



MINUTES:	Autism Partnership Board
DATE and TIME:	Thursday, 20th March 2025, 13:30–15:30
LOCATION:	Bodmin Shire House, Mount Folly Square, Bodmin PL31 2DQ also virtually via Microsoft Teams

ATTENDANCE

Name	Position	Organisation
Debbie Gilbert (DG)	CEO / Executive Director	Healthwatch Cornwall
Robert O’Leary (RO)	Partnership Boards Engagement Officer	Healthwatch Cornwall
Jay Thompson (JT)	Partnership Boards Administrator	Healthwatch Cornwall
Bethany Weiss (BW)	Job Coach Mentor	United Response
Zowie Wyatt (ZW)	Job Coach Mentor	United Response
Madison Churchwood	Student	United Response
Olivia Matta (OM)	Student	United Response
Lucy Meek (LM)	Student	United Response
Penni Charteress (PC)	Community Engagement	Women’s Centre Cornwall
John Holland (JH)	NPAA Lead Coordinator	Devon & Cornwall Police
Craig Lobb (CL)	Lived Experience	-
Marilyn Lobb (ML)	Lived Experience	-

ATTENDANCE via Microsoft Teams

Name	Position	Organisation
Cllr. Sally Weedon (SW)	Chair of the Meeting	Cornwall Council
Vicki Allan (VA)	Strategic Commissioning Lead for Working Age Adults	Cornwall Council
Beth Collis (BC)	Social Worker, Autism Senior Practitioner	Cornwall Council
Paula Chappell (PC2)	Advanced Practitioner	Cornwall Council
Beccy Summers (BS)	Research Associate	University of Exeter
Errol Cordle (EC)	Relationship Director	NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly ICB
Gemma Dyson (GD)	Clinical Psychologist, Cornwall Autism Adult Assessment Team	NHS Cornwall Foundation Trust
Christopher Burns (CB)	Self Advocate, Lived Experience	-
Adrian Quest (AQ)	Deputy Manager, Learning Disability and Autism Team	Royal Cornwall Hospital Triliske

**APOLOGIES**

Name	Organisation
Kelly Williams	NHS Cornwall Foundation Trust
Sgt. Flo Linscott	Devon & Cornwall Police
Michelle Hooker	Cornwall Council
David Allkins	Cornwall Council
Karen Hooper	Cornwall Council
Hussein Rujak	Cornwall Council
Marie Whitehurst	Disability Cornwall
Steve Hillman	Healthy Cornwall and the CHAMPs
Shelagh Mitchell	
The CHAMPs	

We have chosen to use 'identity-first' language when referring to autistic people. This means we say 'Autistic People' rather than 'people with autism'. This is based on system-wide feedback supporting that this is the preferred language used.

MINUTES

	Agenda Item	Actions
1.	Teams Guidance, Meeting Etiquette and Introductions	
	<p>SW welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that members online use the 'raise hand' function if they wished to speak.</p> <p>Expectations regarding meeting etiquette and general housekeeping and safety guidelines were outlined.</p> <p>There were "round table" introductions and apologies received, as detailed above</p>	
2.	Healthwatch Cornwall – Co Chair Recruitment	
	DG from Healthwatch Cornwall introduced the Co-Chair role to the board through a PowerPoint presentation. Additionally, DG informed the board of SW's departure as Chair due to SW not standing for re-election.	



