

THE CAMDEN BUGLE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF CAMDEN MENTAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

ARE CUTS INEVITABLE?

Care Trust Board meetings often seem to try and leave the bad news until last. Perhaps this is why the projected financial situation for the coming year was taken so late in the public part of the April meeting and only discussed fully in the confidential part. Does this mean that the news is too frightening for the public to hear? The board papers report that there could be a deficit as large as £5 000 000. This would come about for a number of reasons, but the result would almost certainly be that services would have to be cut because the 'books must balance'.

The possible consequences for service users and Care Trust staff are very worrying. When will they be involved in the debate about what action should be taken or invited to campaign to keep the services that they value? The Board's view seems to be we should wait and see what negotiations will bring. If we wait overlong then it may be too late to prevent the loss of the things we value most.

NO VOTES IN IT

The campaigning period before a General Election is often one in which politicians seeking election make promises about what they will do if elected. Interestingly, none of the parties currently seem to be making any pledges about improving the mental health of the Nation or putting more money into the mental illness services except where those services deal with people who are detained mainly on the grounds of their dangerousness.

It could be that this is historical and stems from the time that peers, felons and lunatics were excluded from voting. The law has been changed now so that only peers and prisoners serving long-term sentences cannot exercise the right to vote, although it is doubtful that many of those detained as prisoners or patients actually know of this right and are given advice about how to exercise it. It is more likely the acute care side of the National Health Service is the one that people worry most about and which can command the most resources.

Whoever wins, it seems unlikely that it will bring about great changes in the funding of the mental health system and increase the resources to provide proper care for people.

CHANGES TO THE PATIENTS' FORUMS

Depending who you listen to, the increased Patient and Public Involvement in Health has either been a great success or a complete failure. Whichever of these is correct, what is clear is that the system has not been particularly successful with every Trust in the country having its own Forum and difficulty in recruitment and resourcing.

Changes have taken place already – the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health is about to be abolished and may hold the record for the shortest existence of a Government Agency. The Healthcare Commission will take over their role. The Forums themselves will be rationalised so that there will be a single Forum for each PCT from August 2006 and this will have a Chair and Members who have been vetted and appointed by the Appointments Commission. It begins to sound as if they will be composed of the 'great and the good' and charged with not 'rocking the boat'.

CMHC NEWS

'BYE

CMHC is saying goodbye to a number of friends and collaborators, old and new:

Joan Greaves who has acted as the Consultant in the Camden Best Value Review of Mental health Day Provision leaves Camden to take up a post in Islington. Joan worked with CBUG and CMHC in obtaining the views of service users on the Best Value Review and in involving service users in the various committees that oversaw the ongoing process. She leaves at the time when the Review is being implemented and this may be damaging to the process. However, before her departure she set up three Committees, chaired by voluntary sector representatives, to look at the ways and means of implementing the changes in Day Services.

Myrna Daye and Alice Liken may not be names that are well known to many service users but over a number of years their help to CMHC has been invaluable. Alice and Myrna have been the long-time Personal Assistants to Executive Directors at The Camden & Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust and they are both retiring after long service in the NHS. CMHC will miss their great knowledge and support.

CMHC SPRING PARTY & DISCO

The CMHC Spring Party & Disco will be held at The London Irish Centre on Friday, 20th May. The Party will start at 8.00 pm and run on till late. All service users and their friends are cordially invited to join us for this event where there will be free buffet food and soft drinks and a Pay Bar. Music will be overseen by CMHC's Trustee, Hugh Sturrock. If you have any particular CDs that you would like him to play then you are welcome to bring them along on the night.

SMUG (Substance Management User Group)

In the Autumn of 2004 CMHC put together a bid with two users of the Substance Misuse Services to begin some user involvement within those services. It was proposed to set up a pilot project which would begin the involvement of users/ex users and non-users of services within the voluntary and statutory sector of substance misuse. The project was funded for six months by both Camden and Islington.

The two Co-ordinators of the Project, Shirley and Richard (who during the time of its existence managed to find an opportunity to marry each other) worked extremely hard and recognised from the inception that they

needed to get out and meet the people who were their client group. They did this and still managed to meet the targets which had been agreed in the initial proposal. The project began in November and is due to run through until the end of April. Shirley and Richard were not only involved locally but they began to play a part in the wider national scene.

So much was the work of Richard and Shirley recognised that they won an award at this year's Care Trust Award Ceremony.

Now the time has come to consider the project for refunding, it is sad to find that Islington does not feel that it wants to fund it again in a way that is acceptable to SMUG and CMHC. Camden has indicated how much they value the project and the developments in user engagement in this area which have come out of it and are prepared to fund it over a longer period of time so that it will have an opportunity to develop and work with a greater number of people.

CMHC is happy to continue the project and is sorry that it seems likely to be reduced to being the Camden SMUG. There is nothing that we have been able to do about this but it does of course mean that from the end of April, the Project will no longer operate in Islington.

