

Surrey Adults Autism Partnership Board – Minutes

Meeting held on 22 January 2026 on Teams



Welcome and introductions

After the check-in for autistic members of the group, Tom welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves and their roles.

Amanda mentioned that autistic board members who would like to join the check-in, held 10 minutes before each meeting, are invited to contact Amanda, who will make sure they are included in the next session.

Actions from Last Meeting

- **Neurodivergent support plan from prisons:**

Mike Leat confirmed he had obtained a version of a support plan. Plans vary by individual rather than using a standard template. The document will be shared with the Board as requested.

- **Mental health commissioning gaps:**

Fi Bovino advised that discussions are ongoing, with current focus on strengthening core services, particularly Section 117 aftercare to support people in the community and avoid inpatient care.

- **Brain in Hand availability:**

Fi also confirmed Brain in Hand is available in Hampshire but not currently in Frimley. NHS changes from April 2026 may help reduce postcode-based differences

Autism Friendly Communities

Presented by Jo Plumbe and Mike Leat (Autism by Experience).

Key points:

- aim to reduce isolation by helping autistic and neurodivergent people connect through social activities
- Autism Friendly Surrey website has been launched with activity listings, venue information and resources
- support for peer-led adult groups, including safeguarding and group setup

- taster and supported activities such as silent bowling, gaming sessions, coffee and cake meetups, walks and quiet arcade visits
- work with venues to provide sensory-friendly activities
- autism training programme launched with high demand

Autism Friendly Communities is about helping autistic and neurodivergent adults feel less isolated and more included in everyday life. The project supports people to join social activities that feel safe and welcoming and works with local venues to help them understand autism and make simple changes. They support peer-led groups and provide guidance so activities can run safely and continue long term, helping people feel confident to take part in their local community. The Autism Friendly Surrey website shares information about activities, groups and venues.

Discussion and Questions

Sara asked how “young adults” are defined. Mike said groups generally focus on ages 18–39 but are flexible.

Emma thought that what Autism Friendly Surrey is doing is phenomenal and highlighted that some of her Job Centre colleagues are attending the training.

Camilla asked about funding and asked if Mike could provide a slide to add to the Oliver McGowan training so Autism Friendly Surrey can be promoted through the training.

Tom said that future funding is being explored through the Better Care Fund.

Fi praised the work and highlighted its preventative value.

BREAK

Dynamic Support Register (DSR)

Presented by Celia Bennett and Charlie Sherlock.

Key points:

- the Dynamic Support Register (DSR) is an all-age register for people with autism and/or learning disability at risk of mental health crisis or hospital admission
- it is managed by Surrey Heartlands Learning Disability and Autism Programme (ICB) and supports early intervention and multi-agency working
- there are currently 85 people on the register

Celia said the Dynamic Support Register is an all-age list of autistic people and people with a learning disability who are at risk of a mental health crisis or going into hospital. She explained that the register helps services identify people early and work together to give the right support before situations get worse. Celia also said that people who are already in hospital are included on the register so they can be monitored, reviewed and supported with planning for their care and next steps.

Charlie said that the Dynamic Support Register is used to make sure autistic people and people with a learning disability who are at risk are known to services and get the right support. He explained that the register helps different organisations work together, share information and plan support early so people do not reach crisis point. He also said the register is used to make sure people receive the right reviews and oversight, including when someone's situation becomes more serious or when they are in hospital.

Discussion and Questions

Christine asked about CETR and LAEP meanings. Celia explained that CETR stands for Care, Education and Treatment Review, and LAEP stands for Local Area Emergency Protocol.

Tom asked if people in hospital are automatically included; this was confirmed.

Fi Bovino stressed the importance of early referrals.

Surrey Key Working Service

Presented by Celia Bennett and Charlie Sherlock.

Key points:

- supports autistic people and/or those with learning disabilities aged 0–25 who are on the DSR
- focus on those at high risk of hospital admission or currently in hospital
- provides person-centered, relationship-based support
- works across health, education and social care and currently supporting 57 young people with four key workers

Celia and Charlie explained that key workers build strong, trusted relationships with young people and their families and help coordinate support across health, education and social care. They said the service focuses on planning early, supporting discharge

where needed, and helping young people stay safe and supported in their local community.

