



# September 2009

## Review of the Mental Health Act

At our next meeting, we will talk about the review of the Mental Health Act. Last year, the Scottish Government set up a group to look at how the new Mental Health Act was working.

The Act is based on a set of ten principles that are supposed to protect the interests of service users and carers. Especially, it says that there should be minimum interference in people's liberty and maximum involvement of service users in any treatment they might get.

In practice, some things didn't always work out this way. So the Review Group was asked to look at these bits and see if there were things that could be done to make them better.

The Review Group reported back in March this year and the Government has now started a consultation on what they have said should change.

The main things the Review Group looked at were:

- Advance Statements
- Independent Advocacy
- Named Persons
- Medical Matters
- Tribunals

In particular, they want people's views on their ideas for improving:

- how the 'named person' is chosen and how much information they get about a service user
- how medical reports are got hold of
- how to avoid people having to go to more than one Tribunal hearing when a decision on whether or not to put them on a Compulsory Treatment Order is being made.

Join us at the next EUF meeting to give us your views.

The consultation ends on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

You can see the consultation paper at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/281422/0084968.pdf> or contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 for a copy.

### Our Next Meeting:

**Saturday 5 September 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

## Improving the Medical Statement

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) are currently looking for comments on their consultation on improving the medical statement used by GPs.

GPs use this statement to record their advice on fitness for work to patients with a health condition. The form used for the statement has hardly changed since the NHS began.

The form will allow doctors to record information to help discussions between individuals and their employers to decide if there are any changes to the employee's work place or job role which could help them get back to work after being off sick.

There will also be a new part which will allow a doctor to give an assessment of somebody's fitness for work and say whether they "may be fit for some work now".

If you would like to find out more, you can go to the following website:  
[www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2009](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2009)

The consultation will take place until the 31st August 2009. VOX (Voices Of eXperience) are looking for people's views on the proposed changes. You can contact them directly on 0141 572 1663 or contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

## Personality Disorder Project : Progress so far

The Personality Disorder Project has been set up to ask people in Edinburgh and the Lothian Region what they think about the services they get. Over the last few months we have been asking people what they find helpful and unhelpful, as well as what personality disorder means to them. There has been a lot of interest in the project and nearly thirty people have taken part so far.

Now we are going to use the information we have collected to write a pack for staff. This pack will use people's experiences to explain what it is like to have personality disorder and what they find helpful and unhelpful.

When we have written the pack we will be inviting people to have a look at it and tell us what they think before we write the final version.

Even if you have not taken part in the project so far, if you have experience of personality disorder and would like to comment on the pack we produce, we would like to hear from you.

There will be a chance to comment individually and in a group discussion.

If you would like to comment on the pack or get more information about the project please contact Naomi at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or [naomi@capsadvocacy.org](mailto:naomi@capsadvocacy.org).

## Reforming Disability Living Allowance (DLA)?

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit for adults and children with disabilities and the Government wants to review it.

DLA is for people who need help with looking after themselves and for those who find it difficult to get around.

This benefit is divided into two parts:

- A Care Component, for help with personal care needs. This is paid at three different levels depending on how much support a person needs.
- The Mobility Component, for help with getting around. Some people with mental health issues get it because of anxiety and phobias.

Claiming Disability Living Allowance is often complicated. But the important thing to remember is that Disability Living Allowance is awarded because of the difficulties that an illness or disability can cause and how they affect your daily life.

The allowance is not taxed and not related to other benefits a person might get. Once a person gets the allowance they are free to spend it the way they want.

The Westminster Government has just published a Green Paper on social care reform. It is a consultation document about the future of disability benefits.

A Green Paper means that it is a proposal by the Government which will be consulted upon and debated before it can become a law.

The consultation period runs until mid-November 2009. There are no immediate threats to people's benefits and it could take years before anything happens but we need to speak up right now to make sure we get the best benefits system possible.

The Green Paper talks about the possibility of moving the Care Component. from being a cash benefit and instead have the money paid to local authorities. The local Council would then manage that money and decide how it is spent.

This goes against the principle of Direct Payments (now called Self Directed Care). Instead it would take control over spending away from people and put it in the hands of the local Council.

Unless people and charities are prepared to oppose these proposals it will be very difficult to stop them from happening. Some campaigns are already running and we need to add our voice to them.

If you have views on the subject, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

CAPS can also help you join existing campaigns. For example you can get help writing to big charities or even directly to the Government. There are also petitions such as the No More Benefits Cuts campaign you can sign up to.

### **In with this mailing**

EUF Meeting Flyer  
Newsletter questionnaire  
Freepost envelope

## Mental Health in Later Life

As announced in our previous newsletter, we want to hear from people over the age of 65 using older people services. We also want to hear from people approaching 65 interested in how services might change once they reach that age.

CAPS has been aware for many years that service users have been critical about the way the support given to people changes when they reach the age of 65 even if their needs and mental health issues remain the same.

At the last EUF meeting, some service users said they would definitely be interested in joining a group to start talking about what can be done to improve services and also make sure the transition from adult to older people services is smooth.

Example of things to look at are the gaps in services, discrimination and advocacy services.

We would like to know your views and experiences so that we can work together on campaigning for better services and a better transition from adult services to older people services.

Let us know if you would like to join a working group, come to a meeting to talk about the issue, join a campaign or just write to us with your views.

