

CAPS

independent advocacy

The Consultation & Advocacy
Promotion Service

Mental Health Advocacy News Edinburgh

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Fluctuating Outcomes

Over the past couple of years there have been some changes to the benefits system.

One of the biggest changes has been the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Everyone who applies for ESA has to go through a Work Capability Assessment to decide whether they can do some type of work.



In 2010, some people about to go through the process and people having gone through the assessment contacted CAPS to express their concerns about how the process affects people with mental health issues. We were also contacted by services supporting people worrying about how they would cope.

At the end of 2010, CAPS decided to meet with a group of people who have had experience of the Work Capability

Assessment and gathered their views on how they feel the system is working.

Based on this initial focus group, we decided to find out more about how the process is affecting people with mental health issues so we can keep informing the Government about how the system is working or if it needs to change.

A questionnaire about people's experiences and concerns related to ESA and especially the Work Capability Assessment was developed following a focus group run by CAPS. Members of the focus group reviewed the questionnaire before it was circulated.

A report called "Fluctuating Outcomes" is now available. It gives information on the Work Capability Assessment and changes the Government has made so far. Most importantly it shows how it has affected people who have to go through an assessment that is not flexible enough to take mental health issues into proper consideration.

For a copy of the report, contact Laëticia or Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email laetitia@capsadvocacy.org.

Hot Topics

Independent Advocacy Review

Independent advocacy services in Edinburgh have been going through a lot of changes in the last year.

Back in February, a joint review of advocacy services by NHS Lothian and the City of Edinburgh Council decided to put all advocacy services out to tender.

The provision of advocacy services was split into three separate block contracts (people with learning disabilities; people with mental health support needs and carers of people with mental health support needs and/or learning disabilities; and finally older people and people with physical disabilities).

At the end of August 2011, the organisations awarded the contracts were as follows:

- People with Mental Health Support Needs and Carers of People with Mental Health Support Needs and/or Learning Disabilities: **Advocard**



- People with Learning Disabilities: **Partners in Advocacy**
- Older People and adults with Physical Disabilities: **Partners in Advocacy**



This means that, after twenty years of campaigning for better services in Edinburgh, CAPS will no longer provide collective advocacy in Edinburgh and will no longer support groups such as SEASONS and Edinburgh Users Forum.

CAPS will continue providing collective and individual advocacy in both East Lothian, Midlothian and on the Hermitage ward at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. CAPS' other projects (Oor Mad History, Personality Disorder and Experiences of Psychosis) will also be unaffected and CAPS will continue to work on issues that affect people Lothian-wide.

Contracts with existing providers of independent advocacy services have been extended until 1 December 2011 to allow for the transfer of service users from any outgoing to incoming providers during the period September to December 2011 and for the transfer of any staff affected by the changes.

The Council believes that the cost of delivery for advocacy has decreased a lot in real terms as a result of the tendering process. The number of providers delivering all the advocacy services has decreased from seven to two (Advocard and Partners in Advocacy).

The Council thinks this will also help to reduce contract monitoring and management time and costs. However there are still doubts about the quality of the services that will be provided when less money will be spent to provide more services to more people.

Advocard has been providing individual advocacy in the community for many years. In 2009, it was successful in its bid to take over the management of the individual advocacy service at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and the Patients' Council.

For more information about how the change of contract will affect the work CAPS is currently involved in, please contact CAPS on 0131 538 7177. For more information on Advocard, please visit www.advocard.org.uk or phone 0131 554 5307.

City-Wide Development Group

The second city-wide meeting for development groups was held on 13 September 2011 at Cambridge Street House. The group is open to staff, advocacy organisations, carers and people who have experience of using the Community Mental Health Teams.

People talked about what the development group will do. People said they want it to be about improving the Community Mental Health Teams. Other suggestions were to look at information, communication, and getting views from people who don't go to meetings.

At the next meeting the group will agree on its role and decide on a new name. The next meeting is on:

Wednesday 9 November 2011 between 2pm and 3.30pm at Cambridge Street House, 5-7 Cambridge Street, Edinburgh

For more information contact Donna at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email donna@capsadvocacy.org.

Commissioning for Recovery 2011-2014

The Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership (EADP) is looking for people's views for their draft Commissioning Plan: Commissioning for Recovery.

This draft plan sets out how EADP wants to commission services that will support more people to move into sustained recovery from problem alcohol and drug use. They want to get views from service users and their families, service providers, other decision makers and the general public on the draft plan.

