



network

nsun

for mental health

Issue 8 – Autumn/Winter 2013
www.nsun.org.uk

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England expects

Our annual survey says that people with experience of mental health conditions want us to support their involvement in services and communities across the country.

NSUN network for mental health is the only service-user-led charity that supports people help each other, themselves and the services they use across England.

Although we try hard to influence government, the NHS and other bodies that affect our members the most important thing is that people are supported where they are. That is why we have been making a real effort to spread our work as widely as possible.

In this newsletter you will read about our pilots for involving people in Lambeth, Newcastle, Leicester, Suffolk and Hackney. We are recommending that this

approach is replicated all over the country and if we can get the funding that is what we intend to do.

We have also been carrying out research on how people in the West Midlands have been involved in commissioning, or arranging, services and this year our annual general meeting is in Leicester following successful events in Salford and Birmingham.

From Cornwall to Liverpool more than 150 NSUN members have joined their new patient and service-user champion Healthwatch group as part of our Mental Healthwatch scheme – that's an average of one volunteer for every Healthwatch in the country.

Wherever you are we are supporting you to get more involved in your own care and community because when that happens everyone benefits.

network nsun for mental health

Call for action

We are the only service-user-led charity working across England to give people who have experienced mental health conditions more control of their own lives, services and communities.

The NHS and local authorities are under increasing pressure as income falls and demand rises with the most vulnerable suffering the effects of austerity and public health failures.

Whatever the wisdom, or otherwise, of public service cuts that affect the most vulnerable there can be little doubt that those services need to change radically. Whilst there are many dedicated health and social care professionals all too often it feels as if services are set up for their convenience, not the good of those who need care and support.

Part of the answer to shrinking revenue, rising demand and inconsistent and often poor quality care is handing control to the people who use, or who have used, the services in question. In NSUN's work around the country we see that when people are supported to take more responsibility for themselves, others and the services they use those people get better and tax-payers'

money is saved. As an added bonus stigma within services and wider communities is reduced as people see that people with mental health conditions are able to take responsibility and play a valuable role.

We will do our bit but we need government, councils and the NHS to do theirs by taking public health more seriously than industry lobbyists, prioritising mental health and supporting those who use services to take more control.



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Service-user leadership

A new feature showcasing NSUN member groups

Croydon's Hear Us service-user group has grown to an impressive 600 members who are now leading efforts to improve services and share information.

Regularly attracting more than 100 people they discuss issues affecting the community at monthly forums.

They also produce In Our Shoes, a quarterly newsletter produced by people affected by mental health conditions and full of information for their local peers.

Their most important work has been in running a linkworking project in local mental health services.

Teams of linkworkers, who have all experienced mental health conditions, talk with current service-users about the quality of care they are receiving.

They support service-users to openly talk about their lived experiences, their concerns about their journey through services and towards discharge.

Hear Us then talk to the people commissioning, or arranging the

care and the people providing it so that services meet the needs of the service-users.

Hear Us co-ordinator Tim Oldham said: 'Having had our own mental health problems, we know how helpful it is to have someone to talk to in confidence. As linkworkers, we want to give service users a safe space to talk about issues that affect them without any fear of repercussions. Whatever it is that they need, talking to linkworkers can be the first step towards getting needed support, leading to recovery

'Sometimes what's on the service users mind might be something that we can't help with directly but we can usually point them in the direction so that they can get help. We have a gained understanding about the community we live in and the activities available. Through our wide knowledge and our understanding about local services we are able signpost to preventative services.'

For more details of services
T: 020 8681 6888
E: info@hear-us.org
W: www.hear-us.org

'Having had our own mental health problems, we know how helpful it is to have someone to talk to in confidence.'

Tim Oldham

Does your service-user-led group do some work you think others might learn from? Let NSUN know and you could feature here and reach 50,000 people across England for free.



