

ViewPoint

Working for better mental health in Hertfordshire.

The Hertfordshire Mind Network established *ViewPoint* in November 2000 to enable people who use mental health services to get involved in the planning and delivery of these services.

New Welwyn + Hatfield forum 20th July

11.30 - 1pm + buffet lunch

Come along and express your views on mental health services in the Welwyn/Hatfield area.

The intention of this forum is to talk about mental health services. Your views can be passed on to those planning services and can influence the type of care you receive in the future.

The forum will usually be held every six weeks on a Wednesday at the ViewPoint office, 62b Bridge Rd East, WGC. ***Check future dates*** Unfortunately, our offices are not wheelchair accessible and we will be reviewing the venue.

If you have an interest in joining the Forum, please contact Jacqui on 01707 328014. ***This forum is for people who use services within the Welwyn & Hatfield area.***

NEW PROJECT WORKER

We are pleased to welcome a new member of staff, Amy Pask who will be starting with us on the 1st June, as the Service User Involvement Project Worker for the North Herts area of the county. She will be developing forums and consultation projects in Stevenage, North Herts and the RBBS (Royston, Bishops Stortford & Buntingford) areas.

VIEWPOINT WEBSITE



We are pleased to announce that we have secured funding from the Herts Community Foundation to develop our website in conjunction with service users and a community based company. Meetings are under way to discuss the content of the website. Ideas so far include:

- Contact information
- Links to other organizations
- News items
- Meetings & forum news
- Mailing list if people do not have their own email address
- Bulletin board
- Explanation of what we do & how we do it (Not advocacy)

- Glossary of jargon
- FAQ (Frequently asked questions)

If you would like to be involved in planning the website and/or training to update the website please could you contact the office on 01707 328014.

TRAINING BY SERVICE USERS

ViewPoint has received extra funding to support and train service users to enable them to be involved in the training of health and social care professionals. ViewPoint will be in touch with those that have shown an interest in the past. The funding is limited and therefore we are unable to offer this opportunity to all service users at present. However, we will keep you updated on the progress of this venture.

SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT WITH HERTS PARTNERSHIP TRUST INDUCTION

Three service users came along to observe the induction of new HPT staff at the Lister hospital and Harperbury Hospital in Radlett. At the moment, part of the induction programme involves talking about the importance of listening to service users. A video is shown of someone with learning difficulties talking about their Care Program Approach meeting.

If anyone has any suggestions on how mental health service users could convey their experience of using mental health services in a half hour slot, please could you contact Dennis Edwards at the office on 01707 328014.

It is intended that Viewpoint, service users and the Human Resources Manager of HPT will meet to discuss how best to deliver service users experiences to new staff. Please contact us if you are interested in being involved. Everyone is welcome to input even if you do not want to meet to be involved!

SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT WITH STRATAGIES FOR CRISIS INTERVENTION AND PROTECTION (SCIP) TRAINING FOR NHS STAFF

In April, a presentation was given to Viewpoint and service users by Simon White (HPT trainer) explaining the SCIP training that is given to HPT staff. Simon was keen to discuss how service users could be involved in delivering this training. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, we did not manage to reach a decision on how best to take this forward. Further thought is needed on this and again, everyone is welcome to input even if you do not want to meet to be involved.

NEW ROYSTON, BUNTINGFORD & BISHOPS STORTFORD FORUM

Viewpoint would like to thank Helen Cooper for arranging an article on Viewpoint in the Herts & Essex Observer. Here is the write up:

Report:
MARIA WASILEWSKI

A MENTAL health action group is looking for venues, vehicles and volunteers for a new series of patient forums to be held in and around the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth area.

Viewpoint's aim is to empower past and present users of mental health services to talk about their experience of care and have an input in the decision-making process to improve future provision. And a series of meetings across Herts has reached the Primary Care Trust (PCT) for Royston, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford.

Dennis Edwards, project manager, said: "Viewpoint brings together interested groups and individuals to get involved in the development, provision and monitoring of mental health services. We want to work with local groups across Herts to ensure users can take part equally, wherever they live."

To do that, the group, which expanded to employ five members of staff in July 2003 and is currently applying for charitable status, wants residents of North East Herts to get in touch.

Mr Edwards said: "Because of confidentiality we cannot approach people – they have to come to us. But we're getting to be known now. It's a much neglected area in the past, but we're a facilitating organisation, we ensure people have a say."

Adding that Viewpoint also needed suggestions for three suitable venues and volunteers willing to help it provide transport to meetings he said: "We have found that the best thing is not to start new initiatives from scratch, but to harness facilities that are already in use like drop-in centres. But public participation is essential even from the very beginning."

Bishop's Stortford volunteer Helen Cooper said: "This is a new organisation for mental health services which needs publicity so service users can get involved in creating change. They have put leaflets in doctors' surgeries, but if people don't go to the doctors they won't hear about it. We all have mental health, good or bad or indifferent, but the more people read about it the better because it breaks down the stigma."

For more information on Viewpoint or to receive a newsletter, call 01707 328014 or email info@hertsviewpoint.co

Contact Details for ViewPoint :

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Address: The Media Centre, 62b Bridge Road East,
Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL7 1JU

VIEWPOINT STAFF:

PROJECT MANAGER: Dennis Edwards: Tel: : 01707 - 328014

Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

PROJECT WORKERS / SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT:

Simon des Forges: Tel: : 01707 - 328014

St.Albans, Dacorum and Watford.

Monday to Friday.

Amy Pask: Tel: : 01707 - 328014

North Herts, Stevenage, Royston, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford.

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays.

Jacqui Deakin: Tel: : 01707 - 328014

Welwyn/Hatfield, S.E. Herts and Hertsmere.

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays.

ADMINISTRATOR:

Tracy Kinsella: Tel: 01707 - 328014

Monday to Thursday.