



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE USERS' COMMITTEE

Notes of the meeting on 9 November 2006 at The Shaw Trust

Present: Sandra (Shaw Trust); Steve (HUBB); Eleanor (Tulip - WBC); Antony (Tulip - WBC); Lorraine (Rethink); Ron (Porters Avenue); Julie; Jenny; Margaret; Andrew (notes)

Apologies: Michael (Tulip - JDC)

1. Introductions and Welcome

Andrew welcomed everyone and thanked them all for coming to the first meeting. Everyone introduced themselves. Andrew explained the purpose of the Mental Health Service Users' Committee (MHSUC); what it was being asked to do and how it would connect with the Local Implementation Team (LIT), other groups and individual service users. There was a good discussion about this and everyone seemed to think the group was a good idea. Andrew said that there would not be any payment for attending the group (although we would like to meet over lunch, with a sandwich lunch provided free). However, service users would receive payment for attending the LIT. **ACTION:** Andrew said he would find out how this would be done from Bernard.

2. Service User views

There was a good and wide-ranging discussion and sharing of views as to some of the good things about mental health services and some of the challenges. These were some of the highlights of the discussions:

- It was felt that there was not enough information on the wards as to what services were available in the community.
- It wasn't always clear which teams provided which services and how you got the services. It can be confusing and it might be helpful to have a simple diagram/map with explanations.
- There is a new Directory of services out, but it isn't clear how publicly available this is.
- The group felt that for service users to attend the LIT regularly on a rotational basis would be very helpful. Lorraine, Eleanor and Steve would all be interested in going when Antony and Michael step down.

- Everyone agreed how important (real) work and meaningful daytime activities are. It was acknowledged that there is often a lot of talk about work, but when it comes down to it, there is lots of support, help with CVs, job training and lots of other training, but very few real opportunities for work.
- It was felt that the creation of Social Firms might be a positive way forward.
- It was acknowledged that there is a lot of prejudice and discrimination in the workplace
- It was agreed that some people may never be able to work and it was also agreed that it is really important to try work out (therapeutic earnings?) before taking a full-time job.
- It was agreed that it is important to try and inform and influence the LIT, but it is also important to find other groups and individuals to influence, such as MPs and Councillors; it would be good to invite an influential Councillor to the group.
- The group could also feed back views to the Voluntary Sector Provider Forum and could make links with other service user groups.
- It was agreed to try and get some more service users to attend the group. Jenny would give flyers out at the Recovery Conference.
- It was agreed that Andrew would ask Bernard Hannah if service users could see a copy of the Employment Strategy.

3. Name for the group

Andrew said that the name Mental Health Service Users' Committee was not a very good name for the group and it would be great if someone could come up with a better name. Antony thought it would be good to have a name that explains what the group does but is also a word in itself - he suggested something like Community Health Action and Talk (CHAT). **ACTION:** Other members of the group would think about it and bring any ideas back to the next meeting.

4. Next meeting

It was agreed that future meetings should be linked to when the LIT meets. The next meeting will be at 1.00pm on 11 January 2007. Andrew will try and book a room at the Civic Centre and we will make sure there is a sandwich lunch provided. **ACTION:** Andrew to confirm meeting arrangements with everyone.