



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes

Title of Meeting	Learning Disability Partnership Board
Date/Time	Wednesday 19 October 2022 @ 9:30am
Venue	In Person - Council Chamber, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP

No	Item	Action
1	<p>Welcome – Maura Noone introduced herself as stand in chair of the meeting on behalf of Mark Harris.</p> <p>Maura Noone (Chair) made some opening comments in respect today's meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- This meeting had been reset from an earlier date. It was commented, going forward, to commence this meeting during late morning instead of a start time of 9:30am to allow the opportunity for service users to attend. Maura confirmed that this would the timing would be revised for future meetings.- The meeting had previously been arranged to take place with an option to attend virtually, however there were some technical issues experienced with another meeting. Maura believes it would be good to have the option for attendees to stream the meeting so that people could watch from home or from a Day Centre. However, they would not be able to make comments during the meeting and we would have to find a way to help them to have their say. Maura would make a recommendation to Mark Harris to explore if this would be possible for future meetings.- Maura also raised the subject of a co-chair and reiterated the importance to ensure a regular co-chair is nominated and attends each meeting.- The meeting venue was also raised, and it was commented that the Council Chamber may not be the most inviting venue for attendees. It was also noted that the Council Chamber is currently the only Council room with hybrid/ability. It would be the decision of the Board as to the arrangements for future meetings, whether having the ability to stream the meeting is better than having a more suitable room, which doesn't have streaming ability.	
2	<p>Open discussion about COVID and how it has affected people</p> <p>Maura introduced agenda item 2 and asked attendees to comment on their experiences. The following comments were made:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COVID had put a lot of strain on residential provision as care needed to be provided around the clock. A lot of people really suffered then. - Staffing for social care and mask wearing for service users were two main areas of concern, as service users rely on facial expressions. Staff were working with people who were deaf and used lip reading. A person's mood is also obtained through smiling/facial expressions. Service users had to learn new ways to communicate overnight due to mask wearing. This resulted in a lot of frustration from service users. There were no family visits in person, only window or gate visits, which sometimes caused more stress and trauma than no visits at all. - Carers really struggled and found it really difficult due to not being able to go and see their loved one or cared for. Services were reducing as well as care calls, people were left on their own. We arranged for contact calls to service users to ensure there were people on the end of a phone checking on them. This was a big support, having contact with somebody regular. - The number of admissions increased, people were more poorly than they would have been. It was very difficult being in hospital to support people with a learning disability. This had a knock on impact on clients in the community. - Some of the clients that we have, we might be the only contact they have outside of the care home, if they do not have family contacts. We were unable to undertake visits unless absolutely necessary so contact with advocate was extremely important. - Following the comments above, Fiona Walshe (BBC) also added, we created a plan at Bedford Borough to ensure those who were most isolate and vulnerable to be contacted first, which worked well at the beginning of the pandemic. This was to ensure those isolated knew the support was there. - Agreed above and also added that another pressure in this regard was a lack of IT/technology in smaller care homes to facilitate zoom etc, which meant this needed support to set up. - Bedford Borough representative said we had a whole section of people who had no technology. Therefore, we found a funding stream to provide iPads to parents/carers, as well as training at a distance to ensure they could log on and use the devices for zoom reviews etc. - Parents/carers became exhausted during the pandemic as we were unable to give them full respite in terms of the personal care side, which would have been provided by day centre staff. This meant that parents/carers were having to undertake all of the care themselves. - Fiona Walshe (BBC) - From a care management side, it affected everybody, everybody was doing every job. Outreach from advocacy and in house was really helpful. We knew that people were being spoken to/contacted. A lot of regular work fell behind in respect of reviews and assessments due to workforce and complexity of issues. There are now longer-term effects on people in terms of mental health and physical wellbeing, and it will take a long time to support people in this regard. <p>Maura Noone (BBC) asked if there are any positive stories following COVID?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was agreed that staff and carers had increased their digital skills. Attendees also commented that some things worked well in a virtual environment. 	
3	<p>How Day Services changed throughout the pandemic, and how do we support people now</p> <p>This item was presented and the following points were made:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Manager for Kempston and Gatsby Street centres, said at the beginning of COVID, the decision was made very quickly that we had to close. This was originally going to be for 6 weeks, and ended up being 8 months fully closed. The centres were then opened in parts, with people in different parts, based on their own needs. We were doing daily welfare call at first, and then some wanted once a week/once a fortnight. - We then decided to start an alternative virtual day service. Some staff at Kempston would do their session whilst filming themselves, followed by loading sessions onto a protected facebook page for service users to access. There were lots of pre-recorded sessions, which were accessible for service users online ie cookery, sports, arts and crafts. Some of the sessions such as aerobics have remained virtual following the pandemic. - The Manager commented staff got to bond with parents more so than we did before. We also set up zoom friendship calls for those who wanted to talk to friends from the day centres. - An hour of exercise was offered to service users to meet with staff members. This really helped to provide an hour of respite for parents/carers and stimulation for service users. Julieann commented that we actually know the service users better following this period as we've have spent time with them in different environments. - This was a very stressful time for staff, service users and care homes. Staff focused on meeting in the community for parents/carers. - The Manager advised that some people's needs have changed following the pandemic. People who we have connected with early on didn't seem to deteriorate in terms of mental health stayed well. People in care homes who were supported later on, people have deteriorated and now have different needs. We need to go back to redevelop some of the skills that have been lost during this period. - Fiona Walshe (BBC) also commented that the biggest challenge was guidance available for non-registered services as this wasn't clear and was more ambiguous. - Positive reflections were commented as follows; staff developed a lot of new skills, videoing themselves doing sessions and uploading onto the facebook page. Staff are now quite confident in doing this. We also developed agile working, whereby staff can be work in an agile way when needing to complete admin work. Also time spent getting to know service users better, as well as friendships that have formed during this time between service users. - A representative from Public Health, BBC commented what a pleasure it was to work with all of the contacts in and out of the room during the pandemic. From a Public Health perspective, Public Health advised that we continue to monitor things closely and it is inspirational to work with you all. 	
4	<p>The board going forwards</p> <p>To be reviewed for future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timings going forward, later in morning (To commence between 11-11:30am) - To review the venue/room. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To offer a hybrid meeting option or a streaming option or in person only <p>Maura commented, as this is a learning disability partnership board, this board is for, by and with those with learning disabilities. We need to ensure all views are taken into account, in terms of preferences and opinions for future meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A question was asked what is the purpose of the board. Fiona Walshe (Manager, BBC) said following COVID, this is a good opportunity to look at the terms of reference for this meeting. We need to take forward the opportunity to make the boards service-user led going forward. Fiona commented further that it may be useful for colleagues at Voiceability to take this back to service users in centres to look at preferences and possible draft agenda items for future meetings. - Mencap agreed and said it's very difficult to get voices heard by those with learning disabilities. - Maura (Chair, BBC) agreed and reiterated the need to look at the terms of reference, which will also need to be added to the Council's website. - Fiona Walshe (BBC) said it would be good for all attendees to receive the draft minutes of the meeting in advance of the next meeting. 	(Voiceability)
5	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maura confirmed the intention for future and said the draft minutes will be circulated after the meeting and added to the next agenda as draft, for sign off/approval at the next meeting, before being added to the council's website once agreed. 	
6	Date of next meeting – To be confirmed - January 2023	