

MEETING NOTES FOR:	Meeting of the Autism Partnership Board
DATE & TIME:	Thursday, 19 th September 2024 at 2pm
LOCATION:	Room 2E : Trenys Room, County Hall, Truro and Microsoft Teams

ATTENDANCE

Name	Position	Organisation
Councillor Sally Weedon (SW) (Chair)	Chair of the Partnership Board and Elected Member of Cornwall Council	Cornwall Council
Natalie Thompson (NT)	Research and Engagement Manager	Healthwatch Cornwall
Robert O'Leary (RO)	Partnership Boards Lived Experience Project Officer	Healthwatch Cornwall
Bethany J Noall (BJN)	Quality Checker	Citizen Checkers
Beccy Summers (BS)	Research Associate, PenARC Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement Team	University of Exeter
Beth Collis (BC)	Social Worker and Senior Practitioner for Autism	Cornwall Council
Christopher Burns (CB)	Self Advocate and Disability Campaigner	
David Burns (DB)	Citizen Checker, Community Promoter and Self Advocate	Citizen Checkers and Healthwatch Cornwall
Dina Holder (DH)	Community Engagement Manager	The Women's Centre Cornwall & Divas
Gary Dymott (GaD)	Community Connector	Mencap in Bude
Gemma Dyson (GD)	Clinical Psychologist, Adult Autism Assessment Team	Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Heather Davison (HD)	Lived Experience	Divas
Lorraine Corrigan-Turner (LCT)		Mencap and Bude Autism, ADHD and SEN Group
Paul Owen (PO)	Lived Experience, Health Champion	Champs Team, Healthy Cornwall
Sam Mokorram (SM)	Advocacy Coordinator	The Advocacy People
Steve Hillman (SH)	Health Improvement Practitioner	Healthy Cornwall
Tom Scues (TS)	Lived Experience, Health Champion	Champs Team, Healthy Cornwall
Vicki Allan (VA)	Strategic Commissioning Lead for Working Adults (Adult Social Care)	Cornwall Council

APOLOGIES

Name	Position	Organisation
Amber Conn	Speech and Language Therapist; Liaison and Diversion team	Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Julia Wildfire-Roberts	Project Manager – Recovery College Cornwall	Pentreath
Karen Hooper	Head of Commissioning for LD, Autism and Mental Health	Cornwall Council
Lewis Henry	Lived Experience	Brandon Trust
Marie Ralph		Autistic Community of Cornwall
Matthew Wilmott		Autism in Schools Team for East Cornwall
Rachel Mellor		Brandon Trust
Dr. Rebecca Jelbert	Chartered & Registered Clinical Psychologist, Cornwall Adult Autism Assessment Team	Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Rhiannon Sharpe	Young Adults Engagement Officer	Disability Cornwall
Tazmin Hook		Independent Cornwall Autism Network
Tina Sanford	Lead Manager for Autism, Learning Disability and Young People preparing for adulthood.	Cornwall Council
Tracey Chater	Cornwall Supported Employment	United Response

ACTIONS

Action	Responsible	Status	Updates and comments
Update on Safe Places scheme	ZW / Champs	Ongoing.	December 2024 agenda item.
Department of Work & Pension Working Group	PB Team/ AC/JC	Ongoing.	Currently on hold due to capacity issues within the DWP.
Easy Read hospital letters	JR	Ongoing.	Last update – still on hold as awaiting the IT issues to be resolved.
Police Interactions with Neurodivergent People Working Group	PB Team / TB / DH / MR	Ongoing.	Working Group ongoing. Requires Terms of Reference
LeDeR updates	PB Team / SS	Ongoing.	Share as received.
Source appropriate GP representation for the Board	PB Team	Ongoing.	A GP representative has not yet been recruited for the Board, this continues to be pursued.

