of body maps, where it hurts images plus days of the week and various emotions. These folders can help patients that are none verbal communicate.
- Patient Information Folders have been re-laminated with anti-glare laminate sheets to reduce glare from the lighting.

Valerie and Ruth attended a Transformation Tuesday session earlier in the year. Transformation Tuesday is a weekly meeting where staff across the hospital and wider community come together to talk about new projects and new ideas to improve the experiences for patients and staff.

Plans are in place to develop the hospital passport for patients with autism and sensory need.

The ED also plans on making the most of the hospital webpage, including showcasing all the work they've done and their plans for the future and a link to the hospital passport.

They are also adapting a cubical in a quieter calmer area of the department to use as an area for patients with autism. A blossom like panel will be installed with a dimmer switch enabling staff to make the room as dark as the patient needs. They will also be removing unnecessary furniture, signage and equipment so the space will be free from clutter. Longer term they want to get funding for a portable sensory light box that can be used in instances where the sensory room is not available while also being able to use in a cubical in ED, transforming that room into a sensory room.

They have also had feedback from patients about their experience in ED. An example of this was after feedback from a patient signage around the sensory box was changed from “If you would like to make use of our sensory boxes please ask at reception” to “If you are autistic or have sensory needs please let us know” as people may not know what a sensory box is and what it contains.

Ruth said that the Emergency Department will continue to seek feedback from patients to improve the service.

Mary suggested that a reasonable adjustment to help people with autism or sensory needs feel less stressed when people are queuing at reception before getting triaged could be a ticketing system.

Roz to liaise with Ruth about creating some storyboards and also about having some children and parents as mystery shoppers who could then give feedback about their time in the hospital's emergency department.

Autism Strategy Update and Questionnaire Glen Crosier, Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council)

Glen went through the updated timeline of the Joint Autism Strategy, please see attached. Most of the priorities are being worked on jointly with Worcestershire however there are some base placed priorities:

- Priority 2 - Improving autistic children and young people's access to education - formally led by Les Knight now by Roz Pither, head of additional needs.
- Priority 4 - Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people - which is led by Richard Keble, Programme Lead for Learning Disability and Autism, ICB.
- Priority 6 - Improving support in the criminal and youth justice systems - which is led by the Police.
- Priority 7- Keeping safe - Glen himself is leading on this priority.

The consultation period is underway and feedback will be gathered from the online questionnaire and from engagement workshops/ focus groups. A taskforce group will then be established to help form the structure of the strategy including identifying actions for each priority between May and August. Final engagement and the sign off of the draft strategy aims to be completed by September /October 2023.

So far the questionnaire has received 44 responses in Herefordshire, which is far less than Worcestershire. Glen asked board members for ideas on how the questionnaire can be further promoted and shared. He also asked members for any data sets that could be useful, whether they would like to be involved in setting the actions for any of the priority areas and if there is anything missing from the plan.

James had feedback that the survey questions regarding employment that it didn't focus enough on having a career as opposed to a job, and that while both are linked they aren't the same. He also pointed out that the questions focussed too much on employment and not on self-employment. James also advised to share the questionnaire with the schools and colleges to get more feedback regarding education establishments.

If you have any feedback or groups that could be engaged with regarding the Strategy please contact Glen Crosier on Glen.Crosier@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you have any feedback on Priority 1: Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society, please contact Debbie Hobbs on debbie.hobbs@nas-volunteers.org.uk

Mary also offered her services to help groups fill in the questionnaire.

Bryn suggested sharing the questionnaire with GPs.

Debbie mentioned the questionnaire was on the agenda for the ICB Children and Young People Programme Board tomorrow to discuss with Dr Louise Bramble with regards to making sure GP's and health visitors are aware of it.

Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training-Debbie Hobbs

The train the trainer day on the 19th of April had been a shambles because the ICB forgot to tell the facilitators to be there at the training.

A meeting is scheduled later this afternoon (25th April) with the programme board to get an update on the state of play as the focus seems to be on Tier 2 when Tier 1 training has yet to be launched.

Action 1 - Debbie will send Valerie a more detailed update that can be shared with Board members.

Anna offered to come back to the next meeting with a more concrete update and timeframe for the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training from Richard Keble. Anna also asked for ideas from members on training for children and young people universal services around early identification and providing support during the early years of primary school age.

If members have any ideas for Anna please email her on anna.swift12@nhs.net or to Paul who will collate and forward to Anna.

Autism Trainer programme with the Anna Freud Centre and AT-Autism

Debbie also mentioned that the National Autism Trainer programme with the Anna Freud Centre and AT-Autism has launched. The two organisations have joined forces to develop a ground-breaking autism train the trainer programme for NHS England.

This national programme will be delivered to 4,800 trainers over three years, covering all age inpatient mental health hospitals; forensic psychiatric care; secure welfare, youth justice and special residential schools and colleges; and all age community settings, including CAMHs.

