

## Portsmouth Autism Community Forum

### Notes from the Forum meeting on Friday 6 July 2018 at the John Pounds Centre, Portsmouth

1 The meeting was attended by 25 people - a mixture of autistic people, carers, parents and professionals.

2 Jenni Westeels introduced the new autism elearning package that is being developed by Autism Hampshire for use across the Portsmouth and Hampshire area. This aims to give an overview of autism for general staff as well as counter myths and stereotypes about autism. The Forum will also be involved in developing the next level of training for professionals who need a more in-depth understanding of autism.

Meeting attendees offered feedback on the contents and suggested changes to make it more reflective of autistic people's experiences. Detailed feedback was given on different aspects of both the contents and the format of the elearning package.

See the [draft autism elearning training](#) - this is still under development so please do not circulate this version outside the group.

3 Liz McDonald introduced the new Portsmouth City Council autism strategy for children and young people up to age 25 which will apply for the next five years. This strategy will be jointly governed by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Board and the forum. The strategy sets out the council's aspirations that children and young people with autism receive the support they need to access education, health services, employment and live a fulfilled life.

See the [Autism Strategy for Children and young people age 0-25 2018-2021](#)

We discussed what getting it right would look like and suggested that we would see

- Fewer autistic people not in employment, education or training
- Fewer mental health problems among autistic people
- Parental satisfaction with outcomes for their children
- Greater knowledge of the number of Education, Health and Care Plans including autism
- Autistic children and young people happy
- Greater representation of autistic people in the city
- More people moving into employment that's right for them
- Greater attendance at school and an understanding of why children are not attending school/ being excluded

The council would like to involve parents and young people in the development and monitoring of the strategy - contact [liz.robinson@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:liz.robinson@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

John Adams volunteered to be involved in developing the strategy.

## 4 Updates

- Sharon Simpson of Solent NHS Trust highlighted a Newcastle University longitudinal study of the lives of autistic people and their families. Researchers are looking for autistic people and their families to be involved - for further information and to sign up see [www.autismspectrum-uk.com](http://www.autismspectrum-uk.com) or the [autism spectrum research flyer](#).
- Louisa Paston has contacted the forum asking for input into a list of summer holiday activities for children with autism that she is compiling. She is also working at improving autism awareness at Portsmouth venues - contact Louisa [louisapaston@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:louisapaston@yahoo.co.uk)
- Portsmouth Disability Forum have open days on 20 and 21 July