



Minutes / Cofnodion
Cross Party Autism Group / Grŵp Trawsbleidiol Awtistiaeth
September 14 Medi 2018
Glyndŵr University / Prifysgol Glyndŵr

1 WELCOME / CROESO

Group Chair, Mark Isherwood AM, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Mike Hedges AM and David Rees AM, Sharon Bateman from Creatasmile and Cllr Elin Walker Jones.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING / COFNODION A MATERION YN CODI

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate account of the previous meeting.

3 UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH WALES INTEGRATED AUTISM SERVICE / DIWEDDARIAD AR DDATBLYGIAD GWASANAETH INTEGREDIG AWTISTIAETH GOGLEDD CYMRU

Mel Hough and Sioned Thomas provided details of how the North Wales Integrated Autism Service (IAS) was developed and information about ongoing recruitment and priorities. It was discussed that the IAS was not replacing existing services and that a key area of work will be ensuring that existing services are upskilled to help them recognise and support the needs of autistic people.

Questions were asked by attendees seeking a detailed understanding of what the role of the service would be in terms of providing direct support to individuals. Attendees were informed that following a referral, support could be provided in the form of information and advice and, in some instances, direct support. Attendees also emphasised that failure by those providing public services for autistic people to first give careful consideration to the communication environment and the autistic person's communication needs can cause confusion for the autistic person and escalate their anxiety.

4 'A VISION OF EXERCISE', ANDREW EDWARDS, AUTHOR / AWDUR

Andrew provided an overview of his personal experiences, as an autistic person, detailing the positive impact of exercise on his mental health and in reducing stress. Andrew noted that his exercise routine had brought structure and discipline. Andrew also suggested that there was little helpful information available about maintaining a healthy diet and eating but was grateful to find a fantastic support in his new personal trainer, Geraint Llyr Roberts. Andrews's experiences inform his newest book, 'A Vision of Exercise'.

5 DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS COMMUNITY PARTNER UPDATE / DIWEDDARIAD PARTNER CYMUNEDOL YR ADRAN GWAITH A PHENSIYNAU

Sandra Morgan led a presentation on the work that the Department for Work and Pensions are currently undertaking through their Community Partners. Sandra works across 19 Job Centres providing advice and training to job coaches, enabling them to better support autistic people into work. Feedback from attendees included suggestions that work is needed

around the physical environment of Job Centres to ensure they are autism-friendly. The current structures of community partners in Wales are funded for 2018/19. The group agreed to write to the Minister responsible for this scheme in the UK Government recognising the positive work of Community Partners in supporting autistic people into work and calling for these roles to be extended beyond 2018/19.

6 A PERSONAL STORY OF AUTISM AND GETTING OLDER / STORI BERSONOL AM AWTISTIAETH AC HENEIDDIO, GWEN WILLIAMS

Gwen Williams discussed the experiences of her cousin, who is aged 73 and autistic. After being in a hospital for 45 years, Gwen's cousin is now living in the community. Gwen spoke about a number of challenges that her cousin has faced in accessing the right support. Gwen successfully applied to be a legal deputy, allowing her to advocate for her cousin and make a positive impact on her quality of life.

7 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES OUTREACH TEAM / AUTISM BILL TÎM ALLGYMORTH CYNULLIAD CENEDLAETHOL CYMRU / BIL AWTISTIAETH

The Outreach Team spoke about the work they do to inform people across Wales about the work of the National Assembly. The Assembly's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee are currently working on scrutiny of the proposed Autism (Wales) Bill and wanted to make attendees aware of the opportunity to have their say. The team will present the views that they gather throughout the consultation period to the Committee to support their scrutiny.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS / UNRHYW FATER ARALL

Angie Atherton provided information about the North Wales Autism Conference which will be held on 19 October at Glyndŵr University.

9 ACTIONS / CAMAU GWEITHREDU

The group will write to the relevant UK Government Minister, recognising the positive work of Department for Work and Pensions community partners in supporting autistic people into work and to call for these roles will to be extended beyond 2018/19.

The next meeting of the Cross Party Autism Group will be in Cardiff, on 5 December 2018, at the Pierhead building.