

*Canterbury & District Mental Health Forum*

# *Mental Health Matters Newsletter*

December 2009:

Giving a voice to mental health service users in the Canterbury and coastal locality



*To all our newsletter readers*

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas  
& a happy, and healthy, New Year!*

*From the staff and trustees  
@ Canterbury and District Mental health forum*

## Essentials for Recovery and Care *feedback on our Campaign Agenda*

Our key Agenda issues summarise what we found were district's service user's leading concerns here in the last decade: We sent a questionnaire to Forum members, and also called for comments in this newsletter's previous issue. This is a summary of responses:

### **A) Care Plan Approach (CPA)**

One wrote 'CPA review meetings should be less intimidating; ten staff in attendance is excessive'. *The new model CPA now coming in allows for this: e.g. CPA reviews need not be in a formal clinical setting: Service users could go to a community cafe, to do the review in a chat over coffee with their Key worker.*

### **B) Increase use of alternatives to medication, alone:**

Two service user wrote that this was the most important issues, one also saw it as the one most needed to make mental health services as good and useful as possible. "Occupational Therapy, exercise, counselling and socialising through interest groups really work," they wrote, adding "mental health nurses should talk with patients not just sit around".

Another responded with the comment that Recovery means working to "increase social aspects and decrease medication".

### **C) Maintain 24 hour Coverage for a Crisis service:**

### **D) Proper procedure when police detain people with mental health problems:**

### **E) Challenge stigma:**

### **F) Protect and increase Funding for mental health services:**

One wrote that this item, last on our list, is the one agenda item most needed to make the service as useful as possible.

In one of the replies received, one added that the essential issue is *Recovery*, ~ including working with service user strengths in partnership & with hope for the future.

\* One of these responding wrote their reply in green ink. - But I won't worry; they can't Section you for that!

**Matthew**

## NHS Direct launches online mental health checker

An online mental health checker has been launched by NHS Direct in response to rising numbers of people seeking help for depression and anxiety as a result of the recession.

The government's health advice and information agency reported that 37,500 people telephoned complaining of stress and mental health problems in the first six months of the year.



That is 5,000 more than the previous 12 months, and includes people who had taken an overdose or had suicidal thoughts and depression.

More than 5,000 were from London.

A Spokeswoman said: "The mental health checker provides an approachable channel for people to address their problems. The aim is to get people on the right track so that they can get ongoing support."

The checker allows people to seek help without having to speak to a doctor or nurse, and asks if they are feeling "low, depressed, anxious, panicky, stressed out or under pressure".

Depending on their answers they will be advised to call 999, visit a GP or speak to an NHS Direct nurse.

<http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>

***Canterbury & District mental health Forum encourages any service users to contribute to this newsletter, ~ so opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Forum.***

Adults who claim Employment & Support Allowance or incapacity benefits, now have to be considered for Pathways to Work. If claiming for the first time, or after a break in getting benefit, you'll be expected to take steps to find or prepare for work unless you have a disability or health condition that severely affects your ability to do so. - The **Pathways to Work** scheme makes it possible for people to take steps to get work if they get Employment & Support Allowance or an incapacity benefit because of a health condition or disability. RBLI Employment Solutions (a division of Royal British Legion Industries) is a contracted provider of this service in the Canterbury district. \* *Here someone in this situation describes her first dealings with the Pathways to Work scheme*

### **First meeting**

Goodness, what time is it? 7:45 am, typical. The day I have something scary in store I wake up hours in advance. I couldn't get off to sleep last night for worrying. Now I'm sleep deprived, brilliant. I normally wake up later than this, but not today. No, my brain has decided that it wants plenty of time to worry itself stupid before our appointment. Thanks a lot brain. The fear is kicking in already I hate new situations. It's the usual thing; stomach in knots, sweating palms, light-headedness. I'm starting to imagine all the things that could go wrong. There is a little voice inside me that insists that the chance of all of these things actually happening is miniscule, but my neuroses can shout louder and drown it out.

