



**Notes of the Autism Norfolk Forum (ANF) Meeting
Held on: 29 March 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, Lead
Autism Administrator	Note taker
Tom Bassett	Partnership Manager
Greg Lonergan	Norfolk County Council Welfare Rights Unit Manager, presenter
Paul Scott	Norfolk County Council Employment Team Manager, presenter
Morgane Hervy	Chances Project, presenter
Rachel Hardie	Chances Project, Presenter
Sue	Interpreter
Members of the public (10)	

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. • NAPB Code of Conduct and Coproduction principles introduced and explained.

Agenda Item 2	Update from the Board
2.1	<p>The Norfolk Autism Partnership (NAPB) 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. There are currently 4 different working groups that feed into the board: Engagement, Diagnostics, Workforce Development, and Employment. These working groups report</p>

	<p>directly to the NAPB. The NAPB reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>The Partnership Board is Independent of Norfolk County Council (NCC) and any other statutory bodies. It has an independent website, which is managed through the Engagement Working Group.</p>
2.2	<p>Lee Gibbons gave a brief overview of the recent activities of the Board and Working Groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Diagnostics Working Group has been investigating accessible waiting rooms and waiting room policies, as well as describing what needs to be in appointment letters for autistic people. Members have also worked on national and local work on developing a Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) profile. It continues to monitor progress on autism diagnosis waiting times. • The Engagement Working Group works to prepare and run Autism Norfolk Forums. The group writes the Partnership newsletter and manages the independent website, which hosts autism training as well as other useful information. The website continues to grow, and an additional 62 people have been added to the mailing list since the last meeting. It is currently preparing for World Autism Awareness Week. • The Employment Working Group is focussing on finding a large employer to work with as an Autism Employment Champion and compiling knowledge of existing resources. • Autism training developed by the Partnership continues to be refined and is approved by the University of East Anglia. The eLearning component of the training is available on the Partnership website.
2.3	<p>Other recent activities the Partnership is involved in include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the library service to support a network of autism champions. • Setting up social events with Partners ASD Helping Hands. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 31 March 2022, 10am-12pm at the Shoebox Café in Norwich ○ 1 April 2022, 11am-1pm at the 2nd Dereham Scout Group in Dereham. • Continuing to arrange Autism Norfolk Forums. These will likely continue to be on Zoom for the foreseeable future. <p>For more information about what the Partnership is doing, please see the independent partnership website:</p> <p>https://www.norfolkautismpartnership.org.uk/</p>

Agenda Item 3	DWP and payments: Presentation by Greg Lonergan
3.1	DWP representatives were originally scheduled to give a presentation for this item, but unfortunately were unavailable on the day of the Forum. Instead, a presentation on the work of the Welfare Rights Unit, payments and current DWP standards by Greg Lonergan, Welfare Rights Manager at Norfolk County Council was arranged. The Welfare Rights Unit provide a free specialist service to Norfolk residents that receive a Norfolk County Council-funded service, including Adult Social Services, Children's Services or Norfolk Assistance Scheme. They do this by completing benefit checks to ensure the correct entitlements are being received; helping with benefit application forms; helping with appeals where benefits have been stopped; and representing people at tribunal hearings.
3.2	A question-and-answer session followed, with Greg giving specific advice on Disability Living Allowances (DLAs), Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) and advice on filling out forms.
3.3	For more information, or to ask questions in a more private setting, please contact greg.lonergan@norfolk.gov.uk
	The Welfare Rights Unit can be reached by calling 01603 224447 or emailing welfarerights@norfolk.gov.uk https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/help-and-advice-with-benefits
	DIAL charity in Great Yarmouth can also give advice on the completion of the forms https://www.dial-greatyarmouth.org.uk/
	The Norfolk Community Advice Network, a Norfolk-wide partnership of advice and community experts that can help with free, impartial and quality assured advice and assistance is also an excellent resource. https://ncan.co.uk/
3.4	ACTION: Administrator will work with Lee Gibbons and Greg Lonergan to arrange further meetings.

Agenda Item 4	Norfolk County Council Employment Team Presentation by Paul Scott
4.1	Presentation on the Norfolk Employment Service by Paul Scott, Norfolk County Council Employment Team Manager. The Norfolk Employment Service aims to challenge misconceptions about the value of disabled people, people with learning disabilities and those with mental health

