


**Autistic Spectrum Condition Partnership ASCPB Agenda
Minutes from 9th September 2024**

Present: Andrew Coterill (Co-chair), Jan Marriott, Abbas Veshmia, Emma Eccleston, Pippa Baker-Walsh, Caroline Sutcliffe (Minutes), Noor Al-Koky, Karl Gluck, Josh Jones, Rutendo Mugomba, Yvonne Smith, Stuart Seagrave, Stuart Saxton, Dan Jacques, Farooq Ismail, Anna Luckwell, Alison May, Tanya Beres, Saf Hopkins, Lorna Carter, Suzanne Tapping, Aylisha Howard, Nicole Hastie, Mar Plowman, Tamsin Morgan, Paul Avery, Murray Spear, Imran Atcha, Sheila Banga, Mark Wilde, Nadine Blewitt, Kirsten Lloyd, Jacky Martel, Thomas Hobb, Kim George, Marina Furlonger, Sam James, Pete Harper, Keren Paul

Apologies: Emma Royer, Simon Thomason, Building circles

1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>AC welcomed everyone and explained this is the first in person partnership meeting since the covid pandemic.</p> <p>AC introduced the guest co-chair Sammy Roberts</p>
2.	<p>Guest Co-chair: Sammy Roberts</p> <p> Advocacy Slide.pdf</p> <p>SR thanked everyone for coming and introduced the meetings advocacy topic.</p> <p>SR explained that he has been involved in self-advocacy in different forms for 12-13 years but explained that the term self-advocacy in autism community is relatively new and discussed the importance of having reasonable adjustments for autism advising that the louder the voice is – the stronger we are together.</p> <p>Youth Advocacy - https://youtu.be/xrnGWS4RC0A</p> <p>The YouTube video on Inclusion Gloucestershire's Youth Forum highlights the organisation's commitment to empowering autistic and neurodiverse young people aged 13 to 19. The forum provides a platform for them to share their experiences, advocate for change, and discuss key issues such as reasonable adjustments in various settings. It fosters connection among peers, supports mutual learning, and emphasises the importance of inclusivity and understanding in creating supportive environments</p>
3.	<p>Advocacy RoundTable Discussion</p> <p>Noor Al-Koky: Context setting</p> <p>NAK advised that GCC have a statutory advocacy offer for adults which will be outlined during the morning but advised there is also lots of activity in Gloucestershire around 'soft' advocacy and the self-advocacy space. There is also a statutory offer for children's.</p> <p>NAK advised that the purpose of the day is to gather intelligence to find out what is going on in Gloucestershire, along with an opportunity to shape what community advocacy could look like, thinking about if we need to be more joined up going forward. NAK advised whilst the focus is on</p>

adults if there are any views on children's advocacy, please feed this back and this can be passed on to the relevant teams.

NAK explained that Simon Thomason is starting a piece of work to map what is happening in the community in this area, with the aim to identify any gaps and what further support may be needed.

For more information on advocacy - [Advocacy - what is it? | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

POhWER – Statutory offer for adults: Anna Luckwell: Community Manager – see slides



Gloucestershire
Independent Advocacy

AL explained that advocacy is 'empowering people to speak up for themselves when they can and speaking for them when they can't'.

AL explained POhWER provide the statutory advocacy service in Gloucestershire for adults which includes a number of different statutory services this includes:

