

# Viewpoint

Mental Health Service User Involvement Charity in Hertfordshire

## Newsletter Autumn 2005

### World Mental Health Day 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Mental and physical health across the life span was the theme for World Mental Health day 2005.

Clients and services celebrated this year with a variety of events over two days, again supported by Watford and Three Rivers Primary Care Trust. World Mental Health Day started with a moving memorial event in St Mary's church for people who had lost their lives to mental distress. Viewpoint members John, Lisa and Joy presented readings to the congregation, Martin played the organ and the town chaplain gave an address. After the service, there was an opportunity for people to tie ribbons to a Millennium statue in the square and record messages in a book of tributes.



The afternoon event was held at the Watford Museum where people could find out information about mental health and local organisations. A drama sketch from Henry Smith House, Thai massage, poetry from Mind and an art workshop by Andy Davies from Herts Partnership Trust (HPT), kept people busy throughout the afternoon.

The highlight of the day was definitely an impromptu 'Knees up' led by Martin with



renditions of 'My Way', 'My Old Man' and 'Knees up mother Brown' to name but a few!

On Tuesday evening, the Pump House hosted an open mic night. The event was extremely well attended and included poetry, music and a comedy sketch by Viewpoint members.

A big thank you goes to all the groups and people who helped organise the events. These include:

Guideposts Trust, Mind in South West Herts, Turning Point, 9 Lives, Carers in Herts, Watford and Three Rivers PCT, Watford Museum and Iain Avis from HPT. A special thanks goes to Lisa and Joy from NOW who led the events and made things happen!



Now it's about time to get thinking for next year....  
*Simon des Forges*



## NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

This past year has been a very fruitful one for Viewpoint, working hard to ensure your views on services get heard.

Gaining independent charitable status, on-going funding for the project and supporting staff in their roles have meant that we have established a firm foundation on which to build. We can now look to Viewpoint's longer-term aims to enable service users in Hertfordshire to put their views across to shape services.

We are currently finalising the next three years of planned activities of the project and have already achieved much this year in terms of consulting users, voicing their concerns and getting these heard by services to implement change: crisis cards are being given out by Hertfordshire Partnership Trust, day services are currently being reviewed, talking therapies have been identified as needing to be offered more readily, more activities on wards are to be proposed and 'solution-focused' training is to be delivered to ward staff.

As we reach the end of our first year, with our combined Annual General Meeting (AGM) and official launch of Viewpoint on 28<sup>th</sup> October, it is a time of congratulating ourselves on our achievements and coming together as a wider group of user organisations so that together we might achieve more for service users in the future.

I warmly thank everyone who attended our AGM and Launch on 28<sup>th</sup> October and ask you to keep sending us your views. They count! Viewpoint is YOUR official service user charity!

**Heather Straughan, Chair**



## NEWS



The festival was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2005 at Stanborough Lakes in Welwyn Garden City.

It was a great success this year with hot weather and plenty of information stalls, music, art and food and it attracted 12,000 people which was double the amount for 2004.

This annual festival is organized through a working party via the Welwyn Hatfield Ethnic Minority Group and is designed to:

*"Raise awareness of the cultural diversity in Welwyn Hatfield and to improve communication between minority ethnic communities and service providers. It provides an opportunity for people to find out about local community groups and become involved in local opportunities."*

Viewpoint had a stand in one of the large information marquees and once again the old 'knock the tin cans down' game was particularly popular with the youth visiting the stall. Each can had a label such as 'stigma' or 'benefits trap' and everyone who knocked them all over was rewarded with a Viewpoint stress ball.



