

Sussex Oakleaf Newsletter

Spring 2009

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Your Newsletter needs you!

Do you...

- Want to have a voice
- Like to write
- want to expand your cv
- practise your computer skills
- learn how to use Microsoft publisher
- have any contributions for our next issue

Contact a member of staff or Suki Westmore (Service User Involvement Co-ordinator) on 01444 447376 at Norris House.

Oakleaf Consumer Circle Launch

Sub-committee to the Board

On Thursday 15th January a Service User sub committee of the board was launched at Glen Vue in East Grinstead. The launch was extremely well supported by both staff and service users from across Sussex and representing all aspects of services provided by Sussex Oakleaf.

The aim of the committee is to act as liaison between service users and the board of Sussex Oakleaf and it is hoped that it will be a truly two-way exchange of information and ideas. It will consist of ten members, eight from mental health, one from young persons services and one from substance misuse. The first meeting will be held on Monday 19th February when elections will be held for officers and the chair will be co-opted on to the board.

It was a real pleasure to see the number of people who took the trouble to attend the launch and I was impressed with the enthusiasm with which people readily volunteered to get involved. Further details of the make-up

and functions of the committee will be published in future issues of this news letter and readers will be encouraged to have input and involvement.

A proposal has been put forward



Laura Rigg - Chair
Steve Potterton - Vice Chair
Lynn Willis - Vice Chair

that the committee be known as 'The Oakleaf Consumer Circle' this will also be voted on at the meeting.

This move by Sussex Oakleaf is a genuinely unique opportunity for us to have our say in the future of service provision and I sincerely believe we should take it and build on it.

Watch this Space!

By Steve Potterton

Inside this issue:

Introducing... The 'New Futures' Project	2
'Time to Change' campaign	3
Voluntary Work and Me	4
Learning About Recovery	5
All About Stepping Stones	6
Change and Well-being	7
And the winner is...	8

Sussex Oakleaf's service user involvement work is generously supported by the Accent Foundation. The Accent Foundation is part of the Accent Group Limited and is a charitable housing association which supports action to include groups that may experience social exclusion.



Introducing... The 'New Futures' Project

Hi, I'm the New Futures Project Worker - hopefully I've met some of you in person whilst I have been coming round getting to hear about Sussex Oakleaf. If you have met me you'll have heard of New Futures, if not the news may not have reached you yet of this fairly new project. I'm going to try to explain what New Futures is in simple terms, you can let me know next time you see me if I have succeeded!

Who is New Futures for?

New Futures focuses on residents in our registered care homes in Mid Sussex. We currently have 3 houses which are homes to 16 residents from the Mid Sussex area. The idea of New Futures is that we will re-examine the strengths, goals, aspirations and needs of those 16 people. The aims of the project are to support people to:

- have more control and choice in their lives
- live in accommodation that promotes their independence and take part in activities and communities they value

What does New Futures do?

We carry out an assessment with the resident on every aspect of their lives, looking at their wishes, opportunities and capacity to live a more independent life. So far 3 people have successfully moved into more independent ac-

commodation. This is a great achievement for those clients. Sussex Oakleaf continues to support these clients, with our new Community Recovery Team offering complex care packages. The team work with a recovery focussed approach, offering support 7 days per week, from 8am – 9pm for between 8 and 30 hours a week. The support is centred around that person's needs - if they want to take up an evening class, get fit, or meet new people the Community Recovery Worker will support the client to do this. The packages aim to support clients through their journey to get their life back on track, designing support to help with their recovery and wellbeing.

So what else is New Futures about?

Whilst the main focus of New Futures is to re-model the way Sussex Oakleaf delivers registered care in Mid Sussex there are many other areas New Futures is working on, which I hope to get the chance to update you about in future newsletters. Any questions do call me at Head Office – I'd be more than happy to answer them!

Lynne Thomas



Sunny Corner Community Café - Glen Vue, East Grinstead

Sunny Corner café is a community café that opened in August 2008.

It is a service user run café offering refreshments, meals and support.

Recovery workers are based there to aid those experiencing mental health problems.

'Why not drop in for a chat.'



Sunny Corner Café

Glen Vue Community Centre, Station Approach, East Grinstead, W. Sussex
 Wednesday 4pm - 7pm
 Friday 4pm - 7pm

"Volunteering at the café has given me so much confidence"

"I can drop in, chat to my friends and get a good meal."

