



December 2010

December Wrap Up

At our next meeting, we will start looking ahead to 2011. A lot is happening at the moment and we need to start getting ready for the New Year.

We will talk about the new Lothian Joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2010-2015. We have been waiting for the document for a long time but the Government's work on budget cuts caused by the recession has meant that the strategy had to be postponed to make sure it would fit with new budget.

The draft of the strategy will be available for consultation for three months.

CAPS has already talked to Linda Irvine, NHS Lothian Strategic Programme Manager for Mental Health and Wellbeing, about making sure service users from across the Lothians can have a say about the strategy before it is made official

Linda will attend our January meeting to listen to people's views and we will also have an event on 19 January 2011.

We will also talk about the consultation on the Work Capability Assessment. Service users from across the Lothians have met at the CAPS office to share their experiences, views and concerns about

the changes in the benefits systems and how the assessment for Employment & Support Allowance needs to be adapted to fit the needs of people with mental health issues.

CAPS has collated the views from the group and written a questionnaire to get as many people as possible to have a say (see page 2 for more details).

Join us at the December meeting to discuss what has happened in 2010 and what 2011 holds. We will also talk about future campaigns EUF will work on over some festive nibbles.

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

Our Next Meeting:

Saturday 4 December 2010

1.30pm - doors open

2.00 - 4.00pm - meeting

McDonald Road Library,
Edinburgh

For more information contact
CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

Hot Topics

Lothian's Joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2010—2015

The draft strategy for Lothian's Joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2010-2015 is out in November and will be open for consultation for three months.

Over the last year, many people have given their views and attended workshops to look at the future of mental health services in Lothian. Some areas need to be revisited to improve care and to fit with changes in policies, society and services. For example, more services are needed for mental health in later life and services in the community need to be improved to fit with the reduction of beds in psychiatric hospitals.

CAPS is organising a Lothian-wide event for people to find out more about the strategy and get a chance to have a say during the three month consultation. The event will take place on 19 January 2010 from 10am to 1.30pm at the NHS Lothian offices at Waverley Gate, Waterloo Place, Edinburgh.

Linda Irvine, NHS Lothian Strategic Programme Manager for Mental Health and Wellbeing, will give a short presentation about the strategy and people will then be able to ask questions and get clarification about what the strategy will mean for them and the services they use.

The event is only open to service users in the Lothian region. Places are limited

so if you would like to book a place, please contact CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email contact@capsadvocacy.org.

Please also note that Linda Irvine will attend the Januarys 2011 EUF meeting.

Work Capability Assessment What do you think?

With this mailing, we have sent you a questionnaire designed by CAPS and a group of service users on people's experiences of having to go through the assessment for the Employment Support Allowance.

The focus group met on 3 November and discussed how the changes in the benefits system is affecting them, especially the Employment Support Allowance.

Many people said that the thought of having to go and get assessed is having a big impact on their mental health and causes a lot of stress and anxiety.

Others said that the assessment is run by doctors and nurses that do not have the right knowledge of mental health. Therefore they do not always understand how someone's mental health can affect them when it comes to work and also how they might be well on the day they are assessed and get a low score. It means many people have to appeal and get assessed again.

Someone said: "Some days I won't be able to attend that medical, cos I won't be able to get out of the house – by

definition my assessment will be on a good day and therefore inaccurate.”

As everybody of working age will have to go through the assessment, CAPS thinks it is very important to tell the Government about how it needs to take into account the needs of people with mental health issues and look into how the assessments are run, how the people running them are trained and how the whole process can be improved.

Please fill in the enclosed questionnaire and give us your view and experiences. We will also run discussion groups around the Lothian region. If you would like to attend such a group or if you would prefer to talk to someone individually, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email laetitia@capsadvocacy.org

North West Edinburgh Service User Group

The main topic at the next North West Edinburgh Service User Group will be the Work Capability Assessment (see page 2). The group will also talk about the North West Community Mental Health Team and how Fast Track is working. There is always a chance to talk about anything else that might come up in the meantime. The next meeting is on:

Thursday 2 December 2010
2pm to 3pm
PROP Stress Centre
5 West Pilton Park
Edinburgh EH4 4EL

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

What do you think recovery is?

Some EUF representatives will attend the Lothian Recovery Network Conference on the 9 December 2010. At a recent EUF meeting, people discussed what recovery means for them so that the representatives can put forward their views at the conference. If you would like to share your view on what recovery is, please contact Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

The Scottish Recovery Network defines recovery this way: “Recovery is being able to live a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by each person, in the presence or absence of symptoms. It is about having control over and input into your own life. Each individual’s recovery, like his or her experience of the mental health problems or illness, is a unique and deeply personal process.”

Here are some views on what recovery means from people who attended EUF:

Some people don’t recover, it doesn’t apply to everyone.

It’s all very well academically but there needs to be a very simple definition. People need to know how to protect themselves against stigma.

Recovery is a word that is used so widely now. The concepts are good but in physical health ‘recovery’ would be called ‘management’. It is more about mental health management.

Many people agree with the concept but the word ‘recovery’ doesn’t capture it.

Part of it is about introducing recovery-focus at the right point in the process.

When first diagnosed it shouldn't come in right at the start. If you are ill and know about recovery that's ok. If it's the first expectation maybe it's not so helpful or appropriate.

The notion of comfort is important and should be mentioned.

The onus is too much on the patient, it needs to be on others to help as well. Hope is important. Have mental health services signed up to this? From one side you are being told you are untreatable and from the other, you can recover? There is an inconsistent culture, it needs to be the same from all staff.

Experiences of Psychosis

Do you have experience of psychosis? Would you be willing to share your experiences to help improve services and make sure staff are better informed?