*Christiana setting up those cans again!*

# NEWS

## INVESTING IN YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



### GENERAL THEMES/ CONCERNS THAT CAME OUT OF CONSULTATIONS HELD WITH SERVICE USERS.

These consultations were facilitated by Viewpoint and the Herts and Beds Strategic Health Authority. A formal letter was then sent from Viewpoint to the Authority highlighting the general themes below:

- People welcomed the development of services, but the financial restraints at present mean that no developments would take place for a number of years.
- The decision to decant beds from the Princess Alexander Hospital in Harlow to the QE2 in Welwyn Garden City was made on purely financial reasons. It is hoped that these savings will be spent on community services in the Primary Care Trust area they originate from.
- Transport has been a major issue throughout this consultation, for carers and service users that live in the more rural areas such as Royston, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford accessing services in other parts of the county.
- There is a concern that proposed capital spending on new buildings and updates of existing structures will diminish the spending on community services.
- People would like to access services when they need them, including acute services, so there is some concern about the proposed reduction of acute beds.

## VIEWPOINT TRAINING CO-OPERATIVE

The 'Presentation Skills - Mental Health Service Users as Trainers' course started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October in Hatfield. It is hoped the next course will be in February 2006. Please contact Tracy on 01707 328014 if you would like to attend the next course.

The Co-operative is developing a business plan and constitution and is hoping to gain some start up funding by the beginning of next year.

Service user trainers are designing a course around the Care Programme Approach (CPA) process in order to train professionals, services users and carers. This training package aims to give information on the CPA process and good practice. It will also highlight the benefits of empowering service users to have control over their care package.

T Kinsella



## SAMARITANS TRAINING

The Samaritans in Watford recently approached Viewpoint to provide training on mental health awareness.

Up to 40 volunteers attended a discussion group, hosted by a service user from Viewpoint, to discuss mental health and how the Samaritans might help people when distressed.

The event was extremely successful with some positive feedback from attendees. The Watford branch hopes to continue this training to help equip their volunteers with a better understanding.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE USER INVOLVEMENT SUCCESSES

### CRISIS CARDS

Front

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust

**Crisis Card**

NHS Number or Name  
*Simon des Forges*

If this card is found please return to 99 Waverley Road, St. Albans, Herts.

**in an Emergency**  
please contact one of the following teams

Care Coordinator : 01707 xxxxxx 9.00am - 5.00 pm  
Emergency Duty Team: 01707 xxxxxx 5.00pm - 9.00am  
Fred (Carer): 01707 xxxxxx

*I have an Advanced Directive*

Back

The Crisis Card, initially developed by a client in St Albans, has now been adopted by the Herts Partnership Trust (HPT). This simple card gives clients the opportunity to record important information, such as key worker contact, carer contact and whether they have an Advance Directive, so that they can access services quicker if they have a crisis. This information is normally found on the Care Programme Approach (CPA) documentation but inconsistencies in the process and the sensitivity of its contents mean that many clients do not keep their CPA documents with them.

The card will be distributed via HPT and information will be developed for service users, staff, accident & emergency departments and the police service.

The Crisis Card is a great example of Viewpoint members and HPT working well together, facilitated and supported by Viewpoint.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

### DO YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE OF USING ART THERAPY?

#### M.A. ART THERAPY PROGRAMME

As part of the validation process with the Health Professions Council, the above training course is required to meet the varied and multiple needs of those who use health care services.

Therefore, individuals who use or have used art therapy are invited to give their points of view on it in a consultation process.

If you are interested in attending consultations please contact Michele Wood, (Senior Lecturer, MA Art Therapy Programme, University Of Herts) on 01707 285332 or [m.j.wood@herts.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.wood@herts.ac.uk)

## HITCHIN FORUM

Service Users views matter! Your views can then be passed on to those planning services, and can influence the type of care you receive in the future.



