

Autism Residents Advisory Group (ARAG) Meeting Stratford Library 06/07/2026 10:00am –12:00pm

Attendees: Linda Wan – Co-Chair, LBN Commissioner Daniel Nichols – LBN Commissioning Assistant (minutes) Tia Barnes - LBN, SAIL Team Trish Moody - VoiceAbility Maisie Archbold - LBN, MASH Team +3 online Residents/ Participants +11 in-person Residents/Participants	Guest Speakers: Kelly Watson - Metropolitan Police
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Item	Note / Action agreed	Action by
	These minutes should be read alongside the accompanying slides	
1	Welcome, introductions/apologies and meeting rules Linda welcomed everyone to the meeting and set out the meeting rules.	
2	Metropolitan Police Kelly Watson from the Metropolitan Police spoke about the Compassionate Policing project. This has been developed by the Met Police in collaboration with the University of East London (UEL). The aim is to develop a mode of policing which is more sensitive to the needs of neurodiverse people. It will be trialled in Newham before potentially being rolled out across London. Surveys were used to co-produce the training resources that will be delivered to police officers. These will include: • Short training videos • Toolkits • Learning packs • In-depth guides The training is based around the acronym CALM, which stands for: C – comprehend (understand the neurodiverse person) A – ask (offer choices) L – learn (learn from what the neurodiverse person is saying) M – model (model the behaviour that you want to see in others) The training is now being delivered to the first frontline officers, and the project will be evaluated as it continues to be rolled out. An extensive discussion then followed between Kelly and those attending the meeting. The subjects covered included: • Stop-and-search. • Police awareness of the Equality Act 2010. • Disability hate crime. • Educating autistic people about encounters with the police.	

	• Use and recognition of identification aids for autistic people such as lanyards, cards etc. • Police call handlers needing further training on dealing with autistic callers, particularly around the appropriate use of video calls. • Availability of police counters. A particular problem was identified around the withdrawal of dedicated school liaison officers. Police now will only attend schools to give presentations to pupils on issues such as stop-and-search if a particular problem is identified with their school. It was agreed that the P6 group would work on identifying schools in the area that may benefit from police training sessions for autistic pupils. Action: P6 working group to identify schools in Newham that would benefit from Police training input.	Kelly Watson
3	Minutes & Matters Arising Linda recapped what happened at the last meeting as per the slides. She is still working on her action on looking into putting flags for autism on NHS patient records, so it remains pending.	
4	Board updates Christina recapped the Autism Strategy Board Meeting that took place on the 19th May. The key decisions and points raised were: • Funding secured for Peer Support Worker Role, Council to recruit to the post directly. • P2 Officer leads confirmed as Ross Gerry & Kari Askey. ○ Six inclusion workers will be recruited and cascaded across Newham located in local hubs. ○ The government's SEND reforms; the final stage of LBN's plan around this is due around the middle of June. • P3 Forming a Steering Group with Newham College to support needs of students & future employment opportunities. • P4 work with eating disorder service, delivery of autism training & launch of new pack. Linda promoted the peer support groups that are currently being supported by the council. More information about them can be found at Local autism peer support groups – Peer to peer support groups – Newham Council	
5	Council Autism Updates <u>YSTWD Reports & Priorities</u> Linda reported that the new "You Said Together We Did" (YSTWD) Year 2 Report & Year 3 priorities document was signed off by management at both the Adults & Health and the Children & Young Peoples' departments and is now available online at Newham Autism Action Plan: Let's Talk Autism – Autism – Newham Council	

Autism Peer Support & Development Officer Role

Linda reported that the role was approved to proceed on the 30th June and that it would go live this month. The job description and specification have been written in a clear, accessible and autism-friendly format as part of a “test & learn” process at the council. The application job link will be shared with ARAG members and the WhatsApp group shortly.

Autism RAG Group Terms of Reference

The meeting agreed to adopt the terms of reference below:

AUTISM RESIDENTS’ ADVISORY GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

Newham launched its Autism Action Plan in 2024.

Autistic residents helped to develop the plan. Their experiences, views and expertise were important in shaping its priorities and actions.

Newham is committed to continuing this involvement by ensuring autistic residents have opportunities to influence how health and social care organisations deliver the Autism Action Plan.

Meeting arrangements

- The group will meet every three months.
- Meetings are offered as a hybrid meeting.
- Meeting dates are shared in advance [here](#).

Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

- Autism-friendly communication.
- Plain English documents.
- Meeting agendas shared in advance.
- Opportunities to contribute in writing before or after meetings.
- Lights off/dimmed where possible.

Expectations of members

- Treat others with respect.
- Listen to different views and experiences.
- Help create a safe and inclusive environment.
- Work together to improve outcomes for autistic people in Newham.

How feedback is used

- Feedback and recommendations from the group will be shared with the Autism Delivery Board and Priority Working Groups.
- Updates will be provided on actions taken in response to the group's feedback where possible.

	Emma gave an update from the Priority 3 (Supporting more autistic people into employment) Working Group. She reported that: • More visits to employers for local autistic young people (modelled on the recent visit to the City of London Police HQ) were being looked into with LFB. • The Civil Service application process can be problematic. • Video interviews can be difficult. It may be useful for candidates to be sent questions in advance. • Currently Mehak is chiefly working with a small group of large local employers to develop opportunities for local autistic people. • Mehak from Our Newham Work is signposting people to apply for Access to Work funding. • Our long-term ambition is for Newham to be recognised as an autism-friendly borough	
7	AOB Linda mentioned: • July newsletter out now – lots of events on. An “easy read” version is being considered. • Invitation for members to join an Autism Peer-to-Peer Support Group ○ Work Coach register here ○ Staging a Musical Show register here ○ Late Diagnosed Autism Group register here– first meeting 07.07.2026 ○ The Autism Pineapple Friendship Group is being launched as an autism specific spin off from the existing Friendship Group – dates tbc. • Sensory Haircare at 200 Chargeable Lane launched, book now, 15% off in July & Aug. • Volunteers are being sought to help co-design an autism friendly hair salon at 200 Chargeable Lane • Tia is looking at starting a group specifically for autistic people aged 18-25. They may benefit from independent living skills programme. Adults aged 25+ also identified by members as a group in need of this support. Please email autism.commissioning@newham.gov.uk to register an interest. • The idea of a mental health support group for autistic people was raised. Linda agreed to look into this. Action: Linda to look into setting up a mental health support group for autistic people. (NB. There is already a mental health support group facilitated by VoiceAbility that runs from 12.30-2pm at Chargeable Lane Resource Centre on the second Monday of every month).	Linda
8	Dates of future meetings Autumn meeting TBC Monday 25th January 2027 10am-12pm John Hopkins Room Stratford Library (in-person and online)	

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