

THE CAMDEN BUGLE

TAKING NOTICE

After a fairly unsatisfactory vote of support for his past two terms in office, Tony Blair was returned to govern for a third term and assured everyone that he would learn from his mistakes.

The line in the Queen's Speech stating '*My Government will continue with legislation to provide a new framework for the provision of compulsory treatment of those with mental disorders.*' gives cause to question what he's learnt if this means that the Draft Mental Health Bill is to begin the process to become law.

Its proposals have been almost universally criticised by all sides of the mental health community and it was not well received by the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament which scrutinised it. If it is to be driven through despite all this, it is hard to give credence to the Prime Minister's assertions and tends to question whether he accepts a mistake when one is pointed out. This will be bad for mental health but it will also augur badly for other areas where the Government have been rebuffed.

NO BENEFIT TO IT

The Government has decided that it's time to make changes in the rules relating to Incapacity Benefit. The reason is fairly simple – it costs too much! It is, however, there for a reason: so that those incapable of work in the opinion of their doctors receive enough financial support. In the case of someone who experiences mental ill-health it is usually harder to obtain this or any other benefit than it is for those suffering a purely physical illness or disability. It seems likely that any change in the rules would make it even harder for this group.

There is no doubt that the changes that have been made for people to return to work are for the general benefit. It is better for Society and the individual if they are in employment. Some of the ideas developed in Camden's Best Value Review are about this. But not everyone can work. It is the duty of government to see that this group is supported in the best possible way, including financially.

Placing David Blunket in charge of Welfare Reform would seem at least to be putting it in the hands of someone who knows what disability is like. Sadly his record in Education and at the Home Office leaves one feeling that he is without a great deal of feeling and more concerned that policy is out into action whatever the cost. Perhaps he will see that there is little benefit in cutting the support given to those who need it most if the consequences are that it will actually cost more.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO USER INVOLVEMENT?

One of the statements regularly repeated by those in power within the Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust is that it is determined to put service users at the heart of its operations. At the launch of the Care Trust's User Involvement Strategy there was no doubt that 'user involvement' should be part of all its operations. There were some starts to this, but over the past year it seems to have withered. The department that is responsible has had staff on long-term sick leave but it has not brought in anyone to undertake their work and the implementation of the Strategy has suffered in consequence. The Care Trust used to particularly pride itself on the involvement of service users in the recruitment of staff, but this too has fallen away. It maybe that service user involvement is one of the first victims of the Care Trust's financial difficulties. If that is allowed to happen then it will lose a great deal of credibility and trust from those who use its services and have worked hard to help to improve them.

CMHC NEWS

A LATE CALL

The Bank Holiday has been one of the reasons that this month The Camden Bugle is a little late with its call.

We hope that this will not be a repeated and that the June Camden Bugle will appear in the last week of the month as is usual. This is the 93rd edition of CMHC's monthly newsletter and it is still going strong, although it is probably the time that we looked at it again to see how well it is serving its purpose and undertaking the task of informing and advocating on behalf of CMHC's members.

It is highly significant that the Christmas 2005 will be the 100th Edition of The Camden Bugle and it has already been decided that this should be a very special issue to mark a very special anniversary.

CO-ORDINATOR POST

After much debate and taking soundings the Trustees of CMHC have decided that the future development of the organisation should be through the employment of a paid officer to take on the role of Co-ordinator for the organisation with specific remit for CBUG.

This was a project that CMHC put in train last year in an attempt to raise funding for the post. The required amount was seen to be in the region of £100 000 to establish the post for 3 years. CMHC was fortunate in obtaining a grant of £27 000 over three years from the City Parochial Foundation and a donation of £3 000 from the Hampstead Wells and Campden Trust. This left a substantial shortfall and it was not clear that the post could be established. However, the clear view emerged from consultations within CBUG that they would appreciate a Co-ordinator and felt that the group would work effectively and be better supported by setting up such a post.

The Trustees considered carefully the various options open to them and came to the conclusion that it would be right to use some of CMHC's core funding to make up the shortfall and establish the post. This is a high-risk strategy since it leaves open the possibility that we can establish the post but then there will not be enough money for any projects to be undertaken. For this reason, a two-pronged approach has been taken to try and ensure that the risk to the organisation is not too high. A contract

for a single year has been offered and we will continue to fundraise to try and make up the current deficit in funding.