	<p>DG highlighted the various aspects of being a Co Chair, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a Co-Chair?• What does a Co-Chair do?• The benefits of being a Co-Chair• What makes a good Co-Chair? <p>DG proposed a discussion regarding how a Co-Chair would be elected, proposing a nomination process as a potential direction.</p> <p>VA agreed that a nomination process would be a productive process for election, however people who may be nominated would need to consent to being nominated.</p> <p>RO stated that if somebody external is to be nominated, it is important that the details of the role are promoted to external organisations so nominees are aware of what the role entails and that whilst the Co-Chair role is voluntary, it should be treated as an official employment.</p> <p>CB suggested that the role should be advertised in local newspapers, community groups and through external organisations' networks as well as through Healthwatch Cornwall</p> <p>VA stated that the Co-Chair role is important and there are many individuals with Lived Experience who have attended the partnership boards for an extended period that would be better suited for the role as opposed to someone external to the partnership boards, and that the wording surrounding the advertisement should be considered. DG stated that due to Fairer Recruitment processes, the role would still be advertised externally.</p> <p>PC offered to share the advertisement to the volunteers at the Women's Centre Cornwall who were not able to attend.</p> <p>SW offered to speak privately with any individuals who are interested in the role to have a discussion regarding what chairing a meeting entails. SW additionally offered to remain as Chair of the Autism Partnership Board until a Co-Chair is elected.</p>	<p>HWC to advertise the Co-Chair role through public networks</p>
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	<p>VA enquired regarding the timeframe of the election process and the board agreed that the role advertisement will be distributed and active for 1 month, with voting due to commence at the next meeting in June.</p> <p><i>The PowerPoint presentation shown to the board will be available in conjunction to this document</i></p>	
3.	Women's Centre Cornwall – Keeping Safe in Relationships	
	<p>PC from the Women's Centre Cornwall (WCC) gave an explanation on the work that WCC and the DIVAS do and the services they offer, using a PowerPoint presentation for reference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of the Women's Centre Cornwall: The WCC is an organization run by women, for women, with a primary focus on supporting survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. While acknowledging that men are also affected, the WCC emphasises the unique impact on women.• The DIVAS Project: The DIVAS are a group of neurodivergent women who have lived experience of abuse. They use their personal experiences to drive change and help others, aiming to prevent similar experiences for other women.• Necessity of the Project: The DIVAS focus on neurodivergent women and women with learning disabilities, as they are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence. 90% of autistic women experience abuse and often struggle to recognise abuse, are more isolated, and face difficulties accessing support services.• Impact and Work: The Women's Centre Cornwall strives to make services more accessible, including easy-read resources and working with organizations to ensure their services meet the needs of neurodivergent women.	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing Services: The Centre continues to offer support to neurodivergent women and works towards improving the accessibility of services for all women, ensuring they are informed by the expertise of those with lived experience. <p><i>The PowerPoint presentation shown to the board will be available in conjunction to this document</i></p>	
4.	Comfort Break	
	The board took a 10-minute break.	
5.	Cornwall Council – Autism Strategy for Cornwall Updates Devon & Cornwall Police – NDID Wristbands Update	
	<p>VA from CC gave an update on the Autism Strategy for Cornwall, stating it has been written and is going through governance and approval, with hope for it to be published soon.</p> <p>The ‘final design’ version will be distributed to CHAMPs who will provide an easy read draft of the strategy.</p> <p>The Autism Partnership Board will continue to focus on reviewing the delivery plan of the strategy.</p> <p>VA reminded the board of the Autism Strategy’s 7 key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Improve Understanding & Acceptance2) Improve Support3) Better Lives4) Employment & Education5) Supporting Independent Living6) Keeping Safe7) Supporting Families & Carers <p>VA outlined how different service providers feed into the delivery plan and how it is not just Cornwall Council and health services but Police and community services as well</p>	

