

Autism Steering Group
Inaugural Meeting – 9th May 2024
Arbour Park, Slough
Easy Read Minutes



Welcome and introductions.

- The meeting started a bit late and GDM apologised for this.
- GDM said it was great to see many people with autism in attendance and many carers.
- GDM also welcomed all professionals attending the meeting.
- Some people were online and others were in the room
- Everyone said hello and shared a bit about themselves with the person next to them and all the others.



The Autism Steering Group – Presentation

- GDM shared a presentation about what the Autism Steering Group does and some basic rules like “no jargon”.
- Some participants said that the meetings and the group should not involve so many professional and only reflect the views of autistic people.

Actions: GDM to reduce professional involvement and improve autistic participation.



The Autism Steering Group – Reasonable Adjustment Flag, Self-referral, and dynamic register (Presentation)

- A representative from the Frimley Integrated Care Board (NHS) was invited to present some new nation-wide initiatives. These are:
- A document that people can use to request adaptation when attending medical appointments.
- A register that aims to ensure people receive the right support at the right time by pulling together information from several different agencies.
- The possibility to refer themselves for health and social care assessments online.

- This presentation was highly welcome by participants who showed significant interest in the reasonable adjustment documents and how to access this.

Actions: GDM to share the presentation slides with the group.



The Autism Steering Group – Who are we? (Group exercise)

- The Group discussed the topics that are relevant to inform the work that needs to be done. These are:
 - Raising awareness about autism / neuro diversity
 - Need more support for people to “Learn to cope”
 - Ambition to making Slough ‘autism friendly’ town
 - Want long lasting support beyond any funding
 - Need to ensure good signposting for people with autism
 - Data about numbers of people with autism
 - Dedicated staff within MH services with knowledge and understanding of neuro – diversity

- Timely diagnostic assessments – “a diagnosis can be life changing”
- Small task groups needed to support action
- Need to develop a series of training for health professional

The Group also discussed what actions are to be taken:

- What is out there currently to support neurodiverse people?
(Both information and support)
- Travel Support
- Accessing health appointments (GP appointments being the focus)
- Diagnostic assessments – long waiting lists
- Peer awareness training for staff required
- Lack of social group for neuro- diverse people
- Explore autism Hub
- Resources for young people

Tea Break

The Autism Steering Group – Other presentations

- Two more presentations were given on the day.
- Slough CVS presented the #OneSlough Fund opportunities. Community groups can apply for grants to run their activities.
- Based on the income they have received the previous year, they can apply for specific grants.
- The second presentation was about Art Beyond Belief, an organization that uses Art and the therapeutic benefit of Arts to support neurodivergent people.

Actions: GDM to share the presentations with the group.

The Autism Steering Group – Participants feedback.

- Lots of energy and ideas in the room
- The group was very large to make decisions
- Need to consider having a smaller group with less professionals
- Need to agree where to start/focus from the 8 themes
- The group needs specific work streams working on the themes / priorities
- Arranging a smaller meeting with people with autism ASAP to ensure voices heard

- Need to ensure that meetings don't slip into using jargon



The Autism Steering Group – Next Steps

- Sending notes to all participants.
- Creation of online survey for members to decide which working group to join (optional).
- Regular “café style” events with neurodivergent people ASAP to ensure voices heard.
- Setting up the 8 “task and finish” groups / book first meeting (post survey).