Surrey Autism Partnership Board Terms of Reference

What we will do and how we will do it

1. What is the Surrey Autism Partnership Board?

1.1 The Autism Partnership Board is a group of people who are committed to working together to make the lives of autistic adults in Surrey better. The board includes autistic people, family carers, and professionals with an interest from different parts of the service system.

1.2 The government has produced a National Autism Strategy, NHS England has produced a South East Regional Autism Strategy, and partners in Surrey, including autistic people and carers have produced the Surrey All-Age Autism Strategy which was signed off across agencies by Surrey's Committees in Common, and runs from September 2021 until September 2026.

1.3 The Autism Partnership Board has been fully involved in the development of the Surrey strategy and will continue to have input and oversight of its implementation for the life of the strategy.

1.4 This board will make and maintain links with the Surrey Children and Young People's Autism Partnership Board, which was set up as part of the All-Age Autism Strategy.

2. What are the aims of the board?

2.1 To have input to plans and developments so that we get the right services and support for autistic people, and we understand where things need to change to work properly.

2.2 To support and share information about progress against autism strategies and strategic priorities, locally and nationally, so that people know what is happening and what they must do.

2.3 As part of this, the board will share updates from the Autism Strategy's workstreams, and key pieces of work underway in the county. The board will also update on key changes to policy and legislation.

2.4 To work together to share information between organisations and groups that members represent and wider networks.
2.5 To support the use of grant funding money, where available, to develop services and help make change happen.

3. Who will be members of the board?

3.1 It is important that all key groups of people who can bring about change in Surrey are members of the Partnership Board.

These will include:

- ✓ autistic people
- ✓ family carers
- ✓ Surrey County Council (SCC) Adult Social Care
- ✓ health commissioners (Integrated Care Boards)
- ✓ health providers (including Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust)
- ✓ voluntary organisations
- ✓ support provider organisations

4. How the board will run

4.1 Chairs
The Autism Partnership Board will be co-chaired by SCC's Autism Commissioning Lead and an autistic person elected from the peer support groups linked to the board.

In the absence of the Autism Commissioning Lead, the meeting will be co-chaired by the Head of Disabilities Commissioning or another representative from the Disabilities Commissioning Team. In the absence of the autistic co-chair, another autistic member of the board may deputise on their behalf.

4.2 Times
Meetings will be held quarterly from 10.00am to 12.00pm, unless otherwise notified.

4.3. Format of meetings
Agendas and papers for the meetings will be sent out 7 days before the meeting.

The meeting will run as follows:

Part 1

- ✓ check-in for autistic members
- ✓ welcome
- ✓ reminder of topics and actions agreed at last meeting
- ✓ topic presentation / discussion

Break

Part 2

- ✓ topic presentations / discussion
- ✓ any other business
- ✓ end of meeting
- ✓ check-out for autistic members

The board will aim to be fully inclusive and will use plain English.

Board 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 or use red / green cards to show that they want to contribute or need something clarified.

4.4. Papers and presentations to the board

Presentations need to provide an overview of the topic and be accessible, using plain English without jargon or abbreviations.

To enable people to prepare for meetings presentations should be submitted 10 days before the meeting so that they can be sent out with the agenda a week before the meeting.

4.5. Minutes

Notes will be taken of the meeting, and a plain English version will be produced within 15 working days. The notes will be a public document, and backdated copies will be available on the Autism Partnership Board website or by contacting disabilitycomms@surreycc.gov.uk

The co-chairs must approve any press release on behalf of the board in advance.

4.6. Requests to attend the board

Requests to observe the meeting should be made to the co-chairs via disabilitycomms@surreycc.gov.uk . Observers will be limited to 4 per meeting.

4.7 Responsibilities of members of the board

Stakeholders will take up membership by invitation from co-chairs.

Each member of the board represents a stakeholder group.

They have a responsibility to communicate information between the board and the groups they represent.

Members should be able to attend at least 3 of the 4 meetings. Members who cannot attend should send apologies to disabilitycomms@surreycc.gov.uk

4.8. Election of officers
The autistic co-chair will be elected every 2 years.

The co-chairs and lead officer will review membership of board at least every 2 years to ensure all the necessary stakeholders are represented.

4.9 How many people are needed for meeting to go ahead (Quorum)
There must be 8 members of the board at the meeting for the meeting to go ahead. For decisions to be made there must be 12 members.

These must include:
- ✓ a chair or deputy chair
- ✓ a person on the autism spectrum
- ✓ a carer representative

4.10 Work overview
The board will produce an overview of work planned for that year, and a look back at what work has been done in the previous 12 months.

4.11. Managing the agenda
The co-chairs will meet with the Engagement and Partnership Officer regularly to review the board agenda and work programme.

4.12. Making things happen
To ensure the recommendations from the board are heard and that planned changes happen, the lead officer will meet with the Autism Strategy Implementation Board to discuss progress. This group will help commission services that work to support people to get the kind of life they want for themselves and are good quality and cost effective.

4.13 Accessibility for autistic board members
- ✓ we will try to run the meetings in an autism accessible way
- ✓ we will try to include information and views in the format most accessible to board members

- ✓ we will have a break in every meeting
- ✓ we will keep our language simple – not using jargon or initials
- ✓ when anyone struggles to get their views across in the meeting, they will be welcome to share their views with the board through email, phone, advocates, or other ways of passing messages to board members outside the meeting
- ✓ people can bring somebody else to the meeting if that will help them to participate
- ✓ if any board member wants to discuss any of the issues after a board meeting, we will try to support with this
- ✓ if any board members have suggestions of other ways that we could arrange the meetings to be more accessible, please contact us and we will try to accommodate these where we can

4.14 Family carers

Family carers are asked to bring their own perspectives to the meeting, as well as representing the views of autistic people who cannot express their views themselves or cannot access Partnership Board meetings.

Family members will be asked to ensure that as far as possible, the views and interests of people across the whole autism spectrum are represented at the Partnership Board.

4.15. Concerns and Complaints

Concerns and complaints about the conduct of the meetings will be investigated by the Lead Officer.

4.16. Links to Department of Health, National and County Groups

The Autism Partnership Board will ensure:

- ✓ Surrey links into national and regional developments relating to autism
- ✓ the Autism Partnership Board website pages are kept up to date
- ✓ members are updated on key legislation and policy changes
- ✓ decisions of the board are fed through Health and Social Care governance routes

Contact details for partnership board

Email: disabilitycomms@surreycc.gov.uk
Phone: 07929 863 582