

BOLTON ADULT AUTISM SUPPORT

Minutes of the meeting held Wednesday February 22nd 2017

at Thicketford Care and Community Centre, Thicketford Road, Bolton.

Item No.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman extended a very warm welcome to members and also to our guest speaker, Dr Pedro Vital, Senior Lecturer and Researcher at Bolton University.

There were 8 members present, namely, Graham Heywood (Chairman), Roselle Gorman (Vice –Chair), Barbara Brooks(Secretary), Eira Heywood (Safeguarding Officer) Janet Thompson, Susan Darlington, Elaine Birch and Jill Darlington.

Apologies were received from Helen Green, Alison Thompson and Yvonne Poulson and Debbie Newell.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2016

The minutes were reviewed and agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the above minutes

Regarding the post of Hon Treasurer, The Chairman reported that Anna Polichnowska had been interviewed for the post. The post had subsequently been offered to Anna on a 6 month trial period after which, if both party's agreed, the post would be confirmed as permanent.

Eira Heywood had been nominated for the post of Safeguarding Officer to replace Helen Green and Eira had accepted. The meeting unanimously confirmed the appointment.

4. Address by Dr Pedro Vital

Again, Dr Vital was welcomed to the meeting and he said he was glad to be asked to address the meeting on his research topic and that he was also happy to be addressed as Pedro. His research was concerned with the effect/impact of ethnicity and Socio-economic status at which an Autism Diagnosis is made.

The research confirmed that Asian families were diagnosed later than non-Asian families as were members of families with low socio-economic backgrounds. There were no significant differences in respect of 30/40/50 plus age groups compared with younger age groups.

Now, however, diagnosis is happening earlier as there was a risk of Autism as young as 6 months. The research mirrors work previously undertaken by National Autistic Society. Diagnosis in early years is increasing where cultural issues are prevalent. Improved networks are becoming available in the community through, for example, the North West Research group involving Bolton, Salford and Manchester. The preferred mission statement which focuses on the practical aspects of living with Autism and its effects i.e. age of diagnosis and particularly ethnic groups.

Pedro informed the group of other research via a research forum involving 98 adults where the emphasis has been on aspects of well-being and emotional factors associated with ASCs.

Those with an ASC convey positive aspects on those who are high achievers. This recognises that Autism is not an impairment, thus accentuating the positive aspects of an ASC.

Pedro went on to discuss other aspects of living with an ASC such as social relationships and romantic and sexual feelings. He revealed that statistically, those with an ASC were over represented in sexual offences thus confirming the need to address the root problems from an early age. Pedro referred to other research being undertaken by a colleague who was looking at Happiness levels in relation to ASCs. Pedro confirmed his work linked closely with that of the Diagnostic Team in Bolton that underlined the importance of working together and the value of shared information. In answer to a question from the group, Pedro agreed the Diagnostic Q10 guide was not now regarded as fit for purpose.

After a most interesting response to a number of other questions, Pedro offered to return to the group later in the year with a more detailed analysis of the research findings once his study had been completed.

5. Chairman's report

5.1 IAG meeting 6TH February 2017

The Chairman gave feedback on this meeting, highlighting a presentation on the night life of Bolton Town Centre and measures to combat unruly behaviour resulting from alcohol consumption. A short video produced from CCTV coverage highlighted typical problems the police had to deal with. The Chairman said that at one time the problems were often evident on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights but now seemed to be confined mostly to Saturday drinking. Other topics covered at the meeting included plans for recruitment of new members, particularly from under-represented communities such as the LGBT community; national drive on counter terrorism and an update on hate crime.

5.2 Community and Voluntary Sector Forum 7th February 2017

The Chairman gave a brief overview of items dealt with at this meeting. These included a review of the Vision Conference; Current grants update; training opportunities and news items from member groups.

5.3 Meeting with David Ramsbottom of asc Healthcare Wednesday 13th February

The Chairman gave feedback on a very productive meeting with David at which a great number of issues with our website were progressed. The Chairman also referred to a number of additions to the website which were planned to take place later in the year and which would hopefully make the website more interesting and interactive.

6. Befriending Service

The Chairman reported on difficulties experienced with obtaining funding to pay for the recruitment of a Volunteers' Co-ordinator. He outlined the options available and expressed a preference for the recruitment of Volunteers to be trained by NAS and subsequently

managed by himself until strong evidence could be gained for a further bid to employ a Volunteers' Co-ordinator. He emphasised the importance of not returning the grant already promised by The Big Lottery (Awards4All).

7. Carers Trips

The Chairman reported the completion of reports and financial statement for the Carers trips that ended with the visit to see Billy Elliot in Manchester. He stated an application would be submitted for 2017 trips and asked members to let him or Roselle know if they had suggestions for places to visit. Roselle passed to the Chairman a list of potential venues suitable for carers' trips.

8. AOB

The Chairman reported he had attended the funeral of Mr Alan Lingard on behalf of BAAS who had died after a short illness in late January. Alan had been the Caretaker at Commerce House and always took a keen interest in the activities of both BAAS and ABAG. He had no family members living.

9. Dates of next meetings

The next monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday 29th March 2017.

The next Drop-in at Commerce House on Saturday 25th February 2017.