

Autism Partnership Meeting

16th January 12 pm – 2 pm

Venue: Mordiford Room, Plough Lane Offices & Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Name	Role
Valerie Fitch	Chair/Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Paul Choppen	Partnership Board Assistant, Herefordshire Council
Hilary Jones	Head of Additional Needs, Children and Young People, Herefordshire Council
Emma Jones	Social Prescriber for the North & West Herefordshire Primary Care Network (N&W PCN)
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
Alex Fitzpatrick	Cart Shed
Debbie Hobbs	Parent Carer Voice /Local NAS
Sylvia Nicholls	HDU – Hereford Disability United
Rachel Oakley	Walsingham Support
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
Laura Ferguson	ADASS WM, Vice Chair, Parent of Autistic Adult
John Burgess	Senior Commissioning Officer, Community Wellbeing
Mary Simpson	Healthwatch
Sean Ladd	National Star College/Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Zoe Cottrell	Team Manager, CarerLinks
Katie Eastaugh	Cart Shed
Josh Swinson-Davis	Spectrum Days
Bernadette Louise	Autism Champion
Roz Pither	Head of Additional Needs, Children and Young People, Herefordshire Council
Julie Kerin	Social Worker, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council
Ryan Statton	Head of Communities, Halo Leisure
Nick Gregory	CarerLinks
Hilary Hall	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing, Community Wellbeing, Herefordshire Council

Introductions and Apologies

Valerie welcomed everyone and asked for introductions.

Conflict of Interest

No one declared a conflict of interest.

Minutes and Actions from Previous Meetings – Valerie Fitch

Valerie then went through the actions from the previous meetings.

Outstanding 2023 Meeting Actions

Attendee	Action	Detail	Update
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 12 September 2023 meeting, Originally re-arranged for 16 th January, now scheduled for April 23 rd 2024 Meeting
Valerie Fitch	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, Valerie will chase this. The new lead on hate crimes is called PC Marie Bridgwater.
Anna Swift	3	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 passed this over to Valerie to chase. Valerie has e-Mailed Anna.

Joint All Ages Autism Strategy - Glen Crosier, Jack Caine

The final version of the strategy is going through the design process. Glen is in the process of arranging the official approval steps and implementation stages that the strategy has to go through to get to the 28th of March Cabinet meeting to be indorsed and approved.

The ICB (Integrated Care Board) will have a similar sign off process for the strategy. The strategy has to be approved by both Herefordshire's and Worcestershire's Cabinets, both counties Health and Wellbeing Boards, the ICB's Autism and Learning Disability Partnership Board for approval and the Mental Health Collaborative for information purposes.

Once the strategy is approved a steering group will oversee the implementation of all strands of the strategy. The plan of how this will operate is still to be formalised. The health strand of this will report to the ICB Learning Disability and Autism Programme Board which meets quarterly.

Action 1 - Valerie asked Glen to check that the changes requested to the Autism Strategy at the strategy sign off meeting on the 28th of November have been made.

The Autism Champion Bernadette Louise will be doing a presentation on the Joint All Ages Autism Strategy for Worcestershire County Council as part of the governance process in late March. Valerie queried whether a similar presentation will be required as part of the Herefordshire governance process.

Action 2 - Glen will have a discussion with Haley Doyle and other colleagues about this and get back to Valerie.

Joint Children's Autism and ADHD Diagnosis Pathway – Anna Swift

A key part of the health strand of the Joint All Ages Autism Strategy is the re-organisation and re-commissioning of the Children's Diagnostic Pathway. The plan is to have a simpler joint children's diagnostic pathway across both counties that covers autism and ADHD diagnosis.

Anna Swift who has led work around the health strand is planning on putting together groups around the autism assessment and pathway; a diagnostic group; and, a pre- and post-support group.

