



**Minutes / Cofnodion
Cross Party Autism Group / Grŵp Trawsbleidiol Awtistiaeth
Mawrth 20 March 2019
National Assembly for Wales / Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru**

1 WELCOME / CROESO

Group Chair, Mark Isherwood AM, welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was also attended by Group Officer Hefin David AM and staff representing Mike Hedges AM and Lee Waters AM.

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. Chair, Mark Isherwood AM, provided a brief update on the Autism (Wales) Bill, which was rejected by the National Assembly in January 2019, and subsequent commitments made by the Welsh Government to improve autism services in Wales.

Mark also informed the group that the Welsh Government are currently consulting on the draft Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales, which closes on 22nd March 2019.

Hefin David AM declared a personal interest.

3 NATIONAL AUTISM TEAM UPDATE AND FUTURE PLANNING / DIWEDDARIAD TŪM CENEDLAETHOL AWTISTIAETH A CHYNLLUNIO I'R DYFODOL

Sara Harvey, National Strategic Lead of the National Autism Team, and Wendy Thomas, National Professional Lead, provided an update on their four areas of work:

- Autism Awareness and Understanding,
- Resources,
- Training; and
- Development of the IAS.

They informed the group that the Welsh Local Government Association had recently completed the Autism Team's employer accreditation scheme. They are planning to launch a parent and carer film and host a national conference during World Autism Awareness Week. They hope to also launch an emergency services scheme and a work-based learning programme. The Autism Team's future plans include a participation and engagement strategy, supporting development of the Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services and update and roll out key resources in a strategic way.

Questions around the availability of post-diagnostic resources were raised by Hefin David AM and other attendees. Wendy Thomas committed to feed this back to responsible teams. Attendees also urged that autistic people were included in the development of services and support as some concerns were raised that in some instances, the service and support provided by the IAS were not clearly identified or accessible. The Autism Team agreed and said that this will form part of their participation and engagement strategy. It was also

suggested that the National Autism Team should develop further training for Job Centres to better support autistic people, especially following confirmation that the roles of DWP Community Support Partners will not continue.

4 ACCESSIBILITY UPDATE FROM TRANSPORT FOR WALES RAIL / DIWEDDARIAD HYGIRCHEDD GAN DRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU

Barry Lloyd and Sarah Rennie, from Transport for Wales Rail discussed their ongoing development of plans which aim to make the railway accessible to everyone, seven days a week. Barry and Sarah outlined the work that their accessibility panel are doing, such as station visits and developing training. They also announced that the accessibility panel will have a budget to make improvements as issues arise, so that they can be dealt with quickly. Other initiatives that Transport for Wales Rail are developing include the Orange Wallet Scheme, mystery shopping and familiarisation trips.

Questions were raised in relation to the regulatory body to which TfW Rail are accountable. The Office of Rail and Road set policy in this area. Improving punctuality was suggested as key to improving the experience of autistic people on trains, and public transport more widely. Barry Lloyd said that wider planned improvements to the network will make services more efficient and reliable. It was also asked if TfW Rail contractors, such as revenue protection inspectors, would be subject to the same training as those directly employed. It was confirmed that this would be the case.

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS / UNRHYW FATER ARALL

Lisa Morgan, from The Autism Directory informed the group of their upcoming conference, focussing on employment and helping organisations to understand how to become disability-confident employers.

Ian Cutler wanted to share information with the group about the support and campaign group, Autism Injustice, which seeks to ensure criminal justice and care professionals are aware of and follow existing guidelines and policy relating to autistic people in a way that properly safeguards them. It was agreed that details of this group would be circulated with these minutes. As community safety is devolved, it was suggested that Mark Isherwood AM may consider raising questions on this issue with the responsible Welsh Government Minister.

Mark Isherwood AM informed attendees of the Going Gold for Autistic Acceptance event, organised by Autistic UK and the Autistic Women's Empowerment Project, which is taking place in the National Assembly for Wales on April 2nd.

6 ACTIONS / CAMAU GWEITHREDU

To share details of the Autism Injustice campaign with the Cross Party Autism Group mailing list.

The next meeting of the Cross Party Autism Group is to be held in Cardiff in 26 June 2019.