The post has been advertised in The Guardian and The Camden New Journal and the advertisement is being sent out with this edition of The Camden Bugle. There has been a wide debate about whether this is a post specifically for a service user and it has been decided that whilst the qualification has not been limited in this way and that the best candidate for the job is being sought, experience of using mental health services would be regarded as a very valuable asset. The closing date for applications is Monday, 13th June. Further details and an application pack can be obtained by calling CMHC's Administrator on 020 7419 4196 or by e-mailing: administrator@cmhc.org.uk. Interviews will be held in mid-June and it is hoped that the new appointee would start in their role in July.

This is a really exciting development for CMHC which it is hoped will allow it to develop even further. There have been some setbacks in the past year, not the least the contract for the User Focussed Monitoring (UFM) going to an organisation, Peter Bedford, which does not hold itself out as specialising in mental health problems and which does not even have a presence in Camden. However, CMHC has had to accept this bitter pill but continues to work towards developing in its task of monitoring and evaluating services and working with other agencies to develop new services and set quality standards. The organisation believes that having a Co-ordinator will help in this role and in particular will reinvigorate CBUG and take it forward as the active arm of service user involvement within mental health in Camden.

TRUST BOARD MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of the Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust will take place from 5.00 pm on Thursday, 16th June at St Pancras Conference Centre.

Papers for the meeting can be obtained from the Board's Secretary, Kate Wilkins on 020 7445 8427 or by e-mail: kate.wilkins@candi.nhs.uk Notified questions for the Board should be sent to Kate by 5.00 pm on Tuesday, 14 June,

It is to be hoped that this forthcoming meeting of the Care Trust Board will provide some answers to the questions raised by its precarious financial position and how this is likely to impact on jobs and services.

NORTH CAMDEN USER FORUM (NCUF)

In the light of all the criticisms that are often made about the ‘nurses never talking to the patients’, the attendance at May’s meeting of the North Camden User Forum was particularly disappointing. Roger Evans who is the Manager responsible for the in-patient wards on Level 2 at The Royal Free Hospital and the clinical nursing lead for North Camden came along to talk about some work he has been doing for a PHD thesis but which was directly relevant to the usual complaint.

What did become clear is that the complaint is one that is heard at higher levels and which there is concern about and that steps have been taken to try and see what is going on and work out how to address a position where the patients do not feel that those in closest contact with them on a day-to-day basis actually talk and listen to them. Roger’s study which was about trying out some different systems and monitoring them against the process normally used.

What seems to be true is that nurses are not clear about their role within the therapeutic process and this causes them some confusion about how they should interact with patients. What was clearer was the need for leadership. Where a Ward has the benefit of a Ward Manager who takes an active role in the nursing procedures and supports his nursing staff well then the problems begin to lessen. This is enhanced where there is a stable ward team and the nurses are able to support each other and have a clearer role within Multi Disciplinary framework. There is also a question about how much nurses understand about communication and how it is best effected and there is a suspicion that some of it relates to the stigma attached to mental illness which nurses are quite capable of experiencing. So it is a problem which has a number of different parts and they need to be disentangled and addressed separately in order to get things working in the way that is most efficient and beneficial.

It is to be hoped that some of these ideas about good nursing practice will be put into operation more widely with the opening of the new Grove Centre. A visit here, in what we are cautioned will still be unfinished, will be the next **NCUF on Tuesday, 7th June from 5.00 – 6.30 pm.** People are asked to meet outside the new unit which is on the site of the Felix Brown Day Hospital (which is still signposted from the Lawn Road side) at 5.00 pm promptly. There will be an opportunity to view the new centre and to talk about the layout, the transition from Level 2 at the RFH and what should happen within the new setting. This is a real chance to have strong user input from the outset.

SOUTH CAMDEN USER FORUM(SCUF)

The April South Camden User Forum was one of those appointed in the old format, from 5.00 – 6.30 pm at St Pancras Conference Centre. There is always a good audience when Midge Clark comes to talk about Welfare Benefits. She is so clearly an expert and passionate that people should get all that they are entitled to that people often come and ask quite difficult questions and share some of their personal experiences about dealing with the minefield that is the Benefits system. Midge is pretty good at identifying the mines and stopping people from setting them off. This time she gave some dire warnings about the future and this has led CMHC to consider 'Benefits and Mental Ill Health' as a possible topic for its Annual Conference in November.

