



**August
2009**

Advocacy in Jeopardy?

John Armstrong will be coming to our next forum.

He is the Joint Programme Manager for mental health for Edinburgh. His job is to try to make sure City of Edinburgh Council Health and Social Care services work as closely as possible with mental health services provided by NHS Lothian.

John will be coming to our meeting to explain in more detail what his job is but also to find out from EUF members why they think collective advocacy is important and what they think about the support they get from CAPS. It is very important to get a good turn out at the next meeting because we have just found out that City of Edinburgh Council is going to review all the advocacy services they give money to.

The review will be carried out over the next few months. City of Edinburgh Council has already said that on the one hand it wants advocacy services to be provided to more people. For example, it wants more services for older people and new services for people with physical problems. However, at the same time it has announced that it is planning to cut the overall advocacy budget .

We need to make sure that we tell City of Edinburgh Council why advocacy services are important to us. If we don't do this and

are not clear about how important advocacy is for us in having a say in what works and what does not, there is a real risk that money will be taken away from our services.

So come along to our next meeting on August 1st to give your views about advocacy and the importance of EUF and CAPS.

In with this mailing

EUF Meeting Flyer

Our Next Meeting:

Saturday 1 August 2009

1.30pm - doors open

2.00 - 4.00pm - meeting

McDonald Road Library,
Edinburgh

For more information contact
CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

Hot Topics

Advocacy Review

Advocacy services in Edinburgh are being reviewed.

The City of Edinburgh Council wants to cut the budget for advocacy in Edinburgh by £100,000 per year and at the same time, it wants to offer more services for older people and people with physical disabilities.

This means that advocacy services for mental health will be affected as the Council wants to offer more services and reach more people but spend less money.

By mid August, it will also be decided if the review is extended to the rest of the Lothian region. The Council will write a report on this review beginning of November and make decisions then.

There are three possible outcomes. The situation might stay as it is now, Edinburgh might end up with a single advocacy provider for each client group (so one for all the mental health services) or there could be a single provider for all advocacy projects.

A lot of work has already been done to explain the benefits and importance of advocacy but we now need service users to speak up about what they think about advocacy.

CAPS and EUF will concentrate a lot of their efforts on this in the coming months and we need to hear from as many service users as possible. A lot of work has already been done on the

importance of independent advocacy with the document explaining the principles and standards of independent advocacy published by SIAA in 2008. Still the Council wants to hear more from people who use advocacy services and also from people who are not able to get services.

We need to hear from you what you think are the ten most important things for advocacy to work well in Edinburgh and what makes and advocacy service important to you. Some examples are a user-led service or a service just for mental health.

Over the next weeks, CAPS will talk to service user groups about this and also about ways to reach as many people as possible to get views. If you have ideas on how to do this, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

The Council is also going to set up a project board to discuss the review and a checkpoint group. Please get in touch if you would like to be involved in any of these groups.

Also if you are happy to join discussion groups we might organise in the coming weeks to gather views and opinions, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS so that we can have a list of people available to attend.

Advocacy services are at risk so we need people to speak up about what they think of advocacy services, CAPS and groups such as EUF.

We will start discussions at our next forum.

Lothian Wide Service User Meeting

On July 13th, the Lothian Wide Service User Forum met for a second time. This group is a chance for service users from all areas of the Lothians to share ideas and knowledge. It is also a good way to get ahead of the planning of services and make sure service users get to discuss issues and have their views taken forward to planning meetings.

At the first meeting in April, we talked about service user involvement in the building of a new hospital. The report from this meeting was taken to the groups discussing the new hospital and making decisions about where the new hospital will be, the model of care and what the hospital will look like.

At the July meeting, we talked about the location of the hospital and what makes a good site for a hospital. We worked in groups so that people could share their views and discuss conflicting opinions. The aim of the day was not to decide on a new site but to explore what makes a good site.

Here are some examples of what people think a good site for a new hospital should have:

- It is important to find a site in a central location that will not cause stigma.
- We need to be part of a local community and be accepted by a local community.
- There should be plenty of green spaces and sunlight, the hospital should not be in the shadow of something else, or in a built-up area with high-rise buildings. It

should be in a location close to safe places good for walks with disabled access and cycle paths.

- The hospital has to be close to shops, activities, churches and coffee shops.
- Good public transport is important and there should be plenty of space for free parking, possibly underground. It should be easy to locate and within walking distance from bus stops.
- The site needs to be large enough to accommodate all services we need in single storey buildings and with space for extra services such as the Hive. It should also have general medical facilities on site or nearby.
- There should be a proper consultation between all service users and NHS to have all the correct information at all times on possible sites and on the costs involved for a range of services to be included.

We also talked about what people would like the hospital to look like and what their “dream hospital” should have.

People came up with a whole range of ideas about the design of the room, the facilities and activities available.

A point that was raised by many people was the need for social enterprise opportunities such as a laundry service and a crèche and hands on activities such as a service user-run café, gardening and other volunteering and employment training opportunities.

If you would like a copy of the report, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

National Service User Research Network

In March 2009, EUF and CAPS went to a conference about mental health service user research in Scotland. On Wednesday 15 July, we went to a follow up meeting in Glasgow organised by VOX (Voices of Experience).

The meeting was to talk about how to take forward the ideas that were discussed at the conference and to decide which areas are most important for the future.

We talked about how the group will be run and how all the different organisations and people there can work together. We also discussed sharing information about the different research projects that are happening in Scotland, sharing the training and skills we already have around doing research and how we can support service users to take part in research.

