



**February
2007**

What's the point?

Good question and one that EUF needs to think about. That is why we will be looking at the aims of EUF at the February meeting to remind ourselves WHAT WE ARE FOR, and what collective advocacy is all about.

We have looked at 'How We Behave In Meetings' to see if we could come up with a better set of Ground Rules. The EUF Executive have put together some new Ground Rules for the Forum and these and the 'Being Fair' policy will be discussed at the meeting.

We have also been working on our membership strategy to increase our membership and ensure that EUF is an active and collective voice for people who use or have used mental health services in Edinburgh. We hope to build a strong service user network, so we can continue to raise awareness, campaign and influence service planning and provision at both local and national level.

VOX is the new national organisation that has been set up for people who have, or have had, experience of mental health problems.

Included with this months Newsletter is a copy of the VOX membership form and a freepost envelope. It is important that this national service user organisation is kept accountable to local groups.

Our Next Meeting:

Saturday 3 February 2007

**1.30 - 2.00pm Doors
open/social
2.00 - 4.30pm Meeting starts**

**McDonald Road Library,
Edinburgh**

**For more information contact
CAPS on 0131 538 7177.**

Hot Gossip

Crisis Centre

Jacquie Watt, Manager for the Edinburgh Crisis Centre has sent an update to keep us informed about how the centre is running.

“Happy New Year, 2007 has arrived and I am looking forward to the first operational year for the Crisis Centre and hopefully premises where we can develop the long awaited overnight capacity. We are still awaiting the outcome of the appeal hearing held in early December. It was well attended with strong support from a number of Edinburgh City Councillors and Consultation and Advocacy Promotion Service and Edinburgh Carers Council. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the petition.

Taking a minute to reflect, the first four months has seen over one hundred and sixty service users and carers in contact with us. Calls and visits to the Crisis Centre have ranged from concern about personal safety and suicidal thoughts to people feeling isolated, looking for information and signposting to appropriate local services. We have begun to use the services at the Language Line allowing translation of calls and enabling staff to feel more confident about this for the future. The text phone service for deaf and hard of hearing callers is operational as is the email service at crisis@edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk

We are a bit concerned callers may mistakenly think the text phone is a mobile phone texting service, which we do not have at this stage, if there is a demand though for this the Partnership Group will look into it.

The official launch of the Crisis Centre went well in November with speeches from Councillor Kingsley Thomas Department of Health and Social Care, Nigel Henderson Penumbra, Sara Hvidsten Edinburgh Users Forum and Linda Copeland Edinburgh Carers Council. The City Chambers provided an excellent setting for this gathering of folk involved over the years in the development of the Centre.

Centre staff are settling into their new posts and further training is planned throughout the year in telephone helpline skills as well as opportunities to meet with colleagues working in Emergency Social Work and Out of Hours and Unscheduled Care in Edinburgh. Almost all staff have now received training in the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST). This is a model of intervention rolled out in Scotland through the National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent Suicide in Scotland. The Crisis Centre also continues to be involved in the development of ‘*edspace*’ and is looking forward to playing a part in ensuring at times of crisis information about local resources is made easily available.

We have become ever more aware of the requirement for the overnight capacity at the Crisis Centre over the past few months. Callers often describe the wish to stay in a comfortable, safe place when things at home are unbearable. This may be as a result of strained personal relationships, lack of sleep, anxiety and distress. Carers too describe their concerns for their relatives and friends. Let hope early 2007 sees an early move towards this development.”

Jacquie Watt
Manager Edinburgh Crisis Centre

‘Infusion’

Infusion is the not-for-profit organisation that has been given the contract for the evaluation of the Crisis Centre for the next three years.

We have some concerns as, due to funding, they have now reduced the ‘review meetings’ that look specifically at the review of the Crisis Centre, from every 4 months to every 6 months. Sally Dick from Infusion will come along to a special meeting of the EUF Executive next week to discuss these changes and what they will mean.

Infusion can still come along to speak to the Forum at a meeting in the future. It is important that EUF are involved, so we can influence the evaluation process.

Acute Inpatient Forums

The Scottish Executive has written to all health boards in Scotland telling them that they must set up ‘Acute Inpatient Forums’ in psychiatric hospitals. The name is a bit misleading because the Forums are not just for service users. Doctors, nurses, other health workers, hospital managers, social workers and carers will be members of them, as well as ‘representatives from local service user groups’.

What the Forums talk about and decide is supposed to help reduce the number of people readmitted to hospital each year. The Forums will be expected to make links with services that are provided in the community.

Peer Support

EUF have decided to write to voice our concerns about the timing of the Peer Support Worker jobs and what seems to have been a lack of meaningful service user involvement. We will let you know what happens.

At our last meeting ...

VOX **Voices of experience**

The aim of this national organisation is to make sure people with similar experiences across Scotland have opportunities to be involved and to influence services at national level.

We have some concerns about their Constitution but hope it is still possible to influence VOX. We have enclosed a membership form and freepost envelope with this newsletter if you would like to become a member of VOX. We will also bring copies along to the February meeting.

For further information on VOX :
Tel: 0141 572 1663

Email: voxscotland@yahoo.co.uk
Website: www.voxscotland.org.uk

Review of 2006

2006 was a busy year for Edinburgh Users Forum. Our meetings were full of hot topics and members of the Forum were involved in lots of different things. At our January meeting we looked at some of the things that we were involved in and achieved during 2006.

Some of the important things included;

- the Crisis Centre Partnership Group;
- the Choose Life Steering Group;
- planning our review of day services;
- the Database Group;
- the Employment Services Action Group.

