

# nsun



# network

Issue 1 • Summer 2009

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## ABOUT NSUN

If you haven't heard of NSUN, England's National Service User Network, then it's time you did, and this newsletter will tell you more about us – who we are and what we do. If you have heard of us, and are already a member, the pages that follow will tell you more about our work – our aims and ambitions, where we are today, the many groups that make up our membership and the amazing work they are doing to provide invaluable user-led services and ensure their voices are heard by the NHS mental health and social care services.

NSUN was launched in February 2007, with grants over five years from Comic Relief and the Tudor Trust. It is a national organisation, covering all of England, and is managed and run by service users from our offices in south London, which we share with Catch-a-Fiya, a national network organisation for service users and survivors from black and minority ethnic communities.

We are governed by a management committee selected by an independent panel of service users from across England, and currently have two full-time members of staff. Initially the national mental health charity Together provided NSUN with financial and HR support while we found our feet, although it has had no say in how we work and what we do. We are now in the process of establishing ourselves as a fully stand-alone organisation, and hope to have completed the legal processes by this autumn.

Inside this newsletter you will find an introduction to NSUN, its management committee and staff, and news of developments to date. There's a longer article on commissioning – the process whereby the NHS decides what mental health services will be provided and by whom – and developments here in ensuring service users are recognised and have a real influence on the kinds and quality of services available to us. The next two pages give a glimpse of just some of the amazing services and groups service users are already running all over the country, and the back page will tell you how to contact NSUN and how to join us, as an individual, an organisation or an 'ally'.

## WHO ARE WE?

**Currently, there are six of us on NSUN's management committee, although we would like more, so contact us if you are interested in applying (see contact details on the back page).**



### **Tina Coldham (chair)**

Tina has been involved in NSUN from the planning stage. She was a mental health service user for 17 years, and is still 'a practising depressive'. She became a user activist through setting up self-help groups and being part of a local campaigning user group, which led to wider regional, national and international involvement. Since 2003, she has worked for the Health and Social Care Advisory Service (HASCAS) on various national projects, including direct payments work, service reviews, independent investigations, and the Making a Real Difference (MARD) report – the review of user and carer involvement in the Department of Health's National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE). Tina is an experienced trainer, lecturer, researcher and consultant, and currently co-chairs the Partner Council of the Social Care Institute for Excellence.



### **Anne Beales MBE**

Anne has been involved in setting up NSUN from the start. She currently heads up the service user involvement directorate at the national charity Together: Working for Wellbeing, where she has been since 2004. Over the years Anne has been part of many initiatives, events and networks at local, regional and national level and brings this experience to her work at NSUN. She is one of two service user consultants to the NHS Confederation Mental Health Network (MHN), the network that represents mental health and learning disability service provider organisations, and is also a member of the government's national Social Work Task Force, set up to examine the quality, recruitment and retention of social workers.

### **Alisdair Cameron**

Alisdair Cameron has variously been an academic historian, a lawyer and a user of mental health services, in between stretches of generalised community activism. His day job is as team leader at Launchpad, the mental health service user involvement project for Newcastle upon Tyne, and he is also co-chair of the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Service User & Carer Network, and has been a leading light in the establishment of a north east regional mental health user and carer organisation. He is a director of NAGAS (Newcastle and Gateshead Arts Studio), vice-chair of MHNE (Mental Health North East), and a board member of UKAN (United Kingdom Advocacy Network). 'In spare moments I shuffle all of the letters from the aforementioned acronyms and see what they can spell out.'



### **Angela Hill**

Angela Hill is a past user of mental health services who has represented service users for the past 15 years and is also a carer for her son, who has a severe mental illness. She also has business, legal, lecturing and national and international research experience. She chairs a local user group and is company secretary with a regional community interest company (CIC) running a network in the West Midlands. Nationally, she represented service users on the management board of NIMHE. 'User involvement is something I do on a

voluntary basis because I feel this does not restrict my voice too much and I can be as loud or as powerful as I need to be. With the current climate at the moment and the fear that mental health could again be at the bottom of the pile, I feel there needs to be an organisation such as NSUN that can predominantly keep the user voice, concerns and awareness to the fore.'



