

Autism Partnership Meeting

14/11/23 at 11pm-1pm

Venue: Fownhope Room, Plough Lane Offices & Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Name	Role
Valerie Fitch	Chair/Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Paul Choppen	Partnership Board Assistant, Herefordshire Council
Laura Ferguson	ADASS WM, Vice Chair, Parent of Autistic Adult
John Burgess	Senior Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing
Jack Caine	Senior Programme Lead – Learning Disability and Autism NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire
John Gorman	Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
James Baker	Person on the Autistic Spectrum / Hereford Make
Helen George	Accommodation Support Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Glen Crosier	Senior Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Rebecca Antrim	Person on the Autistic Spectrum / Therapist
Mary Simpson	Healthwatch
Zoe Cottrell	Team Manager, Carer Links
Katie Eastaugh	Cart Shed
Zoe Bistow	Autism West Midlands
Sean Ladd	National Star College/Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Kay Mayes	Autism West Midlands
Alexia Heath	Post 16 Senior Advisor, Children and Young People, Herefordshire Council

Apologies

Name	Role
Sally Wilson	Head of Care Commissioning, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Emma Kelly	Commissioning Officer, SEND Market Development and Engagement, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Brigid McGrath	Brightfire CIC
Bernadette Louise	Autism Champion
Sylvia Nicholls	HDU – Hereford Disability United
Debbie Hobbs	Parent Carer Voice
Ryan Statton	Head of Communities, Halo Leisure
Chris Dunlop	Carer Adviser, Carer Links
Nick Gregory	CarerLinks

Introductions and Apologies

Valerie welcomed everyone asked for introductions and if there were 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 4th 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 Brightfire and Autism West Midlands autism support services.	Discussion on this still planned. Both have struggled to organise a suitable date.
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 Brightfire.
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 – done.

Actions from the 12th September 2023 Meeting

Attendee	Action	Detail	
Paul Choppin	1	Will see if Ryan wants to discuss swimming lesson for people with autism at the next board meeting.	Ryan was unable to attend today's meeting, however aims to attend on the 16 th January
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.	Lyn has retired, so Valerie will chase this.
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.	Complete
John Gorman	4	To forward the contact details of Andie Jordon (Digital Engagement Manager, Corporate Services) to Anna.	Complete

Glen Crosier	5	To confirm the length of time that the Joint Strategy will cover following a discussion with the project group.	This was pushed to the Joint Autism Strategy sign off Meeting on the 28 th November where it was agreed that the Strategy would last 5 years
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.	Anna was absent, Jack Caine said he would look into this.

Carers Strategy John Burgess

John gave an update on the strategy, please see presentation attached.

Points of note from John's presentation noted during his presentation.

1. Under the assessment and support slide that currently the needs of both the carer and cared for person get assessed together. It is hoped both the carer and cared for person will have individual assessments in the future.
2. While discussing Information and Support that there is work being done to re-commission the Talk Community Website to make it more accessible. Social prescribers will be issued with fridge sheets that they will be able to give out to carers that contain useful information.
3. GP's will have to undertake more work identifying and working with carers and John will attend a training workshop on this within the next few weeks.
4. The development of a Carers Partnership Board in Herefordshire and to improve the Herefordshire membership of the Carers reference group that runs across both counties.

After the presentation John took questions and points raised from Board members.

Kate raised an issue around how risk is accounted for in the Carers Strategy, in particular how the contribution of the voluntary sector has been undervalued and how financial pressures can impact on the range of services providers can offer and individuals can access.

Laura suggested this was an opportunity for the Carers Strategy to set out its stool on the value of the voluntary sector including unpaid carers.

Laura and John both mentioned that the DHSC (Department of Health and Social Care) has set aside £42.6 million through the Accelerating Reform Fund. The funding will focus on trialling and expanding new approaches to providing care and improving services for unpaid carers.

A meeting has been set up with Michelle Cook the lead in the ICB and Sarah Rothwell the Carers lead in Worcestershire.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/innovation-projects-in-adult-social-care-receive-426m-boost>

<https://www.carersuk.org/media/2d51e03c/valuing-carers-report.pdf>

Hereford Disability United-Mental Health Meeting – Sylvia Nicholls

Sylvia was unable to attend so Valerie read out a brief overview of the event held on the 21st September 2023 which aimed to highlight and address the issues of living with mental health.

