



West Sussex Autism Partnership Board (APB) Minutes

Meeting: Thursday 2nd February 2023, 11am – 1pm (online Zoom)

Attendees:

Mike Smith – Commissioning Lead (WSCC)
Diana Bernhardt – Senior Commissioning Manager (WSCC)
Anna Lansley – ASSA; Aspie Trainer
Jayne Simpson – Parent carer
Dan Gregory – Asperger’s Voice
Maggie - Asperger’s Voice
Roxanne Hall - Asperger’s Voice
Sophie Storer - Impact Advocacy Supporter
Bodil Scrivens – Parent carer
Lucy Watson – Carers’ Wellbeing Support Worker for Carers of Autistic Adults (CSWS)
Diane Bardwell – Interim Deputy Head of Mental Health Commissioning West Sussex
Lesley Durbin – Impact Advocacy Manager
Katie Green – ASSA
Graham Sargent – ASSA
Dr Dawn Howard – Clinical Lead Neurodevelopmental Services (SPFT)

Guests:

Neil Johnson - Project Lead Sussex Neurodevelopmental Pathway (SPFT)

Apologies:

Lisa Loveman – Commissioning Manager (WSCC)
Martin Ford – Aldingbourne Trust (manager of My Network & LIMA services)
Warren Ball – Autism Specialist (SPFT)
Catherine McGill - Co-production Lead West Sussex, Capital Project Trust

Notes and Actions

1. Welcome and Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves and apologies were recorded.

Diane Bardwell attending as the new mental health commissioner replacing Phil Shackell who has left the Mental Health Commissioning Team.

2. Update on actions from 17/11/22

Page 2: Feedback from self-advocates feeling excluded from the LIMA supported Women’s Group and the need to have groups for disabled autistics as well as those women with low support needs. No update for the meeting.

Action Mike to request update from Martin.

Page 4: Annual Health Checks for people with serious and enduring mental health issues. **Update** Diane Bardwell said that to her knowledge annual health checks are only available for people with a serious mental illness. Self-advocate asked whether this included people with OCD? Diane explained that the criteria for annual health checks is set at a national level and is only available for people with a diagnosed psychotic disorder. Self-advocate asked when Annual Health Checks for autistic people were being introduced?

Action To arrange for an update on this for future Partnership Board agenda.

Minutes of the meeting held on 17th November 2022 were approved as correct with the following change *Katie Green representing ASSA not Asperger's Voice*. No objections to the minutes being published on the WSCC APB webpage.

3.Update from Employment sub-group - Mike Smith (WSCC)

Mike gave a presentation on the work of the Employment Subgroup. The subgroup is working to develop an information sheet on local employment support and what support is available from Disability Advisers in the Job Centres.

Bognor Job Centre are carrying out a six-month pilot and have introduced quieter sessions for autistic adults.

Parent carer asked which employers are interested in receiving training and being more accessible? Lesley suggested people contact Workaid as they can provide this information. Aspie Trainers also provide training on autism.

Self-Advocate asked what the council are doing? Mike explained that the council is currently providing training on neurodiversity.

Action: Tim Clayton from DWP to provide an update on Bognor Job Centre pilot at future Autism Partnership Board

4. Update from 'health and social care working more closely together' sub-group – Diana Bernhardt (WSCC)

Diana gave a presentation on the work of the subgroup. The subgroup has been considering the following three issues:

- Quality Check of mental health services
- Reducing waiting times for adult autism diagnosis
- Flexibility in the use of Direct Payments

Quality Check of mental health services - The subgroup is working with Impact to take forward a Quality Check of mental health services to see what has improved since the last quality check in 2013. As there are not a lot of resources to do this, agreed to look at one local area and a service to Quality

Check. The subgroup decided to look at services in Chichester and are considering a quality check of Time to Talk or Chapel Street Clinic.

Self-advocate asked why Chichester been chosen as the council always seem to choose to look at Chichester? Parent Carer explained that Crawley had also been considered but as Crawley services were already included in the review of mental health services, wanted to look at other areas.

Self-advocates will be involved in developing the survey questionnaire. Want to include feedback from carers – Diana talking to West Sussex carers and mental health commissioners.

Reducing waiting times for adult autism diagnosis - The waiting list is kept under review so that people most at risk are assessed first. Work has started across Sussex to improve waiting times and what is offered. Neil Johnson - Project lead is providing update at today's meeting.

Self-advocate asked how does the service know whether people are at risk and whether this is increasing? When people are placed on the waiting list they are prioritised and advised to contact their GP if their situation changes.

Flexibility in the use of Direct Payments – the subgroup is checking the Direct Payment Policy to see if it encourages flexibility so that autistic people can receive support in the different way and adjusted to meet their needs.

Self-advocate explained that they would rather people think about strengths and weaknesses with the emphasis on the latter as clearly support is needed. Strength-based framework denies people have ongoing support needs. Social workers worry about dependency and can sometimes deny that people feel overwhelmed. They thought that 'strength-based is being weaponised against us'. Autism is an executive dysfunction that can't be cured.

5. Neurodevelopmental Pathway

Neil Johnston (SPFT) gave a presentation on work happening across Sussex to reduce waiting times for autism and ADHD diagnosis and assessment.

There are many thousands of people on the waiting lists in Sussex. A key priority is to make sure diagnosis and pathways to services for children, adults and parents provide the right level of support needed. A fully costed business case to describe what services are needed is being developed which will be finalised at the end of March with the aim of a new service being delivered from the end of June 2023.

A strategic board has been set-up to oversee the work. Below the strategic board there is an Operational Delivery Group that is open to everyone, and members of local autism partnership board can contact Neil if they are interested in attending.

Possibility People recruit Experts by Experience and are convening focus groups. They want to hear from people with a lived experience of current services and would like to share their case study.

Self-advocate commented that children do not always get the right support if they don't cause problems at school their needs aren't recognised.

Another Self-advocate talked about being diagnosed at 55 and it was a Benefits Adviser who suggested that they get a diagnosis.

Neil agreed that there was unmet need and explained that the business case was aiming to solve this through two strands of work:

- By unblocking barriers in the system
- Early intervention for young people and unmet need in the adult population

Self-advocate said mental health services don't always recognise autism. Dawn explained that if SPFT had more resources they would address this by providing training through Transforming Care Autism Team (TCAT).

Another Self-advocate had experience of a psychiatrist who does think of autism and said people recently trained seem to have a better understanding.

Parent carer asked whether there were any plans to extend TCAT? Dawn said yes this was one of the options being considered.

Business case being drafted for the strategic board and March operational delivery group. Experts by experience will be coproducing how we can do this and will be running a series of focus groups.

Action: Neil to circulate flyer on the NDP pathway focus groups. People interested in joining the Operational Delivery Group or are interested in sharing their case study to contact neil.johnson@spft.nhs.uk

6. Future agenda items:

CPST - invite Combined Placement and Sourcing Team to discuss how family carers and service users can be involved in the placement process.

Dogs for Autism – scheduled for May's meeting

7. AOB

None

Dates of next meeting:

18TH May 2023 @ 11am online