### **Kath Lovell**

Kath has been a member of NSUN's management committee since January 2007. She is currently the National Project Development Manager for Borderline UK, the oldest personality disorder (PD) service user led organisation in the UK, and Personality Plus, a national anti-stigma and creative arts initiative for people with a PD diagnosis. Kath has been involved in a number of service user involvement initiatives that draw on her personal experience of living with a diagnosis of personality disorder and of accessing mental health services. This experience also informs her training and consultation work with professionals and fellow service users, which includes working as Expert by Experience with the Henderson Hospital and teaching on the Post Graduate Certificate in Personality Disorder. She has also worked as a service user researcher with St George's University.



### **Ian Muhammad**

Ian is a quality assurance manager based in the national mental health charity Together's service user involvement directorate. His role is to review and develop Together's quality assurance systems to ensure service user involvement, leadership and effectiveness. His career has included work in youth, community, prison and the probation services. 'My current specialism is supporting individuals to develop social and life skills that ensure that people who experience mental distress are respected and supported to speak up at all stages of service provision and have the same rights as any other members of the community.'

**We also have two members of staff based at our national office in London.**



### **Sarah Yiannoullou**

Sarah Yiannoullou joined NSUN as its manager on 8th March 2009. Previously she worked across the south east as a service user involvement manager for three years. 'My background was originally in the arts but life experiences (as often happens) took me on a different journey, one that has led me here. I have been involved with service improvement and involvement for over ten years and have worked in both the statutory and voluntary sector. Coming together for collective activity, to share what helps and what hinders and to offer mutual support on a national scale is an exciting prospect which is definitely being realised, against all the odds.'

### **Amma Djan**

Amma is NSUN's administration and finance officer, and has been with us for nearly two years. 'In that time I have really seen the organisation develop and start to blossom. I oversee the daily running of the office, organise meetings and events, prepare papers and support the management committee. I am also responsible for looking after the website and communicating with our members, as well as writing the newsletter, so you could say I'm pretty busy! There are big plans ahead for NSUN and I'm excited to be able to bring my experience of office administration and organisation to the team.'



## DANCING TO OUR OWN TUNES

NSUN has allocated £15,000 to a new national initiative to support black and minority ethnic (BME) service user groups at local grassroots and regional level. The project will build on research into BME user involvement in mental health services and service user groups commissioned by NSUN and Catch-a-Fiya, a national BME mental health service user forum.

The report, *Dancing to Our Own Tunes*, published in March this year, identified numerous barriers to BME user involvement, at individual and community level. It highlighted in particular the overt and covert racism BME service users encountered when they did get 'involved', not just in NHS organisations but also in service user groups. One person said: 'People have said to me, just openly, you're here as a service user, you're not here as a black person, so don't go on about race. But look at my skin. I cannot take off my skin.'

Participants also talked about having to 'dance to their tunes', and not being allowed to talk about what mattered to them and their communities. They wanted to set the agenda and be part of decision-making processes, not just a black rubber stamp.

'Increasing involvement is often seen as increasing the number of black bodies on committees, but people's experience of being involved in this way was overwhelmingly negative,' says the report's author, service user and independent researcher Jayasree Kalathil. 'We have to shift the locus of leadership to the communities whose involvement we are seeking, build the capacity of BME user groups, and create a strong political voice not just on mental health but also on racism,' Jayasree says.

Catch-a-Fiya will lead the BME involvement project, and is currently forming a steering group to guide the work. A workshop for people interested in being actively involved is to be held in London on 8th July.

**Contact: Patricia Chambers, Catch-a-Fiya project manager, tel: 0207 582 0812; email: [patricia.chambers@afiya-trust.org](mailto:patricia.chambers@afiya-trust.org). *Dancing to Our Own Tunes* can be downloaded free from [www.nsun.org.uk](http://www.nsun.org.uk)**

## REGIONAL NETWORKS FLOURISH

Progress to establish NSUN networks in each of the eight regions in England continues apace.