- **Independent Care Act Advocacy:** governed by the Care Act 2014 a referral to the service would be made to the service by social workers. The service helps people to understand information, have their voice heard, and get the support they need. The service supports the person to take decisions and challenge those made by the local authority, and helps the person understand their rights.
- **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA):** An IMCA would get involved in best interest decisions around long term changes to accommodation, along with decisions around reviewing arrangements and best interest decisions around serious medical treatment. The service is for individuals who can't make decisions and don't have any family / friends to help make decisions and ensures a person's views and feelings are involved in the process.
- **Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA):** supports people being treated under the Mental Health Act and can support with any issues around mental health care and treatment whilst detained in hospital or under a Community Treatment Order, and can also get involved in appeal processes.
- **Independent Health Complaints Advocacy:** can get involved if someone wants support to make a complaint around their experience with the NHS – the service can support with providing info, help with writing a letter of complaint/ phone calls etc.
- **Independent Social Care Complaints Advocacy:** can support someone to access the formal social care complaints process.
- **Independent Care Act Advocacy (ICAA):** Governed by the Care Act 2014 – Local Authorities must put arrangements in place to support a person if they have substantial difficulty in going through the Care Act process and they have no-one else to support with this.

AL discussed the different processes involved and different referral routes / criteria. All of the referral forms are on the website www.pohwer.net/gloucestershire however if anyone is unsure

about which service you need you can contact the team via the routes below to chat through any potential scenarios and get further information:

- **Telephone: 0300 456 2370**
- **Email: glosadvocacy@pohwer.net**
- **Post: POhWER, PO Box 17943, Birmingham, B9 9PB**

Questions

JB asked a question about how the advocacy offer in Gloucestershire compares to other areas of the country. AL explained that in terms of statutory advocacy the local authority has to commission an organisation to provide care act advocacy however individual local authorities can decide on whether they commission individual projects. AL explained an example of this in Gloucestershire is the discharge project which is run from Wooton lawn which covers things that an independent mental health advocacy normally wouldn't get involved in.

KG advised that it would be useful to understand what other areas have commissioned community advocacy – AL explained that POhWER has an impact report that can be shared which provides summaries from other areas – please see a link below to a copy of the impact report, which can also be found on the POhWER website: <https://www.pohwer.net/our-impact>

There was also a question about independent mental health advocacy and if it covers s.117 aftercare. AL advised support to attend meetings about 117 aftercare before discharge would be included and that there is no lower age limit and discussed the situation of out of area placements for young people.

Wider VCS Partners:

Inclusion Gloucestershire – Speak Up Groups (missed some of this)

Your voice- running 4 years – unique across s/w – meet monthly online

Active Impact – Neurodiversity Network

MP discussed how the aim of Active Impact is making leisure activities accessible for neuro divergent people, identify any barriers and highlight what good practice looks like.

MP explained that the focus is on self-advocacy and being user led to bring lived experience to work to share experiences and create change. MP discussed how it is important to allow neuro divergent people to speak about their different needs / experiences and advised the next community event being run is a half day neuro diversity conference at Churchdown community centre on Wednesday 4th December between 9.30am-12.30pm (please see flyer below)



Active Impact -You're Welcome Gloucestershire

If you're a provider of leisure activities, you can create a profile for free and promote your upcoming events on You're Welcome, the inclusive activities directory. You can tag your activities by which access requirements you meet (e.g., autism friendly, quiet space) and you can add the Neurodiversity Network to your events as an associated organisation. This means all your activities will also be listed under the Neurodiversity Network page, which will provide a great at-a-glance menu of neurodivergent-friendly things to do in the county.

<https://yourewelcomeglos.org/>

Community Autism Support and Advice Service (CASA) – see slides



Partnership board
CASA.pptx

PBW introduced the Community Autism Support and Advice Service (CASA) which provides autism support for autistic adults who are 17+ in transition and discussed why advocacy is important. PBW explained that individuals can self-refer or be referred to the service and they will then do an initial assessment and talk about goals, individualised support and what's important to an individual to find out what way advocacy needs to be provided in order to get an individual to their goals.

PBW explained that they have produced a number of resources including an autism passport and reasonable adjustments document which supports individuals and also support services to understand what an individual needs. PBW advised that they speak to services with the aim of amplifying the voice of the autistic individual who historically have had decisions made on their behalf with a view of improving outcomes. PBW advised outcomes can include increasing the confidence of individuals, meeting an individual's physical and emotional needs, enabling smoother transition periods and providing appropriate and effective support.

