

**Autism Partnership Group  
January 15<sup>th</sup> 2015  
Kindle Centre**

Present

Ben Clayton	Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Valerie Fitch - Chair	Hereford Carers Support, Person on the Autistic Spectrum and Parent
Jane Clayton	Parent
Paula Daniels-Symonds	Parent
Colin Boughen	Parent
Helen Boughen	Person on the Autistic Spectrum
James Baker	Person on the Autistic Spectrum
Sylvia Nicholls	Chair Hereford Disability United (HDU)
Sara Siloko	HDU
David Malins	Herefordshire ASPIE LINK
Aubrey Baillie	Independent consultant in Autism
Lynne Renton	CCG
Les Knight	Head of Provider Services – Children’s Well Being - Additional Needs
Rose Hunt	Mencap
Chrissy Dunlop	HCS
Jayne Davies	2G
Sarah Perks	Aspire
Fenella Lloyd	Herford College of Arts
Andrew French	Lead Commissioner Herefordshire Council (2nd half of meeting)
Neville Meredith	Equalities Team Herefordshire Council
Paul Choppen	Herefordshire Council
John Gorman	Commissioning Officer Herefordshire Council

Apologies;  
Cllr Powell  
Ian Stead  
Mandy Shrimpton  
Michelle Baillon  
Richard Green  
Catherine McGowan  
Stuart Blake  
Jonathon Williams  
Ian Savage  
Carol Soble  
Mary Godwin  
Trea Connon

**Previous minutes – actions arising**

- Expenses – John Gorman reported that a policy covering expenses was still being discussed.

**Action Point – John Gorman to report at next meeting on progress being made**

- Transitions - **Action Point – Group members are asked to access the test webpages on the Council website and to feedback thoughts and suggestions to Les Knight.** Access the Local Offer pages at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/local-offer/about-the-local-offer>
- Diagnosis pathways - John Gorman has asked Lynne Renton to attend this meeting
- John Gorman and Les Knight had discussed how Childrens Wellbeing could identify additional resources to help fill this gap and to get these actions into the Action Plan as well as the formal sign off of the Children’s Diagnostic pathway in the Action Plan
- Autism and the Criminal Justice System – John had contacted the NAS to see what courses they could offer. Courses tend to be charged for
- Hate Crime - **Action Point - Sylvia Nicholls to raise Hate Crime awareness education with Deborah Baldwin the safeguarding coordinator for the Hereford Colleges.**
- Les Knight reported that he had been unable to invite the anti-bullying Officer to the meeting as she had been injured in a car crash. The meeting sent it best wishes to her for a speedy recovery.
- Social Group - David Malins is speaking with Mandy Shrimpton about setting up a meeting group.

The Minutes were proposed by Sylvia Nicholls and seconded by Aubrey Baillie. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

#### **Other issues;**

Valerie Fitch asked that, in future, items for inclusion on the agenda be submitted at least one week prior to the meeting.

Future chair arrangements – If anyone would like to chair forthcoming meetings they should contact John Gorman

The meeting was asked whether meetings should start at 10am to allow more time for discussions. **This was agreed**

The meeting was also asked whether a different day to Thursday might be easier for members to attend. **Action Point – John Gorman to e-mail members to ask them which would be their preferred day for meetings**

#### **The Action Plan**

John Gorman explained that the draft action plan that had been in the Strategy Document needed to be updated and that a new draft plan had been produced and circulated.

It was agreed that ‘real’ names and posts need to be added to the draft in the column headed “Lead Organisation”

The meeting then discussed each priority point in turn;

#### **Priority 1 - Increasing awareness and understanding for those who provide services to people on the autism spectrum**

Les Knight informed the group that Carol Soble had been doing autism awareness training work with front line staff in Childrens. She is now expanding here work to include social care professionals and is working with an organisation called TASC.

John Gorman said that he had canvassed various partner organisations to ask them what awareness training they provide. Reponses had been mixed and further work was required to baseline the provision. **Action Point – John Gorman to follow up with partner organsiations**

**Priority 2 - Improved identification and diagnosis of autism, leading to assessment of needs for relevant services and improved co-ordination of care**

Les Knight and Lynne Renton said that they has agreed to bring the three autism diagnostic pathways together into one unified document which would then be taken through the approval and governance process. (The Pathways cover ages 0 to 10, 11 to 18 and adults).

Lynne then described how the adult pathway would work. GPs would be the principle gatekeepers of the process. They would refer service users to 2Gether who would arrange for the assessments to be done (These still need to be done out of county although Lynne is planning to work with 2gether to arrange autism diagnosis to be available in county. Currently there is a waiting list for out of county assessments).

The new process was designed to be simple and clear. Lynne confirmed that GPS would use AQ10 NICE guidance for assessing the initial diagnosis.

John Gorman said that Mandy Shrimpton from the local NAS branch was proposing to run local clinics to help diagnose people. The meeting was keen to ensure that any activities dovetailed together and John agreed to put Mandy in touch with Lynne to discuss. **Action – John Gorman to link Mandy and Lynne for discussions**

**Priority 3 - Improved planning in relation to the provision of services to people on the autism spectrum as they move from being children to adults**

Les noted that there were some early indications that management of the Transition Process may be transferred from Childrens to Adult Well Being. Nothing had been decided but the plan would need to reflect any changes that happen.