In the north east, NSUN has been working with Launchpad, the Newcastle, Tyne and Wear service user and carer network (NTWSU&C), and service user groups in the south of the region to set up a regional service user involvement network. The network, which will receive £15,000 over two years from NSUN to support its development, will be hosted by Mental Health North East, a consortium of voluntary sector groups in the region.

'I am hoping we can achieve a means by which users across the region have their voice heard at the decision making levels,'

Alisdair Cameron, NSUN management committee member and team leader at Launchpad, says. He believes it is more important than ever to have a regional presence when decisions about health and social care policy are increasingly devolved to the regions. 'There are also the benefits of sharing good practice among ourselves and also it helps us reach a critical mass so the voices of smaller groups with specialist fields of interest are not overlooked.'

In the south east, the ink is barely dry on a similar contract between NSUN and Canterbury and District Mental Health Forum (CADMHF) to set up a regional network and support new groups. CDMHF will also provide local groups with media and campaign training, in partnership with Media Action Network South East and Open Up, part of the national Time to Change anti-stigma campaign.

Says Mark Kilbey, director of CADMHF: 'Unless groups work together, we can't call ourselves a movement. There's a lot of really good work going on but we need to be able to learn from each other to move forward. Service user involvement is too often done in a tokenistic way. This network is a way to transform service user groups and individuals into a real movement.'

**For more details about the new NSUN South East Network, contact CADMHF at [cadmhforum@btconnect.com](mailto:cadmhforum@btconnect.com)**

## FORENSIC REVIEW

NSUN is on course to publish the findings of its national review of service user involvement in forensic mental health services and prisons later this summer. NSUN commissioned Wish, the national organisation for women who are, or have been, in the secure psychiatric system, to map all NHS and independent sector secure units and prisons and young offender institutions in England and Wales, and then conduct telephone surveys to find out whether they have structures in place to actively involve their service users in planning and delivering services. Armed with this information NSUN can then target services where there is no user involvement, and support and develop models of good practice.

Says Becky Derham, Wish regional development officer, who is leading the forensic user involvement review: 'Mechanisms to involve service users are more widespread in NHS secure units than in independent hospitals, but even in the NHS, forensic service user involvement can be just an add-on to the host mental health trust's user involvement structures. That generally doesn't work very well – the issues for people in acute inpatient and forensic units are very different.'

**Contact: Joyce Kallevik, director of Wish, at [j.kallevik@womenatwish.org.uk](mailto:j.kallevik@womenatwish.org.uk); tel: 020 7017 2828**



Patricia Chambers (left) and Sarah Yiannoullou with the *Dancing to Our own Tunes* report

# COMMISSIONING

## A POSTCODE LOTTERY

**We need clear guidelines to ensure PCTs genuinely involve service users when they make decisions about commissioning mental health services.**

Primary care trusts – the NHS organisations responsible for planning and commissioning mental health services for their local populations – are required by law to involve service users when they make decisions about how they spend their money and what services they ensure are provided locally. So too are NHS trusts that provide mental health services. But how they do it is up to them and the extent to which mental health service users are meaningfully consulted and involved varies hugely around the country.

In some areas, PCTs and trusts are paying local service user groups to consult with and represent service users. Others directly employ service user representatives to do this work.

NSUN says there needs to be clear guidance from the Department of Health on service user involvement, and enough resources to ensure it's done properly. Too often, there is a token service user presence on decision-making bodies, and the views of local service users are pretty much ignored. NSUN also says too little investment is going into supporting local service user groups to build their confidence and skills in providing user input to the commissioning process.

Says Anne Beales, NSUN management committee member: 'There needs to be a level of investment in local service user groups so people are trained and supported to think strategically and contribute meaningfully to policy agendas and inform and influence commissioners. There's been no consistent funding for service user involvement. There's the demand that it happens, but whether it does or not is a postcode lottery.'

There are, in fact, already guidelines on 'how to do service user involvement'. Back in January 2007 NIMHE (the Department of Health's mental health service development agency, now the National Mental Health Development Unit) published a report called Valuing Involvement. The report sets out clear guidance for commissioners based on research into service user involvement in NIMHE under its Making a Real Difference project.

