

# "Having a Voice"

The newsletter for Mental Health Carers



charity registration number 1085491

August 2017

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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[sarah.williams@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:sarah.williams@carersinherts.org.uk)

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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.

Call: 01992 58 69 69  
Email: [contact@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:contact@carersinherts.org.uk)  
Visit: [www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk)

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

*Making carers count*

## Welcome

It's been a while since our last newsletter and we wanted to share with you what Carers in Hertfordshire and we - Sarah Williams and Deryn Sparrow, Mental Health Involvement Workers,



have been doing to support carers of someone with a mental health condition. We have held five Forums, our January Forum was led by Carer Representative Dick Lovelace and looked at ways to make carer involvement more effective. We agreed that our Forums should be more focused and that speakers would be asked to concentrate on specific topics and be provided with the questions carers want answered ahead of the meeting.

Other Forum topics covered have included the Hertfordshire Complex Needs Service, the Triangle of Care and Physical Health Checks (see article on page 3). You can find out more about the Forums and upcoming meetings on page two.

We continue to support carers to have a voice at various meetings and have organised special events to give carers a better understanding of mental health. Events such as a:

- **Mental Health Recovery Workshop:** Sarah co-produced and co-delivered a one day workshop with two carers. The event evaluation showed most of the carers who attended now fully understood the meaning of recovery in mental health.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) Information Session:** Dr Davis Mpavaenda, Principal Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapist at Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) gave an inspirational talk based on what carers wanted to hear about, such as treatment. Notes from this meeting can be found on the mental health page of our website [www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk)

If you would like any topics covered in future newsletters or Forums please get in touch, our details are on the left.

## Would you like to help shape the development of Mental Health Services in Hertfordshire?

We're looking for carers with experience of supporting someone with a mental health condition to join a carers' network and have more of a say in the design and development of local mental health services.

The aim of our Carers' Mental Health Network is to provide carers with a platform to speak up and have their voices heard on an individual and collective basis. They can also use their experiences to help improve the services that are available to them and to the people they care for.

As part of the Network you can:

- Meet other carers and discuss matters of common concern.
- Meet and talk to commissioners and service providers and have a say in what services are working well and what services

are not effective or supportive.

- Influence the design and development of new and improved services.

Our Mental Health Involvement Workers Deryn and Sarah said: "**We believe we can make a difference by working together!**"

Deryn and Sarah will be pleased to receive your views in ways that best suit you and welcome you to the Mental Health Carers' Forum, held bi-monthly in Hatfield (*picture below taken at a Forum*).



### New Caring and Coping Courses

**If you care for someone experiencing mental illness this course is for YOU!**

The free course led by Rethink Mental Illness is held over six weeks and provides carers with skills and support to improve their health and wellbeing.

Learn more about mental illness and its treatment, the mental health system, problem-solving, communication skills, dealing with challenges and looking after yourself.

The next course is in **Hoddesdon**:  
Thursdays starting on Thursday 14th September 2017, 10am -12pm noon.  
Further courses are being planned for:  
**Potters Bar, Watford and Hatfield.**

**If you would wish to attend or find out about future courses please call Jo Clack on 01920 463663 or email him at [jonathan.clack@rethink.org](mailto:jonathan.clack@rethink.org)**



### Upcoming Mental Health Carers' Forums

Our Forums provide an opportunity to hear from speakers on specific topics related to your caring role. You can also share your experiences and meet other carers.

**Wednesday 20th September 2017  
10.30am - 12.30pm**

**Topic: HPFT Good to Great Strategy**

**Thursday 16th November 2017  
1pm - 3pm**

**Topic: Supported Accommodation**

**Tuesday 23rd January 2018  
Topic: Benefits and Mental Health  
10.30am - 12.30pm**

(All sessions include a light sandwich lunch)

Forums are held at Oxlease House,  
Travellers Lane, Hatfield, AL10 8TJ.

**To book your place:**

**☎ 01992 58 69 69**

**@ [contact@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:contact@carersinherts.org.uk)**

**🌐 [www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk)**

Please contact us to discuss travel arrangements if you do not have your own transport.

# The importance of Physical Health Checks for people affected by mental illness

For many years, Lynn Burling, one of our Carer Representatives has been working hard to make people affected by mental illness aware of the importance of Physical Health Checks.



Lynn explains: "People with mental illness have just as much right to good physical health care as anyone else but, too often, this doesn't happen. Any physical symptoms are often overlooked as they are assumed to be part of their mental health

diagnosis. Carers, families and friends can be frustrated when they try to get physical health care for the person they support.

"As a carer for my son, I first experienced this 14 years ago and since then I have been trying to raise awareness of the situation. Overall I think things are slowly improving but we still have a long way to go if NHS professionals are to get better at prioritising the health of people with mental illness. "

Physical Health Checks were the focus for our July Forum and Charli Hadden, Senior Innovation Officer from Rethink Mental Illness

and Dr. Champa Ballalle, Consultant Psychiatrist from Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) spoke about how these worked within NHS England and from an HPFT perspective.

