

## **Surrey Autism Partnership Board meeting held on 18 January 2022 via Zoom**

### **Notes of the last meeting / matters arising:**

Follow up actions:

- Mary Hendrick updated on short breaks as part of today's meeting.
- Sarah Foreman from the User Voice and Participation Team was to share feedback around the Covid vaccine with Melanie Ridge, to raise issues and identify possible solutions. This work is ongoing.
- The covid outreach team have shared information for autistic people who cannot leave the house, to support them to access Covid vaccines. This has been circulated via National Autistic Society Surrey Branch.

### **Short breaks – Mary Hendrick, Surrey County Council**

Mary's presentation on short breaks will be sent around with the minutes.

- This is about support for carers to have a break from their caring responsibilities. Eligibility for short breaks is determined by a carer's assessment.
- Mary outlined current options, demand, challenges, and potential ways forward
- We need to ensure services are accessible for people with physical disabilities.
- Breaks need to be responsive to people using the service and reliable. They can include overnight stays, support at the weekend, or support for the cared-for person to do a range of activities that they enjoy. We want to be able to offer a variety of options.
- We need good information so that carers know how to find support, and what is available.
- Surrey County Council want to work creatively with partners and health colleagues and link with the Carers Strategy.
- If you know anyone who is struggling to have a break, please contact the Learning Disability and Autism Duty team or Transition Team. You can also email our Learning Disability Communications inbox and we will ensure you are signposted to get the support that you need:  
[ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk)

## Questions and answers

**Question 1:** Sara Truman asked whether breaks are fully funded by Surrey County Council?

**Answer:** Mary said that it is determined by a carer's assessment and Care Act eligibility criteria. The social worker would discuss what level of support is needed. There would be a mixed menu of options that would be accessed on a case by case basis.

**Question 2:** Rachel, Action for Carers said that the pandemic has put a strain on carers, and Action for Carers have received lots of calls from carers who are struggling. What happens if the carer is unable to get an assessment? Is it linked to the eligibility of the person being cared for, as a lot of carers are looking after someone who is not open to a social care team. Are they able to have an independent assessment?

**Answer:** Mary said that she will make an action to find out what the process is for carers who are not on our records. Crossroads held some additional sitting services, training on understanding needs are a key thing we need to look at to ensure support is reliable. Mary said that if someone is stressed and struggling, they can get a referral for support through their GP.

**Question 3:** Lisa, Carers Practice Advisor asked when new services are due to start?

**Answer:** Mary said that we are currently gathering information. We have a 12-month plan to draw up specifications, put together protocols and do some community inclusion work to address support needs. However, services that require new buildings will take longer. We have a new brokerage team to source accommodation and support, and part of their role will be finding options for short breaks.

**Question 4:** Lisa, Carers Practice Advisor said if someone is funded in the children's service, they are likely to have funding for short breaks, this is usually a respite service linked to a school. Are we doing work with Children's commissioners to let families know the difference between the children's and adult services?

**Answer:** Mary confirmed that the team are working with children's commissioning and have meetings with family voice in order to work closely on the transition to understand different pathways. COVID-19 has slowed some of the conversations, but we are hoping to go back to more community access. Tom Moore, Chair added that in terms of service and autism training, in the autism strategy part of the process is trying to make autism training more available and ensure it is suitable and useful. Kathryn Telford, Commissioning Manager said that training is going into the community, they are about a third of the way through the Autism Friendly Communities pilot in Redhill. Mel, Carers Practice Advisor added that she has been speaking to a lot of older carers who want to continue in their caring role and through these conversations they have found that a few people would like a blended service where they have somewhere they can visit for respite and get familiar with it with a view to it being long term when the time comes.

### **Convenor role – Liz Williams, Surrey County Council**

Liz's presentation on the convenor role has been sent round with the minutes.