Another topic at the meeting was 'What Can the Network Achieve?' We talked about how we could influence what is researched and how mental health service users could have a say so that research focuses on areas that are important to them.

VOX will be writing a report about this meeting and some members of the group will write an 'ideas paper' about what we discussed.

If you would like more information contact John at VOX on 0141 572 1663 or email voxscotland@yahoo.co.uk. You can also get information from Naomi at CAPS by phoning 0131 538 7177.

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

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 advocacy you may contact:

Advocard 0131 554 5307

(Monday to Friday 9-5pm)

Circles Network 0131 537 6004

At our last meeting.....

At our last meeting we talked about the importance of getting better information about the services available in Edinburgh.

There was a review last year of the Primary Care Liaison Team and the Community Mental Health Teams. Everyone said that more and better information was needed for those teams but also for the Mental Health Assessment Team, The Intensive Home Treatment Teams and the wards.

Information needs to be easier to understand. This is not about changing policy but about explaining what is available. People think that things need to be explained a few times, as well as giving information.

Below are some comments people made about the pack:

People also said that the term "Recovery" can be misleading as some people never recover. It is about looking out for signs and trying to manage their problems. It is not always about completely recovering from your illness. It would be better to put in a sentence saying that in terms of mental health, Recovery has a particular meaning and explain what the meaning is.

The Mental Health Act should include references to the fact that everybody has a right to access independent advocacy, collective and individual. There should be more information about the Mental Health Act, Government booklets and information

about CAPS.

The document should also describe properly what an advocate does. It should refer to the Welfare Commission's new guidance "Working with Independent Advocates".

Some people said that the Primary Care Liaison Team should be there to reassure people that if one particular service is not working for them, they would be referred to a service that is more appropriate and don't just end up in a gap between services.

Some people feel that this document is too long and does not encourage people to do things. Others feel the document is biased towards professionals.

This document is still a draft and the final version will probably be simplified. There is still another meeting to look at it in August.

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 or instead of by post.

SAMH Complaints Procedure

A few months ago, EUF members raised an issue about the SAMH complaints procedure. EUF asked CAPS to write to SAMH about this.

We read out the reply from SAMH which said that they take all complaints seriously and deal with them in line with their complaints policy. They will try to update it when required.

We wrote back to SAMH in July to say that we would like SAMH to give more definite answers to problems raised and to actually undertake specific action on them.

In particular, EUF members would like to know what measures they are going to put into place in response to the particular two points raised in our previous letter (not setting timescales and answering every item raised in one complaint). They would also like to know if they can see the results of these measures in the next review .

Services for Older People

EUF members have been saying for a number of years that it is not fair to be forced to use different and sometimes not appropriate mental health services once you reach the age of 65.

EUF wants to hear from service users who are approaching the age of 65 what information and support they have been offered.

We would also like to hear from people over 65 about their experience of moving to older people's services. We

will talk some more about how we can do this piece of work but we need to hear about your experiences and views. We also need to see if we should start a new group to look at these issues.

If you are interested in sharing your views, you can contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

North West Edinburgh Service User Group

At the last meeting at PROP, we gave an update on Fast Track. The programme has only been running for a month but so far the feedback is positive. Staff were worried they would get too many calls when the programme started. But instead very few calls have come in. It seems people see it as a safety net and makes them feel safer.

We need to make sure people are aware of it. It would be good to give the number to as many people as possible and get cards distributed.

The next meeting is on Friday 7 August at 12.30 at the Rannoch Centre, 6 Rannoch Terrace. Contact Laëtitia at CAPS for more information.

Short Breaks

EUF members are interested in a Short Breaks scheme for Edinburgh. There is already such a programme in Midlothian. People can get a grant to go on a break once a year.

CAPS wrote to John Armstrong about it. He will let us have his views on it at the next meeting.

Community Happenings

NHS Lothian Next Five Years Events

A first event was organised by NHS Lothian in March 2009 to look at their strategy for mental health services in the next five years in the Lothian Region.

A report was written and people were asked to come up with topics and themes they would like to have more discussion on to inform the strategy.

NHS Lothian is now organising new events on specific subjects. The events are spread out until November. Below is a list of events happening in the coming months. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

Understanding the Tendering Process: Information session with opportunities for questions. This event will be presented by Edinburgh City Council. It will take place on 2nd September 2009. The date and venues have not yet been announced but the session will last two hours.

Spirituality: Discussion forum run by faith leaders. This event will take place on 3rd September 2009 from 1pm to 4pm. The venue has not yet been announced.

Maximising the role of Allied Health Professionals in Mental Health. This event will have presentations and discussions. It will be an all day event starting at 9.30 on 10th October 2009. The venue has not yet been announced.

Summer Fete at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital

The Royal Edinburgh Hospital is having a party in the grounds of the hospital, behind Mackinnon House. It will happen on Friday August 7th from 11am to 4pm.

There will be activities for families such as live music, face painting, BBQ, raffles and plant sale.

Stress Control classes

Do you want to learn how to control your stress more effectively?

A series of six free evening classes is starting in September. They are open to all adults and will be run by NHS staff. They will look at ways to control your body, thoughts, actions, sleep and panic.

The classes will take place at Drummond Community High School, 41 Bellevue Place, Edinburgh

They will start on Tuesday 1st September 2009 from 6.30pm - 8pm and run until Tuesday 6th November 2009.

To book a place contact Health in Mind on 0131 243 0106. There are 200 places available.

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 2009

Saturday 1 August 2009

Saturday 5 September 2009

Saturday 3 October 2009

Saturday 1 November 2009

Saturday 5 December 2009

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**.