

NOTES FROM ALL-AGE AUTISM PARTNERSHIP BOARD

DATED 3 JULY 2024

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Oliver Downing welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Alistair Jeffs as a co-chair. Alistair is the Director for Vivo Choices and is passionate about joining the All-Age Autism Partnership Board. He was heavily involved in setting up the Cheshire Autism Hub and was a trustee of this. Alistair is linked in with the Parent/Carer Forum and is the chair of the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:

There were no actions to record.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

- Widen the scope of autism to include neurodivergence. (Agreed)
- Membership of the board was discussed. A GP has been included to the membership – if there are any further gaps in membership from a professional's aspect then please notify Alistair who will approach as appropriate to invite them to attend.
- Be mindful not to be too top heavy with organisations and professionals to avoid losing the "voice".
- Plain English to be used – avoid acronyms.
- Suggestions to include non-diagnosed people as there we need to provide help with those who can't get a diagnosis.
- More people with lived experience to be included in the membership.
- Objectives of the board: to increase awareness of complexities of autism, such as gender identity and sexuality which are currently insufficiently understood.
- Oliver Downing and Kerry Arnison to meet to discuss the word "viable" (Terms of Reference) as Kerry felt this wasn't the correct word to use.

ACTION 1: An updated Terms of Reference to be circulated for approval. This will continue to be refined by the group. (Oliver Downing)

SUB-GROUPS:

Possible suggestions for sub-groups are as follows:

- How people react to autistic people – what are the day-to-day challenges of living with autism.
- Older adults with objectives to include social care, hospitals, struggling to live on a pension.

- Communication – promote use of different communication tools.
- Improving understanding then acceptance should follow – improving understanding and knowledge, female representation, different genders, masking, cultural.
- Help with accessing employment and other services.
- Education needed around diagnosis and assessment process, assessment issues for children in education, tackling waiting lists.
- Supermarkets need to be more aware of people with autism, particularly when doing basket checks.
- Transitions from children to adulthood but also transitions that happen throughout the life course.
- The need for a day-by-day living with autism guide – how best to live and manage their lives.
- There aren't enough provisions for autistic children – no holiday clubs, etc.
- Sensory spaces for adults too not just for children.

Alistair suggested the following three sub-groups, which should sum up the general conversation:

- Lived Experience – improving understanding (in society/by professionals) driven by lived experience including reviewing experiences of local NHS and social care services.
- Service Mapping – what is out there and what are the gaps.
- Autism/Neurodivergence Strategy – to develop a West Cheshire Autism and Neurodivergence Strategy and Action Plan (with clear outcomes and ambitions).

ACTION 2: Set up the three sub-groups and seek volunteers to chair and join a sub-group. Please email Su Chapelow (*email address below*) if you wish to join a sub-group and/or wish to chair. (All)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- Andrew Herbert who is the Mental Health Strategic Lead for Cheshire West Voluntary Action spoke about his role and the link between mental health and autism – emotional tendencies can be represented as mental health when it could be autism.

He shared about the Positive Mental Health for Us group who are looking at challenges faced, provisions and reasonable adjustments.

Andrew also spoke about the overlap with this group as Cheshire West Voluntary Action are trying to engage with schools re SEND and how the community sector can do more in this area. He stated that they want to hear what the pressures are.

- Alistair informed everyone if they have any information to share then to forward to Su Chapelow at su.chapelow@cheshirewest.gov.uk.

ACTION 3: Send any communications you wish to be shared to Su Chapelow on an ongoing basis. (All)

- Tony Mc volunteered himself to be the voice of lived experience at any future professional meetings.
- Future meetings will not be overloaded with agenda items to give the opportunity to discuss items fully.

ACTIONS:

Number	Action	By
1	An updated Terms of Reference to be circulated for approval. This will continue to be refined by the group.	Oliver Downing
2	Set up the three sub-groups and seek volunteers to chair and join the sub-group. Please email Su Chapelow if you wish to join the sub-group and/or wish to chair.	All
3	Send any communications you wish to be shared to Su Chapelow on an ongoing basis.	All
4	Dates for the next 12 months to be shared with everyone.	Su Chapelow
5	Su Chapelow to create an action log.	Su Chapelow
6	Dates for sub-groups to be arranged.	Su Chapelow

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Beginning of September – date to be confirmed and shared.