Item	What was discussed	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies</p>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone and advised that the meeting was being recorded for minute taking purposes.</p> <p>Apologies received are detailed above.</p> <p>The Chair invited everyone present to introduce themselves.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2024 and actions from previous meetings</p>	
	<p>The Chair invited any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.</p> <p>CB – At the last meeting it was suggested that food banks could be utilised as Safer Places. CB had concerns that staff at food banks may not be qualified to provide that service, particularly around disability awareness.</p> <p>Citing personal experiences of a food bank in Plymouth, he said that the people that use them tend to be in desperate circumstances. One example was a couple that said that if it wasn't for the food bank they would have been forced to steal. Another was of a man that couldn't work as he was a fulltime carer for his wife.</p> <p>CB stressed how essential it was that staff were trained in being able to identify people that need support or may be the subject of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>RO said that CB's comments had been noted and would be responded to under the Champs agenda item. He added that he knew that when the Safer Places scheme was "road tested" last year such training needs had been identified.</p> <p>CB had previously raised his concerns with The Trussell Trust and would keep the Board informed of any responses or updates he received from them.</p> <p>PO added that Healthy Cornwall had a new Safer Places Officer in post, Zoe Webb, who was developing the scheme.</p> <p>The Chair moved and the Board agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting be confirmed as a true record.</p> <p>RO provided the following updates on actions agreed at previous meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWP Working Group – On hold due to capacity issues within the DWP. • Easy Read hospital letters – No update. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Interactions with Neurodivergent People Working Group – Ongoing. Terms of Reference required for group. • LeDeR updates – None received. • Source appropriate GP representation for the Board – Ongoing. <p>RO also shared an update on the launch of the new Mental Health Partnership Board, managed by Healthwatch Cornwall.</p> <p>The launch event would be held on Tuesday, 8th October 2024 between noon and 4pm Lanivet Community Centre, Carters Parc, Rectory Road, Lanivet, Bodmin PL30 5HG. Details had already been circulated to all members of the Partnership Boards but further information would be shared soon. RO asked that everyone share it widely with their friends, family and across networks.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Updates from members</p>	
	<p>The Chair invited updates from members.</p> <p>Autism Strategy</p> <p>DB - The Citizen Checkers were leading engagement sessions to improve support to autistic people in Cornwall. Members were encouraged to join the sessions to share their views and improve autistic lives in Cornwall.</p> <p>There would be a session each in the East, the West and online. Details were currently being finalised and would be shared with the Partnership Boards at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>BJN would update further later in the meeting.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Champs Update – Safe Places Scheme & Safer Places ID Cards</p>	
	<p>SH provided the following updates:</p> <p>Safe Places</p> <p>Healthy Cornwall had a new Safer Places Officer in post, Zoe Webb, who was developing the scheme.</p> <p>Zoe had already started to dilute the amount of Safe Places there were with a view to upping the overall quality. There were a lot of places that were not adequate or ideal so that was essential.</p>	

With regard to training, videos were being produced with a view to sending them out to existing and new safe places. There was also face to face training provided by Zoe and a couple of Champs but the team was aiming to do as much as possible virtually. The focus was upon how to be a safe place, how to approach people that are looking for help and also how not to. Scenario videos and secret shoppers would be key to that.

Safe Places ID Cards

A new Safe Places card had been designed, which now aligned with the design on the sticker that you see in the windows of safe places in Cornwall.

The reverse of the card still held the same information – name and emergency contact number (i.e. parent, carer, sibling, best friend). It also contained three boxes – 1. I have a learning disability, 2. I am autistic and 3. I am neurodiverse. The three boxes had been agreed through discussion with The Champs. There would also be training specific to how to best support each group/individual.

RO asked if matters beyond a diagnosis would be included, for example, medication. SH replied that medication was not included but wondered if it was something that people thought should be. RO said that he had experience of Job Centre staff not being trained appropriately and in some cases security had mistaken people that were in need of support for someone that was under the influence of alcohol. SH's view was that by ticking the appropriate box on the card there would be an indication that the individual was not under the influence. It was something that could be included within the training sessions and videos though. SH was confident that the Champs could portray the panicked, worried, disorientated type of state that an individual could experience and demonstrate the steps that a staff member should take to determine why they may be in that state.

BJN was concerned that the correct terminology was included on the card. She highlighted that the term neurodiverse referred to a group, whereas an individual would be neurodivergent.

CB asked if the videos would be available on YouTube. SH said they would be on the Healthy Cornwall YouTube channel.

CB referred to the matter that he raised earlier in the meeting about food banks being utilised as Safer Places. He had concerns that staff at food banks may not be qualified to provide that service, particularly around disability awareness. SH said that he would suggest to Zoe that the Champs visit food banks to test what reaction they receive and how they should progress matters, if necessary. CB gave an example of a negative experience he's had at a Torpoint food bank. SH added that he was not aware of any food banks being signed up to the Safe Places Scheme but there could be an opportunity for the team to be proactive in seeking out ones that could.