For more information and to give us your views and experiences, please contact Laëticia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177 or email [laetitia@capsadvocacy.org](mailto:laetitia@capsadvocacy.org)

## 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.....

## John Armstrong from City of Edinburgh Council

John Armstrong is the Joint Programme Manager for Mental Health in Edinburgh. He came to EUF to explain what his job is and to hear from service users why they think advocacy is important.

John Armstrong explained that his job covers health and social care services including advocacy. He is looking at the services that are already available and also the best way to spend the budget that he has. He told us that his job is to protect this money and get the best services for it.

Someone felt that the review of advocacy that is happening in Edinburgh at the moment is going over old ground and may be asking people to say what advocacy is when that has already been done.

John Armstrong said that the review of advocacy is not about the independence of advocacy, but about

providing advocacy to a wider group of people. Someone pointed out that if all advocacy services are put together in one organisation this independence may be lost.

We talked about the importance of collective advocacy, and the fact that it works well if it is well funded. It is useful to be able to bring individual issues to a group and if others have had similar experiences to be able to do something about it together. There is some safety in raising a concern with the backing of a group as you do not have to put your name on the complaint personally or worry it might affect your treatment.

We talked about the importance of organisations offering collective and individual advocacy. Having approachable staff is very important. Staff bring continuity if service users are not able to go to meetings. They can make sure service users' opinions are still taken forward. Someone pointed out that it can take a long time to build up trust with an agency and it could be very difficult for people to engage with a

## **NEWSLETTER: WE NEED YOUR VIEWS**

**We have enclosed a questionnaire and a FREEPOST envelope with this newsletter.**

**We need your views on the newsletter so that we can carry on producing and improving it.**

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.

different agency if things are changed in Edinburgh.

It is also important that individual and collective advocacy are kept separate because as a group it is possible to complain about services and get them to change in a way that isn't possible as an individual. Collective and individual advocacy have very different roles.

Collective advocacy needs to stay service user led and people need to be supported to carry out their roles well by the organisation.

We talked about the fact that the Council wants to cut the advocacy budget but at the same time offer more services for older people and people with physical disabilities.

A representative from an organisation that supports people with physical disabilities said that they felt it was not productive to take money away from one group to give it to another and that the people with physical disabilities they represent do not want this to happen. They do not feel it is a good idea to provide a service for one group by taking money away from a different group.

## How Can Advocacy Work Well?

We talked about how advocacy can work as well as possible and about the most important characteristics it has to have to work.

To work well, advocacy needs to be user led and provide an honest service. It has to be supportive, listen to service users and clearly tell them what options are available to them. Service users

need to feel they can trust the people and organisations they get support from. Advocacy has to be democratic, independent and give equal access to all service users.

It was said that there should be a choice of organisations to work with. Advocacy for service users should be separate from carers' advocacy as there could be a conflict of interest.

We talked about the four principles of advocacy: advocacy has to be accessible, accountable, as free as possible from conflicts of interest and it has to put the people who use it first.

We also agreed that on top of the four principles, the following 10 things were very important for advocacy to work well and that budget cuts from the Council might have a bad effect on those essential qualities:

- Independence
- Good source of reliable Information
- Good communication
- A targeted voice
- Good service user support
- Signposting to relevant organisations when useful
- Choice of partners to work with
- Feeling of trust
- Democracy
- User-led

The Council will continue its review of advocacy until November. We need to make sure we stay active and speak up to keep our services. If you would like to give your views, please contact Laëtitia at CAPS on 0131 538 7177.

# Community Happenings

## Craiglockhart Centre at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital

The Craiglockhart Centre is now open at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. It is on the second floor of the Andrew Duncan Clinic, next to the Balcarres Ward.

The Craiglockhart Centre will provide extra therapeutic and recreational space for patients. The Centre has 12 rooms for individual or group therapies and activities.

There is an art room, a kitchen and an exercise room as well as large and small rooms which can be used in lots of different ways.

The Patients' Library has now moved to the Craiglockhart Centre, to a much bigger and brighter room with even more books, magazines and music.

The new Information Resource Room is also located in the Craiglockhart Centre. The Resource Room has 2 computers with internet access and a printer. It has self-help books and relaxation materials. It also has leaflets on things like health and wellbeing, recovery, activities, support and services.

On Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2pm to 4pm there are drop-in sessions when the Resource Room is open to all patients, staff and visitors.

If you would like to know more about the Craiglockhart Centre and the Information Resource Room you can contact Emma Doyle, Patient Information Worker on 07887 594 051 or [emma.doyle@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:emma.doyle@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)

## Mental Health Matters Event

On Friday October 9<sup>th</sup> 2009, as part of Mental Health Week, the Royal Edinburgh Hospital will be holding an event called 'Mental Health Matters'.

It will show changes and innovations that have been happening recently. It will be a way to improve knowledge and information exchange about services and working practices for staff, service users, carers and community groups.

Each ward and service will have a display showing something positive or new. Community organisations will also have displays and some will be giving presentations or workshops.

This will allow everyone to learn more about the hospital and also services available in the community.

At the same time, there will be events such as tours, art exhibitions and readings. For more information, contact:

Merrick Pope:  
[merrick.pope@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:merrick.pope@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)  
 0131 537 6390

Emma Doyle:  
[emma.doyle@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:emma.doyle@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)  
 0131 537 6746

Danny Lascelles:  
[daniel.lascelles@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:daniel.lascelles@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)  
 0131 537 6746

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## 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.

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### 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](mailto:info@edinburghusersforum.org)  
Or visit our website:  
[www.edinburghusersforum.org](http://www.edinburghusersforum.org)

### EUF Meetings 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**.