



November 2009

Choice Cuts

At the next EUF Meeting the Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living is coming to speak to us about Self Directed Support and Direct Payments.

Self Directed Support means that if you receive community care services, you can be given an individual budget and decide what the money is spent on. The aim is to give people as much choice and control as possible about the support they get. You can still have someone such as a social worker to help manage the money for you.

With Direct Payments, you are given the money for your support and can arrange for your own support. When you use Direct Payments you can buy support from the local authority or you can employ your own staff to support you.

This is important for people in Edinburgh at the moment. The City of Edinburgh Council has recently decided to reorganise the way they offer their Care at Home/Housing Support services.

At the moment these services are provided by many different organisations, but the council has just said that it is going to give the work for Care at Home/Housing Support for mental health to four big providers. This means that people who receive Care at Home/Housing

Support services may not be able to keep the same support worker as they have at the moment.

One way to keep the same support worker is to apply for Direct Payments and organise your own support by employing someone you have chosen. However, there is no way of knowing how long the council will take to sort your application out.

Another possible problem is that if you are subject to the Mental Health Act, in hospital or the community, you cannot get Direct Payments, and may lose the support you had organised before you were subject to the Act.

We would like to hear your views on any of these issues. If you would like to tell us what you think, come to our next meeting or contact Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email naomi@capsadvocacy.org.

Our Next Meeting:

Saturday 7 November 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

STOP PRESS Care At Home/ Housing Support

CAPS has just found out that the Finance and Resources Committee of City of Edinburgh Council met on 27th October 2009 and were expected to agree to tender mental health Care at Home/Housing Support services to four providers.

Some of these providers are private and some of them are voluntary sector. Nearly all of the organisations who currently provide this support for people with mental health issues will lose their contracts.

The Council said they wanted to try and save 10% of the budget in this area, but have actually managed to save 21%. This is despite insisting that their decision on who got the contracts depended 70% on value and only 30% on cost.

There is also a delay in getting Direct Payments approved, and we have been informed that this is because if everyone who applies for Direct Payments gets them the Council will not save any money.

Obviously this is of real concern to people who value their present arrangements for getting support.

For more information and to be kept updated contact Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email naomi@capsadvocacy.org

Why change at 65 Event

As part of the NHS Next Five Years events, there was a presentation and discussion on October 14th 2009 about the strategy for older people's mental health and wellbeing for the next five years.

As people live longer, some changes are needed to cope with more people needing services. Important things to look at are for example the transition from adult to older people services, housing, activities and employment.

Two speakers gave their views on mental health services organised around age integration and age segregation. People attending were able to give their views and vote on questions asked by the speaker. For example 63% of people thought that the retirement age should be set at 66 for everybody.

The speaker in favour of reviewing the way services change when people turn 65 said that if people are healthier and living longer we need to make sure services see the person and not the diagnosis or the age. We need to make sure services maintain the wellbeing of each individual.

Aging is different for everyone. It is not a state that happens at 65. It does not occur at a set date in anybody's life. Care based on age rather than need will set older people apart from the rest of the community.

The other speaker said instead that it is better to change services at the age of

65 as people have different needs as they get older and services have evolved to cover these needs over time.

He said that with generic services, we would lose the specialist knowledge and expertise of staff and then whose needs would be prioritised?

SAMH Complaint Procedure

In the last months, EUF has been in touch with SAMH to make comments about their complaints procedure and ask them to revise it to make it fairer and easier to deal with for services users.

The points EUF wanted SAMH to look into were the timescales imposed on people making a complaint and complaints with more than one point in them.

Though SAMH have replied, EUF feels their reply is not satisfactory because they say they will take our points into account when they review their policy but they do not say whether they will actually take action.

The point EUF made are as follows:

POINT 1 – TIMESCALES

The procedure should have clear rules about whether there are any timescales from the outset of a complaint.

Timescales should not be imposed on an ad hoc basis during the process of a complaint.

Ideally, there should be no timescales at all because it puts a lot of pressure and stress on a person making a complaint.

In their letter, SAMH says that EUF members can contact them to request an

extension if they find it necessary but this procedure should not be at their discretion as it allows them to potentially ill-treat people instead of being clear with them from the beginning about their entitlements.

POINT 2 - ANSWERING ALL ITEMS IN A COMPLAINT

EUF does not have a problem with SAMH answering different items raised in a complaint together if a single, inter-linked answer makes sense. However all items of a complaint should be answered whether or not they are linked.

It would be good practice for SAMH to acknowledge each item in a complaint before starting to answer. Then it should be made clear when some items get treated as inter-linked with other items and get a common answer.

In any case, SAMH should commit to clearly answer every single item raised in any complaint and the reasons for raising it.

The ethical need to have a complaint process is met only when the whole content of a complaint gets answered. To illustrate this, a complaint is not answered if an investigator's report leaves many of the details not mentioned at all.

We would want SAMH to tell us whether their answer to us on this point means that every item will now be answered in future cases, and past ones when some items were not answered.

EUF has sent a letter to SAMH with these points and requested to meet them to discuss it further.

Development Groups

Development groups bring together service users, health and social work staff and voluntary organisations such as advocacy who all have an interest in developing the local Community Mental Health Team.

There is already a development group in the South West Community Mental Health Team. Service users and staff meet once a month and talk about issues with the service. For example, the South West development group has recently been talking about the potential move of the services to Wester Haioes. They have organised a consultation with service users, and organised coffee mornings to have the NHS people in charge to talk about it. They have also talked about the changes to out-of-hours services.