CAPS is running a project to find out about people's experiences of psychosis and using services in the Lothians. The aim of the project is to collect views and take them to NHS Lothian so that staff and services know about the things that people with personal experience of psychosis feel are important.

We have already done a similar project around personality disorder and have created things like a training course and information pack for staff written by service users. There is more information about the project in the leaflet that came with this mailing. If you would like to get involved or to get more information, please contact Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or naomi@capsadvocacy.org.

Development groups:

Some of the five Community Mental Health Teams have a development group. Service users, carers and staff work in partnership to discuss issues and share ideas on how to develop and improve services.

There will be meeting dates for the next year in the January newsletter. The South West Development Group is organising a Christmas get together (see article below).

Development Groups Christmas Event

The South West Development Group is organising a Christmas get-together. It is for people who go to or are interested in going to the development groups run by the Community Mental Health Teams across Edinburgh.

This is an chance to meet people and to help improve mental health services in a relaxed atmosphere. There will be coffee, tea and mince pies on:

Monday 13 December 2010
2pm – 3.30pm
Cambridge Street House
5 Cambridge Street
Edinburgh EH1 2DY

Contact Amanda Robertson on 0131 666 5128 for more information.

At our last meeting...

CAPS and EUF

We talked about having an agreement between CAPS and EUF about what kind of support we can expect from CAPS and what CAPS can expect from EUF. We agreed at the last meeting to meet with CAPS to talk about this.

If any EUF members are interested in meeting with CAPS to work on an agreement, please contact Donna at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email donna@capsadvocacy.org.

EUF Complaints Subgroup

There is only one person left on our complaints subgroup at the moment. We originally set up this group to review and update our complaints procedure.

We would like to know if EUF members are interested in continuing this group so that we can have a working complaints procedure. If you have views about this or are interested in joining contact Donna at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

Vacancies on the EUF Executive Committee

At the moment there are only two members on the EUF Executive committee.

The Executive has three main jobs:
 - They can make decisions on our behalf if there is not time to wait until a members' meeting.

- They can sort out business to be done at the members' meeting.
- They may write guidelines for the smooth running of EUF.

The Executive usually meets once a month to decide on the agenda of the monthly meeting. They also take part in organising the Annual General Meeting and other events.

We have a Treasurer and a Secretary but the Executive need at least three members to have executive powers.

The positions left to fill are:

- Convenor who usually chairs the monthly meetings
- Vice Convenor who supports the chair
- Membership Secretary who deals with membership

If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Donna at CAPS. We can arrange some training if you feel you need to improve or learn some skills.

Alternative Therapies Group

A few months ago, we decided to set up a subgroup to look at what kind of alternative medicines and treatments are available for people with mental health problems.

The subgroup have met a few times but some people have been unable to attend meetings. If we want to continue to look into this we need more people to join the group. If any EUF members are interested contact Donna at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email donna@capsadvocacy.org.

Community Happenings

Advocard AGM

Advocard (independent individual advocacy in the community and at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital) will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 1 December 2010.

They will talk about the work they have done over the past year and about their plans for the future.

It will take place at 2pm at the Drill Hall, Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh EH6 8RT. For more information, contact Advocard on 0131 554 5307 or email advocacy@advocacrd.org.uk.

Men and Depression

Men's Health Forum Scotland and Bipolar Scotland are holding a conference on Men and Depression on 9 December 2010 at the Radisson Blue, Argyll Street in Glasgow.

The conference aims to raise awareness of issues around men and depression and is for all those working in the men's/mental health field, carers and men who have experienced depression. The event is free for carers and men affected by depression.

Organisers would like as many men as possible who have experienced depression to participate. If you cannot attend, you can share your experience by completing an online survey available at www.surveymonkey.com/s/GSYT7FD. The survey is only appropriate to

complete if you are a man and have experienced depression.

The findings of the survey will be discussed in the last session of the conference. Responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

To attend the conference, email to info@mhfs.org.uk or post to:

Men's Health Forum Scotland, Unit 23
Wellpark Enterprise Centre, 120
Sydney Street, Glasgow, G31 1JF.

Volunteers required

A fourth year psychology and sociology undergraduate student at Queen Margaret University is looking for participants for a dissertation project called: '*Exploring the Lived Experiences of Schizophrenia*'.

The aim of the study is to explore people's lived experiences of psychosis and what these experiences mean to them. The study will consist of two parts:

A focus group of 4 to 5 people where people have the opportunity to share their experiences with each other.

One participant who will use a disposable camera to take photographs of things that represent their experience of psychosis and discuss what these experiences might mean to them.

The purpose of this is to give a better understanding of the subjective experiences of schizophrenia, leading

to better ways of treatment and early interventions for schizophrenia.

All discussions will be recorded using a dictaphone and will take place in a location in or near Edinburgh within the next three months. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed throughout the course of the study.

If you are interested in taking part in this study or would like to know more about it please contact Kirsten McIntosh on 07811 339 357 or email 07004318@qmu.ac.uk.

Trauma Counselling Line Scotland

A new confidential telephone counselling service for male survivors of childhood abuse has been launched.

If you have been abused in any way the service has qualified, experienced counsellors who are ready to listen, support and help you to move forward. It deals with physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or spiritual, neglect.

To arrange a telephone counselling appointment, please phone 08088 020406 (free number) during the following times:

Monday – Wednesday 5pm to 7pm
Thursday and Friday 11am to 2pm

You can also leave a message at all other times.

The service is provided by Health in Mind and funded by SurvivorScotland.

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

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 2010-11

Saturday 4 December

Saturday 8 January

**(exceptionally, the second
Saturday of the month)**

Saturday 5 February

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**.