The three main things that they think will support more people achieve a sustained recovery from problem alcohol and drug use are:

- More people will access treatment services so that 50% of people with drug problems and 20% of people with alcohol problems who need treatment receive it.
- More people will complete treatment programmes.
- More people will move into recovery.

You can view a full version of the draft plan or a summary of the draft plan and you can give your response by completing an online survey or by sending your views by email or post. For more information and for a copy of the draft (also available in other accessible formats), go to www.edinburghadp.co.uk/CommissioningForRecovery/Pages/default.aspx, email hsc.eadp@edinburgh.gov.uk or phone 0131 529 2118.

National Mental Health Strategy 2011—2015

People have been asked to give their views on many mental health strategies recently, from Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland to the Lothian's Sense of Belonging Strategy.

Now the Scottish Government wants to get people's views on a National Mental Health Strategy for 2011 to 2015. They have identified fourteen outcomes and they want to work on improving each of them to be able to see clearly what has been achieved by 2015 and what still has to be done.

The Government thinks that all services people get need to support and enable people to keep well and take responsibility for their mental health. It also thinks that people should know how to access help and be able to get help quickly.

It now wants to have all aspects of mental health work in a single document—from prevention work to improved mental health services—because it believes that they work better when they are joined up.

The Government says that they have already made a lot of progress in promoting positive mental health, preventing mental health problems and improving mental health services through their involvement with many strategic partners.

Areas where most changes have happened are:

- a reduction of psychiatric inpatient readmissions and the development of

community mental health services.

- An increase in the number of people with dementia who have their diagnosis recorded by their GP.
- Training of 50% of all frontline, primary care, accident and emergency and substance misuse staff in suicide prevention awareness training.

This consultation is about fourteen important outcomes. For each of them, it looks at what has been achieved in the last three years and the challenges ahead. The Government wants to consult people on:

- The structure of the strategy and if its broad outcomes are the right outcomes to focus on;
- Whether there are any gaps in the key challenges identified;
- What further actions should be prioritised to help us to meet these challenges.

The consultation runs until 31 January 2012. After the consultation period, the Scottish Government will publish an analysis of the responses, and a final Strategy including an updated set of actions which will be delivered between 2012 and 2015.

The draft strategy and the consultation document are available online at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/01163037/9. You can also contact Katherine Christie, Scottish Government Health Directorate, on 0131 244 5207 or email MHStrategy@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

If you need support to fill in the consultation or if you prefer to discuss your views, please contact CAPS on 0131 538 7177.



Edinburgh Users Forum (EUF) is an independent collective advocacy group. Its members are people who use, or have used mental health services. They give people who use mental health services a say in the services that are provided, and how services are run.

Our Next meeting

The next EUF meeting will take place on Saturday 1 October 2011 at McDonald Road Library. Doors open at 1.30pm and the meeting runs from 2pm to 4pm.

Please contact us if there is anything we can do to make it easier for you to attend the meeting. Contact Donna at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email donna@capsadvocacy.org

The first part of the meeting will be a Special General Meeting (SGM).

The reason EUF is holding a special general meeting is because they would like to change the name Edinburgh Users Forum. Voting is open to EUF members and we need a quorum on the day (at least twelve members present) to make the vote valid.

Short Breaks

In 2010, EUF published a report on the need for a Short Breaks scheme in Edinburgh. City of Edinburgh Council then did their own research and EUF felt that their views were not taken into account.

In September 2011, two service users and a CAPS staff member met with John Armstrong, Joint Programme Manager for Mental Health. We discussed how people feel the Council's report focuses more on respite than the shorts breaks defined by EUF. Not everybody needs

respite but many people could do with a short break they often cannot afford. People need a break from time to time. A change is just as good as a cure.

Some money has now been made available (£15,000 for one year) to run a pilot scheme through Direct Payments but it will come under the Respite label.

Direct Payments is the only option available to access the scheme. However service users will not need to have a carer to be eligible.

We agreed one problem is that people will not know about the short break service and might be unaware of the value of a short break. There will be no advertising budget so we need to find ways to spread the word.

We noted that "Critical Category" is a misleading way of defining who can use the service. John explained that it does not cover only people who are in a crisis but people who have a recognised mental health issue and use mental health services. This will be clarified on leaflets.

The scheme could start very soon. We will meet soon again with John Armstrong to look at the leaflet for the scheme. If you have any views or if you would like to be involved in looking at the pilot project, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email laetitia@capsadvocacy.org.

