

BOLTON ADULT ASPERGERS SUPPORT GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on March 26th 2014

1. In Attendance: 8 members and two guest speakers

2. Apologies and welcome : Apologies were received from Kath and Phillip Martin and Julie Farrar.

The Chairman gave a warm welcome to Mari Saeki and her colleague Jane Owen-Pam

3. Minutes of the February meeting

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 26TH February were agreed

5. Matters arising from the above minutes. There were no issues arising from the minutes bar a correction highlighted by the Chairman.

6. Presentation by Mari Saeki

Mari explained to the Group all the new legislation concerning the Care and Support Bill.

She discussed new pilot schemes within the work place i.e. Supported Internships,

Mari talked about the delivery of training workshops for parents within NA and buying in training via the Together Trust.

No specific work modules yet ready, she has approached employment services but has yet to receive a response. Rachael Tanner (Assistant Director) Children's and Adult Services, Bolton working with National Brokerage in conjunction with the assessment process and individual budget allocations i.e. give practical advice, or short term funding for preventative measures.

AGSMA are working with different models, i.e. Pay-As-You-Go expertise in autism and support planning, or, Local Authority buying-in hours, whilst understanding the danger points of having the ability to crisis manage. Although funding ended last year, NA would like to use this as a 'lever to buy into' this idea.

Mari discussed the mental capacity act and said the act can sometimes be less than helpful, particularly in regard to defining 'capacity' and where there may be a financial abuse issue she has found the Police have no power to intervene; all safeguarding issues are still not in operation or 'in force'. Mari is now working with a specialist in developing the mental capacity act which is

Specifically tailored to autism and autism spectrum disorders. Mari advised the Royal College of Medicine are now prioritising training within target groups, such as GP's and would like to develop GP Champions in autism awareness in the wider community.

Mari has recently developed and delivered training within the Police Authority, 999 Response teams at Sedgeley Park. As part of her awareness training she has introduced the 'E' Card but has found there is scant knowledge of this within the wider police force. Mari says she has discussed this at several

senior levels within the police force and is aware of the work being undertaken by our a previous guest speaker, Detective Inspector Phil Key from the Greater Manchester Police Force and the support team.

Paul Coggins – MP for Greater Manchester has been instrumental in the preparation of a draft paper which he will present to the Justice Minister on police standards which have recently resulted in Asperger related incidents being the subject of investigation. Mari says Autism Awareness Training would be beneficial to them including the right of the individual to request someone with knowledge of autism/ and in particular Aspergers, at the point of arrest.

Presentation from Jane Owen – Welfare Rights Adviser from NA

Jane advised the group that as a welfare rights adviser for NA she would be available to give advice via e-mail or telephone appointments.

Jane explained that a child at the age of 16 years (and the latest 20 years) would now automatically apply for ESA with Adult Services.

Jane then explained some of the changes with the Welfare Benefits affecting DLA (Disability Living Allowance)

It is presently being phased out on a post code basis nationally

Whilst it has now been delayed, due to its complexity etc., no new claims are being processed

Changes would probably affect the Bolton area from October 2015

There is no automatic transfer; appointee/parent/guardian will be invited to re-apply whilst present award is still paid.

DWP (Dept for Works and Pensions) have now appointed DLA Officers who may be required to

undertake home visits etc.,

CLAIM PROCESS - this can be via a phone call, a letter or via the appointee. At this point a 52 page document will be sent to the claimant/appointee for completion.

CRITERIA – PIP (PERSONAL INDEPENDENT PAYMENT), which will be Points based, may make it easier when allocating scoring etc. This is now points based and regularly assessed:

Key Elements: Three Groups

1. Fit or not Fit,
2. Fit to Attend Work Related Activity Groups, or Need Support, and
3. Not able to Work.

When completing the form it is essential to identify what best fits the circumstances and look for the always use the word prompting or needing assistance, within a safe environment.

Must score at least 8 points within daily living tasks or 12 points enhanced across descriptions to qualify. Income will be either contribution based(12 months contribution payments) or income based, which is indefinite. ESA replaced Incapacity/Income Support in 2008 definition: when someone is unable to work through incapacity. Carer or Lone Parent can apply.

There is also an appeal process to follow where a decision can be challenged, this has to be submitted within one month and must include new supporting evidence. If this fails there is the opportunity to appeal again where the appointee can attend the appeal on behalf of the claimant.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT. This is an applicable amount which is paid to those who are experiencing difficulties in employment or where there has been a change in circumstances, either in work, out of work or not able to work.

There were a number of questions put to Jane, who gave a very clear and understandable response. Jane finished her presentation by reminding the group again that she would be available to answer any queries they may have by contacting the NA.

The Chairman thanked both Mari and Jane for their respective presentations and the group gave a round of applause.

7. Chairman's report

The Chairman advised the group that the Carers Grant submitted in December had failed.

However, following a discussion with the Committee, a recommendation was made that we should send a letter of concern to the Director of Children's and Adults department giving reasons why we should be considered favourably for support.

The Chairman advised that the first drop in session will take place at Commerce House, Bolton, on Saturday 29th March between 2 – 4pm and invited all present, to attend if they could.

8. Date/s of Next Meetings:

Wednesday 30th April at 2pm at Thicketford House, whilst reminding all present that the second Drop- In was scheduled for Saturday 26th April.