Some of these topics are ongoing and the Forum needs to decide what the important issues are for 2007!

This is a summary of what was discussed at the meeting. Full minutes of all EUF meetings are kept in the office and are available to any member on request.

Minutes are not automatically sent out any more because members said that they didn't want this.

If you want the full minutes please contact the CAPS office - details on the back page.

You can also ask to have the EUF newsletter sent to you by e-mail as well as by post.

Recovery

This is a topic that the Forum looked at in 2006 at our August meeting. We talked about the whole idea of being 'well' and all the things recovery affects.

There is a lot of work being done at the moment to promote and support the recovery process at both local and national level. It is important that service users who are "the experts" are involved in raising awareness of what really helps people in recovery.

Recovery Awareness Free Workshops

Thursday 5th April 2007

9.30am-4.30pm

The Engine Shed,
19 St. Leonard's Lane,
Edinburgh

These One-Day Workshops are designed to promote awareness of the Recovery Process throughout Services in Edinburgh. Staff from Social Work, Health, Housing, Voluntary Organisations, Carers and Service Users are invited to apply.

For further information and booking:-
Contact

Graham Slowther at AMPS on 229
9363

or Rona McBrierty on 07727181966

Before it's a crisis...

Here is a short list of phone numbers you can contact for support when most services are closed. It is a good idea to have these numbers and others 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

0845 24 24 24 (24 hours)

Emergency Social Work Service

0800 731 6969 (out of hours only)

Crisis Centre Interim Service

Free phone 0808 801 0414

Text phone 0808 801 0415

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 advocacy you may contact:

Advocard 0131 554 5307

Circles Network 0131 537 6004

Web News

Breathing Space

Breathing Space, the telephone helpline and website for people experiencing low mood and depression are planning the first ever 'Breathing Space Day' on 1 February 2007. They are encouraging people to talk about and take breathing space out of busy, hectic lives to help take care of their mental health and well-being.

In the run-up to the day itself, which will see a series of events and activities across Scotland on this theme, Breathing Space is inviting people from all walks of life, across Scotland to explain how they get their 'Breathing Space'.

Scots in public life are being invited to contribute a few words to a booklet, which will be launched on Breathing Space Day. This will include sound-bites from service-users, health professionals, as well as celebrities from the stage and screen and pitch.

They have also launched an online poll to establish how Scotland's general population takes its 'breathing space'. The results of the online poll will be announced on 1 February.

You can log onto the website at www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

'edspace'

edspace now have a working version of the website up and running. This has been described as a 'soft launch' and it is a working version of the site, accessible to members of the public. They will continue to develop and add to both the Service Directory and the Fact Sheets on the lead up to the official launch later in the year.

They are keen to involve as many people as possible in the development and content of the site. You can comment on the database and suggest any changes by clicking on the 'Contact Us' button on the main menu of the website.

www.edspace.org.uk.

They are particularly looking for people to get involved in providing content for the following Fact Sheets: Bereavement / Substance Misuse / Physical Wellbeing / Family Life & Relationships / Alternative/Complementary Therapies / Eating Disorders.

For more information contact:
Dawn Hartmann / Gayle Carmichael
Information Resource Manager / Information Resource Worker
Health in Mind

dawn@health-in-mind.org.uk /
gayle@health-in-mind.org.uk

Tel: 0131 225 8508

Community Happenings

The learning Journey

The Scottish Recovery Network and Social Firms Scotland are about to launch the Learning Journey. This is a learning and development opportunity for people in recovery from mental health problems. It is designed to identify and explore ways of overcoming the barriers to employment.

This free program, which will start on 28th February in Perth, still has a few places available. The Scottish Recovery Network and Social Firms Scotland would welcome applications from interested people from across Scotland.

The Learning Journey will be held one day a month over 9 months in Perth. Meetings will be held from 11.30a.m, - 4.30pm. The Induction day will be on Wednesday 28th February 2007.

You can find further information about the Learning Journey by logging onto:

www.scottishrecovery.net

or

www.socialfirms.org.uk

Outlook

This is an Adult Education Project for people who access mental health services in Edinburgh. They are having an Open Afternoon on Tuesday 30th January 11am—2pm at Springwell House, Ardmillan Terrace.

Outlook's Open Afternoons are informal events that are held regularly offering information and advice on opportunities throughout the city.

Go along and:

- * find out more about Outlook's new programme of courses starting at the end of February;
- * pick up leaflets on a variety of education and training opportunities and
- * get information on local health, social and support groups.

Drop in for a coffee and find out more.

Phone Jackie, Information Worker on 0131 537 7571

About Edinburgh Users Forum

The Edinburgh Users Forum (EUF) is an independent collective advocacy group. Our members are people who use, or have used mental health services. We were set up to give people who use mental health services a say in the services that are provided, and how services are run.

We have monthly meetings where we discuss issues and invite speakers along. We campaign on issues like benefits, housing, advocacy, crisis services and bus passes. If you would like any more information about EUF please contact us.

Contact us

Phone: (0131) 538 7177

Fax: (0131) 538 7215

Email: euf@capsadvocacy.org

Write to:

Edinburgh Users Forum
c/o CAPS
5 Cadzow Place, Edinburgh

Dates for your diary

EUF 2007 meetings:

Saturday 3 March

Saturday 7 April

Saturday 5 May

Saturday 7 July

Saturday 4 August

Saturday 1 September

Saturday 6 October

Saturday 3 November

Saturday 1 December

Monthly meetings

We meet at the McDonald Road Library, Edinburgh (on the corner of McDonald Road and Leith Walk). Come along from **1.30pm** for a cuppa and a chat. Meeting starts at **2.00pm**.