May sees the return to SCUF moving around from venue to venue when it visits the Walk In at Tottenham Mews on the afternoon of Tuesday, 24th May as this month's Camden Bugle is being printed. The March meeting at Jules Thorn Day Unit was well attended and lively and there is every hope that this one will be equally so.

June and July's meetings are set to take place at Mind in Camden on Tuesday, 21st June from 2.30 – 4.00 pm and on Tuesday, 26th July from 3.30 – 5.00 pm at The Highgate Centre. Although these meetings have now become centre-based and there is bound to be a specific interest in the issues that come from the centres visited, all service users are free to come and join in the meeting and newcomers will find themselves especially welcomed. Clearly one of the issues that is likely to be very real to those at Mind and the Highgate Centre is the assessments of needs that have been carried out as part of Camden's implementation of the Best Value Review of Mental Health Day Provision.

We are hoping that the new travelling SCUF will be more successful than the fixed venue format has been. During the last year it was necessary to cancel a number of meetings because of the very poor attendance and then in the Autumn CMHC tried the Stress Busting sessions with some success. South Camden is one of the most deprived areas and has very high levels of mental ill-health. For this reason, if for no other, CMHC recognises that it must continue to try and engage people. It may be that the Forum itself is not the way to do this and the success of the new format will be reviewed to try and work out if it is a more successful manner of getting people involved.

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 OPE, by telephone on 020 7445 8554 or by e-mail robert.jones@candi.nhs.uk

Care Trust Financial Position 2005/6

The Care Trust Chief Executive and Director of Finance have met with senior representatives of the local Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Strategic Health Authority (SHA) to discuss the potential gap in the funding of care trust services for 2005/6. Discussions will continue with our partners over the coming weeks in an effort to jointly resolve the financial challenges facing the care trust. Due to the discipline and dedication of our staff, the care trust has achieved financial balance in 2004/5. In line with all other NHS bodies, the care trust is required to deliver at least a 1.7% cash releasing efficiency savings programme in 2005/6. The care trust executive has drawn up plans to implement this programme and is optimistic that it can be achieved without a significant impact on services. The April meeting of the care trust board had a detailed discussion about the financial position. No decisions whatsoever were made to proceed with service changes. The Board resolved its determination that mental health must not be treated unfairly in comparison with the rest of the NHS and will not pursue savings that compromise the safety of service users or staff.

Service User Survey 2005

As reported in previous editions of The Camden Bugle, the care trust has just completed the 2005 service user survey. Many thanks to those of you who participated in the survey and thanks also for those who encouraged and supported people enabling them to participate.

The service user survey provides an important opportunity each year to gauge the level of service user interaction with mental health professionals, how service users feel about their medication, how much they know about their care plan, how involved they feel with their care plan and the overall level of service user satisfaction.

The results are very positive and many areas have improved significantly since the 2004 survey, which also revealed high levels of service user satisfaction.

When asked "The last time you have a new medication prescribed for you, were the purposes of the medication explained to you?" 90% said yes in 2005, compared to 86% in 2004.

When asked, "Were you involved in deciding what was in your care plan?" 68% said yes. When asked the question "Overall, how would you rate the care you have received from Mental Health Services in the past 12 months?" 87% of services users responded positively in 2005.

Although the survey demonstrates improvements, the care trust will not be complacent about the findings and recognises that further improvements are needed. The next steps are for the results to be fully analysed and an action plan to be developed in response to the figures and feedback.

Letters From Clinicians About Your Care

Most people now know that they have a right to see their medical records. In practice however, much of the communication between professionals is not available to the patient concerned. Patients often do not know why they are being referred or what is being said about them. To address this, the care trust introduced a policy on 'copying letters to patients', which came into effect on the 1st January 2004.

The policy states that the standard practice should be that 'all letters written by professionals within the care trust to other professionals outside the trust or outside agencies such as Housing Department, Benefits Agencies, or similar, should be copied to the person to whom they refer except as specified in (section) 3.2 (of the policy)'.

As part of the care trusts monitoring process we welcome views from service users over the effectiveness of this policy.

