

*Look out for our new-look newsletter
in the new year!*



Service User Research Group England
UK Mental Health Research Network

Winter bulletin, 2006

What is SURGE?

SURGE is the Service User Research Group in England and is the service user arm of the UK Mental Health Research Network (MHRN). We have been set up to support mental health service users and people from universities and NHS trusts as they work together on mental health research. The SURGE team currently consists of Jonathan Bindman, Jan Wallcraft, Louise Morgan, Karen Robinson and Leonie Barron.

For more information on the MHRN and SURGE, please see our website at:
www.mhrn.info/surge.html

Latest News

Staff

Following the departure of Beate Schrank in the summer, we were pleased to welcome a new research worker, Karen Robinson, who started with us in September. Karen is settling in well and has quickly made an appreciable contribution to the work of SURGE. Karen has undergone something of a baptism of fire: shortly after she started with us, Louise Morgan, our other research worker, was taken very seriously ill and rushed to hospital. Following surgery and a long stay in hospital, we were delighted to hear that Lou was well enough to be discharged, but her convalescence is likely to be long and slow. We continue to miss her

enormously. This is not just because of the extra burden of work: she is a great person to have around and makes even bad days bearable. We are all hoping for her speedy recovery and looking forward to her return to work.



Lou: in our thoughts... ...but not in our office

Work

Because of the short staffing, Karen and Leonie are juggling with a slightly heavier workload (please don't feel guilty, Lou – we're learning very quickly how to say "no"!), which explains why you're now reading a mere bulletin, as opposed to a full-blown newsletter. However, progress is still being made.

A major achievement this autumn has been the production of our short, step-by-step guide to good practice in service user involvement. *A Brief Guide to Involving Mental Health Service Users in Research*, developed primarily by Louise and on the brink of completion when she was taken ill, is now at the printers and will soon be available in booklet form. In the mean time, both this new, short guide and the more comprehensive *Guidance for Good Practice*, produced by SURGE last year, are available to download from our website at www.mhrn/info.

Karen has joined Jan Wallcraft, our Operational Manager, in many events around the country, and their presentations, workshops and seminars continue to spread the word about good practice in service user involvement. SURGE will also have a high profile at the MHRN Scientific conference on 18th and 19th January, with the team hosting a session on the first day and Jan Wallcraft presenting a plenary session on the second. In addition,

SURGE has arranged a welcome for service user delegates prior to the start of the conference on the first day.



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Welcome Session at the MHRN Scientific Conference, 2007

Service user delegate?
You're not alone!

Come and meet others in a relaxed
and informal atmosphere.

All service user conference delegates are invited to come and meet each other, and members of the SURGE team, in room 3-3 (the boardroom on level 3) between 8.30am and 9.30am on 18th January. Come and chat, relax, network and have a nice cup of tea before the conference gets underway.



We look forward to meeting you!

The SURGE good practice support exercise continues apace. You may remember reading a report of the state of user involvement in MHRN-adopted projects in our last newsletter, with recommendations and aspirations for improvements. Now we are addressing the other two tiers of the MHRN – the hubs and the research groups – interviewing service users and others involved. Karen, who is concentrating on the hubs, has just a few more interviews to conduct before she starts to collate the information, while Leonie has so far had responses from about half of the research groups, and intends to keep nagging...



Training

SURGE will be involved in running the course *An Introductory Guide to Mental Health Research for Lay People* early next year. Contact us if you're interested in attending.



Finally, please don't forget, an important part of our work is our Research Interest Networking Database: if you are a researcher looking for service users to involve in your project or a service user looking for research to get involved in, our database could meet your needs. We currently have many service users wanting to get involved, and rather fewer projects looking to involve them, so please, if you're running a project on the MHRN, get in touch and we'll give you plenty of help and support!

Contact us

If you want to get in touch with SURGE about any of the items in this bulletin or for any other information, please do so. We all work part time, so don't be disheartened if you don't get an immediate response. Our address is:

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