



April 2010

April Catch up

At our next meeting, we will catch up on a very busy month for EUF! We will talk about the projects two EUF sub groups have been working on.

The detention group is working on ways to improve the experience of being taken into detention and to promote better the safeguards available to people such as Advance Statements and Named Persons.

The group has created a questionnaire that will help them write a report based on people's experiences and stories. The questionnaire has been distributed across the city and the responses will be used in the report. **If you still have not filled in the questionnaire, there is still time!**

Another group is looking at a Short Breaks scheme. This scheme already exists in Midlothian. The group is looking at how it could be adapted for Edinburgh and how it could be beneficial to mental health service users. Again the group will write a report and give it to the NHS and the City of Edinburgh Council.

If you have any views on how you would benefit from a short break, where you would go and what you would do, please contact Laëtitia or Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email contact@capsadvocacy.org.

WE NEED YOU AND YOUR VIEWS!

It is really important for EUF to campaign using service users' experiences as personal stories are strong arguments and the best way to show authorities what needs to change or be improved in mental health services.

We will also talk about the development groups that are taking place in the community mental health teams across the city. Three of them are now up and running, We will look at what they have been working on and how people can get involved.

Please note that the April meeting will be on the second Saturday because of the Easter weekend.

Our Next Meeting:

Saturday 10 April 2010

 **SECOND SATURDAY IN APRIL**

1.30pm - doors open

2pm - 4pm - meeting

McDonald Road Library, Edinburgh

For more information contact
CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

Hot Topics

SAMH Complaint Procedure

On 19 February 2010, EUF representatives met with staff of the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) to discuss SAMH's complaint policy and procedure following EUF's questions about their way of dealing with complaints, especially timescales and complaints with several issues in them.

The meeting went well and we had a good discussion about how to communicate with service users in a positive way so that complaints can be resolved efficiently.

The SAMH representatives explained that their complaints policy and procedure are good because they are based on the fact that everyone has a right to be treated with respect, dignity and equality; and everyone should get choice and achieve personal fulfilment. They did however agree that there is room for improvement.

They are doing a review of the policy this year and they will involve service users, including those who have raised concerns about the policy. The EUF representatives also suggested to look at other complaint procedures that are good examples of good practice, for example the Care Commission.

We also discussed how letters and policies should be written so that people can read them easily and not feel put off by the language and format. EUF representatives explained that the EUF newsletter is written in a good way with

a good layout and appropriate language. SAMH said they will review the language used in the current policy document and take on board the suggestion of talking about consultation rather than complaints.

EUF representatives felt that SAMH really took their experience as service users seriously and valued their ideas and comments. Even though EUF started to talk to SAMH about their complaints procedure a year ago, we feel it has been worth pursuing it. We also felt it was very good to have a positive and constructive discussion as a lot has come out of it.

SAMH confirmed that when they review their policy they will take into account the following points.

They will look at the accessibility and flexibility of the policy and the support provided to individuals who wish to make a complaint. They will review the different stages of complaints, how they are investigated and the way they report back to service users.

SAMH will also take on board ideas about the language used and the importance of learning from practice. Finally they will consider assigning a named-person within SAMH as a contact point if an individual is dealing with different services within SAMH at the same time.

EUF will stay in touch with SAMH and we will keep you updated on the progress of the review.

Development Groups

Following comments by service users, we will now have a regular update on the developments groups and when they meet.

SOUTH WEST EDINBURGH

The South West Group at Cambridge Street House has been talking a lot about the move of the team to Wester Hailes. There have been concerns about the location of the new health centre. The group has been talking to NHS managers but is still unclear about what services will still be provided at Cambridge Street or in a central location.

Service users have got together to write a statement about how they feel about the move. In it they suggested that the mental health facility at Wester Hailes could be used specifically as a centralised unit for staff and the unique services provided for patients at Cambridge Street could stay where they are or in the same area.

The distance of this facility from the city centre causes major concern. The thought of along bus journey with possible changes on route, the time factor and stress this will cause will result in many of us only using the centre for essential purposes such as getting medication.

Our own special and sensitive needs have not been addressed. The architects of the new building were apparently unaware that a large and busy cafeteria would make many people feel most uncomfortable.