Service User Consultation Forum

Consultation forums are held on a regular basis and provide opportunities for service users to meet with senior managers and a director of the care trust. Forums are on the **27th May, 29th July, 23rd September & 25th November 2005** in the Groves Lounge at St Pancras Hospital.

Consultation Forums start with lunch at 1pm and finish at 4pm.

For more information about Consultation Forums or anything else covered in this section please contact Robert Jones at the care trust on 020 7445-8554.

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

Immediately prior to writing this month's piece for *the Bugle*, I attended a meeting of the steering group for Camden's Capital Volunteering project. Therefore, I thought it would be useful to provide a brief update on progress.

Following last month's closing date for submission of proposals to the scheme we received five promising tenders. After the initial selection process we decided that the quality is enough to shortlist and interview all five on the content of their bids evaluated against the original selection criteria as set out in the tendering process. The purpose of the shortlisting interview will be to ask organisations to further discuss issues in relation to their respective bid such as costs, targets, sustainability and scope of the potential projects.

In so doing, we are hoping to encourage innovative approaches to delivering projects that tackle barriers to social inclusion through volunteering. In particular ones which develop or build upon partnerships with organisations outside mental health, e.g., the private sector and non mental health voluntary sector, colleges and other community facilities. A strong focus during the selection interview will be on asking how the bids plan to approach this aspect of Capital Volunteering. The panel will consist of representatives from the Mental Health and Social Care Trust, Camden PCT, Capital Volunteering, CIPF and a service user.

At this stage we had hoped that the process would bring forward a wider range of providers and goals, so that we could support a "portfolio of projects" from a range of organisations; mainstream (or non mental health) statutory and voluntary, and that there would be a mix of befriending and supported volunteering. As this did not happen and we are unlikely to allocate all the available funding in this round we have decided to hold a briefing session for potential bidders soon and a further round to attract applications in other areas.

We are very keen to widen the involvement of service users through Capital Volunteering in Camden. For example, this could be though linking in with projects once these are up and running. Very importantly, we are keen to get

ideas from service users about what they would like to see happening as a result of Capital Volunteering. I would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in getting involved with the Capital Volunteering Project and who would like to get more details.

CAMDEN COUNCIL'S LIAISON GROUPS

Camden Council runs a number of Liaison Groups. The Mental Health Liaison Group has always had a specific resonance for CMHC since it tends to deal in exactly the issues that we are involved with. It also provides a unique opportunity for service users to come into contact with elected representatives and make their views known to them. The fact that the running agenda has for some time given an opportunity to raise issues associated with the Best Value Review of Mental Health Day Provision and the Camden Crisis House is an added bonus.

With the development of SMUG within CMHC the Alcohol Services Liaison Group has taken on a greater importance for this organisation and it seems likely that a closer working relationship will develop as SMUG becomes yet more established.

The next meeting of the Alcohol Services Liaison Group will take place at The Irish Centre, 50 – 52 Camden Square, NW1 on Tuesday 14th June, 6-8 pm.

The Mental Health Liaison Group will meet again on Thursday 21st July.

The Council has just been reviewing its Liaison Groups. As an organisation we are pleased to report that they provide a valuable opportunity to raise issues of concern and to let Councillors know what their constituents think of Council services and how they could best be improved. The Liaison Groups present an opportunity for Citizen Power and they should be enhanced and supported.

Further information on the Mental Health Liaison Group and the Alcohol Services Liaison Group may be obtained from Felix Neighbour on 020 7974 2972.

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
FRIDAY 27 MAY 1.00 – 4.00 pm	Groves Lounge South Wing St Pancras Hospital 4 St Pancras Way LONDON NW1	Camden and Islington  Mental Health and Social Care Trust USER CONSULTATION FORUM
TUESDAY 07 JUNE 5.00 – 6.30 pm	Grove Centre New Mental Health Unit The Royal Free Hospital Pond Street NW3	CMHC NORTH CAMDEN USER FORUM To be held at the new Mental Health Unit (Grove Centre)
TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2.30 - 4.00 pm	Mind In Camden Barnes House 9 – 15 Camden Road LONDON NW1	CMHC SOUTH CAMDEN USER FORUM
TUESDAY 05 JULY 5.00 – 6.30 pm	Room 20 Psychotherapy Corridor Level 2 The Royal Free Hospital	CMHC NORTH CAMDEN USER FORUM