



Surrey Autism
Partnership Board

Reference Group

Terms of Reference

What we will do and how we will do it:

1. What is the Surrey Autism Partnership Board Reference Group?

The Reference Group is a group of autistic adults who are committed to working together to make the lives of autistic adults in Surrey better.

2. What are the Aims of the Reference Group?

- To engage autistic adults in the working of the Autism Partnership Board and implementing the Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy.
- To ensure that the Autism Partnership Board hears views from a wide range of autistic adults across Surrey.

3. Who will be members of the Reference Group?

- Members of the Reference Group will be autistic adults who live in Surrey who can access meetings without support.
- People who want to join in should email: ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk
- A membership form must be completed.
- Members who cannot attend should send their apologies by email.
- The Co-Chairs and Engagement and Partnership Officer will review the membership at least every 2 years to ensure adequate representation.

4. Chairs

- The Reference Group will be co-chaired by a representative of Surrey County Council Adult Social care Commissioning, and an autistic person who is a member of the group.
- The Co-Chair on the autism spectrum will be elected every 2 years.

5. Administration

- The Reference Group will be supported by the Surrey County Council Learning Disability and Autism Engagement Team.

6. Times

- Meetings will be held quarterly on a Thursday, in the month prior to the Autism Partnership Board, unless otherwise notified. The meeting will alternate one during the day and one in the evening.

7. Format of Meetings

- Agendas and papers for the meetings will be sent out 7 days before the meeting. Presentations should provide an overview of the topic and be accessible, using plain English without jargon or abbreviations.

The meeting will run as follows:

Part 1.

- ✓ Welcome
- ✓ Reminder of topics and actions agreed at last meeting.
- ✓ Feedback from the Autism Partnership Board
- ✓ Topic Presentation/ Discussion

Break

Part 2.

- ✓ Topic Presentations/ Discussion
- ✓ Any Other Business
- ✓ End of meeting
 - The group will aim to be fully inclusive and will use plain English.

- Group members are encouraged to contribute. When we meet virtually, this will be in the chat, or by raising a virtual hand. When we meet in person, people can raise their hand to show that they want to contribute or need something clarified. Members are also welcome to contribute in writing by emailing ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk
- Notes will be taken of the meeting and circulated within 15 working days. The notes will be sent to the group members or can be requested by contacting ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk

8. Requests to observe the meeting

- Requests to observe the meeting should be made to the Co-Chairs via ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk . Observers will be limited to 4 per meeting.

9. Work of the Group

- The reference group will use the overview of work planned for the Autism Partnership Board to plan our discussions. The Co-Chairs of the group will communicate information from the Reference Group to the Autism Partnership Board.
- Reference Group members can raise issues they would like to be added to the agenda of the group and the Autism Partnership Board with the Co-Chairs or the Engagement and Partnership Officer.

10 . Accessibility for autistic group members

- The meetings will, as far as possible, be run in an autism accessible way:
 - Papers and agendas will go out to members at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.
 - Information and views should be shared in the format most accessible to board members.
 - There will be a break in every meeting.
 - Language will be kept simple – not using jargon or initials.

- When anyone struggled to get their views across in the meeting, they will be welcome to share views with the group through email, phone, advocates, or other ways of passing messages to the board members outside the meeting.
- People can bring somebody else to the meeting if that will help them to participate.
- If any group member wants to discuss any of the issues after a meeting, this will be supported.
- If any group members have suggestions of other ways that we could arrange the meetings to be more accessible, please contact ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk and these will be accommodated where possible.

11. Concerns for autistic group members

- Our meetings aim to discuss issues that are important for autistic people. Sometimes the content of a meeting or subject matter may trigger distress. This will be acknowledged at the beginning of every meeting and following points will be explained.
- Members can remove themselves for parts of the agenda if they are concerned, sending a message to the Co-Chairs to indicate this if possible.
- The Engagement and Partnership Officer will contact group members where it is evident that they are distressed because of the work of the group.
- Members of the group will be made aware that they can contact the Engagement and Partnership Officer should they experience distress because of their work in the group.
- The Engagement and Partnership Officer and Autism Commissioning Lead will seek to identify appropriate support with the individual concerned.
- The Co-Chairs will stop the meeting for a break if necessary to allow people time to de-stress.
- There will be reflection time at the end of each meeting.

12. Contact Details for the Reference Group

- Email: ldcommunications@surreycc.gov.uk

- Phone/Text: 07929 863 582
- Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/autism