I ought to eat something but I'm stressed about the interview so I have no appetite. This makes things worse and I'm now sick with fear. I try to rationalise the situation; I've been asked to visit the RBLI offices for a series of appointments – mandatory, so I can't get out of them – where I will receive any help I need returning to work. My fear is that they won't understand my problems, won't care what I'm going through and will single-mindedly harass me into accepting a job I'm not ready for. Then there is the problem of getting to the place to begin with,

and dealing with a complete stranger. How am I going to cope with this?

Now I'm attempting to get ready but the thought of leaving the house is troubling me. In the past I've suffered from panic attacks and I'm constantly afraid of having another one. What if it happens during the interview? I'll have to sit on the floor and people will stare at me. I concentrate on my breathing and try to focus on what I'm going to wear. Do I opt for smart or casual though? What is expected of me? Eventually I choose comfort, something familiar; that should help me to relax more.

Well I made it out of the door and I'm in the car. Now the doubts are really setting in. Will they be angry with me for being on benefits? Will they be interested in me as a person or will they simply be on a mission to get me working? I don't know what I'll talk to them about. Ok, now I'm really nervous. Maybe the person won't turn up, maybe I'll get a stay of execution.

We've parked and are walking to the offices. I'm very quiet. I don't know what to expect and it's frightening. I'm trying to picture the person I'm going to see – I imagine them with three heads and breathing fire. I'm not very good at dealing with people or new environments so I'm expecting to feel completely out of my depth, but I'm trying to focus on the positives – hopefully something good will come of this.

I'm outside. This is it. I'm so nervous I can't press the door bell. Walking up the stairs I feel faint. I'm now being approached by someone looking surprisingly normal – one head, no claws or fangs. He is smiling. He's asking me how I am, telling me not to be nervous and offering me a drink. This is better than I expected. I'm being assured that they're here to help people, not scare them. Things will move at a pace I am comfortable with and I won't have to do anything until I am ready. The RBLI will help me get ready in any way they can. This isn't so bad...

**Laila**

*Canterbury and District  
Mental Health Forum*  
**Trustees Annual report,  
for 2008~2009**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

Finding that many service users in the district outside Canterbury felt the name 'Canterbury and Faversham Forum' didn't include them, . The charity changed the charity's name to **Canterbury and District Mental Health Forum. (CaDmhf)** The new name applied from the start of the financial year 2008-2009. To cover the costs of the name change, such as new signage for the forum premises, the charity received a donation from the KCC Members Fund, a grants fund issued at the discretion of local county councillors.

**DEVELOPMENT, ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

In 2008-2009 the forum continued to maintain more Forum activity in the coastal towns: The co-ordinator convened a consultation event for service users, in Whitstable at which a panel (including representatives of the health and social care services, service users, and a carer,) spoke briefly from their knowledge and experience on mental health issues, and answered questions in discussions about the services available.

CaDmhf initiated and takes a lead role in Media Action Network South East [MANSE]; a mental health media network of service users, which has developed through a number of meetings held in our district, attended by service users across the south east. MANSE is a project designed to provide mutual support for service users responding to media coverage of mental health issues, challenging stigma and discrimination.

In east Kent CaDmhf continues to be the agency for payment of expenses which user and carers may claim for taking part in service planning meetings. The charity has helped statutory services with work to redefine the terms and conditions for the payment scheme, and prepare for service user-evaluation projects.

The forum works in partnership with the five other district user forums in east Kent through the Council of East Kent Service User Forums.

The forum has widened and increased its contact with a variety of Regional and National groups. This has ensured the Forums knowledge of important developments to mental health services, both statutory and third sector, is current. As a result, the forum is well versed in the changes in Mental Health legislation. So the Forum is able to promote the significantly beneficial 'Advance Statements' to service users we are in contact with as well as give answers to those who have concerns about major changes in their care delivery.

