

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
Autism –Community Partnership Group
Terms of Reference (Easy Read Version)



What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong way that some people’s brains work differently.

People with Autism might:

- Communicate in different ways
- See, feel, or understand the world differently
- Need help with social situations or sensory things (like noise, lights, touch)



What is This Group?

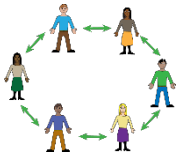
This group is called the **Autism Community Partnership Group**.
We shorten it to **Autism CPG**.

The CPG works with the **Council** and other services to:

Help make adult autism services better.

Listen and give honest feedback (we call this being a “critical friend”).

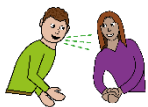
Make sure local services follow the National Autism Strategy (2010–2026).



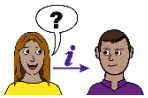
Working with other organisations.

Any issues raised and feedback (both positive and negative) will be communicated back to the relevant organisations, for example, to the council, the National Health Service (NHS), Bedford, Luton & Milton Keynes (BLMK) Integrated Care Board (ICB) or any other relevant organisation.

The Autism CPG will:



Listen to what autistic people in Central Bedfordshire say they need.



Share their ideas with Central Bedfordshire Council and other relevant organisations.

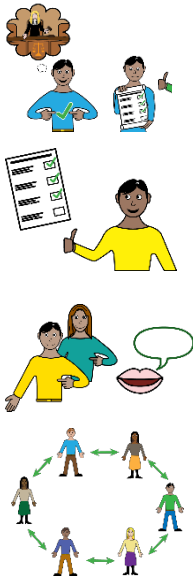


Ask the council and organisations to respond and tell people what they said.



Give updates on news or changes in law that affect autistic people.

What the CPG Does



The CPG will:

- Check how new laws affect local autism services.
- Make sure **Carers** (people who support autistic people) are listened to.
- Speak up for groups that are often left out.
- Look at how good local services are and give feedback.
- Tell autistic people (and their Carers) how their feedback has helped.
- Work with other CPGs (like Learning Disability and Carer groups) to fix shared problems.

Who Can Join the Group?



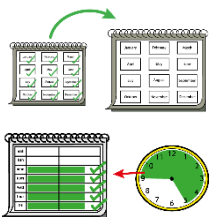
People who join the CPG are called members.

Members



- Come to meetings often.
- Join in the talks and help make decisions.

Membership Rules



- You can be a member for **two years**
- We check each year how things are going
- If someone **misses three meetings in a row** and doesn't tell us why, they will be asked to leave

Who Runs the Meetings? (The Chair)



- The Chair leads the meetings and makes sure everyone gets a turn to speak
- The Chair is chosen by CPG members
- A staff member from **Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire (HWCB)** will help support the Chair.

Ground Rules (How We Work Together)



To make sure meetings are welcoming, fair, and useful, we agree to:

- **Respect everyone** – listen and let people finish speaking.
- **One at a time** – no interrupting.
- **Use clear and simple language** – avoid jargon.
- **Be kind and patient** – everyone communicates differently.
- **Confidentiality** – what is personal stays private (unless someone is at risk of harm).
- **Stay on topic** – keep to the meeting agenda.
- **Share time fairly** – everyone gets a chance to speak.
- **Be reliable** – come to meetings if you say you will.
- **Work together** – we may not always agree, but we listen and find common ground.
- breaks, quiet space, or easy read notes).

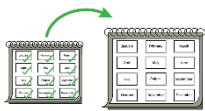
Communication



There will be a single point of contact for the CPG:

- Victoria Bloxham, HWCB Engagement & Volunteer Officer & CPG Lead. Telephone: 0300 3038554/ Email: info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk

Reviewing These Rules



- The group will review these Terms of Reference every year
- We can review them sooner if needed.

These Terms of Reference were agreed on: 5th November 2025
They will be reviewed on: November 2026