For more information please contact

Kim Odell on: 07917 034520
Nicki Sluter on: 07500 964404



About The Campaign

This January, we are launching a ground-breaking campaign across England to challenge attitudes and change behaviour around mental health problems.

The impact of prejudice, ignorance and fear around mental health can be devastating for people, families, communities and society. Stigma may prevent people seeking help when they need it. It stops people with ability getting the jobs they are qualified to do. It can stop people building new friendships and mean they lose existing ones. It can mean that everyday activities that you might take for granted, like going to the pub, shops or gym are impossible.

One in four adults experience mental health problems at some point in their lives. 1 in 50 experience more severe mental health problems. Millions of people across England live in the shadow of one of the last great taboos - mental health problems. This is the social justice issue the 21st century.

A Poem About Change

If you always believe
What you always believed,
You will always feel the way
You have always felt,
You will always think the way
You have always thought,
You will always do what
You have always done,
If you always do
What you have always done,
You will always get
What you have always gotten,
If there is no change
There is no change.

Anon.

Actor and author Stephen Fry says:

"I want to speak out, to fight the public stigma and to give a clearer picture of mental illness that most people know little about."

Our main campaign messages are:

- **Mental illness is one of our last taboos.**
People affected by mental health problems experience stigma and discrimination. Shame and stigma wrecks lives - it stops people getting help, getting back to work and getting on with life.
- **Mental illness is far more common than you think** - Mental illness can happen to anyone and it's common; 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem at some point.

‘There is something you can do to help.’

Don't cut someone with mental health problems out of your life - be there for them and don't write them off.

For more information go to:

www.time-to-change.org.uk



Photo taken by Barry Taylor - Runner up

What My Voluntary Work At The British Heart Foundation Means To Me.

May I first express how much my work means to me in giving me confidence and helping me to maintain my stable mental wellbeing..

I feel it is so important to have some form of structure to one's week and being committed to the British Heart Foundation on a Monday for three hours and Friday has helped me to develop this. My job has given me purpose which I had lost when I had to give up a full-time job in teaching through ill-health.

Through this work and also membership at CAPITAL I have gradually built up identity and self-esteem, which had been shattered.

I work on the till all the time in the BHF shop and enjoy meeting the customers. It is work without stress which I can cope with.

Friends know where they can find me on those days and often pop in to see me.

I have now completed my fifth year and have just received my "Certificate of Appreciation" for 5 years from Head Office. Of course I have had to frame it!

I have made new friends from the customers and the staff. I feel it is a worthwhile cause helping The Foundation and also I love to wear my badge with confidence even though it is only VOLUNTEER!

Kay
Oakleaf Consumer Circle and Capital Member



Wellbeing is in our hands

"SO WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?"

We had everything, I say everything!
The house, the shares, the nice small car!
So what the hell happened?
We had the chance of a family.
We had jobs—decent.
So what the hell happened.
We had love more importantly.
So what the hell happened?
Did we just drift apart?

By Paul McNamee and Grant Curry

"I am glad to come here every day -
I am worried about the changes I
Millhaven but would like to be
involved in any discussions about
the future"

Millhaven Service User

Learning About Recovery...

We are hearing the word *Recovery* more and more often – but what does it really mean for you, for me, for services?

Sussex Oakleaf is running joint Learning About Recovery Training for both staff and service users; this is a 2 day course which covers a wide variety of aspects of the term *Recovery* including the following:-

- What recovery means to me
- Evidence of recovery
- Recovery - from what? and how?
- Planning for recovery based services
- Personal wellness – looking after me
- Finding and using my recovery support skills
 - Listening and coaching skills
- Wellness Recovery Action Plans

The course is delivered by experienced trainers, some of whom have personal experience of accessing services, and is designed to give people an understanding of where the term *recovery* comes from, how it is impacting on the design and delivery of services, and the opportunity to learn and practice skills that support recovery – both your own and someone else's.

Both days are informative and fun, with lots of practical session, the chance to learn from each other, and plenty of space to ask questions, get creative, and have a nice informal lunch!

People who have been on the course have said the following:

"I have enjoyed it very much, and had a good meal"

"I feel really thankful towards you for sharing your personal experiences with us! It really makes a difference"

"The videos and exercises were useful, and the practical ideas can be put to good use."

