

**Sheffield Autism Partnership Board
Terms of Reference March 2021**

1. Title

Sheffield Autism Partnership Board (referred to as 'the Board' in this document)

2. Purpose

- a) The Board will hold to account Sheffield City Council, Sheffield NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Sheffield Health & Social Care Trust and all bodies with statutory responsibilities, to implement in Sheffield the requirements of the Autism Act (2009), the Department of Health's national Adult Autism Strategy and Statutory Guidance¹, the Care Act (2014), Children and Families Act (2014) and all relevant legislation affecting all autistic people aged 14 years and above.
- b) The Board will identify and seek to apply national best practice in Sheffield services affecting autistic² people, their families, and carers, and to provide feedback and information about this work to them.

3. Accountability

- a) The Board will be accountable to the people of Sheffield and in particular to autistic people, their families and carers.
- b) The Board will report to the Sheffield Joint Health & Wellbeing Board.

4. Objectives

- a) To identify the numbers and needs of the autistic community in Sheffield and to identify gaps in the provision of services, so as to inform Sheffield's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the commissioning of future services.
- b) To oversee the development of a strategy and long-term plans in Sheffield to improve services and support for autistic adults and their families, including young autistic persons (aged 14-25) in transition to adulthood.
- c) To monitor the effectiveness of services and support for autistic adults and their families, in line with an evolving understanding of their particular and various needs, and with the most accurate local demographic information available.
- d) To ensure that all those providing front line services receive an appropriate level of training in autism and wherever possible to inform, involve, and educate the wider community in relation to autism.
- e) To agree the Department of Health's Autism Self-Assessment Framework exercise (SAF) for Sheffield before it is submitted.

- f) To make recommendations to decision making bodies on the operation of new services, policies, and strategies.

5. Membership

- a) The Board brings together representation from local authority, NHS, community and voluntary sector organisations and services; autistic people, their parents and carers. It will include commissioners, professionals in health, mental health and social care, elected members of the Council, individuals, and representatives from other relevant organisations (such as education, employment, and housing) and service providers.
- b) Membership will include all autistic persons' representatives and representatives from the education, health, and care of young persons to inform work on the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- c) The Board will actively seek to extend its membership further to include other statutory and voluntary organisations who support autistic people as well as public bodies such as the Police.
- d) The Board will aim to be inclusive and accessible to all autistic people and their families and will offer support to attend when appropriate.
- e) The Board will seek to include the voices of autistic people who choose not to attend formal meetings by means of focus/consultation groups.
- f) Deputies / substitutes are welcome to attend. The expectation will be that they have full delegated authority to act on behalf of the member in decision making, and that they are fully briefed.
- g) Any individual or organisation wishing to join the Board should email or write a letter to the supporting officer for the Board expressing their interest.

6. Responsibilities of members

In fulfilling the aims of the Board, members shall:

- a) Bring their knowledge and expertise to the Board.
- b) Listen responsively to what all relevant parties, especially autistic people themselves, their advocates, and families, have to say.
- c) Promote change to policy and practice that supports the Board's aims.
- d) Embrace risks, innovating and trying new approaches.
- e) Respect data protection and not share sensitive data inappropriately.
- f) Take responsibility for actions that will help progress change activities.

7. Meetings

- a) All meetings will be chaired by the Director of Adult Health and Social Care.
- b) The Group will meet each month with dates and times to be shared by the supporting officer to the group.
- c) The agenda will be agreed by the Board in advance. The Group will establish a work programme of priority work areas to include on the agenda.
- d) Task and Finish working groups will be established when necessary to complete specific pieces of work on the Board's work programme.
- e) Members of the Board may submit written questions to the statutory authorities, and these will be forwarded to the Board membership by the supporting officer to the Board not less than one week before the following Board meeting. Answers in writing or delivered orally will be discussed at the next available Board meeting. The number of such questions per meeting may be limited at the chair's discretion.
- f) The agenda and any papers will be sent to Board members not less than 7 days before the meetings of the Board.
- g) Minutes will be taken at every meeting and sent out to Board members not less than 7 days before the following meeting.

8. Communication

- a) The Board will effectively communicate Sheffield's policies, and the provision and availability of services to autistic people and their families in Sheffield via the council's information and IT infrastructure, as in the case of other services provided to all Sheffield citizens.
- b) Dates, agendas, and minutes of all meetings of the board shall be published on the Sheffield City Council website.

9. Review

These terms of reference will be reviewed 6 months after signing off and then reviewed annually.

Footnotes

1. Statutory Guidance

The full text of the Department of Health's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities and NHS, published March 2015 is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422338/autism-guidance.pdf

An Easy Read version (recommended for quick reference) is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417935/Autism_statutory_guidance_easyread.pdf

2: In the context of this document, the terms 'autism' and 'autistic' refer to Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) including Asperger's Syndrome and related neurodevelopmental disorder.