More information on the programme can be found at <https://www.annafreud.org/training/national-autism-trainer-programme/>

Action 2 - Mary asked what the abbreviation ICB was (Integrated Care Board). Valerie subsequently asked Paul to create a list of all the acronyms used during meetings.

ICS (Integrated Care System) Updates

Valerie gave apologies from Richard Keble and Bernadette Louise as they would usually report on the ICS.

GP Sensory assessments

Valerie said that 30% of GP surgeries have had the sensory awareness training and assessment. The GP Surgeries themselves have to ask for the training and to be assessed. Once assessed a report is sent back to the surgery who then get aid to make the relevant sensory needs changes. Valerie also does the awareness training with the GP surgeries.

Diagnostic Services for Children and Young People

Anna discussed how she came into position in October 2022 through a new post that had been created due to increase demand in children and young people being referred for an autism assessment and ADHD.

She has since done a lot of work listening to feedback from parents around access to the services. This has resulted in additional funding being given to the children community paediatric service. Additionally Anna has also created a recovery plan with them that started in April 2023 to reduce the waiting times for autism diagnosis down to within the NICE guidance by the autumn. Anna is also looking at how the ICS commission diagnostic testing for children and young people and will feedback on this to the board at a later date.

Adult Diagnostic Services

Valerie has also mentioned that the ICB have extended the contract with the Family Psychologists who run the diagnostic services in Herefordshire. Valerie mentioned that individuals were still being pushed to Kidderminster for a diagnosis even though they have the right to get diagnosed in Hereford at the Fred Bulmer's Centre.

Feedback from Partner Organizations

NAS

Debbie mentioned that she will attend the All Party Parliamentary Group for Autism on Tuesday 2nd May where there will be a debate on the diagnostic system for woman and girls.

Hereford Make

James mentioned that Hereford Make support a lot of neurodiverse blacksmithing students and that funding bodies wanted the individual to apply for funding and support rather than Hereford Make. This can be difficult as a lot of them struggle filling in paper work and once they have submitted the paperwork it can take between 3-8 months for their application to be processed by which point most of the year has gone by and they have missed out on most of the support required.

Hereford Make has tried to apply themselves but funding bodies don't believe the need is large enough, hence the reason why they want the individuals themselves to apply, with the wait times for claims and the paperwork putting individuals off applying for support.

Action 3 - Valerie asked Sally and Glen to contact James to discuss the issue further.

Hereford Disability United

Silvia has been engaged in some of the discussions regarding the renovation of the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery and relocation of the Library to Maylords. Silvia felt those that designed the changes to the museum had very little knowledge on autism and people with sensory needs. She had concerns about the potential sensory overload that an individual could face when going into the museum.

Silvia said there are online workshops taking place around the changes for people who would regularly use the Library and Museum as well as those who don't.

Silvia also asked if any members ever contribute to the Mental Health Partnership Board (MHPB) by invitation. Silvia suggested James may be interested in attending to help make them aware of some of the mental health issues people with autism face.

Action 4 - Silvia will send the details of the Mental Health Partnership along with the workshop around the changes to the library and museum, to Paul for onward distribution.

HealthWatch

Mary mentioned that Healthwatch is supporting the Community Partnership with bringing together the voluntary sector, the Council and health services.

The new Community Partnership website which includes all the presentations and information from the meetings can be found at <https://herefordshirecommunitypartnership.co.uk/>

The engagement workers at Healthwatch are still gathering feedback from the community, especially those with health inequalities about what's happening in social care and feeding back to those services.

Personal Experience

Bryn gave a personal experiences of the struggles himself and his wife Judy had faced getting support for his autistic daughter in Herefordshire over the past 20 years. This including the lack of understanding of autism shown by some within health and social care, along with the lack of specialist services.

A.O.B.

No one had any other business

Next Meeting

The current Zoom licence paid by the Council that Paul holds is due to expire on the 12 May. Valerie asked members whether they would be happy to trial the use of MS Teams for the next meeting which the board agreed to.

Action 5 - Paul to set up the next Autism Partnership Board meeting on MS Teams.

4th July 12:30am – 3:30pm in the Fownhope Room at Plough Lane Offices and by Microsoft Teams.

Actions

Attendee	Action	Detail
Debbie	1	To send Valerie an update on the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training
Paul	2	Valerie asked Paul to create an index of all the acronyms and abbreviations used during meetings.
Sally/Glen	3	Sally and Glen to contact James to discuss the difficulty Hereford Make is facing getting funding for support for students.

Silvia/Paul	4	Silvia to send the details of the Mental Health Partnership along with the workshop around the changes to the library and museum to Paul to disseminate to Board members.
Paul	5	To set up the next Autism Partnership Board meeting on MS Teams and invite members.