

BOLTON ADULT ASPERGERS SUPPORT

Minutes of the meeting held on the 30th October 2013 at Thicketford Care Centre.

1.Present: Eira Heywood, Graham Heywood, Tony Shaw, Steph Shaw, Barbara Brooks, Helen Green, Martin Farrar, Julie Farrar, Stuart Ball, Kath , Phillip. and guest speaker Marie Saeki

2.Apologies

There were no apologies

3.Minutes of last meeting held on the 25th September

The minutes of the above meeting were agreed.

4.Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

and the experiences accumulated by the young people who had attended, all in all a very 'positive outcome'.

5.4 The Chairman advised the group that he had not yet heard back from Peter Halliwell with regards the ID cards discussed at the last meeting.

Item 6 Presentation by Marie Saeki

The Chairman welcomed Marie Saeki from the National Autistic Society, Gt.Manchester reminding her it was some fifteen months since she last attended.

Marie informed the group of her role within NAS and outlined the family services project for which she has overall responsibility, funded by the ten authorities in the Greater Manchester area, (including at present Bolton) acknowledging the support she had previously received via Tony and Stephanie Shaw.

Bolton MBC are hoping that NA will be able to provide a 'sign posting' service in the future for those in the Bolton and surrounding areas who are looking for support and advice, additionally NA will undertake research, around specific topics with the help and guidance of her Dedicated team that includes parents of children who are on the autism spectrum. Marie hoped that NA will be able to act as a 'third party back up' who would act as representative to future specific events to be held in the Bolton area.

NAS produce informative newsletters, three times yearly, the next publication being due out within the next three weeks. Marie advised the Group that the NAS carry out research and publish recommendations on the best and most 'tried and tested' literature available

on autism and act as a central information and advice centre in the Greater Manchester and surrounding districts.

Marie went on to inform the group of the following:

- the new 'E' Card – which acts as an autism alert, is presently widely circulated for younger persons, who are finding it a 'useful tool' whilst out in the community. The Manchester 'E' card, used specifically within the Greater Manchester Police Force has been specifically designed with 'high functioning' adults within the community. It contains minimum information which includes diagnosis and a photograph. This was successfully launched via the Diversity Team through the North West Forum, which can be used by parents/carers.
- Marie stressed there is still much to be done in the way of training needs and hopes that groups like ourselves could provide useful information to 'target groups' particularly local police services on appropriate future training, if necessary consider lobbying the police commission services.
- the 'people growing older' pilot scheme launched by NAS. Marie is concerned that the services lack the appropriate training awareness within the present adult strategy proposed and once again reiterated there is 'much more work to be done' in this connection.
- Marie hoped that BAAS will be pro-active in 'pushing along' the adult autism strategy, followed by statutory guidance and diagnostic 'pathway' training and the provision of a specialist in diagnosis and transition within the Bolton area. Marie informed the group that she had previously been working closely with Stephanie Shaw on a 'working panel' which has now implemented changes but this is not yet 'linked up' with other groups within the Greater Manchester area. Marie agreed that she would contact the panel and ask them to make arrangements to contact the Chairman in the foreseeable future with a view to 'linking up' resources. Marie thinks the panel 'are still feeling their way' and we could provide valuable guidance for future actions.
- Trafford BC now has a diagnostic team who are also providing valuable diagnostic training etc., She advised that Trafford had approached her asking if there was a clinical psychologist working within the CMHT's in the Bolton area, Marie advised that she did not think this was the case at present, Marie is of the opinion that Bolton are still 'gate keeping' in terms of diagnostic provision at present and intends to look further into the ethics around this.
- Marie stated the Pathway Strategy again has huge gaps in service and Greater Manchester have launched the 'best way forward' strategy but again this will need to be more creative within the present resources allocation. Tony Shaw stated that he agreed that the self assessment recently launched by Bolton MBC commissioning team had a 'long way to go' to meet the gaps and has yet to see the information the group provided to be published on the local government help line.

