

## **BOLTON ADULT ASPERGER SUPPORT GROUP**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at Thicketford Health Centre.**

### **Item. 1**

#### **Welcome and Apologies**

#### **In attendance were 9 members and two guest speakers**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Mr Mark Fraser, Manager of services for Adults with Disabilities and Ms Katerina Aliri, Commissioning Officer, both from Bolton's Children's and Adult Services Commissioning team for agreeing to visit to provide members with an update on progress with the Autism Strategy.

### **Item.2**

#### **Presentation from Mark Fraser – Manager of Bolton MBC Commissioning Adult Disability Team**

Mark outlined the Authority's Financial Budget Plan for 2015 -17 and advised the Group the overall Authority's budget had to be reduced by 43 Million and the loss of 500 jobs across all the services. Some £6.25 - £7.75 savings had been identified from Adult Social Care budgets. He identified the priorities for the Autism Strategy as:

- Raising Awareness
- ensuring services are able to make reasonable adjustments,
- diagnostic pathway and ongoing support,
- information and advice,
- transition and respite services,
- employment opportunities and training and improved access to training with local providers.

Mark advised that the Local Authority had agreed and 'signed off' the strategy in April 2014 and access to it can be made via the Local Authority's website, which is linked to the 'Think Autism' National Strategy, National Self Assessment, He explained where Bolton was at present and what is still to be achieved.

There will be a new form of self assessment tool in March 2015. The Autism Partnership Board comprising of representation from Housing, Mental Health Team, Clinical Psychology and health professionals in Autism will review Bolton's progress and Mark asked if the Group would like to be represented at future meetings. This was affirmed. The work of the Partnership Board will be discussed at a future meeting in the New Year. Mark also confirmed that Mari Saeki (NAS) has also been invited to attend future meetings.

Mari has been involved in a number of training initiatives, particularly with Greater Manchester Police Force and following a brief discussion on the importance of awareness raising, the Chairman agreed to contact Mari Saeki for advice on the content of forthcoming posters the Group would like publishing in creating greater awareness within the community.

Mark advised the Group that the initial Q10 (a questionnaire which will be a 'useful tool' for all GP Practices across the Borough in diagnosis and referral) is now in operation.

Mark also advised that additional funding has been made available for such referrals since April 2013, and advised that to date 25 were awaiting diagnosis and a further 12 had been diagnosed, making a total of 37.

Mark advised that there is now a ten week group support scheme in place which has a main objective of highlighting and providing appropriate adjustments, particularly within education and training.

Specialism in complex care and multi complex needs has now been provided at an annual cost of £200,000 and it is anticipated demand for this service will increase and additional funding will be required.

A Draft Revision on Statutory Guidance on 'Think Autism' Consultation period is now in place up to the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and this is available to view from the Dept of Health website.

Mark advised that additional funding has become available through the Autism Invitation Fund, part of Greater Manchester & Trafford Services (AGSMA) of £18,500, which would be a 'one off' spend and invited any interested parties for ideas regarding spend of this sum. Suggestions had to be submitted before the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mark offered to make a return visit in the New Year. The Chairman thanked Mark and Katerina for their presence.

### **Item .3.**

#### **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October were accepted as a true record

### **Item. 4**

#### **Matters arising**

There was further discussion in response to ideas on how to increase numbers attending meetings, it was agreed that more informal meetings, perhaps 'coffee and cake' events, or a

different venue, such as a coffee shop or public house in Bolton, may be the way forward in 2015.

**Action:** GH and EH to distribute leaflets and source new venues in Bolton and discuss at next meeting in 2015.

All agreed that as the next meeting would normally be just before Christmas, we would bring the meeting forward and dispense with a formal agenda and instead hold an informal 'bring and share' event at Thicketford House on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December. This would be an 'open invitation' for all members. Invitations also to be sent to previous speakers

## **Item. 5**

### **Nominations for vacancies to the Committee and re-election of Officers**

The Chairman reported that the current membership of the committee was comprised as follows:

Chairman – Graham Heywood  
Vice Chairman - Vacant  
Treasurer – Martin Farrar  
Secretary - Barbara Brooks

Non executive members:

Tony Shaw, Helen Green (Safeguarding Officer) and Assistant Secretary – Eira Heywood

There had been no nominations received for the position of Vice- Chairman  
There remained 3 non executive vacancies to committee.

The Chairman informed members that all existing post holders had agreed to continue in their present capacities

All present agreed by a show of hands that the above members continue as identified and that the vacant positions be filled if and when suitable nominations were subsequently received.

## **Item .6**

### **Chairman's Annual Report.**

The Chairman presented his report for the period 2013/2014 that outlined the progress the group had made since its inception in July 2013.

Main points highlighted were the securing of Seed Corn funding from the Bolton CVS and a Grant from Bolton Council both of which had enabled the group to make significant

progress in its establishment. In particular the Chairman drew attention to the setting up of the web site, provision of pop-up display stands for use at exhibitions and the printing of promotional literature.

He further drew attention to the need for increasing membership and raising awareness of the group amongst the general public. There had however, been many other positives, not least the establishment of partnership arrangements with a number of organisations throughout the Borough. Notable amongst these were the partnership with the Council and the Bolton CVS, both of which had resulted in a great deal of practical support by way of advice and encouragement. All partnership organisations were identified at the end of the report that was circulated.

Members accepted the report.

#### **Item . 7**

##### **Secretary's Report**

The Secretary presented her report for the period 2014/2014 that emphasised the main items of interest from the past year. These included the successful participation at the Bolton CVS Annual General Meeting held at the Macron Stadium on October 15<sup>th</sup>. This had been possible with the availability of the recently purchased exhibition materials and equipment and printing of promotional leaflets etc. The Secretary also drew attention to the need to increase our membership and the need for the group to increase its income streams so as to pursue the achievement of goals that had been set earlier in the year.

Members accepted the report.

#### **Item. 8**

##### **Treasurer's Report**

The treasurer introduced his report for the period July 2013 to end of November 2014.

Total income for the period under review was ££6750 and expenditure was £2677.52 which incorporated running costs, training, trips for Parents and Carers, postage and out of pocket expenses for the year.

#### **Item. 9**

##### **Miscellaneous**

1. The Chairman encouraged any members who may have any ideas on how to improve the web site to let him know and this will be discussed at any future meetings in 2015.
2. The Chairman advised the Group that we had been requested to provide two speakers for a training session organised by Dr Anna Dodd of the GMW Community

Mental Health Team for health professionals. Helen Green and Eira Heywood had agreed to join the training session and speak on the challenges of bringing up a child with Asperger Syndrome.

3. The Group discussed the impact of the changes to the Welfare Benefit system, particularly PIP (Personal Independent Payment) and any future changes in respect of bus passes.  
EH to organise a visiting speaker on PIP Revision to a future meeting and  
EH to obtain further information from the Ministry of Transport on changes to bus Passes and finally EH and GH to organise a trip to Bents Nursery, provisionally Booked for 16<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Item. 10**

### **Date/s of next meetings**

The Chairman advised the Group that the next drop in would be Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November.  
Next group meeting – An informal ‘bring and share’ on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December.

BAAS/min/nov/14