

**Notes of the Autism Norfolk Forum (ANF) Meeting
Held on: 14 December 2022**

Venue: Online via Zoom

Please note: These notes represent an overview summary of this meeting rather than a verbatim transcript.

Name of Attendee	Organisation and/or Role
Lee Gibbons	ASD Helping Hands, <i>Autism Lead</i>
Tracey Walton	Norfolk County Council <i>Autism Commissioning Manager</i> , presenter
Karen Dures	Norfolk County Council <i>Project Lead for Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) and Autism Development</i> , presenter
Charlie Ladyman	Norfolk County Council <i>Market and Business Lead for Adult Social Services</i> , presenter
Cat Duncan-Rees	Curators of Change
Members of the public (29)	

Agenda Item 1	Welcome and Introduction
1.1	<p>Welcome and introductions made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Forum was held using Zoom • Communication prompts and their use explained. • Acknowledged a note taker is provided. • Norfolk Autism Partnership Board's (NAPB) Code of Conduct and Coproduction principles introduced and explained.

Agenda Item 2	Update from the Board
2.1	<p>The Norfolk Autism Partnership was set up 2016 in response to the National Autism Strategy. It aims to make Norfolk a more friendly and accepting place for people with autism.</p> <p>The Partnership is Independent of Norfolk County Council (NCC) and any other statutory bodies. It has an independent website, where newsletters, meeting notes and details about involvement opportunities can be read about. Following a procurement process to find a new</p>

	<p>provider, ASD Helping Hands won a contract to take over the running of the Partnership from NCC in October 2022. Lee Gibbons, the Operations Manager at ASD Helping Hands, explained that the handover period was nearly finished.</p>
2.2	<p>Lee Gibbons gave a brief overview of the recent activities of the Board and what ASD Helping Hands have been doing as part of the handover process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASD Helping Hands have met with key people in the National Health Service (NHS), NCC, charities and other important groups across the county. This will allow new working groups to be set up in 2023, as the originals were put on hold while the new provider procurement exercise and handover period was happening. • Dates for Autism Forums and Board meetings are being arranged for 2023. These will be advertised to members in time. Discussion followed around the format. • All of the existing governance and paperwork is being updated. • Working with Norfolk Library Service, eight Adult Social Groups have been set up in Norfolk for autistic people. ASD Helping Hands will be working with them on a series of Videos and Social Stories. • At the last NAPB Meeting, Rachel Gates, NCC's new Assistant Director of Learning Disability, Autism and Mental Health Commissioning, asked if the NAPB would support the separation of the Learning Disability and Autism Board into two separate groups. The NAPB agreed, as it would allow more time and resources to be dedicated to autism related subjects. The NAPB will work with Rachel Gates to put this into practice.
	<p>Discussion followed around the format of future Forum meetings. Lee agreed to explore the possibility of hybrid in-person and online meetings.</p>
	<p>Lee explained that the existing structure and membership process for the Partnership will remain in place for the foreseeable future. People are encouraged to join the wider Partnership to hear news and share their views on a regular basis, but without long-term commitment; for people who want to be more involved opportunities to join working groups for specific topics or the Board itself will be offered. Following discussion several attendees asked to join the Board and working groups: Lee will follow up with these people outside of the meeting.</p>
2.3	<p>The Norfolk All-Age Autism Strategy, <i>My Autism, Our Lives, Our Norfolk</i>, comes to an end in 2024. Lee Gibbons explained the role of the Partnership in shaping the new Strategy and outlined the early plans for people to get involved. Members will be asked what they think about the strategy, what has been achieved and what still needs to change by the end of 2023.</p>