The charity continues to provide Patients Council meetings at St Martin's Hospital, Canterbury; a form of collective advocacy in which patients may record comments or make proposals and inform the Managers on what's needed.

The charity has continued managing the upstairs flat, which is sub-let to tenants who are clients of the local mental health rehabilitation team. This year the charity has begun work to improve the quality of the accommodation, by having double glazing installed. The charity's premises are leased from Canterbury City Council. This year, the charity successfully applied for a limited rent concession from Canterbury City Council, to offset the costs of this improvement work.

The charity successfully sought a small grant from the Henry Smith Charity to support our activities.

**Directors Update**

The name change to the 'Canterbury and District Mental Health Forum' has proved a positive benefit as the service users of the District identify more clearly with our purpose and identity. This has led to an increase in enquiries for help by e-mail, telephone and callers in person to our premises. We are currently developing a website and the name change should ensure that we have a good chance of the site being accessed via the usual search methods.

Our Regional profile has increased and the Forum has also developed a network of contacts Nationally. This has meant we are able to provide current and detailed information on a wide range of topics essential to service users at a time of rapid change-for example the Mental Capacity Act, the huge issues of the

personalisation agenda and the revised Care Plan Approach.

Our anti-stigma work, (begun with a joint partnership with 'Open Up'), in creating the Media Action Network South East continues. This is now funded via our success in being awarded a two year tender by the National Survivor User Network to coordinate their work in the South East. We are developing a media skills training course which will be hosted by the Forum and delivered early in the New Year. (Congratulations to Sandra Pearson for the amazing 'Place at the Table' work and Steve Finnimore for his success organising the 'Art Uniting People' exhibition at County Hall).

It has been very interesting to see how service user involvement is developed and valued in other parts of the Region. Many service user groups are now transforming themselves from recipients of funding and services into actual providers of services with great success. This is an area that CaD is currently exploring and our Trustees are keen for us to expand in this direction.

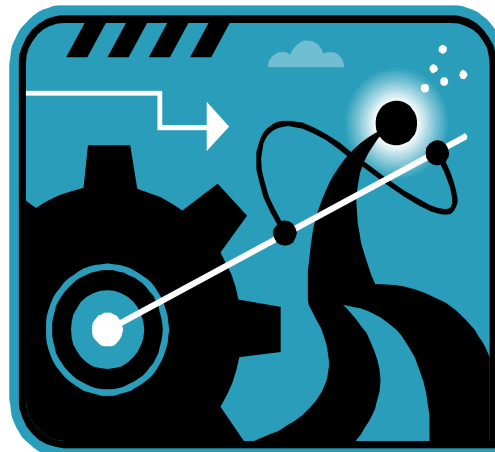
We look forward to continuing to work with you all in the New Year and wish you a happy and healthy 2010'.

MARK KILBEY

\*\*\*\*\*  
%%%%%%%%%

### The Changes

Once upon a time, day services for adults with severe and enduring mental health programmes were all about the creativity. And I loved it. One day, long ago, 2007 I think, a bishop came to look round a centre that helped us express our creativity. I very much felt part of the event. I made little chocolate cakes. I had artwork, pottery and sewing on display. My Little Mermaid story was stuck up on the wall. (That makes me sound about 7 years old. It is actually a satire about body modification and attitudes to disability.)



Those were good days. We made presents for friends and relatives who had been supportive to us. Occasionally, there were exhibitions and perhaps we sold an item or two.

Then the government decided our lives were too enjoyable. Ignoring what service users had to say, it decided to scapegoat us. The rhetoric went along the lines of, "People claiming benefits because of ill health lie on a continuum. On one end are malingerers. On the other are those who are genuinely too feeble to stop their parasitic ways. But most of them can be rehabilitated."

