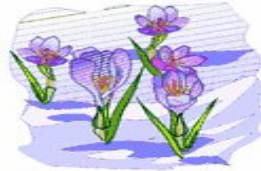




Newsletter Spring 2005

Viewpoint

Mental Health Service User Involvement Charity



CHAIR'S REPORT

I am sure that you will be pleased to hear that the members of Viewpoint's newly formed Executive Committee are settling into their roles in this exciting time of the charity's first year in operation. Several sub-groups have been established with members contributing their time and developing their interest in the work of the group: matters such as Viewpoint's first business plan, staff and volunteers' issues and policies and procedures are being explored in more detail to establish some firm structures to carry Viewpoint's work forward in the year to come.

We would welcome extra support for the committee and are inviting people to contact us if they have secretarial or administrative skills that they would like to contribute. Please see the adverts on page 2.

Our first ever staff and executive 'Away Day' in April will give us all the opportunity to receive some vital training on our roles and responsibilities and enable us to take some valued 'time out' to get to know one another to work together more effectively as a team.

Here's looking forward to the warmer days of Spring. Let's get out and make the most of them!

Heather Straughan, Chair

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority

INVESTING IN YOUR MENTALHEALTH

Public Consultation 9th May
12-3pm with buffet lunch, Luton

Travel expenses will be paid

Please see the invite enclosed

Launch of the public consultations across the two counties is going start on May 9th. The views of service users, carers and service providers are vital to bring about real and lasting improvements to mental health and social care services.

More information and news will be distributed, as the consultations get under way.

WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH STAKEHOLDER DAY

How to improve services and the well-being of the women of Hertfordshire was the theme of a conference held on 11th March in Hatfield. Key speeches were given by Laila Namdarkhan from 'Women in Secure Hospitals' and Dr Alison Lowe, Consultant Psychiatrist specializing in substance misuse, followed by the powerful testimonies of two service users and a carer.

Over 120 delegates participated in 12 workshops which covered topics such as 'women and eating disorders', 'women and violence' and 'women's well-being'. Important themes emerged from the day and will be developed into a multi-agency strategy to improve services for women.



OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED !

VIEWPOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Would you like to support the Viewpoint Executive Committee in its new role?

There are two positions:

1. Admin Support Worker (paid)

Required to take the minutes of the monthly committee meetings.

Ideal for those wishing to obtain therapeutic earnings

£6.50 an hour: 12 hours a month

Previous experience of taking minutes is desirable

If you are interested, please contact Chris Wright (Vice Chair) on: chris.wright687@ntlworld.com or call Tracy on 01707 328014 for a job description.

2. Honorary Secretary (unpaid) Co-opted member of the Executive Committee

Ideal for those wishing to gain experience as a volunteer.

We need someone to support the Chair in organising the monthly executive meetings, special meetings and annual general meetings.

If you are interested, please contact Chris Wright (Vice Chair) at chris.wright687@ntlworld.com or call Tracy on 01707 328014

HERTS UNI STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

As part of the recent review of its Student Mental Health Policy, the University of Hertfordshire is seeking to develop further inclusive approaches. For example, we are discussing whether to provide a dedicated mental health post to support students in managing their mental health needs.

If you are a student who would be interested in contributing to these developments please contact Marcella Wright, Head of the Equality Unit tel 01707 284982 M.Wright@herts.ac.uk

TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

An eight week course for service users who want to help train health professionals in mental health

**We are hoping to start the next course in May 2005
The weekday and venue has yet to be decided**

The course will cover:

- The history of service users as trainers
- Principles of training (knowledge, skills, values)
 - Presentation skills
- How to speak to a group with confidence
- How to look after yourself as a trainer
- Dealing with difficult situations
 - And more!!!

To sign up for this FREE course contact Viewpoint at 01707 328014

"All you need is the courage to commit"

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

USER INVOLVEMENT SUCCESSES

THERE'S A NEW GROUP ON THE BLOCK

“Our training course started in January and ran for 8 weeks. The course title being: ‘Training for Trainers’. The idea being that new recruits on the course would be trained/massaged into a confident cohesive group with the confidence to present the account of their personal experiences/ treatment while in the mental illness system.

Nine recruits started the course and nine completed the course with confidence levels much higher than at the start, and having presentation tools and advice, with limited but valuable practice of public speaking. Each student received a certificate certifying completion of the course. Eight of the course members became the ‘New Group on the Block’.

The ‘end’ advice was that the group should endeavour to form a social firm. Viewpoint would continue to support us till we were ‘up and running’. The group name has not yet been chosen: maybe, ‘The Magnificent 8’ or ‘The 8 Samurai’ (maybe not).

The proof of the pudding? Well, nine started and nine completed - better prepared, more confident, more enthusiastic. What more could you want? Thank you Dave Hobbs and Diane Shepherd (course facilitators).

On with the Show??? YES! Our first group meeting is planned for April 11th, ALL the group have expressed the desire to attend. Watch this space.....”