Independent service user researcher Jan Wallcraft, who co-wrote the guidelines with Mark Leveson, points to the report's subtitle: 'Supporting involvement at a local level by investing in service user and carer led groups'. She stresses the importance of this grassroots capacity building: 'PCTs often have a limited understanding of what user involvement is. It's no good just saying you want service users to take part in planning. You have to put enough money into it to support and train people, so they are not isolated from the groups and individuals they represent.' Too often, this just doesn't happen.

### Bad practice

Reg McKenna, managing director of NEST (North Essex Stronger Together), a service user run organisation in North Essex, has had a very bruising experience with their local mental health service commissioning consortium. NEST and Sunrise, the service user involvement organisation in south Essex, worked closely with the five PCTs and three county councils responsible for commissioning



**'Grassroots training is the first rung on the ladder to participation'**

Reg McKenna

services across the whole of the county to draw up a specification for service user and carer involvement, only to find they failed at the first hurdle when they submitted a tender to do the work. 'Our bid wasn't even looked at because we didn't meet one of the criteria, which hadn't been published when the tenders were invited, that the contract value of the tender shouldn't exceed 25% of the annual turnover of the organisation submitting the tender. Given that we were tendering for a contract worth some £240,000, that meant our organisation had to have a turnover of about £1 million to qualify. I had to make it clear that they would be hard-pressed to find a service user run organisation in the country that would meet that criterion,' he says.

Having managed to persuade the commissioners to discount the turnover requirement, NEST and Sunrise were still unsuccessful in their bid. 'We majored on the need to provide good quality, consistent training for service users across the board. You need that grassroots training as the first rung on the ladder for people who don't have the confidence and self-esteem you need to be able to participate. We created modules for people to participate at different levels. The commissioners said they wanted to "shift the balance of power and make user involvement a reality in the commissioning process" and we said "This is what you need to do to make a fundamental change to the way you commission services."

Both organisations were relying on getting the work. Sunrise has had to close down and make all of its staff redundant. NEST has had to close its office, five staff have lost their jobs and there are just enough funds to continue to employ Reg and one of the Sunrise officers part-time until the end of the year. His advice to other service user organisations putting in similar bids is: 'Be extremely careful. Ensure the full criteria for how tenders are going to be evaluated are properly published.'

### Working together

Catherine Ingram is chief executive of Derbyshire Voice, which holds the contract with Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire County PCT, the joint commissioners for the county, to provide service user involvement in the county's mental health service commissioning process. Derbyshire Voice employs 30 representatives to consult with service users throughout the county and report their views back to feed into



# COMMISSIONING



**'We want to be accountable to local service users'**

**Some of Derbyshire Voice's volunteer representatives**

meetings with the commissioners. 'Previously we had individuals going to meetings with commissioners and it was very much their point of view. We want to be accountable to local service users, which is why we brought in a very organised structure. That representation and feedback is crucial,' she says.

Derbyshire Voice is an independent organisation, and registered charity and limited company. Their contract with the commissioners is worth some £240,000 a year. 'The key factor has been having people in the PCT and councils who have pushed service user involvement forward locally and believe it is a must-do, not an add-on. You need partners in the other organisations and the belief that user involvement is fundamental. We do feel we have made a difference in the way things are done. A lot of the decisions are made nationally, but how they are implemented is often down to local decision-making, which we can influence,' Ingram says.

What she would like is more funding so they can provide training and support for service users doing the work. 'We need to provide peer support, or you are setting people up to fail.'

Graham Saxton, a former service user himself, is the mental health commissioning lead within Derbyshire County PCT. He says that dialogue with commissioners is essential to making service user

involvement work: 'You have to have a relationship with the NHS, rather than sitting at a distance. You need to learn what the government and local targets are, and how these can be best brought together to meet your needs and the commissioners' needs. You need trust, transparency and collaboration. When you start to understand each other you can get progress.'

