

## Autism Partnership Meeting

12/09/23 at 3pm-5pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams

### Attendees

Name	Role
Valerie Fitch	Chair / Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Paul Choppen	Partnership Board Assistant, Herefordshire Council
Laura Ferguson	ADASS, Vice Chair, Parent of Autistic Adult
Helen George	Accommodation Support Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Nick Gregory	CarerLinks
Lyn-Marie Norton	West Mercia Police
Emma Kelly	Commissioning Officer, SEND Market Development and Engagement, Community Wellbeing
Kay Mayes	Autism West Midlands
Mary Simpson	Healthwatch
Glen Crosier	Senior Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Katie Eastaugh	Cart Shed
Anna Swift	Children and Young People Autism Lead, (NHS HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE ICB - 18C)
John Gorman	Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Josh Swinson-Davis	Training Manager, Spectrum Days

### Apologies

Name	Role
Sally Wilson	Head of Care Commissioning, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Zoe Cotterell	CarerLinks Team Manager
Bernadette Louise	Autism Champion
Roz Pither	Head of Additional Needs, Children and Young People
Ryan Statton	Head of Communities , Halo Leisure
Michelle Baillon	Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Jem Jenkin Jones	Parent Carer
Debbie Hobbs	NAS, Parent Carer Voice

### Introductions and Apologies

Valerie welcomed everyone, before asking people to introduce themselves and if they had any conflicts of interests. Valerie then went through the actions from the previous meeting.

## Conflict of Interest

No one declared a conflict of interest.

## Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings – Valerie Fitch

### Actions from the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Meeting

Attendee	Action	Detail	Update
Roz Pither	1	To send details of the adult and children services steering group meetings to Anna Swift.	Unknown Paul to chase.
Sean Ladd, Brigid McGrath and Zoe Backhouse	2	To discuss potential referrals from the Star College to Brighfire and Autism West Midlands autism support services.	Unknown as Zoe, Brigid and Sean were not in attendance. Paul to chase.
Zoe Backhouse	3	Brigid asked for more marketing information from Zoe to promote the 1-1 autism support service.	Autism West Midlands have now taken over the running of the 1-1 support service from Brighfire.
Sally Wilson	4	Sally will discuss Bryn's daughter's case with operational colleagues so they link in with him.	Unknown - however Emma noted that people within the social care team were actively trying to help with Bryn's daughter's case. VF to chase Sally.

## Swimming Lesson for Autistic Children - Ryan Statton, Halo Leisure

Ryan had to give his apologies prior to the meeting.

**Action 1** - Paul will see if Ryan wants to re-arrange for another meeting.

## Police reports (Themes) Lyn Marie Norton (West Mercia) / Valerie Fitch

Lyn is the Children's Care Home Co-ordinator for Herefordshire. Lyn's role has developed from overseeing all of the registered residential children care homes to overseeing all of the looked after children in Herefordshire. She has also covered the role of Missing Person Prevention Officer intermittently over the past three years, which includes children and adults.

Lyn explained that when an individual has been found her team look at the circumstances including the place, with whom the individual was with, the individual's wellbeing and whether they have been a victim or perpetrator of crime.

In the case of children this is then taken up by the council's combined exploitation team and missing children team. This team will arrange an independent return home interview. This review will include investigating the push and pull factors that led to the child leaving home along with what

support needs to be put in place to help the individual and the family. A Push factor could be a fractious relationship with family members or poor home conditions. A pull factor could be an attraction to crime, a friend, an unsuitable or criminal relationship or a location.

If an individual goes missing and sets off triggers then a section 47 multi-agency strategy meeting is arranged to look into any safeguarding concerns. At this meeting recommendations from the return home interviews and additional support can be put in place to help prevent further episodes. The meeting can also be a place to discuss any escalation of safeguarding concerns and whether a joint investigation by the council and police is needed.

Lyn has not noticed a particular prevalence of autism in the numbers of individuals going missing. However currently the Compact system used to log missing incidents doesn't have a specific tick box for autism unlike other conditions.

**Action 2** - Lyn will raise the issue with the chair of the national missing focus group Chief Inspector Alice Reece Cooper.

Laura noted that this could link in with work being done on the Suicide Prevention Strategy and autistic individuals being at a higher risk of taking their own life.

Valerie noted that she has four reports this month.

1. A hate incident where an individual was watching a game of football and his behaviour was being misconstrued as odd and naughty by parents.
2. An incident involved an autistic individual with a learning disability. The individual was beaten up at a party for sitting down on the toilet to urinate resulting in others not being able to relieve themselves.
3. A neighbour dispute where an individual and their parents were shouted at and harassed.
4. The final involved an eight year-long neighbour dispute and hate incident which has escalated to where a family is going to have to move home.

Regarding the final report Laura suggested Valerie get the Council's Equality Team involved in the case. Harriet Yellin (Equality Compliance HLN Manager) details are Tel: 01432 260216 email: [hyellin@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hyellin@herefordshire.gov.uk)

### **Hereford Disability United - Mental Health - Silvia Nicholls**

Sylvia was unable to log in so Valerie mentioned her Better Mental Health, Less Mental Stress event.

The event is to take place on 21<sup>st</sup> September 10:30 -1:30pm at the Kindle Centre. Speakers include Matt Pierce the Director of Public Health in Herefordshire

Attendees include: the Chief Executive of H&W NHS Trust, Director of Partnership and Strategy H&W Health and Care NHS Trust, The Local Policing Commander, Cooperate Director of Community Wellbeing HC, GP Clinical Lead for Mental Health and a representative from the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

At the event they want to answer the question, "Where do we find the best help to support good mental health?"

Mary also wanted her concerns around individuals going to mental health services and being diagnosed with personality disorders when in fact they are just autistic to be raised at the event.

