

Autism Residents Advisory Group (ARAG) Meeting Stratford Advice Arcade 07/07/2025 10:00am – 12:00pm

Attendees: Emma Akosua – Co-Chair, Resident Rep Linda Wan – Co-Chair, LBN Commissioner Daniel Nichols – LBN Commissioning Assistant (minutes) Patricia Moody – Support Facilitator, VoiceAbility Aisha Ahmed – Senior Peer Support Worker, ELFT Christina Pillau – ASDB Co-Chair, Resident Rep Jay Gee – P4 Lead, Expert by Experience +3 online Residents/Guests +15 in-person Residents/Participants	Guest Speakers: Anna Kasmir – LBN, Resident Engagement Mavis Wenham - ANKH Place, Board Director
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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 Emma (Co-chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the purpose of the group. She then outlined the meeting rules.	
2 (a)	Guest Speakers <u>Anna Kasmir: People Powered Places</u> Anna from LBN Resident Engagement & Participation presented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Powered Places is Newham's participatory budgeting process, one of the largest in the UK. • The programme has £1.6 million to allocate. The money mainly comes from a levy on developers. They have also received £80,000 from the Royal Docks Team. • They have been running since 2018, and have funded over 300 projects. In the 2023/25 cycle, 114 projects were completed which reached over 54,284 engagements. • Each of the eight neighbourhoods in Newham are allocated around £200,000. • Residents choose local priorities to shape the types of projects which can receive funding. • Residents, Voluntary, Faith and Community Sector and young people can apply for funding. • Residents decide how funding is spent through voting for projects. Anyone who lives, works or learns in the Community Neighbourhood can take part. • Ring-fenced funding is available for the present cycle (2025/27). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 25% for resident led projects (up to £5,000 per project), ○ 25% for youth led projects (up to £10,000 per project) and ○ 50% for VCFS (Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector) projects (up to £20,000 per project). • Youth-led projects need to be delivered with an organisation, such as a school, youth-zone, youth club or other group. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lots of different projects are funded through People Powered Places (e.g. Social activities, arts and music, litter picking, food banks. However, they must fit in with Newham's Neighbourhood priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and wellbeing, Community safety, Inclusive Economy, Youth empowerment, Environment & public spaces, Community development & participation. Applications will open on Friday 18 July and close on Sunday 14 September. They will be accepted via Plinth, video, audio or word document. Online support clinics are running in July and Community Neighbourhood Teams can provide personalised support. Voting for the projects will take place in November and the projects will be delivered between March 2026 and February 2027. There are lots of different ways to get involved. Find out more at People Powered Places and People Powered Places – People Powered Places – Newham Council Details of support clinic at Project: People Powered Places Support to apply for Funding <p>In response to questions from the meeting, Anna said that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help in setting up organisations to bid for funding is available from Community Neighbourhood Teams. The only age limit on those bidding is that they must be 18+. People who want to work with children or vulnerable adults must have enhanced DBS checked. All applications will need to be vetted by working groups to ensure that they fit in with local priorities. 	
(b)	<p><u>Mavis Wenham: ANKH Place CIC</u></p> <p>Mavis from ANKH Place CIC (Community Interest Company) presented. She said that the organisation currently delivers a range of activities (such as walking and gardening) from community venues across the borough and are looking to arrange activities for autistic people in Newham. They can also fund one off events and help other groups to bid for funding.</p> <p>Linda asked anyone who was interested in attending or arranging activities to email autism.commissioning@newham.gov.uk She also reminded people about the peer support survey which is currently live.</p> <p>Action: All to complete the survey on peer support at: https://forms.office.com/e/Yu22fMheBA</p>	All
3	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>All actions from the last meeting are complete.</p>	

