

Bedfordshire Think Autism Partnership Board Meeting

Minutes of meeting on 21st February 2017 at 11am

The Rufus Centre, Flitwick

| | ACTIONS | |
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| <p>Welcome, introductions and actions/minutes from last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As chairperson, Steve Minchington welcomed everyone to today's meeting on the theme of education. Steve Minchington went through housekeeping and outlined the ground rules for the board meetings. <p>http://www.autismbedsdirectory.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/TAPBgroundrules.doc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steve Minchington introduced Alex Cobley (Commissioning Officer – Central Bedfordshire), Karen Malone (Commissioning Officer – Bedford Borough) and Amy Kay (Commissioning Officer – Luton Borough). Steve Minchington also introduced Helen Charnock as the chair designate. Helen is a service user who will be taking over the role of chairperson from Steve Minchington. Copies of minutes and all partnership board documentation can be viewed on the Autism Bedfordshire website at: http://www.autismbedsdirectory.co.uk/ Actions from the previous meeting – None raised. | |  |

Feedback from the Autism Self-Assessment Framework Questionnaires – Karen Malone and Amy Kay.
<http://www.autismbedsdirectory.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SU-feedback-presentation.pptx>

Analysis of feedback from the Self-Assessment Framework Questionnaires from the previous TAP Board Meeting (18th October 2016). A total of 16 questionnaires were completed along with some statements and 'I stories'.

Questions:

One member of the audience asked, as a parent and volunteer, if it was possible to be involved with the work of the BLMK partnership. Amy Kay said that stakeholder involvement is encouraged and she would take some contact details during the tea and coffee break.

Amy Kay to take contact details during tea and coffee break.



Diagnosis Service Update – Colin Parsons and Sharon Jackson.

<https://www.elft.nhs.uk/service/5/Adult-Autism-Service-Bedfordshire>

Sharon Jackson explained that the current wait for an initial assessment is 16 weeks. There have been changes to staff in some areas but this has not affected the number of people that they can see. The waiting time from initial assessment to diagnosis is currently 12 months.

It was recognised that the gap between the initial assessment and the next appointment was a long time to go with no contact, which is why staff now make contact in the interim to check on well-being and offer advice and sign-post to other support organisations where appropriate.

The Service currently receives 6-8 referrals per week, the majority of which are taken forward. Efforts are being made to streamline the service in the hope of reducing the waiting times.

Colin Parsons said that he has been investing time in educating his colleagues in other teams. He has been training the Community Mental Health Team, the Criminal Justice Mental Health Liaison Team, Bedford and Mid-Bedfordshire Crisis Team, etc. There are skills gaps in other organisations which they are trying to address.

Sharon Jackson explained about the Recovery College, which offers free courses run from locations across Bedfordshire and Luton promoting wellbeing and offering relevant, real-life help and support. The college offers training, information and guided advice sessions. A copy of the prospectus will be included in the minutes.

Questions:

Neil Tunncliffe said that the Recovery College states that it is only for mental health problems. Neil Tunncliffe approached them about a course on autism and is still waiting to hear from them. Neil Tunncliffe asked how he could get support from the Recovery College. Colin Parsons will raise the matter with the college and get back to Neil Tunncliffe.

Neil Tunncliffe asked what the plans were to reduce waiting times given that the current waiting time is longer than that of the Maudsley Hospital. He also asked whether an alternative psychologist was available.

Sharon Jackson explained that the psychologist had returned from maternity leave but has since resigned. There is someone in the role covering the post while a replacement is recruited. There is only one member of staff that can provide a diagnosis; the Service does not employ a medical physician.

Regarding waiting times, Sharon Jackson explained that a questionnaire had been introduced at the initial assessment phase. This would be used as a triage to decide the order of treatment for patients. Steps were also being taken to reduce the number of non-attendees or DNAs.

The Higgins Museum Becoming Autism Friendly

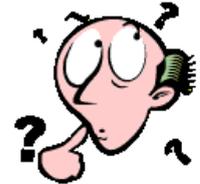
– Rosie Newbigging and Sue Hammond.

Rosie Newbigging explained that they are working to make the Higgins fully accessible. It is their intention to apply for the Autism Friendly Award. They have been developing an easy-to-read visual guide – not just for people with autism but for people with other disabilities too. They circulated copies of the first draft around the meeting and invited comments and questions. <http://www.autismbedsdirectory.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Visual-journeyrev.docx>

John Fortescue asked if it would be possible to use Lurke Street car park as a vantage point to give a

SJ to provide a copy of the Recovery College's prospectus for inclusion with the minutes.

Colin Parsons to ask the Recovery College about autism training courses and get back to Neil Tunncliffe.



clearer idea of the locations. Steve Minchington said that the pictures were fine but they didn't work together as a sequence of clear instructions. Steve Minchington also said that when he has visited the museum he has found that the barrier to the Higgins car park (for disabled visitors) has been padlocked, which causes problems. Rosie Newbigging agreed that this would need to be addressed, perhaps with a buzzer entry system.