National round up

Getting stronger together

Nearly 80 per cent of NSUN members have a positive perception of the charity according to our latest survey. This is up on last year's figures and shows that whilst we are growing quickly as an organisation we are also delivering a good service to members.

We now have over 3,000 individual and 500 group members all over England.

Respondants said they valued our communications particularly the weekly e-mailed news bulletin, this newsletter, our website and events. One member said: 'I find bulletins from you absolutely brilliant; lots of info in bite-size; always several



NSUN London leaders training event

things to follow up - great work.'

People also appreciated that we are service-user-led and that we have stayed close to the grassroots and the values of members whilst developing influence with the Department of Health and other

powerful organisations.

In order to continue doing what members want we need you to fill in this year's member survey, enclosed, or you can find a link on the homepage of our website www.nsun.org.uk

Service-user advisers join ministerial visit

In the first visit of its kind NSUN and a group of other service-users have joined a ministerial trip to a mental health trust.

Norman Lamb MP, who leads on mental health in the government, invited NSUN and the other members of the mental health strategy Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) to join him on a visit to Chase Farm Hospital in north London.

The minister and service-user and carer representatives, who NSUN helped recruit to the MAG, spoke to the Barnet, Enfield

Carer representative Dame Philippa Russell, service-user representative Lucy Rolfe, Norman Lamb MP, service-user representative Terrence Lewis and NSUN's Edward Davie.

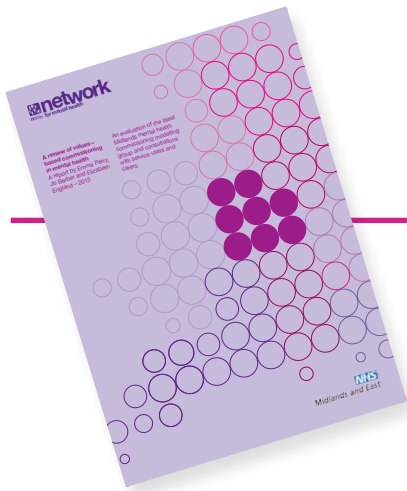
and Haringey NHS Trust chief executive Maria Kane, other staff members and patients about a range of issues including restraint, service-user involvement and commissioning.

Mr Lamb said the service-user input to the trip had been valuable and said: 'I would like to thank NSUN for their contribution to the advisory group for the strategy, and to building user voice across the country. I know how hard you have worked in developing from scratch into a real channel for user voice.'



'I would like to thank NSUN for their contribution to the advisory group for the strategy, and to building user voice across the country.'

Norman Lamb MP



NHS commissioners asked to drop the jargon

Research has suggested improvements to 'values based commissioning' (VBC), a way of arranging care in which service-users, carers, clinicians and managers all work together as equal partners.

NSUN conducted the research with NHS Midlands and found that whilst this way of working was very helpful, there were still significant barriers. The findings show that there continues to be comparatively little service-user leadership, or joint decision-making in relation to service design and delivery.

Research co-ordinator Emma Perry said: 'If NHS commissioners are serious about working more closely with patients, service-users and carers then they need to drop the jargon. This review shows that service users need to be more involved at all stages and at all levels of the commissioning process.'

We are now arranging a conference on values based commissioning on December 9 in London. Contact us if you want to attend or would like a hard copy of the report.

You can also download the full report at www.nsun.org.uk

healthwatch

Mental Healthwatch sets new sights

NSUN's work to ensure people with mental health conditions are involved in the new patient champion Healthwatch groups is going from strength to strength.

In the Spring over 60 volunteers came to our launch and training event speaking to senior representatives of the Department of Health and Healthwatch England, which is the national body supporting local groups.

So far more than 150 people, an average of one per Healthwatch, have volunteered to join their local group and share good and bad practice via NSUN.

Healthwatch England board

member Patrick Vernon invited NSUN to talk to the board and as a result plans are being taken forward to jointly develop a handbook to support local Healthwatch in recruiting people with mental health conditions and inspecting psychiatric services.