How interesting. A few years ago, the government was saying that service users were so dangerous that many of us needed to be medicated against our will *even if we*

*were not ill enough to be in*

*hospital.* Now, it seems, we just need a little confidence-boosting and a computer course. Then, hey presto, we will be transformed into useful citizens.

You see, the government's definition of a useful citizen is one who earns enough to be a taxpayer. (Of course, this view is grossly insulting to millions of full-time carers, who get scandalously little respite. It's insulting to volunteer first aiders. It's incredibly sexist. Etc.) As far as the government is concerned, any job will do. Because being paid to send junk mail or make weapons of mass destruction (aka "the replacement for

Trident") simply has to be more useful than unpaid work like sorting clothes in charity shops.

Right? Well, wrong. I refuse to believe that my writing this article is "less valuable" than someone taking money for saying spiteful things about a dead pop star.

But the government

controls the funding for services for people with mental health problems. So now kilns and print-making equipment and sewing machines lie idle or, at best, are under-used. Nearly everything is vocational.

I have tried to adapt. Next year I am going on a short course involving pottery, circus skills and stuff. I joined two choirs although I cannot sing well. I joined a drama group. My creative writing continues. I have bought a sewing machine, I hope I have the hang of using it. I took a taster course in stained glass. I was already doing some volunteer work, but started putting in a few hours with another organisation. The latter arrangement folded, through no fault of mine. So I am enquiring about something else.

But all these changes are hard to take, and my health has suffered. Doing a class at college or adult education classes tends to be more difficult than doing a class aimed specifically at people with mental health issues. It's not just about the money. There are other factors. Location, time of day, level of ability the class is aimed at, worries about having a meltdown in front of other people.

Let me mention a friend of mine, who has a serious physical disability and physical illnesses on top of her mental health problems. I am constantly amazed that she has the inclination to get out of bed in the morning. Yet she does, and she is taking the opportunities available. But she is not finding it easy. "Another one of my classes has shut down," she said, sadly.

She does sponsored walks for charity, she has helped me both on an emotional and practical level. This is an honest, wonderful person. She deserves to get her art and pottery classes back.

I have fewer problems than she, but some days I want somewhere to go. Not just somewhere to have a nice cup of tea and a chat, but also to play around with a little clay.

## **SeReNe PrInCEsS**

### **Eastern & Coastal Kent NHS has to make cuts after 'Over-Achieving'**

The NHS in east Kent has to cut costs as East Kent's hospitals have overspent, or "over achieved" through the 'Payment By Results' system. Payment By Results won't apply to mental health yet (so mental health services had not caused the problem) but still they look to find some savings in the mental health budget. One project to suffer will be work on new ways to address mental health problems for people in prison. East Kent has the largest prison population, so this seems a pressing need.

The Radio 4 "Law in Action" programme on 10 November quoted the statistic that **90% of people in prison in England and Wales have a mental health problem.**

Do courts identify people early enough and deal with them? If problems are identified there can be delays deciding what to do when people get to court.

They reported a case of a prisoner, required to have mental health treatment, having 14 months on remand while medics decide the most appropriate treatment.

These issues are addressed by a new approach to treatment of those with mental health issues, with pilot schemes at Stratford in East London and in Brighton.

On arrival at court anyone thought to have mental health problems is assessed. The Brighton pilot identified over 700 people for assessment and found 178 with mental health problems needing attention. But only 29 have been given community orders with a mental health element.

The Legal Team Manager said that the pilot shouldn't be judged on this basis: Those who *didn't* get a community order had mental health needs assessed and got advice and signposting onto local services'.

The Ministry of Justice points to Mental Health Courts as "a new and innovative way to deal with the root causes of offending. and work to cut re-offending further".

# MiNDthe GaP

Mind the Gap, an artist led festival celebrating arts for mental health, has had a fantastic second year with the theme A Place at the Table culminating in a magnificent public Exhibition of tablecloths at the Horsebridge Arts Centre in Whitstable.