	<p>VA focussed on the 'Keeping Safe' priority and how the delivery plan addresses keeping safe, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify data collection on young people and adults involved in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) • Better understanding of hate crime and 'cuckooing' • Statutory bodies and charities to understand the needs of autistic people to prevent offending • Establish Joint Workshops with the Police to build relationships with the autistic community • Police officers to be trained in communication and understanding with autistic people experience the CJS and how they process trauma • Deliver Healthy Relationships training for autistic women and girls, with a potential to additionally support men • Police Passports & Autism Alert Cards • Supporting implementation of the Neurodiversity Identification (NDID) wristband pilot <p>JH from Devon & Cornwall Police offered an update on the NDID wristbands pilot with the wristbands to launch to coincide Blue Light Day. Although the trials are taking place in Cornwall, the NDID wristbands are garnering national interest, with engagement with the National Neurodiversity Youth Council. A press release will follow upon the launch of the NDID wristbands. An image of the NDID Wristband is available in the appendix (1).</p> <p>Videos with instructions on how to set up and use the NDID wristbands are currently underdevelopment to educate police officers and neurodivergent people.</p> <p>RO enquired whether there was an age limit on who can use the NDID wristbands. JH explained that it is for individuals of all-ages.</p> <p>At this moment in time, the wristbands are operated by existing mobile applications however a bespoke application is under development. The wristbands are GDPR compliant, and the user's information is not stored on a database.</p>	
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	<p>When the NDID wristbands have been trialled, they may expand to other types of technology such as cards and hand tags, as wristbands may pose sensory concerns to some users.</p> <p>Cornwall Council Care Home Tender Update</p> <p>VA additionally gave an update regarding a tender for Cornwall Council Adult Social Care to focus on Care Homes and the provisions for younger adults living in care homes. At present, the current contract is a joint contract between Cornwall Council Adult Social Care and NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly ICB, however the new contract will most likely be a Cornwall Council contract with a third-party access agreement, similar to the arrangement of the Cornwall Council Housing & Solutions Contract.</p> <p>VA asked the APB how they would like to be involved with the co-production of the tender, suggesting small groups with structured conversations and expressed the importance of engagement from individuals with lived experience of accessing and using care homes.</p> <p>VA requested that if any individuals were interested, they are to contact DG or JT so that they can be invited to any engagement events.</p>	
6.	Group Activity – Theme of the next meeting	
	<p>The board agreed that, due to low attendance of lived experience board members as a result of another event with a similar demographic taking place at the same time, the board should revisit the 'Keeping Safe' theme at the next meeting.</p> <p>On the topic of 'Keeping Safe', JH from Devon & Cornwall Police offered a brief update surrounding the improvements to police information systems, which now allow for more effective use of markers such as Situational Awareness Markers and individual information flags. JH focussed on Autism Alert Cards and wristbands as useful tools, though their use varies across council areas. It was noted that while some regions use these effectively, uptake in Cornwall is lower, and a review of their application may be needed to ensure consistent support across all areas.</p>	



	<p>VA enquired regarding how individuals can access and acquire Autism Alert Cards, JH explained that they are available to buy online, however some police forces and councils fund this. Unfortunately, due to local budgetary constraints, this has not been the case.</p> <p>JH continued, explaining that they are trying to move towards the technology of the NDID wristbands as Autism Alert Cards only offer a 'snapshot' of an individual's needs. JH hopes that Autism Alert Cards become a nationalised tool, with an improved capability of addressing the user's needs.</p> <p>RO enquired regarding a situation wherein an individual may lose their NDID wristband or have it stolen and whether the user's information would be secure. JH stated that a 'crib sheet' directing what information should be added the wristband will be made available.</p> <p>JT stated that due to a research event at New County Hall, the CHAMPs and Healthy Cornwall were unable to offer an update on the Safe Places scheme and that an update can be provided at the next meeting if it is themed around 'Keeping Safe'</p> <p>VA offered to contact the Safer Cornwall Partnership Board, a collective group of organisations, to request some organisations to present at the next APB, particularly organisations centred around autism and neurodiversity. VA will feedback to HWC.</p>	
7.	Members Updates & Any Other Business	
	<p>PC from the Women's Centre Cornwall stated that Dina Holder of the Women's Centre Cornwall has retired and will update regarding role dynamics at the Women's Centre Cornwall at the next meeting.</p> <p>SW stated that she had enjoyed chairing the Autism Partnership Board, describing it as a "really good experience (with) a lovely bunch of people (who) work so hard".</p>	
END OF MINUTES		

Appendix

- (1) An image of the NDID Wristbands showed to the board



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