

NEWSLETTER

October 2008, Issue No. 4

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Welcome New MC members

Firstly it is with regret that we announce the departure of Mark Henderson from the NSUN Management Committee. Mark has been a member of our committee from day one and has contributed his wealth of knowledge and experience in service user involvement to the development of NSUN.

His friendly and calm approach will be missed but we wish Mark well in his new role .

On a brighter note we are pleased to announce that three new members have been appointed to our Management committee. Alasdair Cameron, Ian Muhammed and Graham Saxton have, between them a huge amount of knowledge and experience within the service users movement and we look forward to their input and involvement in the further growth and development of NSUN as an organisation.

We are still looking for new Management Committee members so if you are interested email: info@nsun.org.uk for an application pack.

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Membership fees and website

We have decided to do away with our membership fee so all service user groups and individuals can now join NSUN for free!

This means that you can now access the members area of our site and have full access to our online database of service user groups, individuals and allies.

In the next few months we plan to further expand our website, so now is the time to become a member and have your say and remember it's absolutely free!

Wish Proposal

NSUN will be working in partnership with WISH to carry out a complete mapping exercise of user involvement in forensic units across England.



It is acknowledged by local and national government that it is good practice for the users of services to have a mechanism to influence the practice and policy of that service; and that it is important to listen to what people who use services are saying about those services. In forensic environments this is often an anathema in relation to the security and risk factor protocols and power base operating within these institutions. Thus it is imperative to ensure that the users of forensic mental health services are supported and enabled to have a collective voice

WISH is planning to gather information about user involvement within women's forensic environments, and already have in place the majority of information resources to take this forward. NSUN also wants to develop information in this sphere.

Meet the Management Committee

Anne Beales

I am currently the Director of Service User Involvement at Together – working for the well-being of those with needs specifically related to having mental health problems. As someone who has accessed services myself, the hope is this experience enhances my effectiveness in this job.

The objectives of my role are to set up and lead the Directorate, to place the views of those who access services from both within and outside of Together at the centre of developments. It is also my role to support people who access services to participate in order to positively influence as widely as possible.



I am a member of service user groups at Regional levels and alongside this I am serving as a Management Committee member of the National Survivor User Network. I also sit on the National Committee for Gender Equality and Women's Mental Health.

I was part of the working group which merged the National Mental Health Partnership Forum into the NHS Confederations' Mental Health Network with lead responsibility around Service User Involvement and also vice chair of the Management Committee responsible for the Mental Health work stream at the South East Development Centre (CSIP).

SUI Vacancies

User Involvement Co-ordinator ,National Service User Forum

3 days per week, Secondment considered)

Salary (£34k pro rata)

6- month contract

Revolving Doors Agency is seeking an experienced User Involvement Co-ordinator to continue the development and support of our National Service User Forum.

Who are we?

Revolving Doors Agency is a small charity dedicated to improving the lives of people with mental health problems who have been arrested or imprisoned. We are committed to inclusive user participation in all areas of our work.

The National Service User Forum

Following extensive development work, we have recently recruited the first group of service users to join our National Service User Forum. The panel will work in partnership with our staff team to develop and deliver policy messages designed to influence and inform the ideas and practice of a number of Government Departments including the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Health and the Home Office.

A full training programme for members will start in the autumn designed to enable them to undertake this work and all will be paid for their participation.

Further Information

If you would like further information, please contact; Alison Faulkner- User Involvement Manager on 020 72534038 /Catherine Hennessy - Director of Operations on 020 7 253 4038.

Applications

The deadline for receipt of completed applications is **Monday October 20th at 9am.**

Realising Mental Wellbeing

'Realising Mental well-being' is a new project being delivered through the community interest company 'Freemind well-being' which is based in Tendring.

The project has two main focuses

- Providing free 4-5 day workshops to community members
- Recruiting and training 18 'Community facilitators' (to deliver workshops in 2009 and 2010)

The workshops are aimed at those who experience a wide variety of challenges with coping with current circumstances, . Individuals can self refer, or be referred .

The workshops start at the end of September and they are looking for suitable venues that can become known locally as a resource for these workshops.

If you would like to support this project or would like to find out more please call 0845 116 1455.

grassroots grants

Managed by the Community Development Foundation
Funded by the Office of the Third Sector

Grassroots Grants
Grassroots Grants is a £130million scheme which aims to provide much needed access to small grants for local community groups. The programme, which will run from 2008-2011 will be divided into two parts:

an £80million small grants fund for local funders and community organisations; and a £50million endowments programme to enable local funders to generate additional donations .