Lolo Sittingbourne



Hundreds of visitors came and exclaimed WOW as they walked into the gallery. Their comments left in the visitors book are testament to the success of the show and appreciation of the work everyone put in to it. I'm sure they took with them a positive view of what can be achieved by those with enduring mental health problems. The private view was great fun with performances in the gallery by artist Lizz Daniels, the 1 in 4 Drama Group and performance poets The Word. Video footage of the exhibition and performances will be on the website soon with other contributions to A Place at the Table.

The spirit of Mind the Gap is diverse, inclusive, creative, challenging and 'out of the box'. We are hoping to launch new activities in Spring 2010 so watch out for news on the website and visit [www.canterburymindthegap.com](http://www.canterburymindthegap.com)

Sandra Pearson



# useful Telephone Numbers

## WHEN IN DISTRESS

**STOURCARE** (For urgent help when  
GP surgery is closed)  
**0844 800 1234**

### **Mental Health Matters**

**HELPLINE 0800 1070160**

*(confidential and emotional support for service users and carers)*

*Available from 5 pm – 9 am next day on weekdays, with a 24 hour service at weekends and on Bank Holidays.*

**SAMARITANS 01227 457777**

**Community Mental Health Teams  
(Duty Service):**

**Canterbury 01227 597111**

**Coastal 01227 594888**

**social services Out of Hours Service:  
0845 762 6777**

**NHS direct:0845 4647**

**Asian Mental Health Helpline  
freephone 0808 800 2073**

*Mon & Wed: 4.00 pm - 7.00 pm*

*Tues & Thurs: 12 noon-3.00 pm*

## YOUNG PEOPLE

**HOPELineUK (Helping You to Prevent Young  
Suicide): 08000 68 41 41**

**Early Intervention Psychosis Service:  
01303 222411.**  
8 am-8 pm Mon –Fri; (Also Self-referral)

**Homeless Day Centre 01227 464904**

## SUPPORT

**Canterbury and Coastal  
Rethink Carers' Support Group  
Tel: 01227 760707**

**Manic Depression Fellowship 08456 340540**

**Epilepsy Here: 01227 360207**  
(for support of those with epilepsy)

**K&C Pharmacy Helpline:  
01227 812115**

**CaD,**

**34 Military Rd, Canterbury, CT1 1LT.  
~ Ring: 01227 788211**

## ADVICE & REPRESENTATION.

**East Kent Advocacy Service  
01843 224511**

**Citizens Advice Bureau  
087101 264062**

**Kent County Council Helpline  
–for needs assessment 24/7  
08458 247100**

## ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROBLEMS

**38 Drug Advice Centre 01843 596638**

**Alcohol Advice Centre 01227 454740**

**Alcoholics Anonymous 08457 697 555**

**Turning Point 01227 454374**

## Day Centres

**The Mustard Seed 01227 451834**

**Canterbury Umbrella 01227 767660**

**Herne Bay Umbrella 01227 370200**

**Faversham Umbrella 01795 773038**

**Whitstable Umbrella 01227 274880**

## Residential

**Porchlight 01227 760078**

**Canterbury Housing Advice Centre  
01227 762605**

## Benefits

**Income Support; (01843) 258000**

**Other benefits; (01227) 596700**

**Direct Payments Helpline: 01304 841987**  
Visit: [www.kentdp.co.uk](http://www.kentdp.co.uk)

## St Martin's Hospital

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service:  
01227 812020**

**Spiritual and Religious Care:  
01227 812021 or email  
[Peter.Richmond@kmpt.nhs.uk](mailto:Peter.Richmond@kmpt.nhs.uk)**

**Hearing Voices Group –for service users:  
01227 597111  
(Jill Knight at Laurel House).**

## **Canterbury MDF Bipolar Self-Help Group:**

Meets the second Tuesday of the month  
at the Canterbury Umbrella,  
St Peter's Place, Canterbury at 7.15 pm.  
For further details ring: **08456 340543**