Sandra Pearce offered the services of the Bedford Borough Voice Group to give ideas on the guide and feedback through the lunch club.

Helen Charnock asked if there was a bus stop near the Higgins and suggested that the guide should include public transport.

Neil Tunnicliffe said that the arrows suggest that the step is part of the journey, which makes the first picture look more like the first step of the journey rather than the destination. He suggested that the pictures would be better if they described the journey from A to B. Neil Tunnicliffe stressed that the guide was a very good idea but needed some work.

John Fortescue added that a full picture of Lurke Street car park would be helpful. Mandy Higgs agreed that it would add context. Mandy Higgs also pointed out that the photograph of St. Cuthbert's church is not taken from Mill Street but from the other side in Castle Road. This is not the view that would present itself to anyone following the route. Steve Minchington said that the comments were useful but it would be important to take pictures as you walk the route.

Rosie Newbigging said that they would stay and talk about the guide during the tea and coffee break and they could also be contacted by email.



Youth Inspired – Education

Due to illness a representative of Youth Inspired was unable to attend. Steve Minchington covered for them and explained a little about the arts courses that are currently running in Bedford.

Following a successful course in Luton, Autism Beds wanted to run a similar course in Bedford. Steve Minchington co-founded a group in Bedford called Infinite 29. Infinite 29 is a group of like-minded

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| <p>individuals who come together in a group setting to be creative. Steve Minchington said that art can be very beneficial to people who have autism.</p> <p>Bedford Creative Arts have a group which meets on a monthly basis. Steve Minchington attended a meeting and made a request for artists who would be willing to work with people who have autism. A new group would be launched in Bedford on 21st February. There is a young filmmaker from Luton and a ceramics teacher involved. Steve Minchington can put anyone interested in touch.</p> <p>Youth Inspired are also running a group. Steve Minchington is keen to keep the momentum going and start other groups. Steve Minchington continued that this links in to further education; there are many people who have found employment through developing their creative talents.</p> <p>Anyone who is interested in setting up or attending an art group or anyone that can help with funding please contact Steve Minchington.</p> | | |
| <p>Ruskin Mill – presentation by Wendy Holt.</p> <p>Ruskin Mill is a college for young adults (aged 16 – 25) with SEN. Wendy Holt emphasised that there are other provisions available.</p> <p>The Trust works with young people with complex behaviour and learning difficulties and disabilities, including autistic spectrum conditions, whose needs cannot be met elsewhere. There are colleges in 5 different locations offering both residential and day placements. Admissions are accepted all-year round.</p> <p>Students benefit from the Trust’s innovative Practical Skills Therapeutic Education (PSTE) method that gives students the opportunity to overcome barriers to learning, become skilled through doing real-life purposeful activities and engage as valued members of their community.</p> <p>The Trust has an organic café and a farm shop, which are open to the public. Students are able to work in the café and shop. The majority of students leave with qualifications or certificates of achievement for life, living and work skills.</p> <p>Places are funded by the local authority. There are 2 students from Bedford Borough currently attending the college.</p> | | |

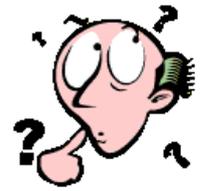
Questions:

Helen Charnock asked if the college was exclusively for those aged 16 -25. Wendy Holt said that they do have a school (Brantwood Specialist School 7 – 19 years) but the college is for 16-25 year olds only.

Neil Tunnicliffe asked if day trips were available. Wendy Holt said that there are open days for the college and those interested can call or email to arrange a visit.

Neil Tunnicliffe asked what the prospects of finding work were after leaving the college. Wendy Holt said that they work closely with local colleges on academic qualifications.

Wendy Holt made copies of the prospectus available at the end of the meeting. Further details are on the website www.rmt.org



Workshops

1. What are your experiences of education?
2. What education would you benefit from?

Questions:

Neil Tunnicliffe asked if the information from the workshops will be collated and fed back into the TAP Board.

Amy Kay said that, as with previous meetings, it would be included with the minutes and reviewed at the next meeting. Questions for the commissioners would be taken after the meeting. These can also be submitted in writing.

Any other business

Helen Charnock mentioned the Autism Bedfordshire Barn Dance on Saturday 1st April 2017 to celebrate World Autism Day. A flyer will be included with the minutes.



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| <p>How was this meeting? – Evaluation forms. Autism Bedfordshire will collate the feedback from the questionnaires and will send them out with the minutes. Actions will be picked up at the next TAP meeting.</p> | <p>AB, Chair.</p> |  |
| <p>Date of next meeting: Tuesday 20th April 2017 at the Lockyer Room, The Rufus Centre, Flitwick</p> | <p>All</p> |  |