Saxton believes NSUN has a key role here: 'There are many user groups across the country that are facing similar challenges. NSUN's role is to link these up where people have done the learning and pass that on to other groups.'

## Looking forward

Maurice Burns, programme manager for the National Mental Health Development Unit's (NMHDU) effective mental health commissioning programme, says they are keen to build on the MARD project. As part of its World Class Commissioning development initiative, the Department of Health specifically expects commissioners to show improvement in involving patients and the public in their work. In mental health 'it's patchy – there are some examples of good practice, but nothing very organised,' Burns admits.

NSUN has met with Burns to discuss the NMHDU's plans for a project to work with a service user led organisation and a Strategic Health Authority to develop a 'charter', or guidelines, for service user involvement in commissioning. 'We are particularly interested to look at the peer support model, where trained peer specialists are part of mainstream mental health provision, often based in third sector voluntary organisations, to see how that might work in commissioning. If you can change mental health practice by having peer specialists working on a paid and equal basis alongside the mental health team, as evidence from other countries like the US and New Zealand shows, we think this is a model that can similarly influence the commissioning process,' Burns believes.

NSUN is a lead partner in a major national conference this autumn to discuss service user involvement in World Class Mental Health Commissioning. The conference is organised by Humana, an independent company contracted by the Department of Health to support PCTs in their commissioner role. NSUN will be leading a workshop to discuss proposals for a charter for service user involvement in commissioning.

**World Class Mental Health Commissioning 2009: Making an Impact** takes place on 19 October, in central London. For details call Hanisha on 020 8541 1399 or email [hanisha@healthcare-events.co.uk](mailto:hanisha@healthcare-events.co.uk)

Leveson M, Wallcraft J (2007). Valuing involvement: supporting involvement at a local level by investing in service user and carer led groups. London: CSIP/NIMHE. Available at: [www.mard.csip.org.uk/guidelines-and-standards/commissioning.html](http://www.mard.csip.org.uk/guidelines-and-standards/commissioning.html)

# GOOD PRACTICE

## PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

**There's a wealth of expertise and enterprise in the service user movement, as the groups and organisations profiled here – all members of NSUN – demonstrate**



Kathryn Livingston (left), with Melanie Goodwin, chair of FPP

### First Person Plural

First Person Plural is a national organisation for people with trauma-related, complex dissociative experiences, including Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). It was founded 11 years ago by Kathryn Livingston. It has no paid staff, and

relies entirely on a small number of volunteers, most of whom are survivors. It has a membership of about 170 people UK-wide.

'I founded it because I needed it. I'd been in the mental health system for 25 years with all kinds of labels and treatment failures before my DID was recognised. But then there was no one who knew anything about it to support me,' Kathryn says. 'Professionals' attitudes are improving but, sadly, it is still unusual to be correctly diagnosed and receive effective treatment and care from the NHS.'

FPP is a registered charity. Its main aims are to provide information and facilitate mutual support. It responds to enquiries, publishes a newsletter and runs two or three members meetings in different locations across the country during the year. It also delivers training, which it has developed itself, to staff and volunteers in the NHS, social services, the voluntary sector, and the prison service. Training brings in its main income, on top of the £10 membership subscription fee.

'It's important in all areas of mental health to get the survivor perspective but for us it's particularly important because there is so little awareness from any perspective out there,' Kathryn says.

**T: 01902 763 490**

**E: [fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk](mailto:fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk)**

**W: [www.firstpersonplural.org.uk](http://www.firstpersonplural.org.uk)**

### Raise!

Launched originally as a Hampshire County Council funded service user involvement group, Raise! is an independent user-managed training and consultancy company based in Basingstoke, but with a national remit. A not-for-profit limited company (it declared independence from the county council in 2007), it is staffed by three paid workers and (currently) 14 volunteers, who are paid on a sessional basis for training and consultancy work. It has also recently started taking on affiliated trainers based elsewhere in the country. Raise! offers an annual calendar of courses at its premises in Basingstoke or at clients' own venues, and bespoke training packages to meet clients' specific training needs. Courses include diagnosis-specific training, training for service users and staff in WRAP (wellness recovery action planning), the Mental Capacity and Mental Health Acts, mental health and elderly people, mental health and people with learning disabilities, and more.