The training is mandatory for all Sussex Oakleaf staff, and for service users who want to attend we pay for travel expenses, and it is fine to attend the course in the way that works best for each person e.g. 2 whole days together, day 1 one month and day 2 another, just attend specific parts of each day etc. There are dates and places from now until July 09. If you want more information, or would like to book a place, please contact Jan Spiller or Suki Westmore at Norris House on 01444 459517, or email info@sussexoakleaf.org.uk



"I feel really thankful towards you for sharing your personal experiences with us! It really makes a difference"

Stepping Stones — Women's Group

Thinking back it took me at least four attempts. Going to the door, turning round going back to my car.

The courage it took to go through the door I will never forget. I've finally done it. It was not so bad.

I have met women there, some have been through so much. But they all know they are respected and they have friends. We are all there for each other and most important we laugh. Feeling safe is a

good thing. They don't judge, no matter how bad we might feel some times.

We plan the activities together as a group that also includes lunch.

Going out on trips; it might just be going for a coffee in town or walking around Tilgate Park looking at the animals. We have had speakers come in, quizzes, card making and there's so much I would run out of paper.

I personally have made lots of friends, I look forward to the women's group on a Friday it is always so different. We all help out and make our own decisions.

If anyone wants to come along I can guarantee they will feel safe, respected and enjoy the morning.

Shell XXXX



Photo by Barry Taylor

Stepping Stones is...

- a day centre for people with mental health problems.
- open 5 days a week.
- the bee's knee's.
- recovery.
- somewhere to go and find support from staff and peers.
- help to be proactive
- wonderful
- about engaging in groups.

At Stepping Stones we...

- take part in community activities, well - being events, BME conferences, dinners and volunteering.
- are a bunch of people with mental health problems.
- need to advertise.
- have a cooked meal provided at a minimal cost.
- are supportive
- have activity groups including outings, band, cooking, keep - fit, relaxation, women's group, woodwork, gardening, drop - in's, café and arts and crafts.
- respect others.
- can help with lots of things.
- aren't ashamed.

Stepping Stones Day Centre

01293 534789

5 Perryfield Road,
Southgate, Crawley,
West Sussex
RH11 8AA



...friendship!!

Bringing about changes in services and in personal wellbeing

How we can make a difference to mental health services

East Grinstead Mental Health Discussion and Action Group is a local mental health service user group funded by Sussex Oakleaf. We meet once a month, have 30 members and work with people in our area to improve mental health services.

In the seven years we've been running we have had some major successes. These include;

- Lobbying for and achieving free use of Glen Vue Centre.
- Lobbying for and shaping the Sunny Corner café project.

Production of an information leaflet used by our community mental health team and given to all service users and carers

We're really pleased that we have good relations with people in our community involved in providing services, sometimes we have different views but we're all working towards a better future.

Group members say that some of the good stuff about being involved is....

- Participation and Confidence.
- Senior managers coming to talk to people who have the experience.

But it isn't always easy, members also say:

"It doesn't do to offend your funders and there is never enough money."

"It takes a long time to get things going and to produce change."

"Professionals see us as off another planet --- probably because they never had a problem and never think it will happen to them."

We don't all agree about everything but we believe that speaking about what needs to change will make it easier for people who have had mental health issues to be accepted, find recovery and be included in the community.

There are more and more opportunities to be involved in shaping services. If you live in Mid Sussex then contact

laura.lea@sussexoakleaf.org or phone her on 07709 922087 if you are interested in service user involvement for Sussex Oakleaf then contact Suki on 07919 597743 or email:

suki.westmore@sussexoakleaf.org.uk

Here's to better services and a smooth path on the recovery journey.

By Laura Lea



"The discussion and action group is excellent, I am treated as an intelligent person with my own thoughts and ideas and always feel included and respected"

Discussion and Action Group Member

Runner Up Photo by Steve Potterton

Sussex OAKLEAF

www.sussexoakleaf.org.uk

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West Sussex
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Langley Green
Hospital: 01293 590400

NHS Direct: 0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

All further
Contributions to be sent to:
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Disclaimer: *Sussex Oakleaf would like to note that all views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are that of the contributor and not necessarily those of the organization as a whole.*

'What a picture!'

And the winner is...



Mark Pickering
from 54 Leylands
Road with
'Vegetables
in the Snow'

CONGRATULATIONS MARK!!!

Mark wins a £20 gift voucher from the shop of his choice.

Camera's are still available for all who want to enter. Contact Suki Westmore or Claire Knight at Norris House for a camera or ask a member of staff.