Health minister Norman Lamb said: 'I was very pleased to hear that the launch of the mental Healthwatch initiative was a great success. I hope you all enjoyed the day and I wish NSUN and the Mental Healthwatch initiative every success.'

Contact NSUN to learn more or join Mental Healthwatch

NiP lack of involvement in the bud

The NSUN-led National Involvement Partnership (NiP) aims to give mental health service-users direct control of the services they use.

As part of the three-year Department of Health funded work we are developing new national involvement standards to guide organisations who want to give the people who use their services a greater say.

Our aim is for all services to encourage the participation of service-users, carers and the wider community in the design and evaluation of services. To do this effectively we are developing a validated assessment system to show the social, economic and health benefits of doing so.



Working with partners in places like Leicester, where we have our main pilot scheme, has introduced us to great new partners who we have been working with to promote involvement.

They include the Rethink Your Mind mental health arts competition in which service-users were presented with awards by Lord Patel of Bradford pictured at the House of Lords with NSUN volunteer and prize winner Ella Zellaby.

Regional round up

North West

Rochdale Circle is a membership organisation supporting people over the age of 50 with mental health, and other, conditions.

They offer events, trips, holidays and a safe gardening, decorating, DIY and cleaning service.

Rochdale Circle is working with social services and the NHS to provide home visits for those with a need and support to remove barriers to social inclusion.

*For more information contact Julie Brierley
T: 0800 112 3440
E: Julie@rochdalecircle.org.uk*

North East

BECON (Black Minority Ethnic Community Organisations Network) is North East region-wide organisation for the black minority ethnic (BME) voluntary and community sector.

This NSUN-member group provides services to BME communities addressing disadvantage, discrimination, exclusion, inequalities and racism. Services are geared to support individuals to participate more fully and inclusively in the economic, social and cultural developments of their localities. BECON strives to bring about a more inclusive society promoting equality, diversity, human rights and social justice.

*T: 0191 27 22 339
E: information@becon.org.uk*

South East



Tandem supports people who have experienced mental health conditions rebuild their lives through one-to-one befriending. We are now recruiting volunteers in Bicester and Oxford for our next two day training course on Saturday 28 September and Saturday 5 October.

From going for a coffee to visiting a gallery, or cycling or swimming – if you've got interests to share, and an hour a week to spare, Tandem would love to hear from you.

Volunteers are asked to undertake two days training an commit to an hour per week for at least six months. After acceptance as a volunteer you will receive support and supervision, expenses, and group supervision four times a year.

*To apply in Oxford contact Stephen
T: 01865 724225
E: stephen@tandem-oxon.org*

*To apply in Bicester contact Lisa
T: 07720 871923
E: tandembicester@gmail.com
W: www.tandembefriending.org.uk*

South West



Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network (WSUN) was founded in 1991 and is managed by service-users themselves.

They are an inclusive organisation which aims to support and empower people to have a voice about the services they receive, to promote their wellbeing and independence.

WSUN supports people to improve services, raise issues, promote good practice and influence communities.

Membership of the network is free and entitles members to free mailings and quarterly issues of our newsletter.

*For more information please contact WSUN
T: 01380 871800
E: email info.wsun@btconnect.com or visit
W: www.wsun.co.uk*



East Midlands

Leicester is one of three pilot sites around the country for the three-year, NSUN-led 'Involvement for Influence, Influence for Improvement' project, funded by the Department of Health.

Starting with a mental health summit in March 2013 organised by local MP for Leicester South, Jon Ashworth, regular events are taking place including NSUN's annual general meeting being held in the city.

There have been pledges made by all leading stakeholders in Leicester to work together towards better mental health in the city.

For more details and to get involved please contact fran.singer@nsun.org.uk or call her 0207 820 8982

West Midlands



Birmingham-based Muslim Women's Network UK is a national organisation representing Muslim women in UK.

Challenging attitudes to mental health is one of its current priority areas.