**Priority 4 - Local planning and leadership in relation to the provision of services for adults and children with autism**

John Gorman confirmed that Autism would be included within the Childrens Services needs assessment (CHINA) which in turn feeds into the overall County Needs assessment (Herefordshire Matters)

**Priority 5 - Support for parents, families and carers**

Valerie Fitch said that her task group had produced an interim report on their work **Action point – Valerie to circulate the interim report to the group**

James Baker asked whether Autism Cards had been discussed. Valerie said that they had not but asked Lynne Renton whether the CCG could produce these as part of the diagnosis process. **Action Point - Lynne to discuss this proposal with the local authority**

David Malins noted that he had a supply of spare cards if required.

**Priority 6 - Appropriate support for people with autism in criminal justice system**

John Gorman said he would continue to try and locate contacts within the CSJ to pursue this point. Valerie Fitch said that Herefordshire Carer Support (HCS) were starting a series of training sessions with Police Cadets to raise their awareness of Autism. The first session would be February 5.

**Priority 7 - Getting the right housing and housing related support for those with ASD.**

John Gorman presented a draft survey from the Housing Team. This would be used to generate base need data that would inform future housing plans.

**Action – John Gorman to circulate the draft survey**

**Action – ALL – comments, amendments and suggestions on the draft to be fed back to John Gorman before the end of January.**

James Baker asked if any members had responded to the 'Core Strategy' which covered issues such as housing.

**Action – all those who responded to Core Strategy consultation to inform James of the outcome (before he meets with the Core Strategy Team).** James e-mail is [winter\\_samurai@hotmail.com](mailto:winter_samurai@hotmail.com)

### **Priority 8 - Helping people with autism into employment and training including Further Education**

Les Knight said that previously a 'New Horizons Hub' had been created for LD service users to help them choose future options and pathways. The intention was that this be duplicated for those with Autism. He recommended that Alexis Heath be invited to future meetings. **Action – John Gorman to invite Alexia to next meeting**

Best Practice – Fenella Lloyd said that she would like to work on identifying best practice on transitions and pastoral care in FE.

Sylvia Nicholls noted that she and Stuart Blake had been meeting to discuss employment issues. Stuart has produced a proposal for a programme of work (Empowering Change) to improve employment opportunities for people with LD and Autism and he is currently applying for funding to help run it. Sylvia has also tried speaking to Job Centre Plus but is finding it hard to get through to anyone who can make decisions. She asked that if anyone is being, or has recently been, assessed by Job Centre Plus to get in touch with her as she wants to assess what questions are being asked at interview.

**Action Point- ALL – contact Sylvia with your experiences of being assessed at the Job Centre.** Sylvia's e-mail is [sylvia.nicholls@btinternet.com](mailto:sylvia.nicholls@btinternet.com)

James Baker asked to be part of the employment task group.

### **Priority 8A - Review of the Autism offer to pre 16 years of age**

This is a new priority identified since the publication of the Strategy

Les Knight said that a review of this provision would help ensure continuity from services for children through to those for adults.

### **Priority 9 – Community Safety and dealing with Hate Crime**

This is a new priority identified since the publication of the Strategy

Neville Meredith said that he was working through a report from NAS entitled 'Living in Fear' and that he would produce a local report for the next meeting that would combine the recommendations of this report with best practice that he has gathered elsewhere. This he hoped would help inform local decisions and policies. **Action Point – Neville to be invited to next meeting to present report**

### **The Herefordshire Autism Self Assessment**

John Gorman spoke to the meeting about the third National Autism Self Assessment which was currently underway. This has been asked for by the Department of Health and must be completed by the first week of March. It consists of about 50 questions (with additional supplementary questions making it around 100 question in total). John said that although most of the survey would be completed by various teams within the Council and CCG it was important that the Partnership Group also had a say in the final product. He asked for volunteers to act as an 'Editorial Board' to clear the final draft before it is signed off. Sylvia Nicholls, Valerie Fitch and Sara Siloko all agreed to sit on the Board.

### **Discussion paper – Living with Autism**

This discussion paper had been produced by Valerie Fitch, Sylvia Nicholls and Aubrey Baillie. Valerie introduced the paper by saying that it had been produced to concentrate on the role of parents in helping people on the spectrum. It was important to understand how parents react (and why) when their children are diagnosed, how they plan for their children's future and how they obtain help. It was important to make sure that parents are trained so that they are 'in the game' when it comes to dealing with Autism. Valerie asked for comments on the paper.

**Action Point – ALL – comment on the paper to Valerie as soon as possible** Valerie's e-mail is [valerie.fitch@btinternet.com](mailto:valerie.fitch@btinternet.com)

At this point Jane Clayton said that her son, Ben, had recently been successful in getting work experience with and IT equipment from HaO2 to help develop his 3D graphics skills. Ben has also recently had a photography exhibition. The meeting congratulated Ben on this good news.

### **Any other business**

**Capital Grant** - John Gorman informed the group that the Council had recently applied for a Capital Grant of £18,500 from the Department of Health to buy telecare equipment to help young people in transition to maintain their independence. The grant would also help pay for IT communication equipment to promote choice, inclusion and independence.

**Digital communications** – Aubrey Baillie informed the group that he was working with Rural Media to set up multi media approached to facilitate contacts between people on the spectrum. He is meeting with them again on the last Wednesday of January – **Action Point – if anyone wants to attend the meeting please contact Aubrey Aubrey's e-mail is [aubrey@aubreybaillieconsulting.co.uk](mailto:aubrey@aubreybaillieconsulting.co.uk)**

David Malins told the group that at a recent meeting of the Welsh Cross Party Autism Group he had used Herefordshire as a positive role model of what could be done, within tight financial constraints, to develop an autism strategy and to take the work forward. The meeting thanked him for this valediction of their work.

The meeting ended at 12.30

Next meeting at the Kindle Centre

Tuesday 14 April 2015 – **Note the change of date**

Start at 10.00 and end at 12.30 / 1pm