

**Worcestershire Autism Reference Group Meeting**  
**Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 13.00 – 14.30**  
**Online Microsoft Teams**

**People Present:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation/Job Title</b>
LW	Co-Chair, Worcestershire County Council (WCC), Adult Social Care Lead Commissioner
CC	Co-Chair and Expert by Experience
HS	Co-Chair of Worcestershire Autism Partnership Board and Expert by Experience
EA	WCC, Commissioning Officer
JR	Expert by Experience
MK	Expert by Experience
T	Expert by Experience
N	Expert by Experience
WL	Expert by Experience
BB	Expert by Experience

**Apologies:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation/Job Title</b>
JH	Expert by Experience
MW	Expert by Experience

<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes from last meeting</b>

Item	Notes
3.	<p><b>Overview of the Autism Partnership Board and the Autism Strategy</b> – Laura Westwood, Lead Commissioner, Adult Social Care, Worcestershire County Council</p> <p>Laura went through presentation slides.</p>
4.	<p><b>Key areas of interest – All</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to health and care related to autism – diagnosis and support after (MK)</li> <li>- Access to all other health and care – G.P, first point of call health services, secondary level health services and barriers to this for autistic people (MK) (N) (T) (B)</li> <li>- Employment (N)</li> <li>- Reasonable adjustments – what these might be related to employment, schools/education, health, commercial companies (N) (H).</li> <li>- Education need and duties and what reasonable adjustments could be made.</li> <li>- Assessments – autism assessments, ADHD, resources, and subsequent support after the assessment</li> <li>- Education and inclusion in school (JR) (B)</li> <li>- Support for people with low support needs but when do need support there is a gap. Increased advocacy and support when we need it, with no waiting lists. (WL)</li> <li>- Social housing and education on what they can do to make accessing services inclusive to autistic people (WL).</li> <li>- Accessing benefits entitled to e.g. PIP (MK)</li> <li>- Social isolation (HS)</li> <li>- Dating opportunities for autistic people (HS)</li> </ul> <p>LW explained that we will add these topics to future meeting agendas. May invite appropriate priority leads to a meeting to lead on those conversations.</p> <p>It was explained all the above areas will fit into a priority area and there will also be opportunities to input to the priority action plans.</p> <p>Reference group will have a reciprocal relationship with Autism Partnership Board (APB) and put forward topics that should be raised with one another.</p> <p>This group can shape as the group develops.</p>
5.	<p><b>Where do you/would you go to find information about Autism?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social media - run and delivered by autistic people.</li> <li>- Autism YouTube channels – created and delivered by autistic people.</li> <li>- Peer support Facebook groups</li> </ul>

Item	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National autistic society – have a directory of services that are related to autism: “autism services directory” which gives a broad overview of services that you could access locally and nationally.</li> <li>- Autism West Midlands</li> <li>- Libraries</li> </ul> <p>.</p> <p>Gaps/barriers: Physical locations to ‘drop in’ and get information and support.</p> <p>Feedback on access to the Council website to find information, for a younger family member: all the information on the pathways for children of school age was good and comprehensive.</p> <p>For adults: there are links to groups that offer support, problem is people don't know which groups are right for them (can vary for each person and level/support needed) and there is a barrier in people taking the step to try and find out because of the apprehension that it will not be suitable place for their support needs.</p> <p>Hard to understand and navigate all the information that is available online from Google searching.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>Discussed the benefits of a Worcestershire Autism Directory and its location. Can put information on council website but would people find it there? Agreed need a good URL that then directs search traffic to the location.</p> <p>YouTube – however risk if ‘autism’ is put in the search engine, it may not lead to good content. Could help people filter search by creating a recommended YouTube autism directory with recommendations from this group.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Send around services and mapping template – ask for responses</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Find out levels of traffic to WCC autism website and Autism West Midlands webpages</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Group to email <a href="mailto:autismgroups@worcestershire.gov.uk">autismgroups@worcestershire.gov.uk</a> to put suggestions forward and share any good resources that you have found and would recommend others to look at.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Have a remote panel to review one another’s recommendations</p>

Item	Notes
6.	<p><b>Future meetings – All</b></p> <p>The consensus was that evening meetings are better for people and a mixture of online and in person. Central Worcester agreed as a location and will explore the Hive for the next meeting.</p>
	<p><b>Next Meeting:</b> TBC</p>