- Marie advised that as a group we could look at local free training providers and advised that there were relevant courses held at Castle Hill Centre, Marie agreed to contact the Chairman with this information.
- Marie advised that the CCG still has little knowledge around the autism spectrum disorders and NAS intends to 'take them to task' within the next few months, stating that they have access to free 'E' learning modules, and this knowledge and information should be known by all health professionals working within the CMHT's across all ten authorities.
- there have so far been five training sessions and it is vital that the authority 'target' groups who possess no knowledge at all on the subject. Marie states that the Royal College of Medicine has insisted that as of 2014 autism and autism spectrum disorders must be a priority.
- Marie discussed the 'help with work in employment' pilot scheme which had raised a number of concerns and again hoped that within the near future local employers will be made aware of the needs and support for adults with Asperger Syndrome and autism spectrum disorders and the 'lets talk autism' scheme which targets the high functioning, will provide clear adjustments to their needs etc.,
- statistically only 25% of graduates with autism spectrum disorders gain paid employment. Marie stated that the BBC recently launched a documentary highlighting these issues, which discussed the strengths, rather than the negatives, these young people could and should be able to offer within the work place, but again there is no specific model and work experience will require radical restructuring to meet these needs if it is ever to success in the future.
- the 'access to work' funding stream had more financial resources than it would admit to and again urged the group to consider lobbying the local authority into using some of this valuable resource into the voluntary sector to enable them to create much needed work experience opportunities and a much wider application that funding could buy other specialist services.
- Marie discussed the transition from child to adult and said she would like to see more workshops identifying the need to 'prepare' an adult etc., and again would like to see this 'piloted' across all areas using learning tools, such as work books etc., Marie said 'knowledge is power' and this will help not only the group but young adults 'navigate through the services' with the ongoing support of the NAS in the future.
- Wigan MBC in conjunction with Job Centre Plus have introduced the 'autism champions network' for this particular purpose and hoped that Bolton/Bury would adopt such a resource for their own areas in the future.

- At this point in the meeting there was an ‘open discussion’ on the mental capacity act and its implications etc. There was overall consent within the group that we contact a professional in employment law to discuss this and other issues to the group in the future. Marie expressed an interest in introducing this as a ‘work shop’ topic. The Chairman asked if Marie could recommend an expert in this field who would be prepared to offer advice and training, particularly in light of the recent changes to the Welfare Benefits system .

At this point the Chairman thanked Marie for her inspirational and illuminating talk which he knew would give the group hope to raise some of these issues but acknowledged that there is still much more to be done and hope this will be part of our ‘way forward’ in the future.

5. Chairman’s report

5.1 The Chairman explained to the Group the issues encountered to date around the setting up of a bank account

5.2 The Chairman brought the group up to date with the evening meeting held at the Holiday Inn on Wednesday 23rd October. Initial payment for room hire at the Holiday Inn was complimentary, but a small charge for refreshments was payable., Depending on future costs, the group may need to look elsewhere The group agreed to continue with evening meetings at the Holiday Inn subject to costs, It was agreed that the group should hold a further meeting on the third Wednesday in each month, with the next meeting on November 20th November at 7pm.

The Chairman advised that he had been contacted by a Jennie Pemberton (Chamber of Commerce, Bolton), with regards alternative venue, to date there has been no date set to view the premises, due to annual leave, chairman intends to contact and arrange before next group meeting.

5.3 Feedback from evening meeting held on the 23rd October. Steph Sherrat gave an informative ‘insight’ into the week-ends activities in the Lake District which had been enjoyed by all who attended.

5.4 The Chairman advised that the application for grant aid had now been submitted to Bolton CVS – small grants programme (a maximum of £1500) but are asking for evidence of need and advised the group that a document would be passed around the room for all present to complete and sign, this will then be re-submitted to the CVS on behalf of the Group.

5.5 The Chairman advised the Group that following the drafting of a letter by Barbara to the Chief Constable a letter has now been submitted and if there is no response within a reasonable time, the letter will be re submitted for the attention of the Police Commissioner, Tony Lloyd.

5.6 The Chairman advised the group that the CVS required the name of the acting Safe Guarding Officer for the Group and asked if anyone would be prepared to take on this responsibility.

Helen expressed an interest and Eira was also prepared to attend the appropriate training.

The Chairman advised that the CVS are requiring also sight of our 'safeguarding policy' and Marie Saeki offered to help in this and advised that the CVS also has developed 'model' which will also be a useful tool in the completion of this documentation.

Open Forum

Stuart Ball discussed the issues he had encountered at Bolton College when re-enrolling his son on a course.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 27th November at 2pm at Thicketford Health Centre.