PBW advised that society is now much better at communicating and understanding different communication styles but there is still work to do with services to break down the barriers to support this, which might include advocating for longer GP appointments or face to face appointments when needed and discussed the need for services to be flexible to meet people's needs.

PBW advised they challenge myths and biases to change assumptions and aim to increase the confidence of autistic individuals. PBW discussed a case study which highlights the importance of treating everyone as an individual focusing on that individual need at that time.

PBW advised that they provide social drop ins for people to access support from each other and advised the Cheltenham group is completely peer led. (can we include details here?)

Questions

A question was raised around the capacity how many people need the service. PBW advised that the service is over capacity explaining that the team have 1 f/t member of staff and a p/t post and a 5 and a 10-hour zero-hour contract which covers the whole of the county however when the retendering goes live for the new contract, they are hoping there may be some more capacity going forward.

Access Social Care - see slides below

Discussion around good practice around ensuring referrals for an advocate to support for care reviews are made in advance (approx. 2-4 weeks prior to review) so that the advocate can learn how the individual communicates and / develop a plan / reasonable adjustments in advance in accordance with the Equality Act - not good practice to meet advocate at assessment/review

JM discussed a case study where an individual was offered support around their wish to move and the process of requesting a care act assessment and support with this which resulted in a care needs advocate to assist with this process.



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Barnwood Trust – see slides below



Barnwood Trust -
Autism Partnership Bc

DJ explained that in 2022, Barnwood Trust conducted research with over 100 parent-carers and disabled young people about their experiences of short breaks in Gloucestershire (elements of this research were co-designed with parent-carers and disabled young people) and the research demonstrated a number of areas where families of disabled children would benefit from advocacy and support.

The research also looked at families experience of the asesment process and identified some common themes and key outcomes (highlighted in slides attached) that could improve the experience for families.

For further information please contact Dan Jacques (Social Change Manager)
dan.jacques@barnwoodtrust.org

4. Breakout room discussions



Discussion Questions


The questions for discussion around 'breakout' tables included:

- What are organisations doing?
- What are the gaps in advocacy services?
- How do you bridge the gaps?
- Are there any training needs?

Initial feedback from each table was:

- Table 1: There should be a county strategy for advocacy that should include a broader range of advocacy support for different types of advocacy at different times of people's lives
- Table 2: How do people know how to access organisations that provide advocacy support – who to contact, where to signpost- how do parents / carers find info on their rights - carers hub can provide support
- Table 3: Signposting –discussion around how hard it can be to make a phone call and then be signposted somewhere else – discussion that advocacy for 'life admin' would be life changing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 4: Need for more training / awareness for families earlier on in a child's life Table 5: Discussed looking at how people identify with the term advocacy particular unpaid carers <p>Please see attached handout detailing key discussion points:</p>  <p>Advocacy Breakout Room Discussion Not</p>
5.	<p>Partner Presentations</p> <p>Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Hub (Kirsten Lloyd) – see slides</p>  <p>Employment and Skills Hub APB.pptx</p> <p>KL explained that the Employment and Skills Hub launched in Sept 2021, it is a front door for those who are employed/unemployed who require advice, guidance and support with skill development, training and employment.</p> <p>KL explained that the service is a front door for individuals who are unemployed or employed but need support with training and skills and explained the hub brokers signpost individuals to correct services.</p> <p>KL outlined how the Employer Engagement Team supports employers to look at employer processes and helps employers with advice and practical solutions that they may need to support inclusivity in the workplace. This includes employer forums where a number of employers attend on a quarterly basis where key topics are discussed and employers sharing best practice. The forums also discuss how accessible they can make the recruitment process including applications, interviews and workplace visits.</p> <p>KL explained the importance of ensuring sustainability and once employed individuals stay in the service for 52 weeks and the employer engagement team helps employers with advice and practical solutions that they may need.</p> <p>Discussion held about how best to seek views from neurodiverse individuals who are seeking employment opportunities and whether this would be through online surveys, consultations or in person. Suggestions included accessing existing groups and having a choice of options. JJ advised that Barnwood Trust have lots of good research that can be shared and KG also advised of the carers hub employers toolkit.</p>
6.	<p>Autism Strategy Service Updates</p> <p>Life in the MiND (Inclusion Gloucestershire) Paul Avery / Murray Spear</p> <p>PA advised that 'Life in the MiND' is an Inclusion Gloucestershire project which is a podcast which tells individual stories about neurodivergence through personal experience. PA advised this is hosted by neurodivergent people who tell their story from their perspective and advised they have developed a website to support the podcast and advised they are also on TikTok</p> <p>PA explained there are 24 podcasts which are available on all the streaming platforms, and they discuss topics that are relevant to the guest this covers themes such as parenting, hoarding, art / creativity. Themes for the next season include discussing the queer space and education.</p>

