



Meeting held on 19 April 2022 via Zoom

Tom welcomed everyone, and attendees introduced themselves.

Notes of last meeting / matters arising:

Follow up actions:

- No follow up actions

Autism Acceptance Week

Mary's presentation on Short Breaks will be sent around with the minutes

- Imogen gave an update on Autism Acceptance Week.
- After holding Autism Reference Group meeting and hearing feedback from several members of the group, we decided to change our branding from Autism Acceptance week to Autism Appreciation week.
- The group have drafted a letter to NAS which they would like to be sent also give their feedback.
- The Redhill autism friendly communities event kick started the Appreciation week and went really well. There has been a positive response from partners.
- Funding for the reast of east Surrey is in place and we are looking to secure funding for the whole county.
- Each area that we work on will take time and currently there is no timeframe currently in place, but we are pleased with the progress that has been made so far.

Stories on how digital technology can help people with Learning Disability and/or Autism – Liz Williams, Surrey County Council

Liz's presentation has been sent around with the minutes.

- Liz spoke to the group about the work that is currently been happening around the digital technology project.
- Liz fed back on some of the groups she has been attending.
- All information included in presentation

Questions, Answers and Comments:

Comment

Sabrina mentioned that there may be different information that is key from different groups. For example, autistic people and/or autistic parents. Autism can be hereditary, surrounding network could be disabled people. Would be good to raise this specific work to the different groups.

Comment



Surrey Autism Partnership Board

John mentioned that now we are moving forward in “covid times” there is a push to get back to normality and come out of the virtual meeting world, however autistic people seem to prefer to still meet in this way. When you meet in person you can’t control the room, and this can be very stressful experience as the unpredictability of a meeting can present many challenges. When you meet virtually you can control the screen, you can use mute options, you don’t have to appear on camera if your area having a challenging moment. Is anyone else feeling this way?

Comment

Bex agreed with this. There are a lot of sensory challenges that are incorporated with this. Lots of conversation, lights etc. Processing can be harder when in a room with other people, however virtually being able to manage the screen and being in a comfortable setting change things.

Comment

Liz – Choice is really important as things can change on the day of an event depending on how people are feeling. We really want to recognise that.

Comment

Jenny – Sensory issues means that senses in general are heightened, and things can feel overwhelming. You can’t necessarily regulate this when you are in the same space as other people. The intensity can be overwhelming.

Comment

Sabrina- it can feel that it is almost as though autistic people can be shamed for not being social and preferring to stay in a virtual world. This is not the case and is very much down to the individual. We do not all fit under one bracket, and we are always fighting against the stigma. We want to come but we struggle being in person so actually we are more social through a different tool. Having the choice gives the ability to save our energy to be present and social in a different environment. Otherwise, it could look like autistic people aren’t social and just want to stay at home, but this is not the case.

Comment

Ruben – Perhaps a reasonable adjustment in this area needs to be considered. Body language can be really unclear to read and especially online. Perhaps showing more than just a face on screen could be helpful. The more you see of a person the more you can understand.

Autism Strategy Progress Update – Thomas Moore

Tom’s presentation will be shared with these minutes.

- Tom shared a presentation with the group.

Questions, Answers and Comments



Surrey Autism Partnership Board

Comment

Christina- We do have employment reps and chamber of commerce are involved.
We want to have examples of positive cases in the workplace also.

AOB

- **None**

Future meeting dates:

- Our next meetings will be:
 - 1) **Tuesday 19th July 2022 at 1:30 – 3:30 pm**
 - 2) **Tuesday 18th October 2022 at 1:30 – 3:30 pm**