Agenda Item 3	Presentation on Proposed Early Support for Autism service
3.1	Tracey Walton, Autism Commissioning Manager, and Karen Dures, Project Lead for Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) and Autism Development, gave a presentation on a proposed new early support service for people with autism.
3.2	Tracey and Karen briefly explained the Care Act and how it sets out rules for providing Social Care in England. Local councils, including Norfolk County Council, have a duty to prevent, reduce and delay people's need for care and support. As social care, unlike health care, is not free for everyone, prevention is a key priority in Norfolk and Waveney's Health and Wellbeing strategy and the Norfolk Autism Strategy.
	Autistic adults without a learning disability were identified as a key group who were not well served by current services. To address this need, Tracey and Karen did further research, concluding that an improved service which supports autistic adults at an earlier stage to enable them to live independently can prevent significant problems.
	<p>With funding already in place, Tracey and Karen intend to put in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Operational Autism Lead, who will identify the needs of autistic people known to social services who currently cannot access existing services. They will support service development and improvements across Norfolk. • A Specialist Social Care Service for Autistic Adults without a learning disability. This will provide support at an earlier age and a specialist service for people known to Adult Social Care. <p>They are working with a wide range of stakeholders, including Family Voice, Carers Voice, ASD Helping Hands, Nansa, the National Autistic Society, SENSational Families, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System, as well as the NAPB.</p>
	<p>Attendees who would be interested in giving their views in more detail, or being part of further work, were encouraged to contact the NAPB or Tracey Walton directly.</p> <p>Email: contact@norfolkautismpartnership.org.uk Email: tracey.walton@norfolk.gov.uk</p>
3.3	Attendees raised concerns that the proposed service would not support people with autism and learning disabilities. Tracey explained that while there are already many services that support people with a learning disability and autism, there are no services for those with autism but without a learning disability. The new service will focus on autistic people without a learning disability to address this need.
3.4	Tracey and Karen asked attendees to discuss the question "How do we continue to work with autistic people, their families and those that care for them to deliver a specialist social care service?"

	<p>Discussion followed. Suggested answers included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face meetings. • Virtual meetings. • Phone calls. • Newsletter and email updates. • Use of social media such as Discord and Facebook. <p>Some participants stated that they would not be involved if the involvement opportunities were face to face.</p>
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Agenda Item 4	Breakout Room Discussion
4.1	<p>Following a fifteen minute break, attendees were split into two focus groups to answer the following questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of support do autistic people who ask for social care support need? • What type of support do autistic people who are in receipt of social care need? <p>Each group was given 30 minutes to discuss these points before giving feedback.</p>
4.2	<p>Feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals involved with the service, including support workers and social workers, need good listening skills and have a high level of understanding of autism and related conditions. • The service should seek to increase access to social workers • The proposed service should seek out Sensory Needs Specialist and Occupational Therapist input. • support with every aspect of an autistic person's life may be required rather than focus on one or two areas. • There should be one point of contact to find out any information about the service. • Information about the service, such as its structure, should be presented visually to aid communication. • The service should consider anxiety and mental health issues and include ways to manage related conditions. • Access to the service should be based on individual need. • The service should include training and employment support. • The service should include support to help users access their local community. • Advocacy support should be available for people who need it.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to complete forms should be available. One attendee noted that anyone involved in the service should be a “professional who amplifies the voice of an autistic person”
4.4	Tracey and Karen explained that they would use feedback from today’s session to help write the service specification and tender document. Attendees who wished to participate in further discussions gave permission to be contacted outside of the Forum.

Agenda Item 5	Any other business
5.1	Following recommendations made by the Norfolk Safeguarding Board after a serious case review of Cawston Park Hospital, a new ethical commissioning framework is being worked out. Charlie Ladyman (NCC, Market and Business Lead) and Cat Duncan-Rees (Curators of changed) outlined opportunities for autistic people and their parents/carers to be involved in creating the new framework. Attendees who wished to get involved were encouraged to contact the Partnership or Charlie and Cat directly.
4.2	Attendees who would like to be more involved with the Partnership as Board or working Group members advised to write to contact@norfolkautismpartnership.org.uk

Date, time, and location of next meeting
<p>The next Autism Norfolk Forum will be held on: 22nd March 2023 13:00-15:00 via zoom.</p> <p>Sign-up details will be posted to the Partnership’s webpage and sent to members. The topic will be Advocacy.</p> <p>Future Forum meeting dates: 11 July 2023, 10:30-12:30, held online via Zoom 13 December 2023, 13:00-15:00. Venue TBA</p>

Glossary

ANF:	Autism Norfolk Forum
ASD:	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASB:	Autism Service Norfolk
CCG:	Clinical Commissioning Groups
EHCP:	Education, Health and Care Plan
FOIA:	Freedom of Information Act
GDPR:	General Data Protection Regulations
NAP:	Norfolk Autism Partnership
NAPB:	Norfolk Autism Partnership Board
NAS:	National Autistic Society
NCC:	Norfolk County Council
NCH&C:	Norfolk Community Health and Care
N&SFT:	Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust
SEND:	Special Educational Need and Disabilities
UEA:	University of East Anglia
WAW:	World Autism Week
WG:	Working Group
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