	<p>PA advised that they want to continue to connect with the community and asked if anyone has a good story to tell let them know.</p> <p>Take a look at the project website and listen to the podcast by following the links below.</p> <p>Project website: https://lifeinthemind.co.uk/</p> <p>Listen to the podcast here: https://lifeinthemind.podbean.com/</p> <p>GCC Neuro-Inclusive Working Group; D-Net Tea talk in Neuro divergence: Sam Jones – see slides</p> <p></p> <p>Autism Partnership Board Update on Dne</p> <p>SJ discussed how D-Net have held a safe space tea talk about workplace neurodivergence at GCC. SJ explained that as part of this attendees shared challenges, hopes, aspirations and there are a lots of outcomes and next steps to be achieved around training, amending policies and practices, creating a working group and supporting the organisation to understand reasonable adjustments and system change.</p> <p>One of the outcomes was to set up a neurodivergent working group to follow up on areas of work that have been identified this will be made up lived experience members and allies. SJ advised that they also delivered a session at GCC's leadership conference in June where there were a diverse range of speakers with lived experience and where they examined the staff survey response, did some myth busting to understand knowledge around the strengths of neurodivergent people and explained about spikey profiles.</p> <p>If anyone would like any further information SJ is happy to be contacted at Samantha.james@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p>
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Newsletter feedback</p> <p>We would welcome your feedback on our latest newsletter's content. Either by email neurodiversity@gloucestershire.gov.uk or complete a short survey by visiting this link https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=VMeuX-NkFECbzOcvxzuJ_Eoij_MhinhFJi5-pxlNO4YZUNFFHMllaR0U4WEtRUTJTR1UzUVpZRUZCSC4u</p> <p>Hate Crime Event</p> <p>In part response to Theme 6 of Gloucestershire's Autism Strategy, and in partnership with the Southwest Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Gloucestershire Police, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) are holding an event on Hate Crime, with a focus on disability (including neurodivergence), intersectionality and race, particularly in light of the August violent disorder.</p> <p>The event, which will take place on Monday 14 October during Hate Crime Awareness Week and Black History Month, has the following aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise awareness of the current Hate Crime picture, with a particular focus on disability, intersectionality, and race in light of the August violent disorder. • To understand the impact of hate crime on individuals and wider communities. • To clarify roles of agencies and partners in supporting victims and preventing hate crime including sharing the lessons learnt from the August violent disorder.

- To educate and empower upstanders to not be bystanders.

The Event will be hybrid, with speakers from the County Council, Gloucestershire Police, Crown Prosecution Service and Voluntary Community Sector. If you would like to join the conversation, you will need to register your place - using this link.

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/gcc/gloucestershires-hate-crime-event/e-mbjrdx>. A Microsoft Teams link will be sent nearer the time, as well as an agenda for the day.