	<p>RO cited an article that referenced the Trussell Trust’s involvement with Safe Places. He also reiterated CB’s concerns, saying that the scheme was only as good as the people providing the support. SH agreed and highlighted the high turnover of staff at food banks. Producing videos that were permanently available for new staff to view could help to address the problem. Having fewer places but the capacity for them to be better managed would also help. Additional information would include a newsletter and an online forum where questions could be asked and answers received.</p> <p>RO asked what the timeline for rollout was. SH anticipated that it would be within six months. Zoe was passionate about getting it right. PO echoed that and TS emphasised how proactive she had been in visiting existing places.</p> <p>RO invited questions and recommendations from members. VA suggested that Zoe provide an update to a future meeting. It was agreed that she be invited to present to the December meeting.</p>	Action
5.	Specialist Support from The Women’s Centre Cornwall	
	<p>DH apologised for not being at the meeting in person but that morning The Women’s Centre Cornwall had been in a focus group meeting with the Domestic Abuse Victims Commissioner’s Office. The work that they were doing was about disabilities but there was no mention of neurodivergence. They accepted that there was a gap there and had undertaken to liaise with DH to learn more about the work in Cornwall to develop the Autism Strategy. It was hoped that local learning could be shared at a national level.</p> <p>Similarly, DH had attended a Police Access and Engagement meeting at Middlemoor Police HQ that week. One of the forms they shared around disabilities didn’t capture neurodiversity. DH had asked how they could know how accessible their services were if they didn’t collect the necessary data. All organisations needed to ensure that they were capturing the relevant information.</p> <p>The DIVAS and The Women’s Centre Cornwall are ready to deliver bespoke Healthy Relationship Training.</p> <p>Women with Learning Disabilities and Autistic women are the highest risk group for domestic abuse and/or sexual violence of any women in the UK. DH had previously spoken about the DIVAS developing Healthy Relationships Training and/or workshops and they were now ready to take bookings. This was a free service and if there was substantial interest they would need to prioritise who received training. The training would take place over a 12 month period in the first instance.</p> <p>Via the chat function, BJN asked if services were open to AFAB (Assigned Female</p>	

at Birth) non-binary people and trans women. DH said that they wanted to support all women and if they were the right agency to provide it then they would or they would work with trans women on an individual basis rather than in a group. They would also want to work with other organisations that might be better placed to deliver support.

DH shared a presentation entitled 'A guide to what healthy relationships look like and how to spot the signs of abuse', produced by Durham University. It was about understanding from autistic people what they said they needed to know.

It focused upon both good and healthy relationships and the signs of abuse. The guide focused on red, orange and green flags and they were the types of issues that the Divas would be talking about.

Another key focus area would be helping people to better understand and manage their trauma, though that would be taken outside of the workshop setting. HD gave an example of a process adopted by the team in relation to helping people to understand their trauma. DH added that an important outcome was enabling people to feel safer and more confident, hopefully leading to healthy relationships.

They wanted to encourage contact from key organisations in Cornwall working with women with learning disabilities and with autistic women including from Supportive Housing, Colleges/Education & Training/ Employment & Health & Social Care providers. They hoped to work with a number of groups of women and also with staff from the organisations referring to us.

They would design the actual programme to suit the needs of the service and the women it referred.

An example of core sessions delivered:

1. The Bill of Rights (exploring self -esteem and empowerment) and Types of Relationships that we might have.
2. Equality Wheel, Power and Control Wheel and Healthy Relationships(what is healthy and what is not) and understanding how to identify this.
3. Online (Looking at what it is used for, things to remember, online communities) – How to make it work for you and how to keep safe.
4. Where & How to get help- Resources available locally & Nationally and practicing asking for help possibly to understand what is happening- Is it OK? Referrals on.

Delivery Model : Flexible, for example they could deliver 4 sessions (90-120 minutes long) or 2 linked days or 4 x half day sessions; they will adapt them to suit the needs of the learners, so if there is anything that should be included (or not) that could be accommodated. The team tried to work flexibly to suit the needs of learners.

For more information, contact Penni Charteress, DIVAS Project Coordinator on 07958 611948 or penni.charteress@womenscentrecornwall.org.uk

The team were also working in partnership with Cornwall People First to enable them to develop Healthy Relationship Groups for men with learning disabilities and autistic men. Please contact fliss@cornwallpeoplefirst.com to discuss their programme.

Flyers for the training had already been circulated to the Board. DH shared one onscreen.

GD had spoken to DH previously about how CFT were able to offer post-diagnostic group sessions following assessment. The offer was short-term, consisting of three sessions. GD asked if the service could get a group together that were interested in the training being offered by the DIVAS and The Women's Centre Cornwall, would CFT need to have continued involvement? Usually individuals are discharged after taking part in their group as the service cannot provide ongoing support. DH said that would be possible. Ideally, a professional from CFT would be there too but if that was not possible then the right level of support would be found.

