### MINUTES

### Autism Way Forward Meeting

**Wednesday 8th May 2019**

**10am – 12pm**

**Lees Suite, Civic Centre**

**Chair – Jo Charlan**

**Minutes – Martin Ruddock**

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| **Present:** | Cliff Wilson (CW) | Oldham Cares |
|  | Derek Rhoden (DR) | National Probation |
|  | Sally Twist (ST) | Pennine Care NHS Trust |
|  | John Timney (JT) | Pennine Care NHS Trust |
|  | Abigail Hall (AH) | PCFT |
|  | Cathy Williams (CW) | Parent |
|  | Debbie Baum (DB) | ECPS |
|  | Emma Dewar (ED) | QEST |
|  | Maria Barber (MB) | QEST |
|  | Sophie Croft (SC) | HYM |
|  | John Birch (JB) | HYM |
|  | Debbie Gainsborough (DG) | POINT |
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1. **Welcome, Introductions and apologies from Chair**

JC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

1. **Group Discussion**

The first Greater Manchester autism strategy has been commissioned by the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium (GMAC) - a partnership of adult services from the 10 local authorities in Greater Manchester, the 10 Clinical Commissioning groups (CCG) and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership. The work has beencoordinated by the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium project, run by the National Autistic Society.

JC advised that a great deal of work had been undertaken and it was time to review the current work relating to the strategy. This was especially relevant given the introduction of the that quite a lot has happened & time has moved on & that there are things to be looked at such as where we are, where we are going & how. There’s quite a bit of work to draw a line under – and also weather there is more work that needs to be done

There are a set of working groups for the GM strategy and to make Greater Manchester autism friendly, we would need to work across four key areas:

**Access** - This is about making sure that public services for autistic people are accessible and that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in mainstream settings (i.e. services that are not specialist for people on the autism spectrum or with learning disabilities but aimed at the general population) and that staff in these settings are trained. This includes housing and general council services.

**Community** - To make sure that autistic people and their families are able to take part in their communities, be active citizens and access the help to which they are entitled, accessible information available needs to be available. As well autistic people and their families should be active participants in the planning of local services. This strand also looks at addressing additional barriers faced by certain groups including those in the criminal justice system, older adults, women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Others (LGBTQ+) communities.

**Health and support** - This includes ensuring access to diagnosis and post diagnostic support across the region, making sure that health and care have the right information on local need and are planning the right services locally as well as making sure health and care staff have appropriate levels of training in line with the Autism Act.

**Employment and transition** - This includes employment and transition into adulthood for autistic people and family members.

In relation to sub groups and work undertaken, group members noted that:

* They felt that things have improved dramatically
* The sub groups had lost momentum, in some cases no longer fit for purpose and in some cases had completed their work
* Referrers still experienced difficulties in finding information for individuals, however the actual diagnosis process is better and has added benefits & services
* A member had undertaken training on a tool that probation staff could use which enables them to make referrals to a GP for formal diagnosis

A member of the group asked how employment would employment work in term of the GM Strategy.The group were informed that:

* An Employment and Transition group is already in place which includes children and young people in addition to adults
* There are around 10 apprenticeships a year and these were open to people with autism
* That individuals were asking for more work experience opportunities to enable preparation and support into employment

**Transitions**

It was suggested that a transitions group examine transitioning into different life stages such as into school, work, into college, living situation.

CW informed the group thatmentioned he attended a transitions group meeting in March around the GM Strategy and this would inform the function & support people in different areas.

It was noted that the AFW should be seen to be contributing to local and regional strategy work. It was agreed that the work being undertaken for the GM Learning Disability Strategy and the GM Autism Strategy could be mirrored at locality level to dovetail with ongoing GM work. The leads from the regional sub groups could feed back to AWF on the work being undertaken.

JC shared a table with the group that demonstrates how the GM Autism Strategy aligned with the GM Learning Disability Strategy.

**Data**

Members discussed data and the types of information accessible to make decisions and support people. For example, that appropriate access be available to find out if somebody has been diagnosed or to gain permission to contact families.

There are also data issues such as struggling to gain access for information

JC informed the group that a data sub group had developed from a previous sub group. There is appetite to ensure that locally our learning disability and autism data is collated appropriately. Currently this is being undertaken within health and social care systems accessed by teams within the council. Updates will be provided at AWF meetings.

ST suggested thatthere should be evidence of a person’s learning disability or autism – such as a record of information or a diagnosis or health checks also there seems to be a lot of feedback from people who advised they don’t have a learning disability, they have autism

JC agreed to bring back a revised action plan, based on the aligned GMLD strategy sub groups and the GM Autism strategy. Leads would be appointed and asked to update at AWF meetings in the future.