Date of next forum meeting:  
**To be arranged**

Forum will be held in Hitchin

For more information, please contact  
Christiana on: 01707 328014 or  
[christiana@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:christiana@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

# RECOVERY

## Recovery Training in Cheshunt

In July, a training event on the theme of recovery was held in Cheshunt, organised by Prem Rani, deputy manager of Holly Lodge Community Mental Health Team, and facilitated by Grethe Hansen, University of Herts. Staff and service users discussed local services and identified the changes that need to take place which Clive McClure has summarised below:

### Changes in Services identified

**Problem:** Lack of information / knowledge of services available, both from users, carers and professionals.

**Solutions:** *Clear central information needed - perhaps a regular Trust newsletter / brochure detailing services.*

**Problem:** lack of clear method of contacting professionals.

**Solutions:** *Simple emergency contact number - automated link to correct service. Better local liaison between users and professionals eg joint training.*

**Problem:** Too many changes in professional staff dealing with users' problems.

**Solutions:** *Continuity of care.*

**Problem:** Lack of local support groups.

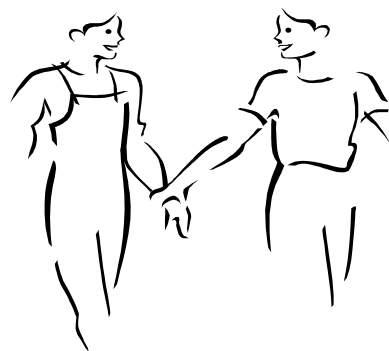
**Solutions:** *Set up central local support group (social group), perhaps jointly with professionals.*

**Problem:** Lack of proper support when leaving hospital.

**Solutions:** *Needs some kind of provision like the 'Day' hospital, providing respite and convalescence, before a full return to home life.*

Prem Rani reports that staff at Holly Lodge and the Community Support Team enjoyed working jointly with service users to work out ways to improve service delivery. She wants to emphasise that Holly Lodge continues to strive to provide an excellent service to the community of Cheshunt and Waltham Cross and any feedback and suggestions are welcomed.

She also added that service users of Holly Lodge are welcome to call in to Holly Lodge, 45 Church Lane, Cheshunt, if they want more information about mental health disorders, treatments and recovery. There are information sheets available and staff are happy to do photocopies. You can also call her on 01992 624600.



### TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Prem will be organising another training morning jointly with service users on the Care Programme Approach and working in partnership. It is planned to be held in the first week of January 2006. If you are interested in attending, please call Prem on 01992 624600

**The Cavalry's Coming.**

**THE CAVALRY'S COMING.  
IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.  
THE CAVALRY'S COMING,  
SOME FROM DISTANT,  
SOME NOT SEEN IN YEARS.  
SOME UNEXPECTED FOES,  
TURNED ALLIES.  
THE CAVALRY'S COMING,  
THANK GOD FOR THAT,  
TO TAKE AWAY THIS AWFUL  
SHEER CLIFF OF  
LONELINESS.  
I'LL NEVER THINK THE  
RED INDIAN  
HAD A RAW DEAL AGAIN.**

**P.C VEALEY**

"I wrote this poem in 1999. I first heard of Viewpoint in 2003 and I see it as a very good voice for mental health issues and service users. I know myself that recovery with help, (a thorough ongoing programme of counselling, forums, talking, social centres, as well as standard treatments) can lead most

people back to good mental health.

I think the poem ends on a humorous note of recovery and hope." *P.C Vealey*

### **When I think about me!**

*I sometimes think I'm really big  
And then I think I'm really small  
Shall I change my body?  
No! My mind would be cool*

*Meet in the middle  
Take care of both sides  
Go on think twice!  
And strengthen your mind*

*Why am I here?  
To think about me  
How does that feel?  
Yeah! That's scary  
There's a past and a future  
Where do I run?  
Nowhere, let em connect  
It's me! I am the one*

*The fear and the pain  
I know it all hurts  
But you can't cut them out  
Come on!  
That one don't work*

*Try to change, the bad habits you follow  
You can't change yesterday  
But you can change tomorrow  
Take risk, be honest  
Be strong see it through  
Cos it might help out others  
But it will most benefit you*

**June Carter**

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