### Autism Way Forward

**Notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 September 2015**

##### Shaw Room

10.00am to 12.00pm

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| 1 | **Welcome and Apologies**  Peter Tomlin, Interim Head of Safeguarding, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.  In attendance:  Peter Tomlin (Chair)  Maria Barber  Gill Barnard  Hayley Broxup  Jakki Crawley  Debbie Gainsborough  Louise Herniman  Claire Hill  Debbie Holland  David Lloyd  Debbie Messam  Adrian Murray  Charlotte Platt  Karen Shaw  Fiona Southall  Gareth Welford  Cathy Williams  Anne Wood  Janet Wray  Kathryn Lyons - Business Support (Minutes)  Wendy Whitehead - Observing  Apologies for absence were received from Debbie Burton, Cllr Jenny Harrison, Gary Flanagan, John King, Colin Elliot, Emma Williams, Mari Saeki, Shirley Murray, Jacqueline Stewart and Angela Lees.  Peter requested that all those present introduce themselves and outline their main roles, particularly in relation to Autism. |
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| 2 | **Matters Arising from the Meeting held on 16th September 2015**  Item 3  Capital Grant – This was an Agenda Item.  Item 5  There were resolutions that Colin would contact groups to move forward with consultation and feedback  Action: That Peter Tomlin speak to Colin and establish whether this was done.  Action: That Debbie Burton and Maria Barber speak to schools regarding the Autism Champions.  Action: That all people are identified from all areas to ensure that they are consulted.  Item 6  Claire confirmed that Colin had sent a letter of thanks to Michelle Hope.  Peter explained that car parking was an issue that could not be resolve. He explained that the possibility of holding the meetings at different venues/setting could be investigated. |
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| 3 | **Early Help**  Peter introduced Debbie Holland, Early Help Service Manager, and explained that he had invited her to update the Group on Early Help and what it entails.  The Early Help Team was set up on 1st April 2015 and brought together   * Family Support * Drug and Alcohol * School Support * ESF   It works across all ages and supports families and individuals and deals with different issues such as housing, debt, work, smoking and weight.  She explained that the team have been trained to deal with all complexities. There is an offer for the team to support and mentor people within the community support to do it themselves. The Team are also developing community Groups  Referrals can be made in several ways: self-refer, professionals, Council, Positive Steps, Threshold.  Peter stated that he could clearly see where the work of the Team fits in with the strategy work being done by the AWF Group.  Debbie explained that she is trying to raise awareness of the team and that there is scope to work with more people. The Group discussed ways that they felt could help raise awareness of the service.  Peter asked the Group to identify where they felt there were gaps in their areas regarding children, young people and adults with Autism in Oldham.  Debbie – Transition points – critical  Post diagnosis work. Knowing where else to go – signposting  Specialisms - link up – both ways    Karen – Complex young people – Top end  Teenage boys – not in education  E-safety – not socialising – online  Resources / Expertise  Vulnerable to being exploited  Maria – Articulate more able children  Still vulnerable  Not aware of consequences of actions  Late diagnosis – in schools  Young person themselves to better understand diagnosis, be positive  Girls with ASD  Anne Wood - Training and coordination – levels available.  Awareness of what being delivered across the Borough  Need ASD training Strategy  Include service users  Need different level of training  Link into more specialist, direct work  Skills of practitioners  No EY representation – all ages  OPAL – Specialist training for support staff  Jakki - Transitions 16-25  Mainstream – anxiety about change  Don’t want to disable users  Early help for mainstream transition, help /what’s available?  School refusers – fall out of system – into education training  Early help for up to 6 months  Supporting low level need – become reliant  Autism champion rather than new referral  Difficult to navigate internet – something easy to use  Simplifying routes to services  Easily manipulated – low level vulnerable  Dave Accommodation issues  No support in Oldham therefore other Borough placements needed  Debbie G – Hidden needs more complex  Don’t fit criteria – where do they go?  Work with individuals and families to make life better  Training for Early Help workers  Diagnose co-existing conditions – differentiation if autism element.  Understanding approach – Psych / Psychologist / GPs of diagnosis  Education system – not geared to give holistic education to equip for life  - not just about qualifications  - life skills  - dynamics – eg if bus late  - sustain employment  Why can’t schools accommodate these children – good opportunity with  Strategy?  Cathy – Front line staff - training  First response  Charlotte – Late diagnosis – adulthood  Specialist services – Out of Borough  Can’t get right support in Oldham  Impact on families and individuals  Gareth - Transition – Primary to Secondary  Teachers trained to spot signs  Adrian - Peoples’ attitude / understanding  Everyone different  Better awareness  Not in a box diagnosis  Gill - Risks – vulnerabilities  Support to minimise risk  Louise - Transition – all stages  People’s knowledge  Peter thanked everyone for their views and explained that this information was crucial to the development of the Strategy.  **Action:** That Peter Tomlin look at the membership constitution of the AWF Group. |
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| 4 | **Capital Grant**  The Group looked at the revised Capital Grant document and Claire explained that it would be sent out in the next couple of days. Members expressed their concern over the timescale but Peter explained that the money had to be allocated before the end of March.  At this point Peter left the meeting and Claire took the Chair.  **Action:** Claire will send out information on the Capital Grant, including the background and purpose of the grant, the forms community groups need to use in order to apply for the grant and the timescales. |
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| 5 | **Forward Plan**  There was a discussion regarding the fact that members felt that clear actions agreed in the previous meeting had not been undertaken, particular concern was the consultation visits Colin agreed to do. They felt that this was a missed opportunity to raise awareness of a valuable piece of work.  Claire gave an assurance that this would not be the case and that the Action Plan would be in place before the end of March and that consultation will be undertaken as part of the process.  **Action:** That Louise and Claire will undertake the consultation visits as previously agreed by Colin  **Action:** That Claire share the timeline that she and Louise are working to, once they have reviewed it.  **Action:** That members of the Group forward any comments/feedback to Claire. |
| 6 | **Autism Friendly Town**  Claire circulated a document about Autism Friendly Cities. She explained that this concept was in the early stages and that there were currently only two autism-friendly cities which were in Scotland. She felt that it would be a good idea for Oldham to commit to becoming one.  Members felt that this was a good idea and a discussion ensued as to how this could be achieved. A lot of the principles of the document reinforced the work currently being undertaken by the Theme Groups.  **Action:** That this be an Agenda Item at the next meeting.  **Action:** That Claire and Louise discuss this item with NAS at their upcoming meeting. |
| 7 | **Update on Theme Groups**  Claire and Louise verbally updated the Group on the work of the theme groups.  They reported that the Groups have been meeting regularly, were well attended and were on track. Members were thanked for their continued input and commitment.  **Action:** That Claire send the minutes of these meetings to Kathryn for circulation. |
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| 8 | **Any other business**  There were no further items of AOB. |
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| 9 | **Next Meeting**  Due to the fact that this meeting had been rearranged from November, Claire questioned whether members felt the need to hold the meeting scheduled for 16th December.  As all items had been covered on the agenda it was resolved that the next meeting would be held on 27th January 2016, 10am-12pm in the Lees Suite, Civic Centre**.** |