

Title of Meeting

Learning Disability Partnership Board

Date

Friday 28 March 2025

Time

11am – 1pm

Venue

Committee Room 1

Borough Hall

Cauldwell Street

Bedford

MK42 9AP

Easy read minutes

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1 Welcome

Mark Harris opened the meeting as chair.

Introductions were made and noted.

2 Draft Minutes of last meeting held on 17 January 2025

Actions from the last meeting:

To invite Safeguarding team to future meeting – Mark Harris said they will be coming to the next meeting and the item will be discussed at the meeting in June.

Saragh Fleckney (Transport) was going to speak to Stagecoach asking them to attend a future meeting – They will be invited to attend the next meeting and we will wait for them to confirm.

It was also discussed in relation to keeping healthy/health promotion. **Action: Mark Harris said he would speak to Ian from Public Health to see if he is able to attend a future meeting.**

3 Volunteering Opportunities – Presentation by Community Voluntary Service (CVS)

Paul Atkin came to the meeting to present information on what CVS do and how they can help with volunteering opportunities in Bedford.

CVS run a service called 'simply connect' where both businesses and individual people can register to be involved in volunteering. The service is completely free too.

Paul gave some background about his life and had previously worked down the coal mines. However, following a bank injury and treatment, this resulted in Paul being out of work for 18 years out of work. Paul's mental health suffered significantly as a result and when he felt ready to return to employment, it was suggested for Paul to start volunteering. Paul started with CVS, doing two hours a week, which helped to built his confidence. Paul went on to volunteer three full days a week. Paul then applied and got a paid job at CVS. Paul has also completed some qualifications at CVS, such as a mental health councillor, as well as bereavement councillor.

Paul said volunteering is a great way to use your time to build confidence and get more skills, which could then possibly result in paid employment.

Paul showed board members the website where people can register to become a volunteer and apply for opportunities. The website can also be used for businesses who may be interested in using volunteers.

The link to CVS website is **[Home | CVS Bedfordshire](#)**.

The link to search for volunteering opportunities is **<https://vcconnectsystem.org.uk/BedfordshireVMS2/volunteeropportunities/opportunitysearch>**.

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To register as a volunteer, the link is <https://vcconnectsystem.org.uk/BedfordshireVMS2/vmsaccount/login>

When registering as an individual person, you can add your skills and interests to your profile. The website is useful to provide suggestions of opportunities from the system in place. There are lots of different ways of search for opportunities and roles available. You can also search by adding the skills you may have, when you are available, or key words. If you find a role you might be interested in, you can click on the details, and then register an interest and say you'd like to be considered for the role.

A rep from Gig buddies asked if there is support for those who aren't confident with technology. Paul said yes he is happy for anybody to make contact with him to discuss over the phone if this is preferred. Paul's contact details are below.

CVS also have a volunteers newsletter, which is sent out at the start of every month.

Paul said that support is also available for organisations on how volunteer role applications can be written, and CVS also run some training courses free of charge.

Paul asked if the Council had any opportunities to work together on supported employment. **Action: Mark Harris will speak to Nicola, who leads on this and will follow up.**

Paul also said that CVS have connections with 4/5 different radio stations. Paul has been on the radio to speak about CVS. A rep from Gig Buddies said they are connected with Bedford Hospital radio station and have been on their show. A rep from Gig Buddies said he will be going on the hospital radio show regularly once a month, with the potential to have his own segment on the radio show.

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The Gig Buddies rep said some people can be find it difficult to be confident and it is good to show that people can do things like this. He also said he would like to volunteer to help homeless people. Paul said the kings arms project is on their list of volunteering opportunities and this could be something that can be looked at.

A rep from Gig Buddies also talked about buses for disabled people and asked if more can be done to help people with disabilities to travel on buses. **Action: Mark Harris is hopeful that Stagecoach will attend the next or future board, but will send an email to Stagecoach to request this.**

A rep from Gig Buddies also said it would be good to make communities safe where all are welcome like disabled or accessible toilets. Marie said some venues have difficulties making their toilets accessible due to the age of the buildings. Mark Harris said there is a website called www.toiletmap.org.uk which lists of all toilets/ accessible toilets in the area.

Paul is happy to be contacted to answer any questions or queries – his contact details are: paul@cvsbeds.org.uk - 01234 354366

Mark Harris thanked Paul for coming to the board

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4 Any other business

A rep from Voiceability said there are some things that have been mentioned by Gadsby Street and Kempston Centre clients that she would like to raise on their behalf.

Friday is not a good day of the week to have the meetings. It was asked if this be changed to a different day of the week and to avoid lunchtime. Cllr Rigby asked if we can avoid Wednesdays. Following discussion, it was agreed to change the next meeting to a Tuesday morning at 10am-12noon. Following the meeting, the next meeting was changed to Tuesday 8th July at 10am-12noon. Mark Harris said we can then talk about this at the next meeting to see if this day is better for clients and if others would like to vary which day the meeting is held on.

Keeping safe – clients are keen to talk about this at a future meeting – It was mentioned that some feel scared and unsafe when it's dark. It would also be good to know what to do when they are feeling unsafe and if there are safe places to go. A parent said she attended a meeting with the Police recently and she wasn't aware of how much CCTV there is around the town. The Voiceability rep can feed this back. **Action: Mark Harris also said he will speak to the community safety team to be invited to a future meeting.**

It was also said that when clients go to the doctors, they don't receive any information in easy read format and this has not been offered to them. A rep from ELFT said that they are working with GP's on this, to upload information into easy read with a new system. **Action: The rep from ELFT will feedback with an update at the next meeting.**

Clients had also said that there used to be a disability swim hour previously. It is believed that the timings were changed which became unsuitable for clients to go. A rep from Gig Buddies said Robinson Pool do a neuro-diverse swim on Wednesday evenings. Paul (CVS) also said Embrace run a children's swimming session for those with cerebral palsy. Mark Harris said that leisure services are run by 'Better', on behalf of the council. **Action: Mark Harris will provide their contact details to Julieann so that they can be contacted about this.**

A rep from Gig Buddies asked if there is a way we can put together a couch to 5k programme to help with keeping healthy. **Action: Another rep from Gig Buddies said they do a couch to 5k and will share the details of this to RF to circulate to the board.** Paul said CVS can also advertise this on their website. Mark Harris said Public Health will be invited to attend a future board to talk about keeping healthy/health promotion.

5 Date of next meeting

Next meeting has been changed to Tuesday 8 July
10am to 12noon in Committee Room 1