Anyone interested in being part of these groups please let Jack know and he will inform Anna. Jack's email address is: jack.caine@nhs.net

Police Reports - Valerie Fitch

No reports had been collated from the police in time to share at this meeting due to staff turnover. PC Marie Bridgwater has been employed to be our contact in future and Valerie will make contact to see if she can attend our meetings in future.

Action 3 – Valerie to make contact with PC Marie Bridgwater to see if she can attend our meetings in future and to ensure Hate Crimes against autistic people are provided in a timely manner if she cannot attend.

Carers Strategy - John Gorman

The Herefordshire only strategy is currently in draft. It will go through the governance process between May and June 2024.

Once the strategy is approved a Carer's Partnership Board will be set up.

The Carers Strategy encompasses a wide range of people with different needs, therefore, a decision was made to not show favouritism to any particular cohort. John Burgess is currently working on an over-arching statement that will cover a wide range of issues carers and those receiving care face in Herefordshire.

If you would like to highlight specific issues autistic carers and autistic individuals face for inclusion in this statement please email John.Gorman@herefordshire.gov.uk

Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training - Debbie Hobbs

Valerie read out an update from Josh Swinson-Davis as he was unable to attend our meeting.

Debbie highlighted that the governance has changed around experts by experience which means that parents of autistic children or young adults can now become training facilitators.

The code of practice has also been updated with new frameworks in place. Tier 1 and Tier 2 training was been re-written.

The Police won't be invited to do the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training. However, they will be invited to complete the National Autism Trainer Award with the Anna Freud Foundation, which focuses more on the legislation side.

If you are interested in getting involved in the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training please email ugo.jonathan@nhs.net or Debbie Hobbs admin@pcvherefordshire.com. The minimum age to deliver the training as an expert by experience is 19.

It is advised that interested parties in doing the training book up through ICB Academy quickly. Lots of interest in the training is coming from out of county including Norfolk. Debbie doing training not just in Herefordshire and Worcestershire but also Gloucestershire. There are no training spaces for Tier 2 until the end of May.

The ICS Academy website has figures on the number of people doing the training. [ICS Academy Exchange: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System \(hwics.org.uk\)](http://hwics.org.uk)

ICB - Updates - Jack Caine

a) Reasonable Adjustments Digital Flag Project

This project which is in the NHS long term plan is about working with health and social care providers to identify and flag people who have a learning disability and/or autism. Then provide these individuals with the reasonable adjustments that they need.

With different health providers and NHS Trusts using different systems this project is a logistically challenging project. The aim is for this project to start in April.

b) Annual Health Checks

A National roll out of annual health checks for autistic individuals is underway. In terms of uptake for annual health checks for people with learning disabilities it is around 60%. We are on track to match uptake figures from last year that are some of the best in the country.

c) Sensory Friendly Environments

The project is approaching the end of its second year. Reviews of the changes GP Surgeries have made is currently taking place. Hereford Medical Group (HMG) and Ledbury Surgery have been planned.

Valerie highlighted issues with Hereford Medical Group and the slowness of making the agreed improvements. Valerie and Jack will be revisiting them in February to see if they have finally made the agreed changes.

For Herefordshire and Worcestershire thirty-three reports have been logged. Confirmed introductory meetings have been scheduled with Whiteacres Surgery, Kington Surgery and Worcestershire Royal Hospital. Meetings are currently in the process of being confirmed with Davenal House Surgery, New Road Surgery, Haresfield Surgery, Churchfields Surgery and Nunwell Surgery.

Meetings have taken place with Lancashire and Cumbria ICB regarding the project and there are plans to meet with Warwickshire Council.

Feedback from Partner Organisations

- **Hereford Disability United - Silvia Nicholls**

Mental Health Event - 24th of January, Kindle Centre, Hereford. The event will relate to children and people below 30 with mental health issues and the services that are available for them. Speakers from organisations such as Herefordshire Young Carers Club, Mind, CLD Trust, Marches Counselling Service, Brightfire CIC and Travelers Times will be there.

