

Worcestershire Autism Reference Group Meeting
Wednesday, 26th February 10th, 2025, 13.00 – 14.30
Online Microsoft Teams

People Present:

Name	Organisation/Job Title
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
6	Expert by Experience

Apologies:

Name	Organisation/Job Title
2	Expert by Experience

Item	Notes
1	Welcome and Introductions
2	Minutes from last meeting
3.	Overview of the Autism Partnership Board and the Autism Strategy – Laura Westwood, Lead Commissioner, Adult Social Care, Worcestershire County Council Laura went through presentation slides.
4.	Key areas of interest – All - Access to health and care related to autism – diagnosis and support after (MK)

Item	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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) - Employment (N) - Reasonable adjustments – what these might be related to employment, schools/education, health, commercial companies (N) (H). - Education need and duties and what reasonable adjustments could be made. - Assessments – autism assessments, ADHD, resources, and subsequent support after the assessment - Education and inclusion in school (JR) (B) - 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) - Social housing and education on what they can do to make accessing services inclusive to autistic people (WL). - Accessing benefits entitled to e.g. PIP (MK) - Social isolation (HS) - Dating opportunities for autistic people (HS) <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>Where do you/would you go to find information about Autism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media - run and delivered by autistic people. - Autism YouTube channels – created and delivered by autistic people. - Peer support Facebook groups - 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. - Autism West Midlands - Libraries <p>.</p> <p>Gaps/barriers:</p> <p>Physical locations to ‘drop in’ and get information and support.</p>

Item	Notes
	<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>ACTION: Send around services and mapping template – ask for responses</p> <p>ACTION: Find out levels of traffic to WCC autism website and Autism West Midlands webpages</p> <p>ACTION: Group to email autismgroups@worcestershire.gov.uk to put suggestions forward and share any good resources that you have found and would recommend others to look at.</p> <p>ACTION: Have a remote panel to review one another’s recommendations</p>
6.	<p>Future meetings – All</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>Next Meeting: TBC</p>