

"Having a Voice"

The newsletter for Mental Health Carers



charity registration number 1085491

February 2016

For more information about anything in this newsletter, to have your say on mental health issues, or to find out more about our support for carers of people affected by mental illness, please contact a member of the Involvement Team:

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St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford
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sarah.williams@carersinherts.org.uk

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07725 215490
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Or Roma Mills,
Carers Involvement Manager
01992 58 69 69

For any other caring issues or to speak to someone in the office, who can get in touch with Deryn or Sarah to return your call please:

Call: 01992 58 69 69
Email: contact@carersinherts.org.uk
Visit: www.carersinherts.org.uk

Carers in Hertfordshire,
The Red House, 119 Fore Street,
Hertford, SG14 1AX.

Welcome

We hold bi-monthly forums where information and concerns about mental health services are shared. These meetings give carers the chance to meet up, share their views to influence service



development and agree responses to consultations. Why not join us at an upcoming forum? They take place on:

Tuesday 8th March

10.30am - 12.30pm

Coffee from 10am and a light sandwich lunch afterwards.

Tuesday 17th May

1pm - 3pm

A light sandwich lunch is available from 12.30pm

Wednesday 13th July

7pm - 9pm

Tea and cake from 6.30pm.

Tuesday 6th September

10.30am - 12.30pm

Coffee from 10am and a light sandwich lunch afterwards.

Thursday 17th November

1pm - 3pm

A light sandwich lunch is available from 12.30pm

All forums held at Oxlease House, Travellers Lane, Hatfield, AL10 8TJ.

To book your place:

☎ 01992 58 69 69

@ contact@carersinherts.org.uk

If you do not have your own transport and wish to attend please contact us to discuss travel arrangements. We can also cover the costs of alternative care.

Making carers count

Help shape Mental Health Strategy

Hertfordshire Mental Health Strategy is due to be refreshed by April and service commissioners want to hear what carers and service users feel is working well and suggestions for improvements.

The Strategy is reviewed every five years and the latest consultation process started at the Hertfordshire Partnership University Foundation Trust (HPFT) Recovery Conference in October.

At the conference staff from *Carers in Hertfordshire*, *Viewpoint* and commissioners facilitated a workshop entitled *The Future Starts now!* that focused on Community, Choice and Cohesion. Carers, service users and staff shared lots of ideas, which are being considered.

We also held a workshop in October to capture what carers want to see in the Strategy and to influence the new contract that will be drawn up with HPFT.

It was facilitated by Lisa Jacobs from the Integrated Health and Care Commissioning Team. Deryn Sparrow, one of our Mental

Health Involvement Workers, said: "Carers gave us examples of what is working well such as HPFT Beacon Rehab Unit and the various voluntary organisations. They also told us what would be good for the future and with no extra funding it was important for ideas to be achievable within the current financial restriction."

Ideas for the future included:-

- More carer involvement;
- Agencies working closer together such as housing, GPs, inpatient services and community teams;
- More talking therapies
- Timely response and earlier intervention in mental health care
- More local groups/activities with support attending.

If you have other ideas you'd like to be considered for Hertfordshire's Mental Health Strategy, please contact Deryn by email deryn.sparrow@carersinherts.org.uk or call 07725 215490 and she will pass them onto the commissioning team.

Developing a Stronger Voice

Training course giving you the skills to speak up and represent the views and concerns of family carers.



To be held in Hatfield. To book call 01992 58 69 69 or email contact@carersinherts.org.uk

This is a two day course to help you understand how meetings work and get tips to speak out. You then have opportunities to attend meetings, events and forums where carers' views are welcomed, as well as speak directly to those who commission services to try and improve provision.

Hertfordshire NightLight

01923 256391

If you are feeling distressed or in a crisis, Hertfordshire NightLight is an out of hour's crisis service providing safe, welcoming support.

Turning Point and Herts Mind Network provide this service with centres in Ware, Watford plus Hemel Hempstead and Stevenage, which also have beds if an overnight stay will help.

The centres are open Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday nights from 6pm-2am, every week of the year. To refer someone please call between 6pm and 7pm.

There is also a helpline that is staffed by a team of Crisis Support Workers and Peer Mentors. The helpline is open from 8pm to 12am (midnight) on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

You can refer yourself or be referred by a professional, family member or friend. To learn more please visit www.turning-point.co.uk/hertfordshire-nightlight

We respond to Trust's 'Good' rating

At Carers in Hertfordshire we hear from many carers who are not satisfied with the mental health services provided for their relatives. Consequently, we were surprised that an inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2015 rated Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) 'Good'. This was out of four possible ratings: Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate. This did not seem consistent with the experiences of the carers we are in touch with.

Here we look at the community-based mental health services findings. The article explains the CQC's rating and also identifies concerns about staffing and care co-ordination that do reflect carers' experiences.