The South West Development group meets on the last Monday of the month at 2pm.

SOUTH EAST EDINBURGH

The group at Ballenden House has met twice. They have worked on improving the environment at Ballenden House by making a list of things that need to be repaired or painted. They are also working on a folder with all the activities available in the area.

The group is also looking at ways to involve people in the group and organise events on topics that people feel are important. The next meeting will be on 12 May at 2pm.

NORTH WEST EDINBURGH

We are still waiting for this group to start. Service users attending the North West service user group have asked Laëtitia to contact the team as they feel it is unfair that other areas have development groups. They thought the group was due to start in January. It is disappointing when groups are up and running in three other parts of Edinburgh.

SOUTH CENTRAL EDINBURGH

The group at the Henderson Unit talked about MHAS (Mental Health Assessment Service). There have been some changes to MHAS which service users would like to be informed about so staff will make sure this information is sent out to service users.

We also discussed what the policies are if staff are on holiday or off sick, to make sure that service users can still access support. The staff will talk about this and give clear information to service users about what to do in this situation.

We also talked about short breaks and were able to link in with the work that EUF is doing in this area. Next meeting to be arranged.

Eligibility Criteria

The City of Edinburgh Council has been looking at the way they assess if people need different support services. They held consultation events about these Eligibility Criteria to find out service users' views.

We made it clear that it is important that support is not just for people with critical issues, as support can often prevent things from getting worse. We also feel the assessment has to be fair and cover all the areas the service user feels are important.

City of Edinburgh Council are adopting the national criteria, but we be checking that they are still supporting everyone who needs support.

Detention Sub-Group

The Detention sub-group has been sending out questionnaires asking people about their experiences of being taken into detention. We have put questionnaires in the community bases, hospital wards and advocacy agencies.

We really need to hear people's stories whether they had a good or bad experience. Without this evidence it is hard to tell the authorities what needs to change and what could be improved.

Personal stories have a big impact, so if you haven't filled in the questionnaire, there's still time. If you would like another copy please contact CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email contact@capsadvocacy.org
The questionnaire is also online at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7CTRGL2>

Leaflet about your rights

The Scottish Government has decided that the leaflet they produce to explain people's rights when they are detained will now only be available on the Internet. The Government printed a lot of copies of this booklet when the Mental Health Act was brought in in 2003, but they have now run out and have decided not to print any more.

This means that people who are detained cannot have a paper copy of this booklet and know about their rights unless someone can print it for them.

When someone is detained and needs to know about their rights they are unlikely to have access to a computer and browse the Internet to find this for themselves. They would also need to be aware that the booklet is on the Internet and know how to find it.

It is very important for people who are detained to know their rights and their treatment options and this will make it much harder for them to get the information that they need.

If you would like to give us your views on this, please contact Naomi or Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email contact@capsadvocacy.org

You can also contact your MSP to let them know your views about this and ask what they can do about it. You can find your MSP by calling their Public Information Service on 0131 348 5000 or 0800 092 7500. You can also find their details at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/apps2/msp/msphome/default.aspx>
Your views can change things so let us know what you think.

At our last meeting...

Short Breaks

At our last meeting we started to look at how a Short Breaks scheme could work in Edinburgh. We also set up a sub-group to look at it in more detail.

Although there is no funding available for it at the moment, EUF feels it is important to produce a paper that details how we think the scheme should work, who should have access to it and how it can be monitored. If there was some money available later, we would be ready to have a say on the assessment of a potential scheme.

In Midlothian people can get £200 for a short break once a year. They are available for service users and carers. They are focused on recovery. People can choose what they do on their break and where they go but it has to help them towards their recovery so some activities and expenses are not covered by the scheme.

People can also organise a break as a group. The idea is that by organising a break themselves people do something that helps their recovery and helps them feel better and more confident.

Some people think that having the possibility of going away from their homes and daily lives could sometimes save them from being admitted in hospital. Often people get ill because they are stuck at home and cannot afford to go away and look at new things and come home with a new perspective.

We looked at the criteria for Midlothian and made comments about how some can be adapted for Edinburgh and how some should be removed.