### **Joint Autism Strategy Update**

Glen mentioned that the engagement process should be complete by September or October, with leads then drafting the autism strategy ready for November. He then went through the upcoming engagement events and updates around each priority.

The ICB have agreed to provide resources to co-ordinate the digital co-production of the strategy with experts by experience. Anna Swift who is leading the digital co-production of the strategy asked members if they could provide local photographs or access to digital image banks.

**Action 3** - Paul and Valerie will ask members who can provide local photographs for the digital production of the autism strategy then forwarded to Anna.

**Action 4** - John will forward the contact details of Andie Jordon (Digital Engagement Manager, Corporate Services) to Anna.

### **Priority 4-Tackling Health and Care Inequalities for Autistic People**

Anna, alongside Bernadette Louise (Autism Champion, Integrated Care Board) have been undertaking various focus groups over the summer with carers, service users, and health professionals. Recently Anna has focused on getting feedback from families with children under the age of 18 as engagement from this cohort had been limited.

Anna would like to share this feedback with the Board at a future meeting.

Valerie and Glen would like to put on record their thanks to Worcestershire Autism Partnership Board and Worcs Council in helping develop the Joint Autism Strategy. They also thanked the Taskforce group for their feedback. Glen also thanked colleagues for their input in helping with the strategy.

Mary asked what length of time the Joint Autism Strategy would cover.

**Action 5** - Glen to confirm this after a discussion with the project group.

**Newsletters will be produced at regular intervals to update on progress with the strategy and help keep momentum.**

### **Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT) -Valerie Fitch / Josh Swinson-Davis**

Josh discussed how everyone doing the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training will undertake an e-learning course on the NHS ELFH (E-Learning for Healthcare) website.

After this then either doing the Tier 1 or Tier 2 training:

- a) Tier 1 comprises of a one hour webinar using video conferencing software where delegates will hear from a pair of experts by experience, one with a learning disability and one with autism.
- b) Tier 2 comprises of a full day face to face course which will be delivered by a facilitator and experts by experience again, one with a learning disability and one with autism.

In Herefordshire and Worcestershire Josh and one other trainer have delivered Train the Trainer courses to six other facilitators, four experts by experience with a learning disability and four experts by experience with autism. They hope to start the Tier 1 training on the 29<sup>th</sup> September with the Tier 2 training starting in early November.

Anna and Josh raised concerns with Board members around what reasonable adjustments could be made to help a experts by experience who have communication issues be involved in the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training. Josh and the other lead trainer Collin Hanley were looking at potentially running a specialist training programme for this cohort of individuals. Mary questioned whether the experts by experience support workers could support them to deliver the training. Katie suggested using the Hear Me Now app as an aid.

Clare Dauncey is the lead on Hear Me Now, her email is: [clare@maldaba.co.uk](mailto:clare@maldaba.co.uk)  
The Websites are: [www.hearmenowapp.com](http://www.hearmenowapp.com)  
and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84NfklpLszl&t=4s>

John and Valerie raised the need for the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training to be delivered to sensory impairment services, council social workers involved with autistic and/or learning disability and their managers and the police,

Valerie asked that if members know of any experts by experience who would like to be involved in delivering the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training to contact her and she will pass the details on to Ugo Jonathon (Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training Facilitator). Experts by experience can earn £15 per hour.

## **ICS updates - Valerie Fitch**

### **GP Sensory Assessments**

Progress in Herefordshire has been slow due to individuals being on their summer holidays. Valerie asked Board members for feedback on whether GP surgeries were making reasonable adjustments for autistic individuals.

Valerie praised the improvements to the wording within the booking form that patients can use to contact most GP surgeries about their medical needs.

**Action 6** - Anna said she needed to raise with her ICB and PCN colleagues the need for the booking form to be easily accessible on the surgeries websites.

## Feedback from Partner Organizations - All

### Cart Shed

The Cart Shed plan on further developing their autism programmes due to a high number of their users being autistic. Over 90% of their young Cart Shed users are either autistic or semi neurodivergent.

### Health Watch

Mary has just completed a pieces of work on Annual Health Checks and COVID vaccinations. She has met and reviewed 40 people with a learning disability, some of whom were also autistic.

### A.O.B.

Katie also raised the exponential increase to the waiting time to get requests for an autism diagnosis reviewed by the Multi-Disciplinary Team.

Anna was aware of this issue, she highlighted the struggles retaining clinicians who are able to undertake the assessments and services being commissioned on historic figures that doesn't reflect the current levels of need. The ICS is looking to re-design the diagnostic pathway and to increase the funding and staffing levels of the service. Katie noted that one potential solution would be for the ICS to work with community organisations whose staff are often qualified to carry out assessments.

Anna will come back to the Board in the future with the priorities for redesigning the diagnostic pathway.

### Next Meeting:

November 14th 11am-1pm, Fownhope Room, Plough Lane Offices / MS Teams

### Actions

Attendee	Action	Detail
Paul Choppin	1	Will see if Ryan wants to discuss swimming lesson for people with autism at the next board meeting.
Lyn-Marie Norton	2	To ask whether an autism tick box could be added to the Compact system to the chair of the National Missing Focus group.
Paul Choppin and Valerie Fitch	3	Will ask members who can provide local photographs for the digital production of the autism strategy then forwarded to Anna.
John Gorman	4	To forward the contact details of Andie Jordon (Digital Engagement Manager, Corporate Services) to Anna.
Glen Crosier	5	To confirm the length of time that the Joint Strategy will cover following a discussion with the project group.
Anna Swift	6	Anna said she needed to raise with her ICB and PCN colleagues the need for the appointment booking form to be easily accessible on the surgeries websites.