NORTH & SOUTH CAMDEN USER FORUMS

The April North Camden User Forum (NCUF) will be held from 5.00 – 6.30 pm in Room 20 on Level 2 at The Royal Free Hospital on Tuesday, 10th May – it is later this month because of the May Day Bank Holiday. This meeting will bring along Roger Evans who manages the inpatient services for North Camden Mental Health Services at the RFH. He and some of his colleagues will be considering the important topic of 'Nurses & Patients Talking'.

The May meeting of the South Camden User Forum (SCUF) will follow the new agreed formula and visit the 'Walk In' at Tottenham Mews Resource Centre. CMHC hopes that this meeting will take place on the afternoon of Tuesday, 24th May, but as the April 2005 edition of The Camden Bugle goes to press, this has not been confirmed. Flyers will be sent out once the date is fixed. Although, the meeting will be held at Tottenham Mews and CMHC would expect that it will attract the clients from that service, it is open to all. The meeting will have a starting theme but it will encourage people to bring up the issues that matter to them.

NEWS FROM THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Aidan Moloney is the Co-ordinator of Camden & Islington Providers' Forum (CIPF). We include regular monthly contributions from Aidan telling people what is happening in the voluntary sector. Aidan can be contacted by post at Camden & Islington Providers' Forum, St. James's House, 15 – 20 Bruges Place, Baynes Street, London, NW1 0TF; by 'phone on 020 7428 5999, and by e-mail at cipf.office@virgin.net

April 22nd marks the closing date for receipt of bid applications to the Capital Volunteering project in Camden. CIPF has been acting as the central information point for dissemination of information and fielding queries in the interim before a project co-ordinator is appointed. Thus far there have been some very exciting expressions of interest from prospective providers and I am hopeful we will see a range of innovative services developing from this. We are confident we will have a co-ordinator in place shortly to take the work forward.

CIPF is involving itself very closely with the next stage of the Best Value Review. We are represented on all four groups of the Day Services review and on the overarching Chairs Group to which the sub-groups will report. We look forward to helping implementing the recommendations of the Best Value Review and to working with the service user and statutory sector representatives in doing this.

I am particularly pleased to see the formation of Camden Music & Poetry Forum, a collaborative Project between the Camden-based band "Reedell" and New Directions Camden. The project's aim is to develop a Forum through which individuals with mental health experiences living and working in Camden can develop their interest in music and/or written expression and have the opportunity to perform in the community. The Forum welcomes contact from people who have an interest in music and the performing arts and who believe that they should be accessible to everyone in the community. The Forum also very much wants to hear from people who have experience of mental health issues and who would like to explore playing music or writing for live performance (lyrics, poetry, prose etc.).

CAMDEN COUNCIL'S LIAISON GROUPS

Camden Council has seven Liaison Groups. Those best known to CMHC are the Mental Health Liaison Group and the Alcohol Services Liaison Group.

The Council is currently carrying out one of its regular reviews of its Liaison Groups. It wants to know what value they have for people and what people like about them or would like to see changed and improved. If you have any views you should contact Felix Neighbour, Development Support Assistant for Users & Carers at Camden Social Services on 020 7974 2972. The deadline for responses is 12th May 2005.

Col-in Burrell, CMHC Trustee, writes about the pleasures that can be gained from time working in the garden.

TIME TO GET BUSY FOR THE GARDENING GROUP

Did you know there is a Gardening Group based on a large allotment in Child's Hill? The group is organised by Andy and Miranda, two Occupational Therapists from North Camden Community Mental Health Team. This group meets every Thursday from 2-4 pm and is open to referrals from anyone who is a User in Camden. The group is about to enter its third season, with 'growing' excitement. The next two months are the busiest in the growing year. The members have worked hard at getting the plot dug, weeded and prepared for seed planting. Last year's crop was really successful, producing a huge array of fresh organic vegetables, fruit and flowers, which everyone gets to take home and enjoy. It's great reward for the months of hard work. Current group members report many benefits in taking part – it gives people the chance to get out of the house and do an activity in the fresh air for two hours a week, having social contact and working as part of a team. It's very relaxing, hard work at times, but also great fun and extremely rewarding.

If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Andy or Miranda at The Hoo on 020 7941 1600, or ask any member of staff with whom you are involved to refer you.

Remember – Fun exercise is good for the mind, body and soul!

CARE TRUST NEWS

Robert Jones, the Social Care & Inclusion Development Manager, provides a review of the month's events within Camden & Islington Mental Health & Social Care Trust. Robert can be contacted at Care Trust Headquarters, 2nd floor, East Wing, St Pancras Hospital, London NW1 0PE, by telephone on 020 7445 8554 or by e-mail robert.jones@candi.nhs.uk

Service User Consultation Forum

The next Service User Consultation Forum will be on Friday 27th May in the Groves Lounge at St Pancras Hospital. The meeting will start at 1pm with lunch and finish at 4pm. Consultation Forums are meetings run by service users. They provide an opportunity for service users to discuss with senior managers and directors issues that they may have with regards to the way in which Camden and Islington's mental health services are run. If you require an Interpreter or BSL signer for this event contact Robert Jones details above, by the 13th May 2005.

ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE IN GENERAL ELECTIONS

Mental health service users in inpatient settings such as a hospital ward are entitled to vote in the general election in they are registered in the register of electors. While an informal patient may leave hospital to attend a polling station, inpatients detained under the mental health act may only vote by post or by proxy (if so entitled), or by grant of S.17 leave, possibly accompanied, for the purpose of voting (where clinically appropriate). If you are on a ward and want details about arrangements for voting, contact your ward manager.

Spend a day with London Ambulance Service

London Ambulance service are inviting patient representatives and users to spend a day (9.30-3 pm) with them on Tuesday, May 10th to contribute ideas on what they believe to be the ingredients of a world class ambulance service from a users perspective. This is to help the ambulance service develop their five year strategy. The event will take place at Church House, Westminster.

Can Exorcism Cure Ghost Possession

Resistant to Psychiatric Treatment

This is the title of a 'free' seminar for staff and service users that will be held on the 14th July 2005, 2.00 – 4.00 pm at the Huntley centre at St Pancras Hospital. Ghost possession poses some fundamental questions

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for psychiatrists: the relative credibility and 'truth claims' of scientific models of psychiatry as opposed to 'folk' models held by patients, contracted with their rather different notions of cure.....Based on an award-winning ethnographic film, this unique presentation will screen the clinical cultural course of a young girls journey involving unsuccessful consultations with numerous medical doctors including psychiatrists, and culminating in recovery following exorcism at the Barajas temple in North India. The film will be followed by a discussion on clinical and cultural dimensions of 'ghost possession', and examine why traditional healers succeed when psychiatrists fail. A limited number of places are available for this seminar and will be allocated on a first come basis if you are interested in attending please contact Robert Jones, details above.

Do You Have a Friend or Relative with an Alcohol Problem?

Alcohol Advisory Service based at 309 Greys Inn Road, has now introduced a Friends and Family service for Camden and Islington residents. The service offers up to 6 sessions for friends or relatives of people with an alcohol problem to come along and receive advice and support. To arrange a visit call 020 7530-5900

If you have experienced mental health services either directly or as a carer and would like to influence the way mental health services are run, then we would like to hear from you. Within the Care Trust we have established a service user involvement bank, people who have used mental health services and who are now available to support the Care Trust in monitoring and improving services.

Service User Involvement within the Care Trust

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Should the Care Trust introduce Sniffer Dogs and

Metal Detectors on Wards? Have Your Say

Although the majority of people in hospital with a mental health problem do not use illegal drugs or weapons, unfortunately some do. To deal with this growing problem, a group has been established their brief is to consult widely, consider the options, and present recommendations to the Care Trust board. This group would like to hear from you. Send your views to Robert Jones at St Pancras Hospital, 4 St Pancras way, London, NW1 0PE.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Consortium is a voluntary organisation, which operates in the London Borough of Camden.

It is run by its members who are users, former users and survivors of mental health services in Camden, its purpose is to enhance the quality of life of its members by promoting social contact and support, enabling them to take control of their own lives.

We promote equal opportunities and positively value individual differences and choice.

We combat negative prejudice and stereotypes of users of mental health services.

We seek to influence professionals and public opinion, to challenge poor practice, and to improve the quality and variety of mental health and related services.


To achieve our goals we work with other voluntary bodies, statutory agencies and individual allies.

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Events & Diary

DATE/TIME	VENUE	EVENT
<p>TUESDAY</p> <p>10 MAY</p> <p>5.00 – 6.30 pm</p>	<p>Room 20 Psychotherapy Corridor Level 2 The Royal Free Hospital</p>	<p>CMHC</p> <p>NORTH CAMDEN USER FORUM</p> <p>Roger Evans will talk about ‘NURSES AND PATIENTS TALKING’</p>
<p>FRIDAY</p> <p>20 MAY</p> <p>8.00 – 12.00 pm</p>	<p>The London Irish Centre 52 Camden Square LONDON NW1</p>	<p>CMHC</p> <p>SPRING PARTY & DISCO</p>
<p>TUESDAY</p> <p>24 MAY</p> <p>5.00 – 6.30 pm</p>	<p>The Conference Centre St. Pancras Hospital 4 St. Pancras Way LONDON NW1</p>	<p>CMHC</p> <p>SOUTH CAMDEN USER FORUM</p>
<p>FRIDAY</p> <p>27 MAY</p> <p>1.00 – 4.00 pm</p>	<p>Groves Lounge St Pancras Hospital 4 St Pancras Way LONDON NW1</p>	<p>Camden and Islington  Mental Health and Social Care Trust</p> <p>USER CONSULTATION FORUM</p>