Frank Williams (Elected Chair of the New Group)



Friday night in Borehamwood!

Something social and something in the evening - that was the response of the members of Borehamwood User Forum when asked what type of new service they would like to have. The idea was put forward to Margaret, the local Mind organiser, who was successful in securing a grant to fund it. Now there's a group of people who meet every other Friday in the local church hall. New members are referred by Mind. If you are interested in finding out more, give Margaret a ring on 01707 659 455.

The group is supported by Estelle who also runs the Mind Drop-In sessions on Monday and Thursday afternoons. ‘Estelle is very hard working and helpful. She takes us to groups outside Mind and also puts her time into the new Friday evening group,’ writes Tina, a group member. ‘A big thank you from everyone at Mind Borehamwood!’

Service users' views count! Borehamwood User Forum meets at 3.00pm on the last Monday in each month, except for bank holidays. Interested in coming along? Call Jacqui on 01707 328014.

SERVICE USER FORUMS

Use Your Knowledge



NEW User Involvement Forum **Watford**

The views and expertise of mental health service users are essential to improving current and future service provision.

The forum will be a place where people can discuss mental health services, with the aim of using their experience to improve them. *This forum is open to service users within the Watford and Three Rivers area.*

The information and ideas you develop will be fed into local mental health meetings and used to give service user views.

For information on both these forums, please contact Simon on 01707 328014 or email simon@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

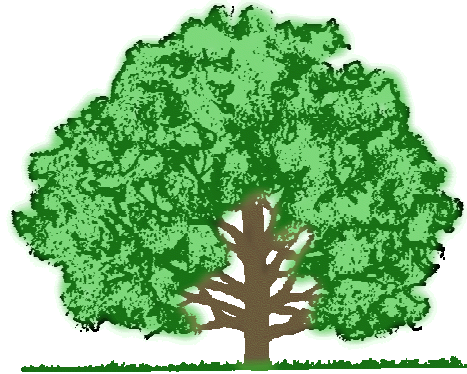
User Involvement Forum **ST ALBANS**

Come along to the forum to have your say about mental health services in the St Albans area.

It is open to service users within the St Albans and Harpenden area.

The purpose of the forum is to talk about mental health services. Your opinions can be passed on to people who plan, deliver and monitor services. This is a genuine opportunity to influence changes to services for the future.

If you would like to attend the forum, we would be delighted to see you.



WEBSITE

www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk

The Viewpoint website is continuing to grow, with information, links and news concerning mental health. Our 'debate' section is a bit too quiet, and we need your input to help get the discussion going! Current topics include:

'The Benefits System' and 'Smoking and Mental Health'. If you have any topics or news you would like to discuss, please email them to website@hertsviewpoint.co.uk. You can also sign up to our mailing list and be the first to hear about the latest newsletter.

*Simon
Viewpoint Webteam*



A Smile



A smile costs nothing,
but gives much.
It enriches those who receive
without making poorer those who give.
It takes but a moment
but the memory of it sometimes lasts
forever.

None is so rich and mighty that he can
get along without it,
and none is so poor that he cannot be
made rich by it.

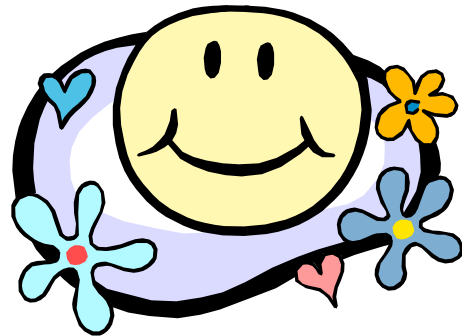
A smile creates happiness in the home,
fosters goodwill in business,
and is the countersign of friendship.
A smile brings rest to the weary,
cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to
the sad,
and it is nature's best antidote for
trouble.

Yet it cannot be bought, begged,
borrowed or stolen,
for it is something that is of no value to
anyone
until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give you a
smile,
Give them one of yours,
as none needs a smile so much
as he who has no more to give.

Anon

Contributed by Tina, from
Borehamwood



CONTACT VIEWPOINT

62b Bridge Road East, Welwyn Garden
City, Herts. AL7 1JU
Tel 01707 328014, fax 01707 328068
E-Mail: info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk
Website www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk

PROJECT MANAGER:

Dennis Edwards 01707 328014
Mon-Weds

PROJECT WORKER

Jacqui Deakin 01707 328014
Welwyn/Hatfield, S.E. Herts and Hertsmere.
Mon-Weds

PROJECT WORKER

Simon des Forges 01707 328014
St.Albans, Dacorum and Watford.
Mon-Fri.

PROJECT WORKER

Dennis Edwards (temp) 01707 328014
North Herts, Stevenage, Royston, Buntingford
and Bishop's Stortford.
Mon-Weds

ADMINISTRATOR:

Tracy Kinsella 01707 328014
Mon-Fri