Carers Hub Updates

Carers Right Day

LC advised that this year's Carers Rights Day is on Thursday 21st November 2024 and there will be an information event to celebrate this on Thursday 21st November 2024 at Shurdington Community Centre, Bishop Road, Shurdington, Cheltenham, GL51 4TB.

This will give unpaid Carers the opportunity to come along and meet with individual organisations who can offer them advice and support. The event will be set up from 1.00pm – 7.00pm. (Open to the public 1.30pm – 6.30pm) and there will also be talks from various organisations between 4.00pm and 6.30pm. If you would like to book a stand at the event, please email: careraware@peopleplus.co.uk.

Please see other carers hub updates below:

September 'Be Connected' Programme

You can now download the 'Be Connected' for September on our website September Be Connected - Gloucestershire Carers Hub

Carers will find all the sessions and activities running throughout September 2024.

Join us on the NHS Bus

Why not join us on our NHS Bus Tour this autumn, we will be in various locations around the county and welcome you to join us.

2nd October – Bishop's Cleeve Library
 11th October – Lydney Tesco
 15th October – Tetbury Tesco
 21st October – Dursley Town Centre, outside Bank Cafe
 6th November – Fairford Market
 15th November – Tewkesbury Morrison's
 25th November – Hester's Way Shopping Parade, Cheltenham
 26th November – Northleach, Westwoods Centre
 27th November – Cirencester Market Place
 28th November – Moreton in the Marsh, outside Tesco Express

We will be at these locations from approximately 9.30am - 3.00pm.

To come along with us please email: careraware@peopleplus.co.uk

Carer Information Brochure

Why not take a look at our new 'Professional Guide to Services' brochure which is available along with other printable marketing on our website: [Printable Marketing - Gloucestershire Carers Hub](#)

Translation Services

Did you know that if a Carer's first language is not English that we offer a translation service for them. When making a referral please make sure you input this information into the communication section of the referral form.

Carer Survey

Gloucestershire County Council and NHS Gloucestershire invite unpaid carers and professionals to share their views on services to support adult carers aged 18+.

Your feedback will help to shape future services and support for carers across the county.

Carer definition: "An unpaid carer provides support or looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of frailty, physical or mental illness, addiction, or disability."

Regardless of whether a person receives Carers Allowance.

- Carers have your say by visiting [Carers Survey 2024 | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.engagementhq.com/carers-survey-2024)
- Professionals, who support carers, have your say by visiting [Carers Professionals Survey 2024 | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.engagementhq.com/carers-professionals-survey-2024)

The carers survey closes on Wednesday 4 September 2024

If you would like further information or support to complete the survey, please email the Carers Commissioning Team at CommissioningHubAdults@gloucestershire.gov.uk

They welcome individual, meeting, or group discussions in September 2024 to gather detailed carer feedback. Please email: CommissioningHubAdults@gloucestershire.gov.uk to arrange.

Carer Aware e-learning

The aim is for the whole of Gloucestershire to be Carer Aware, to help us with this Gloucestershire County Council are delighted to offer a free Adult Carer Awareness e-learning course*.

Which looks at:

- Who is an unpaid carer?
- Carer rights
- Local support

Visit <https://GCC.astute-elearning.com> to access the training.

Click 'self-register'. Once you have created your account and logged in, you should see the training course on the homepage.

Please complete this training and encourage your friends and colleagues to do the same.

If you would like to provide any feedback regarding the training, please email commissioninghubadult@gloucestershire.gov.uk

*This is a complementary training offer and does not form/ replace any alternative training which employers may require employees to complete.

Police- March 25 looking to run 2-day awareness session looking for different speakers to come in

- Open up to see if anyone would like to attend

	<p>- share in mins</p> <p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>SR concluded the session, noting that the information and slides would be emailed to the group and thanked everyone for their participation and input.</p>
8.	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 3rd December 2024: 10am – 12.30pm (online)</p>