Please see attached document. They aim to run a similar event early in 2024 to consider mental health issues for children and those up to 30 years.

Laura suggested that at their next meeting a speaker should be found to speak about autism and mental health.

If you have any more queries or recommendations for the next event please email Sylvia Nicholls on: sylvia.nicholls@btinternet.com

Police reports – Valerie Fitch

There were 3 hate crimes since the last APB meeting.

1. A young lady felt she had been victim of a hate crime from her neighbour. Due to then spitting at this neighbour he has since reported her to the police too. The lady lost her faith in the police system and gave up getting justice, the case has been closed.
2. The second case involves the harassment by other youths of a young child who enjoys riding his scooter and playing at the skate park in Ledbury. The child's parents spoke to the group and took names which were incorrect and no record of them was found at the local school. No footage of the incident was captured so the police have been unable to do any ID checks. The parents aim to take the child to the skate park at a different time to avoid the harassment.
3. An autistic mum and son have had issues with their neighbours allegedly due to the son having a learning disability and being scared by the neighbour's child. The incident has been reported to the police who have spoken to the individuals concerned.

If anyone has any concerns about a hate crime they can email Valerie at: valerie.fitch@btinternet.com

All Age Joint Autism Strategy Update - Glen Crosier

The Strategy has been drafted and over the next week project leads will meet to make any final amendments. The Strategy will then go to both Worcestershire's and Herefordshire's Autism Partnership Boards to be signed off by the end of the month.

The Design group will then meet in December to draw up the strategy. Meanwhile both councils and the ICB will take the Strategy through their governance processes. Glen will be meeting next week with Hayley Doyle (Service Director All Age Commissioning) to outline the governance timeline with senior leaders and councillors, with the aim of having the Strategy signed off, endorsed and adopted within this financial year.

A joint meeting between Herefordshire's and Worcestershire's Autism Partnership Board's to sign off the Strategy has been scheduled for the 22nd of November at 12:30pm. Chairs of both APB's are currently making amendments and aim to share the draft strategy document to their respective members prior to this meeting.

Action 1 - Paul will forward the invite to this meeting to members.

Due to the short notice the joint meeting board members agreed that Herefordshire's APB would should have its own meeting to sign off the Strategy.

Action 2 - Valerie, Paul and John will arrange a meeting for Herefordshire's APB members to sign off the Joint Autism Strategy.

Update 28/11/23 - This meeting happened on the 28th of November. Please see attached for notes from that meeting.

It was also agreed at the meeting that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Autism Strategy would run for 5 years.

Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT) – Valerie Fitch

Valerie informed the Board that she has resigned as a trainer for Tier 2 of the OMMT. The delivery of the Tier 2 training has been delayed with issues in the management of the training, issues finding suitable venues and changes to the experts by experience trainer's subsidies.

Regarding Tier 1 training James also noted that the trainers had found differences between the script and the e-learning. They are working with Ugo Jonathan (ICS Academy Project Manager – OMMT) to bring attention to this.

Valerie and James raised concerns around the police not currently being considered for the training and the amount of time it will take to train NHS and Council staff and whether professionals will undertake training.

ICS updates - Jack Caine (Programme Lead for LD and Autism, Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB)

Jack introduced himself and went through his remit for the next six months included:

- Annual Health Checks (national target 75% take up, currently 85% in H&W)
- Making sure Health Action Plans are of good quality
- Improving the take up of Annual Health Checks in Young People (14-17 year olds)
- LeDeR Reviews
- Sensory Friendly Environments in GP surgeries and Hospitals
- Commissioning LD Health Services in the Community (including Epilepsy specialist nurse)
- Re Commissioning and Re-Specking the ADHD Assessment Pathway for Adults and how it will link with the Neurodiversity Assessment Pathway

Action 3 - Alexia recommended Jack link up with herself, Maria, Louise and Anna regarding the work relating to Preparing for Adulthood and the Herefordshire SEND Strategy.