Community Happenings

Have You Ever Contacted Samaritans?

Samaritans is trying to improve how they describe their service to the public. They think it is important for them to be able to explain what they do in everyday language so that people know what to expect and feel able to contact them if they want to.

They would like to hear about people's experience of calling Samaritans to help them with this work. The research will be completely anonymous and confidential. Would you be interested in taking part in this session?

There will be a focus group on the afternoon of Wednesday 26 October 2011 in the Edinburgh branch of Samaritans at 3pm.

They would not expect people to discuss any aspect of why they called or the content of their call. The discussion would focus on whether people feel the way Samaritans describe their service is understandable and matches what people think is important about the service.

Whether you have called Samaritans once or many times, today or ten years ago, they would really value your opinion. The focus group will last an hour. All attendees will receive a voucher and travel expenses.

If you are interested in taking part in this session, please contact Fiona Barlow by email at f.barlow@samaritans.org or by calling 0131 556 7058.

You can also take part in an online survey via the Samaritans website (www.samaritans.org) if you would like to take part and are unable to attend a focus group. In addition if you know of anyone else who might be interested in taking part please pass on this information.

Craig House Campus Memories

An Edinburgh Users Forum member has asked CAPS to inform people that an archive of memories from the Craig House site is being put together. In the late nineteenth century, it was purchased by the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, developed as a psychiatric hospital until the mid 1990s.

Tom Parnell would love to record any memories, documents and photographs people may have relating to any period of the history of the Craig House site.

If you have any memories about the buildings, grounds or operation of the former clinic which you think might be of interest, please contact Tom Parnell at tparnell@simpsonandbrown.co.uk or send them to Tom at Simpson & Brown, St Ninian's Manse, Quayside Street, Edinburgh EH6 6RJ. All original documents will of course be returned.

Theatre of the Oppressed Open Invitation

Emily Steedman is a theatre practitioner who is interested in setting up an on-going drama group using Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' techniques to look

specifically at the oppressions that exist within our culture towards mental health and well-being.

This is not just about looking at issues of oppression that can be seen to exist within mental health and other public services.

Emily also wants to look at the more subtle oppressions that can happen in everyday human interactions (not to mention the current climate of demonising people who claim benefits in Parliament and the media!) and the oppressions we may inflict on ourselves from within.

If you are interested, please come along to an initial meeting in room 1:22 of the Art's Complex, St Margaret's House, 151 London Road, Edinburgh EH7 6AE, on Saturday 8 October 2011 from 12pm to 3pm. The Art's Complex is situated near Meadowbank Stadium. If you require disabled access please call Emily and she will explain where you need to go.

At this first meeting she will explain a little about 'Theatre of the Oppressed' and its techniques as well as give tasters of some exercises.

This is a group which will be open to anyone wanting to explore questions of how we can better support ourselves and each other in our mental health. Her intention will be for people to share and develop skills and to be a group run through consensus.

No previous theatre experience is needed! To book a place or for more information please contact Emily Steedman on 07812 589 888 or email emstedman@hotmail.co.uk

Before it's a crisis...

Here is a list of numbers you can phone for support when most services are closed. It is a good idea to keep these numbers where you can find them when you need support or help. Services such as Breathing Space and the Samaritans offer a listening service. Social Work and the NHS are more appropriate if you need more than this.

Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87 (6.00pm-2.00am)

Samaritans

08457 90 90 90 (24 hours)

NHS 24

08454 24 24 24 (24 hours)

Emergency Social Work Service

0800 731 6969 (out of hours only)

Crisis Centre

Free phone 0808 801 0414 (24 hours)

Text phone 0808 801 0415 (24 hours)

If you get support at home, you may have an 'on-call' number to contact staff. If you have contact with a Community Mental Health Team, they may also have a number for you to contact staff.

If you require individual advocacy you may contact:

Advocard 0131 554 5307

(Monday to Friday 9-5pm)

Royal Edinburgh Hospital Advocacy Service

0131 537 6004

CAPS is a service user led organisation which is independent from the people who fund it and the people who provide services.

Our collective advocacy service works with groups of people who use mental health services in Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian.

We support service users to have their views taken into account in the way services are planned and provided.

What is CAPS Collective Advocacy about?

- develops and works with service user groups
- publishes service users' views on mental health issues
- makes service users aware of new kinds of services and what the effects of mental health policy are for them
- campaigns for the services people say they want
- checks with service users how services are working
- supports service user involvement in training people working in mental health

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