Discussion and Questions

Tom Moore asked about referral criteria and discharge support; Celia and Charlie said that young people who are already in hospital, or at high risk of hospital admission, are prioritised and that the service supports discharge planning and ongoing support in the community.

Short Breaks Policy

Presented by Mary Hendrick.

Key points

- policy supports carers and adults aged 18+ with eligible Care Act needs
- does not apply to residential care, supported living or non-eligible needs
- short breaks are flexible, personalised and agreed through assessment
- emergency and unplanned short breaks may be provided short-term
- short breaks may be chargeable following a financial assessment
- consultation runs from **12 January to 8 March 2026**

Mary said the Draft Short Breaks Policy consultation is intended to make sure carers and the people they support are not left behind. She explained that carers play a vital role and need regular breaks so they can continue to support people living at home.

Mary said the policy sets out how Surrey County Council meets its duties under the Care Act 2014 and who the policy applies to. She explained that short breaks can take different forms, depending on individual need, and should be planned as part of the assessment and support planning process. She also explained that there may be times when emergency or unplanned short breaks are needed, and that charging and travel arrangements are covered in the policy.

Mary encouraged people to read the policy and take part in the consultation before it closes on 8 March, so feedback can be considered before the policy is finalised.

You can read the policy and answer the questions online: <https://scnv.io/short-break-26>

You can get it in different formats from the Surrey Says website including easy read. You can ask for a paper copy and envelope to send it back.

Email: AWHPshortbreaks.consultation@surreycc.gov.uk

Any other business

Emma highlighted an upcoming Careers Fair taking place on Wednesday 4 February which includes employers and training providers.

There was also discussion about the planned reorganisation of Surrey County Council into two new authorities, with members acknowledging uncertainty but confirming that work is underway and that the autism strategy would continue in some form during the transition period.

Tom Moore informed the Board that this would be his final meeting as he is retiring. He thanked members and confirmed that arrangements are in place to ensure continuity of the Partnership Board and its work going forward.

Summary of Actions

- Mike to share the prison neurodivergent support plan with Amanda Aldridge
- Mike will provide a slide or QR code for Oliver McGowan training slides to Camilla
- Members were encouraged to complete the Inclusive Cinema survey
- Members were asked to complete the Draft Short Breaks Policy consultation by 8 March 2026

Next Meeting Date

10am to 12.30pm on Thursday 9 April 2026

Attendees

Co-chair:

- Thomas Moore – Surrey County Council (Co-Chair)

Board members:

- Amanda Aldridge – Engagement and Partnership Officer, Surrey County Council
- Debbie Overton – Information & Engagement Team, Surrey County Council (notes)
- Fi Bovino – NHS Surrey Heartlands ICB
- Chloe Sugden – Atlas, Surrey County Council
- Christina Earl – Surrey Choices
- Colette Lane – Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Sara Truman – National Autistic Society Surrey Branch
- Emma Langdon – DWP Disability Employment Advisor
- Camilla Ford – NHS Surrey Heartlands ICB
- Hayward Drake – Co-chair of Autism Reference Group

- Katherine Everett – Service Manager for Alternative Provision & Participation
- Sabrina Peters – All Age Autism Strategy Co-ordinator
- Caroline Kelly – Head of SEND at Nescot College
- Joanna Grudzinska-Dmowska – the Grange
- Vanessa Clark – All age Autism Strategy
- Parveen Ahmed – Mary Frances Trust
- Michael Fullerton – Achieve Together
- Christine Malik – National Autistic Society

Presenters:

- Jo Plumbe – Autism by Experience
- Mike Leat – Autism by Experience
- Celia Bennett – Surrey Key Working Service
- Charlie Sherlock – Surrey Key Working Service
- Mary Hendrick – Senior Commissioner, Disabilities Team, Surrey County Council

Supporters:

- Carrie Moorhouse – BSL interpreter
- Rachel Higginson – BSL interpreter

Observer:

Lindsay Hill – Senior Project Manager, Surrey County Council