These groups are open and inclusive and they set up their own agenda. They don't have power of decision but their advice and points of view are taken forward to the local Adult Management Team.

New groups are now being organised and set up in the South Central, South East and North West areas. If you are interested in taking part in these groups, please contact the following people or Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177:

South Central: Nick Prance

North West: Lorraine Fleming

South East: Fiona Guthrie

These groups have not yet started and some meetings and events will take place by the end of the year to present how they can work and show people how they can get involved.

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.....

Review of advocacy services

At our last meeting, Eileen McNaughton came to talk about the review of advocacy services she is doing for City of Edinburgh Council. She explained that the funding situation was very difficult and that the Council needs to make big savings throughout the advocacy services in the city.

The Council may reorganise the services and some service users are worried about a lack of choice if all services are put together. They feel that it is good that advocacy agencies are separate because if they have a bad experience with one service they can go to a different agency.

The main issues people felt were important were choice, staff training, continuity and communication.

Someone said that it is not always clear what an advocate is. Eileen agreed that some people can think it is related only to legal issues and she wants to highlight in the review that this needs to be clearer.

Someone also pointed out that often NHS and social work staff don't know what advocacy is and it might be a good idea to have them properly trained in what advocacy is and ask them to tell people about advocacy and how it can help them.

Eileen said that staff have a responsibility to explain advocacy to

service users and give them an opportunity to contact advocacy organisations. It is

also in the contracts of advocacy agencies to provide training to other services but they often don't have the resources for it. She said this needs to be looked at and perhaps made more centralised, to free up advocates' time and also make sure all staff know about advocacy.

A service user said that in their experience in hospital advocates were the only people who listened to them and accepted their view, but that advocacy was 'outpowered' by staff on the ward.

Someone pointed out that you feel that the advocate is there for you, but when you are discharged from hospital, you have to go through the whole system again to get an advocate in the community.

It was suggested that there could be information passed between advocacy agencies to achieve more continuity. Eileen agreed that the division is about

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. 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.

the way the services are organised rather than what people need.

Someone said there is a particular need for advocacy in mental health because the system is very powerful and different from other areas of health, especially with tribunals.

There was a discussion about whether there should be more connections between advocacy and legal services and it was agreed this would be very helpful. It is not always clear what the difference is between information and advocacy services. It would be easier if advocacy had a wider remit to be able to provide information.

People asked Eileen about the plans for people who are over 65.

She said that specialist advocacy can be helpful for older people and it is important to restructure services as people live longer and people should not feel they are being discriminated against.

EUF does welcome people who are over 65 and wants to start a subgroup around this issue. But CAPS is only funded to work with people aged from 18-65.

Eileen will write a report for Housing, Health and Social Care. The report was supposed to be ready for December but the deadline has now been moved to March next year as more issues have come up, especially what NHS Lothian is planning to do with their funding if the Council cuts budgets for advocacy organisations such as CAPS that get funding from both.

We will keep you updated in future newsletters. If you want more information on the advocacy review and

how it can affect services, please contact CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

12S Student Project

The 12S Project is an NHS project to promote better mental health amongst students. A Health Promotion Specialist has been employed to work with all the universities and colleges across Lothian around student mental health.

Students make up around 10% of the population in the Lothian area and as it can be a very stressful time, mental health is a big issue in universities and colleges.

The 12S project has already held one event earlier this year in June and is planning another event on 9th November 2009 at Pollock Halls in Edinburgh to look at the different ways student mental health can be improved and how this might be done.

The project is also giving out small grants to projects run by universities or colleges around student mental health.

CAPS is on the advisory group for this project and is interested in promoting advocacy to students.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for this project, please contact Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email naomi@capsadvocacy.org

In with this mailing

EUF Meeting Flyer
EUF Newsletter

Community Happenings

Recovery Conference

The Lothian Recovery Network is holding its annual conference called Creativity and Change on Wednesday 16th December from 9.30am to 4pm at the Thistle Foundation in Craigmillar.

The conference will be an opportunity to share stories and experiences. There will be a screening of the film Hope inspired by people from the Lothian area, workshops and a market place.

To apply, please contact the Project Administrator, Mental Health and Wellbeing Team, NHS Lothian on 0131 536 9411 to get an application for or email LH_LRN@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk.

The closing date for applications is the 9th November 2009.

Intensive Psychiatric Care Units – service user and carer focus groups

VOX is running service-user-led focus groups across Scotland to find out service user and carer experiences of Intensive Psychiatric Care Units (IPCUs).

There will be a focus group in Edinburgh at the Carers Council offices in Canonmills on November 6th 2009.

If you have had experience of being in an IPCU in the recent past, you can go to a meeting to share your valuable experiences, and give your views on:

- How much did you participate in care and treatment decisions?
- Did you feel safe or have any concerns about personal safety?
- Were you treated with respect for diversity (beliefs, ethnicity, gender...)?

VOX would also like to take photos or get copies of any poetry you may have written which demonstrates how you felt in an IPCU or how you felt caring for someone in an IPCU.

To take part, please contact John Steel at VOX on 0141 572 1663 or email jsteel@mhf.org.uk.

Review of the Crisis Centre

An organisation called Infusion is doing a review of the Crisis Centre.

You can fill out a questionnaire and send it back in a free post envelope. To get a questionnaire, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

You can also fill in the questionnaire online at www.infusioncoop.org.uk.

Infusion is also keen to talk to people on the phone or in person. You can phone Sally or Chris on 0131 228 8590 or 0131 667 2497 to arrange for an interview.

It is really important to get people's views, good or bad. This will help the Centre to continue to do what works well and to make improvements.

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 5 December

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**.