4	<p>Governance Board Updates</p> <p><u>Governance Board structures</u> Linda updated us on the governance structures. She stated that the Autism & Learning Disability Joint Planning Board has been abolished as per the diagram in the slides.</p> <p><u>Christina Pillai – Autism Strategic Delivery Board</u> Christina reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Newham Autism Diagnostic Team is under severe financial pressure and may have to be merged with services in other boroughs. • The Papyrus Autism & Suicide Training is being rolled out. • Saddler's Wells and East Bank are working on improving access for autistic people and providing work experience opportunities for them. • The NHS Autism Diagnostic Service delivered training to the Newham Together Cafe. • The Hospital Autism Eating Disorders Pack has been developed. • Newham is developing an in-house floating support offer for people with complex needs (including autism). • Neurodiverse hubs are being developed by the NHS ELFT People Participation Leads locally. • The environmental checklist and Learning Disability & Autism poster have been displayed at Newham Centre for Mental Health. <p>Action – Linda to find out when the consultation session for autistic people is being organised for.</p> <p>Discussion took place around the potential merging of local autism diagnostic services. It was pointed out that anyone who is on the current waiting list in Newham should check if they are still on the waiting list of any merged service. Emma pointed out that you have the "Right to Choose" to seek a private autism diagnosis at NHS expense if you are still on a waiting list after 9 months.</p> <p>Action – Linda to circulate information on the "Right to Choose".</p> <p>Action – Linda to look seek out opportunities to collaborate with autism support services in neighbouring boroughs.</p> <p>There were no updates from any other boards.</p>	<p>Linda</p> <p>Linda</p> <p>Linda</p>
5	<p>Autism Action Plan: Experts by Experience – progress on actions</p> <p><u>Priority 2 – Improve autistic children and young people's access to education and support positive transitions into adulthood (Natalia)</u> Natalia reported that she is exploring employment and support opportunities for autistic people at the New Bean Café, Newham College.</p> <p><u>Priority 4 – Tackle health and care inequalities for autistic people (Jay)</u> Mitelia reported on Jay's behalf. Jay has met with Jason and Robin and has been given relevant documents from other borough. They are arranging a further meeting with Jason.</p>	

	<p>There were no updates from any of the other priority areas.</p> <p><u>NHS ELFT Peer Support Worker (Aisha)</u> Aisha reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The July newsletter has been sent out. It is available at https://www.newham.gov.uk/downloads/file/9014/autism-newsletter-july-2025 Aisha encouraged everyone to publicise the newsletters amongst their peers. <p>Action – All to complete the newsletter survey at https://forms.office.com/e/aT4X1YLBf1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> She convened a meeting of the support group leads in order to shape and grow the groups. She visited the Togetherness Café, a community engagement initiative run by Blossom Place. <p><u>Autism Lead update (Linda)</u> Linda reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2024/25 “You Said, Together We Did” report is available at Yr1 You Said Together We Did.pptx Feedback is welcome (email autism.commissioning@newham.gov.uk) The 2025/26 priorities document is available at Autism Action Plan 2025 26.docx <p>Action – All to send any feedback on the 2025/26 prioritise document to autism.commissioning@newham.gov.uk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first Autism Drop in surgeries took place in June and they will be continuing monthly on a trial basis until November. Westfield Stratford will be co-designing a quiet room with the ARAG. An organisation called AccessAble is looking to recruit Autistic people to help them to advise organisations on making their buildings accessible, There will be monthly slots on NuSound radio for discussions on autism. Please email autism.commissioning@newham.gov.uk with any ideas on who you would like to hear on the programme. Details on the Autistic “Expert by Experience” roles will be available at Newham's Autism Resident Advisory Group (ARAG) – Autism – Newham Council as will details of how to apply for grant funding for local projects. 	All
6	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>VoiceAbility Advocacy & Support</u> VoiceAbility are doing ARAG follow up meetings. There will be a drop in sessions at Chargeable Lane from 2.30-4.00pm on the 14th July and the 8th August.</p> <p>There was a discussion on the support available for autistic students.</p> <p>Action – Linda to share slides from the UEL speaker at the October 2024 meeting and info on a “Going Back to Studies” session.</p> <p>Action – Natalia to share information on “Uniting Friends” Talking Therapies.</p>	<p>Linda</p> <p>Natalia</p>

9	Dates of future meetings Monday 6 th October 2025, 10am-12pm, Stratford Advice Arcade (ADHD Guest Speaker) Monday 26 th January 2026, 10am-12pm, John Hopkins Room, Stratford Library (Autism & Homelessness/Rough Sleeping Project)	