HD said that it was hoped that some sessions could be online and some in person. DH agreed and said that trying to work out the logistics of catering for as many people as possible in a rural county had slightly delayed the work. HD added that it was hoped that rollout could begin before Christmas. DH agreed and said that it would start small. She encouraged anyone that wanted to volunteer to get in touch. Training would be provided.

DIVAS Specialist Support

The Specialist Support Work Service was for women in Cornwall living with the impact of any form of domestic abuse, child sexual abuse, rape or sexual violence at any time in their lives.

The support offered lasted for up to 20 sessions; but it was dependent on what worked best for the individual. Support could be accessed online, over the phone or in person.

Knowledge gave an individual the basis to understand and heal and the team offered women a wide range of resources (worksheets, leaflets, life story work, and much more) alongside one-to-one support.

People could self-refer or ask a trusted person to help them make contact. To learn more contact Penni Charteress, DIVAS Project Coordinator on 07958 611948 or penni.charteress@womenscentrecornwall.org.uk

	<p>DH shared a diagram of the Specialist Support Healing Journey process followed by The Women’s Centre Cornwall. A copy would be circulated to the Board.</p> <p>Peer Support Groups</p> <p>These would be coming soon. It was recognised how isolating it could be living as a woman with learning disabilities and/or an autistic woman and that isolation could grow if abuse had also been experienced. The aim was to create a safe place to meet and talk with other women with similar experiences.</p> <p>The offer is currently being planned. Those interested to join a group, learn more or want to help could contact Addy Oliver, DIVAS Project Worker on 07961 900672 addy.oliver@womenscentrecornwall.org.uk.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Break</p>	
	<p>The Board took a short comfort break.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Update on an Autism Strategy in Cornwall</p>	
	<p>VA gave a short presentation, attached as an Appendix, detailing the Autism Strategy Governance Pathway. She apologised to the Board for the presentation not being in an accessible format and added that the draft Strategy, which the Board would receive, would not yet be in easy read either. Due to this, VA encouraged groups and support systems to work with people to understand its content and to help to formulate suggestions around it.</p> <p>VA emphasised the key role that the Board would have in both the development and the scrutinising of the implementation of the Strategy. She invited conversations with NT and RO around the best means to ensure appropriate monitoring.</p> <p>BJN gave a short presentation on the Leadership from Lived Experience engagement sessions that the Citizen Checkers were delivering to improve support to autistic people in Cornwall. There would be a session each in the East, the West and online. Members were encouraged to join the sessions to share their views and improve autistic lives in Cornwall. Citizen Checkers believed in paying for people’s contribution and were able to pay for the time taken to attend in person. BJN provided a draft itinerary of the topics to be considered and how the day would be structured.</p> <p>Adjustments to ensure autistic accessibility had been fully considered and</p>	

appropriate measures were in place, including:

- Maximum 15 person capacity so room isn't overcrowded and overwhelming.
- Small group work, with option to work in pairs or alone if preferred.
- Discussion followed by quiet reflection for opportunity to process and organise thoughts.
- Facilitating easy to navigate turn-taking and minimising overlapping chatter.
- Making information easy to understand, clear and contextualised.
- Following a set structure for the day and having it written up for reference.
- Creating a safe and functional sensory environment.
- Making people feel safe and in control of how they interact with the session.

For more information, contact Kate Spenceley at kate@citizencheckers.co.uk.

CB stressed how difficult it was for people to access in-person events – both in time and cost – and felt that the online event should not be limited to a set number of attendees.

CB raised a further concern. That week he'd been forced to call the Learning Disability Helpline as he had found it impossible to find support in Cornwall. Within two hours of the call he had received an email and a call because they were so concerned about what he had told them. He was immediately referred to a legal team. Why wasn't such support available for people with autism? Why wasn't money being directed that way? VA clarified that the Zoom session would be open to as many people as possible. Cornwall was so vast that it was not possible to hold in-person sessions in ever area. Concerns such as those expressed by CB were the types of issues that the sessions wanted to capture. VA asked if CB was okay with her response. CB said that he was and he wasn't. He had raised the same issues six or seven years ago and now it was starting to be heard but it would still be ten or fifteen years until the results were seen so another generation would miss out on support. It was hard to hear that work was being done and everything would be fine when you knew that it was not.

RO said that the Zoom session being in the evening would make it more accessible. He asked if more than one session could be held. VA said that she was conscious of timescales to complete the consultation and the capacity of Citizen Checkers but it was a consideration.