	<p>issues. It highlights the skills people with these conditions can bring to the workplace and works 1:1 with clients to improve CVs, prepare them for interview and develop essential skills.</p> <p>The Employment Service works closely with MIND, Norfolk and Waveney NHS Well Being team, the Chances Project, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Volunteer Norfolk, Norfolk Adult Education, Job Centres, Active Norfolk, the Norfolk County Council Development Team, the Norfolk Apprenticeship/Kickstart Team and various external training and education providers.</p>
4.2	<p>Potential participants must be referred to the Employment Service by an Assistant Practitioner or Social Worker from a Mental Health Team, a Learning Disabilities Team or a Physical Disabilities Team. To be eligible, a potential participant must also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a recipient of Care and Support Package, either a commissioned or non-commissioned service. • Have a completed Care Act Assessment. • Be 18 years old or older. • want to seek paid employment, to do training or other educational courses, to do work experiences/placement or voluntary work. • Have an identified disability or long-term health condition. • Have an assigned Assistant Practitioner or Social Worker. • Not be using Day Provider.
4.3	<p>Although the support the team gives will vary from participant to participant, examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafted employment support • Tailored employment related activities • In work support • Specialist 1:1 support, either in-person or via telephone, video calls or email. • Expert advice and guidance. <p>After working with the participant, the Employment Team hopes to achieved at least one of the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 6–12-week work placement • Volunteering opportunities • Training and education in either a short or long-term programme. • A work trial. • Signposting to different services with other opportunities for involvement.
4.4	<p>For more information, please contact Paul Scott or the Employment Team directly:</p>

	<p>paul.scott2@norfolk.gov.uk</p> <p>NES@norfolk.gov.uk</p>
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Agenda Item 5	Chances Project: Presentation by Morgane Hervy and Rachel Hardie
5.1	<p>Presentation on the work of the Chances Project, given by Morgane Hervy and Rachel Hardie. Chances is a £4.9m Norfolk County Council project, co-funded by the European Social Fund, aimed at people in Norfolk who have recently lost their jobs or are long-term unemployed who may face barriers to finding work. It seeks to help them get back into employment through new opportunities for support and training. Participants do not necessarily have to have autism and/or learning disabilities, but they are very happy to support people with these conditions.</p> <p>Launched in April 2021 and running to 2023, the project has so far supported 550 people with various needs out of a goal of 2,602 people. Referrals to the project have mainly been from Job Centre Plus, but health or mental health services, voluntary sector organisations, local councils, and the Norfolk Community Advice Network have directed people to the project. People can also self-refer or refer on behalf of family or friends. Chances is partnered with wellbeing services in Norfolk, particularly the Community Sports Foundation (charity associated with Norwich City Football Club) and is exploring options to hire a mental health and disability specialist.</p>
4.2	<p>There are two main strands to the Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chances for Work, which supports those who face barriers to entering the workplace. • Chances for Healthy Living, which supports those who may require intensive support to overcome complex social, economic and health related barriers to entering the workplace. <p>Chances operates across all Norfolk's locality regions, with advocates embedded in local communities. Chances advocates are the primary contact for participants, and work with them to overcome barriers to engagement, employment, or education by providing personalised support. Advocates</p>
4.3	<p>Participants go through give stages as part of their work with the Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to the project. • Meet with a local advocate to learn more about the project, understand what is on offer and ask questions. This initial meeting can take different forms, and does not have to happen in

	<p>an office or home environment if the participants does not want it to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advocate will assess the participant's eligibility for Chances for Work and Chances for Healthy Living. Advocates will then support a participant to complete the entry form. • In the following sessions, the advocate and participants will work together to identify the participants goals, skills and barriers to work and agree a Personal Action Plan with the next steps to take. This may involve developing soft skills, job skills, overcoming practical barriers (such as childcare needs, funding), practical support, specialist support (such as referral links to other services) or engagement with local activities. • Participants who find work but fall out of it can re-engage with their advocate.
4.4	<p>For more information, or to refer yourself or someone else to the Chances Project, please contact your nearest team:</p> <p>Norwich: Email the Norwich Team at chances@futureprojects.org.uk or call 07956 033 275</p> <p>Breckland: Email the Breckland team at chances@ncab.org.uk or call 07707 365 218</p> <p>North Norfolk: Email the North Norfolk Team at chances@ncab.org.uk or call 07707 365 218</p> <p>South Norfolk: Email Emma Claridge and her team at Emma.Claridge@voluntarynorfolk.org.uk or call 07867 229 500</p> <p>Broadland: Email Evie Ross and her team at Evie.Ross@voluntarynorfolk.org.uk or call 07435 989 710</p> <p>Great Yarmouth: Email Rachael Hardie and her team at Rachael.Hardie@voluntarynorfolk.org.uk or call 07867 231 130</p>

	<p>King's Lynn:</p> <p>Email Roni Dean and her team at Roni.Dean@voluntarynorfolk.gov.uk or call 07867 229 775</p>
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Date, time and location of next meeting
<p>Future Autism Forums are still being arranged. It is hoped the next meeting will be in late June 2022. More details will be released in time.</p> <p>Suggestion for next ANF meeting theme: Housing</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
WG Lead:	Working Group Lead

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