Action 4 - Mary recommended Jack look at some of the engagement work Healthwatch had done in collaboration with Taurus on Annual Health Checks and Vaccination Take up. Mary also highlighted work Healthwatch is doing regrading ADHD. John also recommended Jack look at the Reasonable Adjustments work Healthwatch had done.

Autism Diagnostic Pathway

Valerie raised concerns about the long waiting lists for getting an autism diagnosis in Herefordshire still and as a consequence individuals traveling to other counties to seek a diagnosis.

James also raised concerns around the provision in the diagnosis process for individuals that mask their autism when communicating with unfamiliar people in unfamiliar settings.

Action 5 - Laura suggested having a conversation with James on this point to see what could be done by ADASS to highlight his concerns.

Sensory Friendly Environments

Valerie and Rebecca are planning on going back to all of the GP Surgeries that have been assessed and ask them to show what changes they have made to make their surgery more inclusive. HMG (Hereford Medical Group) will be the first to have a visit, in December, and Jack will attend with Valerie so that he can meet the Managing Partner.

Zoe B described that autistic individuals with communication needs have struggled with the new systems that's in place to get an appointment. Zoe is raised concerns on the lack of specialist mental health support for individuals with autism.

Katie raised concerns that individuals with complex needs were increasingly needing support by the voluntary sector due to the lack of financial support.

Feedback from Partner Organizations

- a) **Carers Links** - Zoe Cottrell mentioned the Carers Forum on the 22nd November from 2-4pm at the Fred Bulmer's Centre and via Microsoft Teams.

Action 6 - Paul will forward the details of the Carer Forum to Board members.

- b) **Star College** -Sean mentioned that the college had been using the Hear Me Now service to help solve some of the issues their students had been having in communicating their needs by capturing and recording information using the app.
- c) **Cart Shed** - Katie mentioned that the Being Autistic Programme for individuals 16+ starts in December. In January in collaboration with Adult Community Learning Team a pilot programme will be running around Community Learning on Autism.
- d) **Autism West Midlands** - have had a bigger uptake than expected of people accessing the service from Herefordshire. They have secured funding from the Fred Bulmer Trust to deliver a teen (11-17 year olds) Autism Confident Programme in January. They will also will in the next month be running a peer lead group on autism and LGBTQ+ and a peer lead autism social group.

A.O.B

- a) **GDPR** - Valerie asked Board members if they had any objections to her having access to attendees email addresses. No one raised any objections. Valerie will, therefore, send round an e-Mail to Board members via Paul to formally clarify this.

Action 7 - Paul will collate responses from board members who give consent for their email address to be shared with Valerie.

- b) **Kaleidoscope Foundation** – James made the Board aware of this foundation. They offer training, peer support and grants to disabled people would like to be employed or start their own business. Their link is shown below.

<https://thekaleidoscopefoundation.org/>

Next Meeting:

January 16th 12:30pm-2:30pm, Mordiford Room, Plough Lane Offices / MS Teams

Actions

Attendee	Action	Detail
Paul Choppen	1	Paul will forward the invite to this meeting to members, the All Ages Joint Autism Strategy meeting on 22 nd November.
Valerie Fitch/Paul Choppen/John Gorman	2	Valerie, Paul and John will arrange a meeting for Herefordshire's APB members to sign off the Joint Autism Strategy.
Alexia Heath / Jack Caine	3	Alexia to contact Jack to link up with herself, Maria, Louise and Anna Swift regarding the work relating to Preparing for Adulthood and the Herefordshire SEND Strategy.
Mary Simpson	4	Mary to contact Jack to look at some of the engagement work Healthwatch had on Annual Health Checks, Vaccination Take up, ADHD and Reasonable Adjustments.
Laura Ferguson / James Baker	5	Laura will contact James on what measures could be put in place to prevent autistic individuals feeling uncomfortable and masking their autism during the diagnostic assessment process.
Paul Choppen	6	To forward the details of the 22 nd November Carer Forum to Board members.
Paul Choppen	7	To collate the responses from Board members regarding GDPR consent for their e-Mail address to be shared with Valerie.