

BOLTON ADULT AUTISM SUPPORT
Minutes of the Meeting held at 2pm on 28th February 2018
at Thicketford Care and Community Centre

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed members, Dr Emma Gowen and her two colleagues to the meeting. There were 8 members and three guests. Apologies were received from Elaine Birch and Anna Polichnowska.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on the 29th November 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th February were reviewed and agreed.

3. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

4. Presentation from Dr.Emma Gowen, Senior Lecturer and Co-Director of the BEAM Laboratory (Body, Eyes and Movement) and Chair of Autism Manchester.

Dr. Gowen was assisted by members of her team; titles of the presentations included the following:

- (i) Overview of the research in the Body, Eye and Movement (BEAM) lab, Dr.Emma Gowen.
- (ii) Visual perception in autistic adults, Sabrina Subri.
- (iii) Time perception in autistic adults, Martin Casassus.

Dr Emma Gowen and her team discussed their body, eye and movement research programme relating to adults with autism. This included; sensory processing, visual perception, motor ability, timing (a sense of time etc.) and brain movement.

Dr Emma Gowen along with a network of clinicians, practitioners and researchers share knowledge and collaborate on research alongside an experienced advisory group including families and educational research.

Sabrina Subri gave a short presentation on the impact of visual perception in autism, posing the question, "How do we perceive image processing and orientation of image linking, with information from the eyes to the optical lobe with orientation of lines then shapes, texture and objects".

In autism, sensory perception results in information overload as the brain processes differently. (Shah and Frith 1982).

'To look on part of the picture and not the whole', when an individual with autism is unable to open and close shapes, closure and symmetry; they experience a pop up effect of visual clutter. (Joachim Et Al 2015).

Time Perception - Martin Casassus. In autism there is no transduction process (cognition), no sense of time, this can vary from one individual on the autism spectrum to another.

Time Sensitivity - Interim Time - High Order - Expectations - Social Co-ordination. There has been experimental work carried out on 'sand timers' present studies have shown there is no significant differences but still no clarity on time perception present.

The presentations sparked much debate with members and our speakers answered a number of questions posed by members. At the end of the discussions, the Chairman thanked Dr Gowen and her colleagues for a most stimulating and enlightening set of presentations.

5. Befriending Service Update:

The Chairman reported on the current position regarding the Befriending service. He indicated that the grant application for a Co-ordinator had been partly funded by the Postcode Community Trust but an additional grant application had been submitted to the Bolton CVS for the balance required. He indicated that a decision on this last application would be known by the next committee meeting in March. He went on to inform members that the immediate task now was to recruit volunteers to undertake training and

then act as Befrienders. Although during the previous 6 months there had been 8 expressions of interest, none of these had actually materialised in the form of a completed application form.

6. Chairman's report.

(i) Meeting of Bolton IAG

The Chairman gave feedback on the three IAG meetings he had attended. He reported much discussion at the first meeting had dealt with a complete revision of the recruitment pack for new members that were urgently needed. The second meeting had dealt largely with a presentation on the National Anti terrorism campaign called PREVENT and the last meeting was devoted to a review of stop and search videos undertaken by the police. These were reviewed as part of the GMP need to ensure independent validation and feedback.

(ii) Meeting of the Equality Action Target Group

The Chairman reported this meeting had provided several speakers from the NHS; Bolton Council and Bolton CVS. Topics covered included a presentation on Co-production of services, Engagement with Doctors surgeries to help identify vulnerable patients who might be subject of radicalisation and a presentation on the Bolton Home Start initiative for young families. The latter emphasising the reliance upon volunteers and the difficulty of recruiting the same.

(iii) Bolton Vision Conference

Both the Chairman and Vice-chair reported briefly on the above conference held on 30th January. This year had seen a much greater use of technology throughout the conference to ensure maximum participation of the delegates. Much time had been devoted to a 'slick' video presentation of recent developments in the town such as the new Interchange and also visions of those projects yet to be developed such as the re-development of the old Moor Lane bus station.

(iv) Meeting with Sir David Crausby MP

The Chairman reported that he and Eira Heywood had recently met with Sir David Crausby to discuss the possibility of Sir David becoming Patron for BAAS. The Chairman said he was thrilled to be able to now report that Sir David had generously consented to be our Patron. The Chairman said this matter had been placed as a 'breaking News' item on our website.

7. Relocation of monthly drop-in sessions

The Chairman reported that the trustees had investigated various locations in the Marketplace to ascertain their suitability as venues for a new drop-in centre following the removal from Commerce House. He indicated that so far the preferred option was in the foyer area of the light cinema. However, he confirmed that investigations were ongoing to see if a private room might be available with easy access to refreshment facilities.

An alternative facility for drop-in sessions for members' sons and daughters was discussed and various options discussed such as the Triangle at Doffcocker, Oscars Disco and Christ Church Hall at Longsight Lane, Harwood.

8. Website additions

The Chairman informed members that several YouTube links had been added to our website under the Useful Links page. These included several videos on Autism including presentations by Dr Tony Attwood. He urged all members to visit the website as often as possible.

9. Any Other Business.

Time constraints prevented any further discussion, save for the item below.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

28th March commencing 2.00pm at Thicketford Care and Community Centre.