



# Your Voice Network Neurodiverse group

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

## Ice breaker question

Favorite song at the moment

## Main Discussion

Public transport and the effect it has  
on accessing health care and  
wellbeing

# Feedback given by the group

What is public transport like in your area? Is it affordable? Does it prevent you getting to appointments at certain times? Does it make journeys too long?

- Someone from Devon said that there were issues getting to the new Nightingale Hospital, its not accessible by public transport. That buses can be a bit hit and miss run mainly by Stagecoach. Bus only runs once a week so if you have a doctors appointment and rely on public transport, it is difficult to get access. It felt like you had to use Community transport or nothing.

In a certain area, they have tried using volunteer drivers to help take people to appointments. You can ring up and book and have had some positive experiences using this service

- Someone from Devon said that there had been a trainline re opened (originally closed in the 60's) and that generally GWR have excellent staff in their region (Devon) – you could wear your sunflower lanyard or if you approach a member of staff, they have an excellent service. They go out of their way to help people either before or on the train itself.

- Someone said they had had a job interview in rural Devon. The job advert had advised essential criteria for the job was to have a driving license. They advised the reason for this was because the public transport is so difficult so people really need to have reliable transportation – being able to get a job becomes harder if you don't drive or need to rely on public transport. If they lived closer, there is an opportunity to walk / bike but realistically, it would have made it challenging to get access (taking 1.5 hours to get to work)

- Someone said that bus services in their village (Yatton) had been cancelled and they go through cycles of having buses and losing buses. Some buses go to Clevedon but limited. Clevedon is the closest place to have a proper supermarket and be able to do a full shop. If you can't get to Clevedon, you can't get to a supermarket. If you don't have a vehicle, it's almost impossible to get a GP's – the Covid jab, I was only offered one which was a distance away - which you can only get to by having a car. Its impossible to get to the hospital from Yatton There is no bus into Bristol, and no bus into Weston

- There is no bank in the village – the only option is the post office. If you need a real bank, you need to get the train to Weston.

- They are trying to introduce a on demand type service, which you can book and arrange some transport – but details unknown at the moment.

- Someone said they live fairly centrally in Bristol, and said their services were pretty good . Though don't really take the bus unless it would take more than half an hour to get there
- It was said that a lot of people find public transport anxiety provoking. Its difficult to anticipate when the bus is going to come, whether it is going to be on time, whether it is going to the right destination. Stagecoach app sometimes doesn't work. Sometimes trying to track a bus without its tracker on can be really annoying – particularly if weather is bad etc.
- A number of people mentioned potential sensory issues such as:
  - the amount of people on the bus and the busyness, as well as the sensory impact of the bus moving, if you are sitting in the seats which are side on, rather than front facing.
  - Sound levels and crowdedness of public transport and the announcements on the bus and trains can add to the sensory input
  - Cleanliness – it is not clear how clean the soft seats are and how often they clean them. here has been some improvement over the years.
  - The speed of the approach can sometimes be too quick and that can be worrying
- Someone said the services in Wiltshire weren't very good so they drive most of the time for example Bus to Swindon – once every hour in the day time so that makes it difficult if you wanted to go there
- Someone mentioned buses had stopped running at around 7pm. Finishing at a certain time makes it difficult
- Someone said the timetable on the site showed differently to what was showing on the signs and they were unsure which one was the right one which can be difficult.
- It was suggested all the buses should have a QR code so that it brings up all the buses that go through and where – alongside the prices. That would be really good.
- Two people had or were going to convert their bikes into electric bikes however this was a limited solution to public transport as they wouldn't be able to get enough shopping for their family and bad weather makes riding difficult
- Someone said they refuse certain buses due to previously bad experiences. As a result, their journey to work takes 2 hours, rather than 1.15 hours because of those bad experiences.
- it was suggested that there could be some way of capturing online different services and their suitability for people with varying conditions – so that provides people with assurances around the treatment and experiences they will have etc.

# Recommendations

- New hospitals and GPs should be accessible by public transport
- Hospitals and health clinics could have park and ride services or accessible community transport to make attending appointments possible
- Hospital and GP appointment times should take in to account the length of journey and be booked with this in consideration
- Ask bus operators to make sure that timetables on bus stops and websites are matching. And that trackers are turned on. Suggest the adoption of a QR code to bring up the website and bus information
- Work together to create an online directory capturing different services and their suitability for people with varying conditions – so that provides people with assurances around the treatment and experiences they will have etc.

## AOB and future meetings

- Andrew talked about a potential piece of research around the accessibility of the NHS app for neurodiverse. Researcher would like participants and people who are willing to take part. Let Sammy know if anyone wants to join. Dual diagnosis / no diagnosis is absolutely fine.
- Mala is joining us for the first 15/30 minutes of the march meeting with some questions
- Sammy has invited Mark Tucker from the NHS England Learning disability and Autism program to come to the April meeting
- Our march meeting we will talk about barriers to health care in preparation for march coming in April .

- **Next meeting Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023**
- **6:00 pm – 7:30pm**