People feel it is important to clearly say from the start who the scheme is for and also that it is not means tested. It should be flexible and open to people who use mental health services or have a mental health diagnosis. It should also be open to all adults without age limit.

The sub-group has started looking at what is already available in Edinburgh and in other places in Scotland. We know there is a scheme for carers, respite at Cairdeas House in Shandwick Place and there is a short break team at the Council offering breaks for older people and people with learning difficulties. People with mental health problems can access it only if they fit in those two categories. The sub-group will research all the existing services to make sure we campaign for a new project that will serve the right people.

We looked at how much money people should get. Some people feel £200 is not enough but other feel that if we suggest a high grant then we might not get anything at all, It is important not to see a break as just a holiday and to remember that it is recovery focused.

There are a lot of things we still need to discuss. We need to think of all the aspects of the scheme, such as what it covers, how it is assessed, who can approve an application and what kind of organisation should manage the money.

We also want to use people's stories and views to illustrate how much Short Breaks could benefit people's lives and recovery.

If you have an idea of where you would go on a break, what you would do and how it could help improve your life, and how it could help you recover, please drop us a line and we will use your story in our report.

You can contact Laetitia or Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email laetitia@capsadvocacy.org.

Oor Mad History Book Workshop

Oor Mad History is a project looking at the history of the service user movement in Lothian. Service users have been involved in the project as volunteers over the last year and a half and many have been interviewed.

The project now has 60 oral history interviews and a large paper archive. They now want to turn this material into a book and show the achievements of collective advocacy.

There will be a book workshop to look through the material and help to choose quotes to go in the book.

It will take place on Friday 16 April from 10am to 3pm at the Drill Hall in Dalmeny Street (off Leith Walk), Edinburgh. Lunch will be provided.

To find out more, contact Kirsten at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

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)

Hospital Advocacy Service

0131 537 6004

Community Happenings

"VOICES": A Documentary

Last year people from a Spanish organisation called Spora came to Scotland to make a film about 'Empowerment' with HUG (Highlands User Group).

The film looks at the role and value of 'users associations' and the importance of people with mental health problems speaking out to improve services and challenge stigma.

The film came from two European projects which HUG has been involved with over the last six years with colleagues from Poland, Spain, Romania and Portugal.

It captures the voices and experiences of people from each country, including people from the Lothian.

You can see the film on the Internet at the following address:
<http://vimeo.com/9331285>

Borderline Personality Disorder Information

Health in Mind is holding an information afternoon on personality disorder on 26 May 2010 from 2pm to 4pm.

If you want to know more about Borderline Personality Disorder and what it means to live with Borderline it, come along to an informal session at Health in Mind, 40 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh. To book a place call 0131 243 0106 or e-mail: information@health-in-mind.org.uk

Community Link Project

The Community Links Project is a new service from SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health). It is based in the Hive activity centre at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital in Morningside.

Often patients feel excluded from community resources and can be vulnerable for many months after leaving hospital.

The project supports service users' social needs when they leave hospital. For example the staff can work with services users to develop a plan, find out where to go and what to do in Edinburgh. They can also go with service users to a new group to help build relationships.

They meet with people before they are discharged from hospital and work together with them with the challenges of going back home.

If you have any questions or comments on how the service can best benefit people, please contact Fraser or Laura at the Hive on 0131 537 6256, You can also email fraser.muir@samh.org.uk or laura.porter@samh.org.uk

EUF AGM

The EUF Annual General Meeting will take place on Friday 28 May from 2pm to 4pm at :
 Cafe Camino
 St Mary's Parish Centre
 Top of Leith Walk

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 services, benefits, housing, advocacy, crisis services and transport. If you would like any more information about EUF please contact us.

Contact us

Write to:
Edinburgh Users Forum
c/o CAPS
5 Cadzow Place, Edinburgh
EH7 5SN

Phone: 0131 538 7177
Fax: 0131 538 7215

Email:
info@edinburghusersforum.org
Or visit our website:
www.edinburghusersforum.org

EUF Meetings 2010

Saturday 10 April
Saturday 1 May
Saturday 5 June
Saturday 3 July
Saturday 7 August
Saturday 4 September
Saturday 2 October

Monthly meetings

On the first Saturday of each month 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**.