Charli and Dr Ballalle highlighted the importance of annual Physical Health Checks and more often if needed. Checks are part of the Care Plan Approach (CPA).

- Two of the reasons they gave as to why Physical Health Checks are important were
- Life expectancy for people affected by mental illness can be 15-20 years less than the general population. The main reasons for this include side effects of antipsychotic medication and poor diet.
  - Two-thirds of these early deaths are from preventable physical health problems such as diabetes and heart disease.

Mental Health Services are responsible for monitoring physical health and medication side-effects for the first 12 months, or until the person's condition has stabilised, whichever is longer. Responsibility may then transfer to primary care under shared care arrangements, where information is shared between GP and secondary service.

## The Annual Event for Carers

Tuesday 26th September 2017

10am - 3.30pm

Drop-in session from 4pm - 5.30pm.

The Fielder Centre, Hatfield Avenue,  
Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9TP.

If you are an unpaid carer please join us to:

- Get information and advice from us and other organisations that support carers.
- Meet other carers.
- Tell us about your experience of caring.
- Learn about what we have been doing over the last 12 months and our plans for the future.



Places for the 10am - 3.30pm session are limited, so book early to avoid disappointment. Book via:

Phone: 01992 58 69 69

Email: [contact@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:contact@carersinherts.org.uk)

Online at: [www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk)

# 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.

## Caring for Carers in Mental Health Dacorum

**Contact:** Dick Lovelace 01442 823712 or 07850 186210  
**Meets:** First Thursday of the month 7.45pm – 10pm  
**Where:** Herts Mind Network, 139 Leighton Buzzard Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1HN.

## Depression St Albans Self-Help Group

**Contact:** Peter 07941 450 345  
[www.depressionalliance-stalbans.org.uk](http://www.depressionalliance-stalbans.org.uk)  
**Meets:** Third Friday of the month from 7.30pm  
**Where:** St Albans.

## 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:** Tuesday evening every four weeks.  
**Where:** Stevenage - for more details visit [www.feellighter.co.uk](http://www.feellighter.co.uk)

## Mind in Mid Herts

**OCD groups in Stevenage and St Albans.**  
Call 01438 369216 for Stevenage details and 01727 865070 for St Albans.

**Personality Disorder Group** meets in **Welwyn Garden City**. Call Nicky Kuklys on 01438 369216 for details.

## Carer Support Groups:

**Stevenage** - meets on the third Tuesday of the month in Stevenage. Call 01438 369216 for details.

**St Albans** - meets first Thursday of month, call 01727 865070 for details.

## Herts Mind Network Carer Support Groups held at their wellbeing centres in Letchworth, Hemel Hempstead, Ware and Watford.

**Contact:** 02037 273600,  
email: [info@hertsmindnetwork.org](mailto:info@hertsmindnetwork.org)  
or visit [www.hertsmindnetwork.org](http://www.hertsmindnetwork.org)

## North Herts Mental Health Support Group

**Contact:** 01992 58 69 69 for details  
**Meets:** Third Thursday of the month at 10am – 12pm noon  
**Where:** The Wellbeing Centre, 28 Broadway, Letchworth, SG6 3AA.



Hertfordshire Partnership  
University NHS Foundation Trust



## HPFT Carers Groups

**Contact:** Rob Asplin 01727 804700  
**Meets:** Second Monday of the month 7- 9pm  
**Where:** 99 Waverley Road, St Albans, AL3 5TL.

**Contact:** Arron or Lucy 01992 818600  
**Meets:** Second Wednesday of month 6pm – 8pm  
**Where:** Holly Lodge, 45 Church Lane, Cheshunt, EN8 0DR.

**Contact:** 02087313000 or Tracy Hamm 07826922611  
**Meets:** Last Wednesday of month 10am -12pm noon  
**Where:** Civic Offices, 291 Shenley Road, Borehamwood, WD6 1TG.

## Eating Disorder Carer Group

**Meets:** second Tuesday of month 6.00pm - 7.30pm  
**Where:** Albany Lodge, Church Crescent, St Albans, AL3 5JB.  
**Contact** Karen Huxtable or Sonia Withey for details 01707 364006.

## Personality Disorder Carer Group

**Contact:** Tracy Hamm 07833 381295.  
**Meets:** First Monday of the month (or second Monday for Bank Holidays) 10.30am - 12.30pm  
**Where:** Watford Wellbeing Centre, 501 St Albans Road, Watford, WD24 7RZ.

HPFT's Physical Health Conference is on November 16th 2017. To learn more please contact Deryn or Sarah (details on page 1).