



## West Sussex Autism Partnership Board (APB) Minutes

**Meeting:** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023, 11am – 1pm (online Zoom)

### **Attendees:**

Lucie Venables – Head of Commissioning (WSCC) – Chair  
Anna Lansley – ASSA; Aspie Trainer  
Jayne Simpson – Parent carer  
Dan Gregory – Asperger’s Voice  
Maggie - Asperger’s Voice  
Sophie Storer - Impact Advocacy Supporter  
Chelsea Harwell – ASSA Supporter  
Bodil Scrivens – Parent carer  
Sheryl Bunting – Learning Disability and Autism Lead (CSWS)  
Olesya Buck – Mental Health Commissioning Sussex NHS  
Lesley Durbin – Impact Advocacy Manager  
Katie Green – ASSA  
Graham Sargent – ASSA  
Rosie Froget – Aspergers Voice Supporter  
Diana Bernhardt – Senior Commissioning Manager (WSCC)  
Simona Giunta – Commissioning and Contracts Officer (WSCC) - minutes  
Tom Elsam – WSCC Service Manager Lifelong Services

### **Guests:**

### **Apologies:**

## **Notes and Actions**

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Everyone introduced themselves and apologies were recorded.

Olesya Buck will be joining later due to a calendar clash.

Sergeant Ross Wickings from Sussex Police was invited to this Board but did not login. He will also be invited to future Boards.

### **2. Update on actions from previous meeting**

Autism Training and NDP update: any outstanding items will be picked up at future meetings when updates are available.

### 3. Presentation about the future of APB

Lucie Venables looked at what has worked well in the APB and what the future of this Board could look like. This was within the context of Impact Advocacy contract coming to its end in Sept 23.

A general discussion followed; main themes and topics were:

Member said they feel the APB has not heard what they have contributed. Member said that they feel there has been a breach of trust between WSCC and the group due to the changes being implemented and how they are being implemented.

Member expressed concern about the future of the self-advocacy groups if they did not accept support from WSCC.

There were various questions on how individual groups could continue to operate without Impact's support.

Member was worried about fair and wide representation of people with learning disabilities and autism in future if the self-advocacy groups did not continue.

All present want the individual groups to continue – WSCC is committed to supporting each group to identify options for their long term future which may involve peer support as a model. Each group will be different in their journey going forward.

Parent carer expressed disappointment with the transition process and that it was left late. They also shared there was a lot of anger and disappointment in the carer support forum about this change.

Member was concerned that WSCC facilitating self-advocacy groups was a conflict of interest.

Parent carer reflected that communication from WSCC during this process was not clear.

Member asked about safeguarding concerns point of contact. [The council's safeguarding page](#) is accessible to the public to raise concerns.

WSCC clarified that the council is meeting with all self-advocacy groups to work through the transition process.

Members expressed the wish to be involved in future council budget decisions that impact them directly WSCC will feed this request back. The council has a duty to review all contracts periodically.

Member asked that Alan Sinclair, WSCC Director of Adults & Health, is invited to the APB, other members agreed with this request.

WSCC has commissioned Independent Lives to support all groups with their financial items including exploring potential future funding sources.

Things to keep:

- Ability to influence, being involved.
- Online meetings.

Things that have not worked as well:

Co-production – members fed back that although there have been presentations and sharing of information, it still does not feel that members have an equal voice at the table. Members want to have a say from the beginning.

**Action:**

**4. Updates and future agenda items:**

Not discussed

**5. Impact**

Impact staff were thanked for their support of both the Boards and the individual groups.

**Dates of next meeting:**

16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 @ 11am online