Its consultancy work includes a recently completed national project for the Department of Health to compile generic mental

health training materials for prison staff. Says Tracey Butler, managing director: 'For me, Raise! has been my recovery. I spent a long time being very unwell, and finding an environment that is welcoming and understanding has allowed me to turn the negative of being diagnosed with schizophrenia into a positive of helping other people recover and develop skills through working with us. People with mental health problems are more than capable of running a successful commercial business, and that sends a very powerful message to challenge stigma and discrimination.'

**T: 01256 476 981**

**W: [www.raise.org.uk](http://www.raise.org.uk)**



Raise! staff and volunteers

**'We send a very powerful message to challenge stigma and discrimination'**

**Raise! managing director  
Tracey Butler**

### Making Waves

Maving Waves is a not-for-profit limited company set up in 2003 to provide training and user-focused monitoring to the NHS and social services, universities and the voluntary sector, mainly in and around Nottingham. It survives entirely on contracts from clients. It delivers mental health awareness training to student nurses, social workers and other health and social care professionals at the two local universities, and carries out user-focused mental health service evaluations for Nottingham Healthcare NHS Trust. It also gets work from local voluntary sector organisations and housing associations.

Making Waves employs four salaried part-time staff and has about 12 volunteers, all people who have used mental health services, whom it trains and pays on a sessional basis to do the training and service evaluation work. Last year it achieved an annual turnover of some £60,000.

But surviving without grant funding is a struggle, says Torsten Shaw, founder and director: 'There is often a gap between what clients are prepared to pay you and what you need to meet the full costs. Making Waves is entirely made up of people who have had their own experience of mental distress, and we provide them with a lot of preparation and support. There is also a high turnover of people moving on, which is good for them but difficult for us because we then have to train new people to replace them. As a social firm, we do need other funding to provide that additional element of support, and that is something we are looking into.'

**W: [www.makingwaves.org](http://www.makingwaves.org)**



# GOOD PRACTICE

## Sutton Mental Health Foundation

Sutton Mental Health Foundation (SMHF) was launched in 1987 as a mental health self-help support group. It became a registered charity in 1994, and a limited company in 1998. It employs 13 staff, all part-time except for one full-time community development worker, paid for by the PCT through the national Delivering Race Equality programme to do outreach work with local black and minority ethnic communities. They are in the process of recruiting a second CDW, also paid for by the PCT.

Its main activity is providing weekly daytime and out-of-hours drop-ins for mental health service users across the London Borough of Sutton, funded by the Borough Council. It also runs four hearing voices groups based at different community venues and in the local psychiatric unit.

One of SMHF's important developments in recent years is its unique peer support service, based on the model of 'intentional peer support' developed in the US by Shery Mead. Funded largely through a one-year grant from Skills for Care, SMHF sent four people – two staff and two peer support workers – to the US to train as peer support work trainers with Shery Mead and her partner, Chris Hansen. They now have their own training programme for peer support workers in the borough, led by SMHF development worker John Nurse. They have so far trained about 20 people, and run regular peer support sessions on the local acute psychiatric admission ward – under a service level agreement initially with South West London and St George's NHS Mental Health Trust and now with Sutton and Merton PCT – and a Sunday peer support drop-in at a community venue in Sutton.

SMHF would like to extend the peer support service into the community, and to set up a peer-run crisis centre and a safe house in the borough. Ultimately, they would like to establish the service as an independent social enterprise.