- **Local NAS - Debbie Hobbs**

Debbie informed the group that the branch is no longer working from Fred Bulmer's Centre. Five new volunteers are currently being trained. More families and young people are coming through without an autism diagnosis, exacerbated by the growing waiting list for the diagnosis pathway.

For Autism Acceptance week the local NAS is running an autism spectrum walk.

- **Parent Carer Voice - Debbie Hobbs**

Debbie has met three families that have had their autism diagnosis being unaccepted by the authorities due to the individuals having a private diagnosis assessment that were not NICE compliant.

- **Cart Shed - Alex Fitzpatrick**

Is looking into securing funding to enable it to offer its Being Autistic programme to a younger age group.

- **Hereford Make - James Baker**

Hopes to do blacksmithing with the Cart Shed and other organisations such as schools in the future by using portable forges.

Hereford Make has also secured Awards for All funding.

Hereford Make was also getting individuals including students partaking in their service that have unmet housing and social care needs and may lack capacity to seek these assessments. James would like to find out if a member of ART (Advice Referral Team) could visit Hereford Make semi regularly to help these individuals get their needs assessed.

Action 4 - John will find an ART contact for James to liaise with.

Action 5 - James and Helen will also have a conversation about who would be the best person to help with the individuals' accommodation needs.

A.O.B

- a) **Herefordshire and Worcestershire Youth Justice Forum**

Hilary Jones has accepted an invitation to be part of the Forum and will bring her experience working in SEN to this forum (Special Educational Needs). Hilary also highlighted that Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College has a free course on Autism. Level 2, See the link for more information. <https://hlnc.ac.uk/hlnc-courses/autism-level-2-certificate/>

b) Joint All Ages Autism Strategy

As part of the Strategy governance, Valerie Fitch will ask leads of the seven priorities within the Autism Strategy will be invited to future meetings to update the Board on progress for the seven priority areas.

c) Digital Switch Over

John raised whether the autistic public were aware that analogue phones were being switched to digital between March 2024 and 2025.

Helen George asked if anyone had any concerns about the switch over to email her, she will then forward these concerns over to Holly Gittings (Technology Enabled Living Innovation Lead).

Next Meeting

Requested Agenda Items

- **Local Authority Schools and the Parent Carer Forum, Partnerships for Inclusion for Neurodiversity in Schools**

Action 6 - Debbie asked Paul to add this as an agenda item the next meeting. Debbie also asked Paul to contact Anna Swift for information that can be sent out to APB members.

- **Housing** - Valerie also suggested this be added to the next meeting's agenda which members agreed with.

Action 7 - Paul to add Housing to the agenda for the next APB Meeting

Date of next Meeting

April 23rd 10:30pm -12:30pm, Mordiford Room, Plough Lane Offices/MS Teams

Actions

Attendee	Action	Detail	Update
Glen Crosier	Action 1	To have a discussion with Haley Doyle and other colleagues about whether a presentation on the Joint All Ages Autism Strategy is needed when it goes to Cabinet.	
Glen Crosier	Action 2	Check that the changes requested to the Autism Strategy at the strategy sign off meeting on the 28th of November have been made.	
Valerie Fitch	Action 3	Valerie to liaise with PC Marie Bridgwater to obtain Hate Crime information against autistic people and also to see if she would attend our meetings in future.	.
John Gorman	Action 4	To find an ART contact (Advice Referral Team) for James to liaise regarding helping at Hereford Make having their needs assessed.	20/ 2/24 John confirmed that due to a lack of staff, ART are unable to offer such a service

Attendee	Action	Detail	Update
James Baker and Helen George	Action 5	James and Helen to liaise regarding the best person to help with the accommodation needs of service users at Hereford Make.	
Paul Choppen	Action 6	Add ICB Local Authority Schools and the Parent Carer Forum, Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools to the next meeting's agenda. Debbie also asked Paul to contact Anna Swift for information that can be sent out to APB members.	
Paul Choppen	Action 7	To add Housing to the agenda for the next meeting	