The CQC rated HPFT community services 'Good' because:

- Staff had completed safeguarding training and there were good examples of multidisciplinary working across the teams.
- Of the good range of psychological therapies available.
- Staff showed a good understanding of people's individual needs.
- Most of the service users and carers who CQC spoke to were pleased with the care and support they received.

However, the Overall Summary of the Findings highlighted seven areas of concern, three relating to staff issues:

- There were a high number of vacancies and the use of agency/bank staff across the teams affected the continuity of people's care.
- A number of people had not been allocated a Care Co-ordinator within 28 days. People experienced a delay in allocation and frequent changes in their Care Co-ordinator.
- Staff were unhappy with the recent transformation and this affected their morale.

Another concern was that care plans were not always up-to-date and did not always show how the person using the service and/or their carers were involved with their care and treatment.

Roma Mills, our Involvement Manager, said: "HPFT provides many excellent and innovative mental health services. These include the Acute Day Treatment Units, Host Families and Peer Support/Listening. However, our experience of working with carers suggests that staffing issues within HPFT remain a real concern."

She continued: "Critically, staff vacancies and the use of agency and bank staff impact on the quality of treatment and care available to service users living in the community. This inevitably, has a big impact on families and friends."

We believe that national and international literature shows that a therapeutic alliance between the service user, carer and mental health care team is central to the recovery process. This is clearly illustrated in the Triangle of Care, which we want to see working locally.

Carers in Hertfordshire is working with HPFT to deliver a training programme to HPFT staff. Training focuses on the underpinning principles when working with carers and aims to improve their experience of mental health services.

You can read the CQC Quality Report at www.hpft.nhs.uk

 Outstanding

 Good ✓

 Requires improvement

 Inadequate

Support groups for carers of someone with mental illness

Carers Support Group

Contact: Rod Cottrell 07794 633404

Meets: Bi-monthly various times and dates so please call.

Where: CHMS, St Paul's, Slippers Hill, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 5XY.

Dacorum & District Support Group

Contact: Dick Lovelace 01442 823712 or 07836 213209

Meets: First Thursday of the month 7.45pm – 10pm

Where: Herts Mind Network, 139 Leighton Buzzard Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1HN

Depression Alliance St Albans Self-Help Group

Contact: Peter 07941 450 345

Meets: Third Friday of the month from 7.30pm

Where: St Albans

www.depressionalliance-stalbans.org.uk

Guideposts Trust Carers Support Group

Contact: Lin Fellows or Carol Williams on 01923 223554

Meets: Last Monday of the month 7pm - 9pm

Where: Guideposts Trust, Henry Smith House, 3-5 Estcourt Road, Watford, WD17 2PT.

OCD Carer Group

Contact: Jenny Robinson 07769 639186

Meets: Wednesday evening every four weeks.

Where: Stevenage - for more details visit www.feellighter.co.uk

Mind in Mid Herts OCD group

Has groups that meet in **Stevenage** and **St Albans**. For more details for Stevenage please call 01438 369216 and for St Albans call 01727 865070.

Herts Mind Network - Carer Support Groups held at their wellbeing centres in **Hemel Hempstead, Waltham Cross, Watford** and **Bishop's Stortford**.

Contact: 02037 273600,
email: info@hertsmindnetwork.org
or visit www.hertsmindnetwork.org

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) Carers Support Group

Contact: Jo Edwards 01727 804700

Meets: Second Monday of the month 7- 9pm

Where: HPFT 99 Waverley Road, St Albans, AL3 5TL.

HPFT Eating Disorder Carer Group

Contact: Eating Disorder Team 01707 364006

Where: Welwyn Garden City the third Thursday of the month 6pm - 7.30pm and

St Albans the second Tuesday of the month 4pm - 5.30pm.

HPFT Personality Disorder Carer Group

Contact: Tracy Hamm 07833 381295

Meets: First Monday of the month (or second Monday for Bank Holidays)

Where: Watford Wellbeing Centre, Watford,
For more details about any of these visit www.hpft.nhs.uk

North Herts Mental Health Support Group

Contact: Us on 01992 58 69 69

Meets: Third Thursday of the month at 11am.

Where: The Community Hub, 43 Station Road, Letchworth SG6 3BQ

Caring and Coping Course

If you are currently caring for someone experiencing mental illness this course is for YOU!

The free course with Rethink Mental Illness is held over six weeks and provides carers with skills and support to improve their health and wellbeing. Learn about mental illness and its treatment, the mental health system, problem-solving, communication skills, dealing with challenges and looking after yourself.

2016 Dates and Areas

April – Bishops Stortford

May - Hemel Hempstead

September – Hertford

November - Watford

If you wish to attend please call Jo Clack 01920 463663 or email jonathan.clack@rethink.org