The Government wants the smallest, volunteer-led organisations to thrive and direct their energies to the particular challenges they see in their local community, especially in giving a voice to marginalised groups. The Government recognises the work of these grassroots groups and is taking this action to support them.

A vital part of the programme are the local funders that will help deliver the money where it is needed.

BME Consultation and report

Engaging people who use services in developing those services, is now an intrinsic part of policy. User involvement includes participation in policy driven, organisational initiatives, and in peer groups for personal support and/or political campaign. It is based on the idea that service users/survivors are experts in their own experiences and that self-organisation and self-determination are crucial in their journey to recovery.

While user involvement is generally seen as enabling, some groups, for example, people from Black and minority ethnic communities, are not as "involved" as others in mainstream user involvement initiatives. Evidence shows an "under-representation" of service users/survivors from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds in user involvement activities, even as their over-representation in services continues. In reality, mainstream involvement initiatives often excluded Black and minority ethnic service users with the label of being "hard to reach." Experiences of being involved in tokenistic gestures to increase "Black bodies" on committees have often been negative.

We wanted to explore these experiences further by finding out from Black and minority ethnic service users their experiences of being involved.

Local funders will also raise and build the endowments to sustain funding in the future.

Details of the local funders can be found on the CDF website or by calling the Grassroots Grants helpline on 01223 400 331 or emailing grassroots@cdf.org.uk

Ecominds



Mind has been announced as an award partner to run an open grant scheme funding projects around England over the next five years. These projects will integrate mental health service users into the community via the delivery of environmental projects conducive to good mental and physical health.

If you would like to receive the Ecominds newsletter, filled with information on the projects being funded, tips on running a successful project, information on annual events and so on,

<http://www.mind.org.uk/ecominds/>

We wanted to find out from service users from White British backgrounds their experiences of involving Black and minority ethnic service users in mainstream initiatives, user groups etc. And, together, we wanted to explore how to work more effectively in collaboration to increase the influence of service users from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The objective was not to access representational data through a large research process, but to concentrate on the lived experience of people who had participated in various user involvement initiatives and learn from that

The process of consultation

The participants were recruited through the NSUN and Catch-a-Fiya networks, and brought together a range of experiences of participating in user involvement initiatives. The consultation took the shape of a day-long meeting with service users and survivors from Black and minority ethnic communities, a half-day meeting with service users and survivors from White British backgrounds, and three one-to-one interviews.

The full report will soon be available on our website
www.nsun.org.uk

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SODIT conference

Survivors of Depression in Transition placed a bid to Comic relief small grant scheme to set up and run a days conference in Sheffield, with the aim of looking at improving services and partnerships. With the funding from Comic relief a conference was held in Sheffield, at ST Mary's Conference centre on the 1st July 2008.

SODIT previously held a conference in 2005 and one of the continuing issues to arise was the need for better communication and partnership working with smaller organisations, particularly service user-led ones such as SODIT. It was decided to hold another conference on the theme of improving services and better partnership working. This conference was advertised across The Yorkshire and Humber Region through networks such as Mental Health North East and the Foundation Trust. The idea was to bring together a range of people from service users to health professionals to voluntary and faith organisations.

The need for this type of event run and organised by services users was paramount to give consistency among the health and social care sector, and to show that small groups can deliver a quality and meaningful conference..

Your voice, a mental health magazine, sent 2 people to write a piece for their next issue, and the Sheffield Star also advertised the conference. The conference was further supported by Business Boosters network CIC and NSUN. Some 125 people attended the day which was a very good turn out. Representatives from an um-ber of organisations had stands including St Wilfred's centre, Black Drugs and Your Voice. Speakers on the day included Simon Frances, Dr Fabian Davis, Kevan Taylor, Patrick Wood, Dr Angela Carter.

Overall the day was a great success.

Many people commented on how much they would take back to their organisation and that the day was in general comfortable and safe for service users.

If you would like to read the full report please got to :- where a copy can be downloaded.

Poet's corner

MAKING IT GOOD

The night we took Aubretia Ward

It was a cool night
There was nothing wrong going on in our heads
The cats in the foundations were curled and still
The birds in the bushes had fled
The night we took Aubretia Ward as we'd dreamed we would.

The night we took Aubretia Ward

It was a calm night
There was nothing disturbing us inside our heads
The keys were in the nightman's pocket
He slept as if he was dead
The night we took Aubretia Ward because we could.

The night we took Aubretia Ward

It was a clear night
There was nothing malevolent turning our heads
The psychiatrists tapped at the outer door
Remembering what we'd said
The night we took Aubretia Ward.

Making our word good.

c. Peter Campbell

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If you would like to contribute an article or information about your group to our next newsletter, please forward your suggestions to : info@nsun.org.uk