As part of its recently launched anthology project Muslim Women's Network UK is seeking poetry and short story submissions on the subject of mental health.

This project is open to all irrespective of gender, age, faith, ethnicity or sexuality.

Deadline for submissions is 30 September.

W: www.mwnuk.co.uk

T: 07972542475

E: nazmin.law@gmail.com

Yorks & Humber

A Leeds-based service-user is trying to get a new initiative under way called: 'Hope - Rise & Shine'.

Mark Russell is looking at providing a service-user-run resource that supports people to deal with issues that may be contributing to poor mental health.

He envisages a welcoming place where people can socialise, get financial and other advice and generally get support and solidarity.

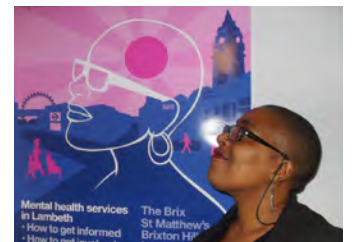
If you are interested in Mark's proposal and would like to get involved contact him on,

T: 01132261039

or 07927357056

E: email.mark.redtiger.russell799@gmail.com

London



NSUN pilot schemes in Lambeth and Hackney have brought scores of people with experience of mental health conditions together to influence their services.

Work has focused on introducing people to their new local Healthwatch patient champions, doctors arranging care through clinical commissioning groups, councils, police officers and charities.

We are keen to build on this work across the capital. If you would like to get involved contact Naomi
E: Naomi.james@nsun.org

East of England



In an on-going project to boost the involvement of people with mental health conditions in the region NSUN has been working with the Suffolk User Forum.

SUF have regular meetings and take part in a range of initiatives aimed at improving services in the county through the involvement of those that use them.

They can be contacted at

T: 01473 329316

E: suf.mh@nsft.nhs.uk

W: www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk



network

nsun for mental health



The last word

In April the NHS underwent the greatest organisational change since it was formed 65 years ago. Nearly all of our members polled (95 per cent) rejected the government bill that made the changes and patient approval in the NHS has dropped from over 70 per cent in 2010 to 58 per cent now.

Despite the problems NSUN has worked very hard to ensure that all the new organisations and people taking responsibility for it listen to people with experience of mental health conditions.

We have built a strong relationship with NHS England, the new body commissioning GP, specialist mental health and prison health services

and we have also forged links with Healthwatch England, who support the local patient and service-user Healthwatch champions in every area.

Of course treating illness is not the whole story which is why we have been working with Public Health England to develop 'mental health in public health', that is seeking to ensure that everyone works to prevent poor mental health.

Locally we have been developing pilot schemes in four very different parts of England with the aim of ensuring that people with experience of mental health conditions have an influence with their local commissioners, providers and other influential bodies. Councils now have responsibility for public health in their areas and, under the government's mental health strategy, are meant to prioritise mental health. Similarly clinical commissioning groups, which are now organising services locally,

should be working with service-users to ensure 'parity of esteem' between mental and physical care services. Healthwatch groups should also be reaching out to people with mental health conditions and ensuring that they are checking properly on the quality of mental health services.

If the NHS is to survive another 65 years it must change by treating the people who use it as assets who, with the right support, can take more responsibility for themselves, each other and the services they use. When people feel both powerless and unsupported it is not surprising they often develop mental and physical health conditions. A society and care system that gives power and support to everyone regardless of their means will reap the benefits in healthier people less reliant on the state.

Sarah Yiannoullou,
Managing director

NSUN is a service-user led charity that connects people with experience of mental health issues to give us a stronger voice in shaping policy and services.

Care to join us?

Membership is free and gives you:

- regular members' magazine
- emailed bulletins and online resources
- invites to events and training
- the chance to join others in shaping care and offering mutual support

name:

organisation:

address:

.....

phone:

email:

Where did you see this information?
.....

Autumn / Winter 2013



return your details to:



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London. SW8 1SY

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