**T: 020 8770 0172**

**E: [admin@smhf.org.uk](mailto:admin@smhf.org.uk)**

**W: [www.smhf.org.uk](http://www.smhf.org.uk)**



SMHF's core activity is running drop-ins for local service users – its ambition is to expand its ground-breaking peer support service

## Business Boosters Network

Business Boosters Network is mental health and well-being training and consultancy brokerage company. Founded in 2007, it is a community interest company, which means all its profits are ploughed back into the business. It has over 50 members, all people with experience of using mental health services who are either already established trainers, therapists and research



Business Boosters Stephanie de la Haye (front row, second from right) and Bernie Hannon Rignall (front row left), with colleagues from Mind and Mental Health North East

consultants or are just starting out in self-employment. BBN draws on the skills of its members to bid for and negotiate training and consultancy contracts with clients, and also provides training, advice and information and a network of peer support to help those just starting out as freelance consultants and trainers. The aim is to break through the barriers that stop many people with experience of mental ill health from getting back into paid work.

BBN offers training and consultancy services in a wide range of topics, from general mental health awareness and diagnosis-specific issues through to stress management, self-esteem and confidence building, evaluation and audit and mental health research.

BBN currently has no paid staff: all income goes to the people delivering the work, and into building the business. 'The more members we have, the more training we do, and the more money we have to help other service users to get going,' says Stephanie de la Haye, chair and co-founder (with BBN director Bernadette Hannon Rignall) of BBN.

BBN is currently working on a toolkit for people setting up their own business or social enterprise, which will be published through Mind. They are also looking to link up with other organisations to enable them to draw on a wider range of skills and expertise and bid for bigger contracts.

**T: 0114 242 1700**

**W: [www.bbn.uk.com](http://www.bbn.uk.com)**

## JOIN US!

The service user movement has massively increased in strength and influence over the past decade. More and more, users are providing services to meet our own needs for support, and are playing a central and recognised role in shaping the services provided by statutory mental health and social care services and the voluntary sector. We need a national network to support this growing diversity of groups and organisations and strengthen the user voice.

### NSUN's aims are to:

- facilitate active links between service user groups and individuals
- build capacity for service user groups
- broker and facilitate access to service users for purposes of influencing and informing policy-makers and planners
- develop a training programme in confidence building and committee, interview and staff training skills.

NSUN is here to help the individuals and groups that make up our very diverse user movement make their voices heard. We are not here to speak for service user groups and organisations.

### What do we offer?

Our protected Online User Database contains details of all our members, individuals and groups, so members can search for and contact others with similar interests.

We offer practical assistance for new groups on important issues such as funding, budgets, managing staff, bidding for contracts and applying for grants.

We organise conferences, support user-led research into issues that concern our membership and help our members to influence policy on behalf of service users at national and regional level.

We link groups and individuals seeking and providing training in assertiveness and confidence-building and committee procedures and management skills, to build capacity and support the independent voice of individual service users, groups and the movement as a whole.

If you would like more information about NSUN, visit our website at [www.nsun.org.uk](http://www.nsun.org.uk), or fill out and return the form below. Membership is completely FREE to service user individuals, groups and organisations. Membership is also open to allies, who are asked to pay a fee on a sliding scale according to income.\*

\* Please contact NSUN for further details or visit [www.nsun.org.uk](http://www.nsun.org.uk)

## NSUN membership application form

I would like to join NSUN. I am a service user individual/group/organisation (please delete as appropriate). My details are as follows.

First name.....  
Last name.....  
Group/organisation name (for groups/organisations only).....  
Address 1.....  
Address 2.....  
Town/City..... County..... Postcode..... Country.....  
Phone number..... Fax..... E-mail address.....  
Website.....

### For groups

#### Region (tick all that apply)

National  East of England  East Midlands  London  Northeast  Northwest  South Central   
South East Coast  Southwest  West Midlands

#### Type of organisation

Voluntary  Statutory  Independent sector  Other

Other (please give details).....

#### Activities (tick all that apply)

Young people  Forensics  BME  Depression  Personality disorder  Women  Elderly  Other

Other (please give details).....

#### Structure (tick all that apply)

Service user led (51% or more)  Service user representation (50% or less)

Independent service user group (100% service user led)

Other (give details).....

Mission statement/Description.....

Number of members  Number of paid staff

Please complete and return to: NSUN, 27–29 Vauxhall Grove, Vauxhall, London SW8 1SY T: 0207 820 8982 E: [info@nsun.org.uk](mailto:info@nsun.org.uk)