	<p>HD said that she agreed with the sentiments shared by CB. She added that it was important to hear the voices of as many autistic people in Cornwall as possible, not just a small section. VA said that the Strategy was the start of the process. Not everything would be perfect immediately but there would be learning to take from everything. HD asked if the Strategy would be a living document that could be updated as things progressed and VA confirmed that it would be.</p> <p>RO said that a lot of voices had already been heard within the process and the timeline had been extended to ensure that more could have input.</p> <p>CB asked how people that could not write or were not able to contribute through spoken word could have continued input into the living document. VA said that was a really good point and she would gauge from groups that worked with those individuals the best way to allow them to contribute. CB said that there was a national organisation providing such support but none at a local level in Cornwall.</p> <p>VA stressed that the Strategy was not her sole responsibility, it required collective ownership to drive it forward.</p> <p>RO asked BJN how the payments for participation in the sessions would be managed in terms of ensuring that benefits were not affected. VA said that was a question to ask of Kate Spenceley.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
	<p>The Chair invited members to raise any other business.</p> <p>Social Housing</p> <p>GD said that she had recently heard of at least a couple of people that were struggling with social housing in terms of accommodation meeting their sensory needs. She wondered if the matter could be considered at a future meeting of the Board. VA asked for more context. If GD could share more detail VA would look into it. GD said that she had previously sent an email to Alison Bulman, Strategic Director – Care and Wellbeing but she would also send a synopsis to VA.</p> <p>Neurodiverse males - A preventative approach to healthy relationships</p> <p>RO wondered what support was available to support neurodivergent men in terms of preventative measures, education and training, including what a healthy relationship was. There could be a lot of people that don't have a clear</p>	

	<p>idea of what abuse was. A short conversation between people in the room in the break had indicated that there could be benefits in a preventative approach to educating men, who were the main perpetrators of domestic abuse and sexual violence. HD said that it was a valid and important issue to raise. She referenced the work of Cornwall People First that DH had spoken of earlier in the meeting. RO said that the only way to decrease the number of victims was to prevent the crimes from occurring. HD agreed and suggested about approaching Man Down with a view to working together to identify and secure funding. HD would feed the conversation back to DH.</p> <p>VA wondered if Healthwatch Cornwall could research what services were currently available.</p> <p><i>The connection between the room and the virtual meeting was lost.</i></p> <p>NT closed the meeting</p> <p>Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting would be held at 2pm on Thursday, 12th December 2024 and people could join either in person or on Microsoft Teams. The venue would be confirmed as soon as possible.</p>	
--	---	--

APPENDIX

Autism Partnership Board

19.09.24 Autism Strategy update

Autism Strategy Governance Pathway

Governance	Meeting Date	Paper deadline
People Commissioning Board- date to be agreed as was tabled for CBS	13/11/24	One week prior
Extended DLT	04/12/24	One week prior
LDAMH Prog of Care Group (poss clinical ref group, check Stuart Cohen)-ICB governance	Nov /Dec 24	One week prior
Autism Partnership Board	12/12/24	One week prior
Integrated Commissioning Partnership Group (IPCG)	Dec/Jan 25	One week prior
DLT TFF	03/12/24	One week prior
CDT	27.02.25	20/02/2025
Integrated Care Partnership/Health & Wellbeing Board	Check Dates	
Cabinet Workplan – Individual Decision Portfolio Holder sign off-Decision Report in EDRMS Director, Legal, Finance approval	26.03.25 or earlier March (There is no meeting in earlier March – the meeting before this is 12 th February 2025)	26/02/2025

Engagement Sessions

Autism Partnership Board Update 19.09.24

Share Autism Strategy V 2 Neurodivergent Café -council staff group 10.09.24, reach out to NHS Neurodivergent staff network and offer a session supported by working group members from CPFT

Experts By Experience sessions- 30/09/-06/10/24 (two F2F West/East, 1 virtual evening session)

Strategy Implementation/action Plan session Working Group 17/09/24

Public consultation Let's Talk Cornwall Early-Mid Oct

Callout Autistic people in Cornwall. We need your input-Citizen Checkers Engagement Sessions

- Cornwall Council are working to improve support to autistic people in Cornwall. Join our sessions to share your views and improve autistic lives in Cornwall.
- We will talk about
 - Improving understanding and acceptance
 - Improving support
 - Reducing inequalities
 - Increasing employment and education opportunities
 - Supporting independent living
 - Keeping Safe
- <https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcitizencheckers.co.uk%2Fautistic-people-in-cornwall%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cvicki.allan%40cornwall.gov.uk%7Cea775fffe47a4decdf008dcd64b8997%7Cefaa16aad1de4d58ba2e2833fdfd29f%7C0%7C0%7C638620867134712720%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=0HGQ78XJNNJjGvG%2F1tbMi6WYRM695iz2NBUBXEoLF4%3D&reserved=0>