- Liz is a System Convenor. This job aims to bring people together to address problems or opportunities. Liz is organising collaborations and groups of people to raise people's voices and resolve problems.
- There are three convenors in Surrey, Kate Barker (Children's), Liz Williams (Learning Disability & Autism 25+) and Alison Leather (Mental Health).
- Liz said that she had spoken to a lot of people to find the tricky issues that we need to work on long term, and has identified three priorities:
  - Priority 1: Maintaining a healthy lifestyle
  - Priority 2: Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing
  - Priority 3: Employment and Reaching Potential
- Links with commissioning are important to support the system to work in a flexible, person-centred way and to reduce risks.
- Liz said that she is happy for anyone to contact her directly via email: [Liz.Williams@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:Liz.Williams@surreycc.gov.uk)

### **Reasonable adjustment flag – Rose Payne, Surrey Heartlands**

Rose's presentation on reasonable adjustment flag has been sent round with the minutes.

- Making reasonable adjustments means making it easier for everyone to use health services.
- What reasonable adjustments are required will vary from person to person, depending on their individual needs.
- All organisations are required to provide reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act.
- Rose is working on a way to record reasonable adjustments people need on their medical records.
- Rose is keen to understand the views of people who access services and need, have needed, or may need reasonable adjustment.

### **Discussion**

- Yasmin, Surrey Coalition said that reasonable adjustments would improve access for people. Yasmin said that a few of their members have asked GPs to contact them via text but this has not happened. We need to ensure that people can get reasonable adjustments in the first place. Clinicians need to understand this is important.
- Liz Williams, Convenor said that communication about reasonable adjustments would have made her family member's experience much better as they would not have had to battle with services every time.

- Sarah Cawley, Action for Carers said that it would be good to have something in practice that means once a year you check whether someone's reasonable adjustments have changed.

### Questions and answers

**Question 1.** Sara, Parent Carer said she thinks it is a good idea to share reasonable adjustments however is worried about data protection.

**Answer:** Rose said that this is something that they want to get right as people need to have control over their own information about reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments may be different for different services, and people need to have control over the sharing of information to adjust work for them.

### Autism Anxiety Treatment Research Project – Maria Del Piccolo

Maria's presentation on autism anxiety treatment research project has been sent round with the minutes.

- About 1 in 5 adults with a diagnosis of autism are prescribed medications for anxiety, but we do not know if they are an effective treatment for autistic people. Anecdotal evidence suggests autistic people may respond differently. Trials have been done but they have been very small.
- Maria is part of a team carrying out a larger study to look at effectiveness of Sertraline in reducing symptoms of anxiety in autistic people. This will be a randomized, double-blind study, so should give good, clear results.
- If you would like more details, or to take part in this study, please refer to the slides for contact details.
- All Partnership Board members to share this offer and information with their networks as appropriate.

### Questions and answers

**Question 1:** Tom Moore, Chair said can you clarify what stage this project is at?

**Answer:** Maria said that they have started to recruit people for the study and are starting the trial but need to recruit a lot more participants.

**Question 2:** Paul Hamilton, GP said that Sertraline has been the first option for anyone with anxiety. Paul asked about the rationale for the study, and how it would be compared to the general population.

**Answer:** Maria took an action to speak to the chief investigator and feed back.

### About other business

- Tom Moore, Chair updated that a Senior Manager has been recruited in Surrey County Council Send Commissioning. This role will be to lead on



implementing the autism strategy from the Children's perspective. This is great news and will help get the strategy moving effectively.

- Future Learning offer a training course alongside the University of Kent, Tizard Centre. This course is about understanding autism. This course is delivered online over four weeks and is open for people to register. The latest course is due to start on 24 February 2022. Please share with networks.

### Future meeting dates:

- Tuesday 19 April 1.30 to 3.30pm via Zoom
- Tuesday 19 July 1:30 to 3:30pm via Zoom
- Tuesday 18 October 1:30 to 3:30pm via Zoom

