

# Focus on **OAKLEAF** Winter 2016



**IN THIS ISSUE:**  
**CONFERENCE 2016**  
**MENTAL HEALTH AT CHRISTMAS**  
**WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY**  
**PLUS MUCH MORE!**



# Welcome...

Welcome to our Winter edition of Focus on Oakleaf. Firstly, a big Thank You to everybody who attended and contributed to a fantastic October conference; the theme was 'Celebrating Diversity and Difference' and we had a suitably broad range of speakers and activities that reflected the theme.

Since the last edition, our CEO for the past two years, Neil Curtis, has moved on to a new opportunity and he left with our thanks for his hard work and commitment to setting and sustaining the organisation on a solid path forwards. We are looking forward to welcoming our new Chief Executive, Philippa Thompson, who will be starting with us in January, plus we are also pleased to welcome our new Head of HR, Parul Chatterjee, who starts in December. Sussex Oakleaf has an established history of positively embracing change and adapting to new challenges, and this new chapter for us will be no different.

I am excited about the new opportunities that 2017 will bring, and am looking forward to us all helping to develop new initiatives alongside building upon our high quality existing services. And in the spirit of the season... I hope everybody has an enjoyable Christmas/New Year/Holiday!

**Caspar Murphy - Interim Chief Executive**



## Focus on OAKLEAF

Focus on Oakleaf is our quarterly magazine which is co-produced by clients, volunteers and staff. There are many ways that you can get involved in the magazine. You could write an article or take a photograph. You could send us poetry, recipes or tell us about your experiences of using Sussex Oakleaf services.

If you would like to take an even more active role in deciding how the magazine looks and what content is included, why not join our Magazine Working Group. For more information, or to submit an article please email

**[focusonoakleaf@sussexoakleaf.org.uk](mailto:focusonoakleaf@sussexoakleaf.org.uk)**  
or speak to a member of staff.



*The OCC are a group of current and former Sussex Oakleaf clients who work to represent the views of individuals accessing Sussex Oakleaf services. If you are interested in finding out more about the OCC or joining yourself then why not visit the Sussex Oakleaf website or speak to a member of staff.*

[www.sussexoakleaf.org.uk](http://www.sussexoakleaf.org.uk)

- We've adopted a new OCC logo and reviewed our literature
- We continue to monitor the Client Survey Action Plan
- A great presentation was given by OCC members at the Sussex Oakleaf conference
- A successful OCC AGM was held on the day of the conference
- We continue to look for new OCC members
- OCC and client representatives joined the interview panels for the senior management positions which were recently advertised
- We continue to work closely with staff and volunteers around client communication

## An OCC Member Speaks...



The OCC started for me at the Hawth Theatre, at an OCC AGM, a number of years ago. It became apparent that there were no representatives from Steps Wellbeing Service in Crawley so I signed up. It seemed a good idea and it still does. To represent Crawley clients within Sussex Oakleaf and possibly on a larger scale too having experienced a certain amount of stigma in the big wide world.

I lasted a few years then had to take a break due to "stuff" taking over my life. I had had an interesting time, being involved with the OCC Good Practice Charter (GPC), survey and Client Engagement training. I am now back with the OCC and will hopefully be able to become more involved again. It has taken me a while to understand the role and whether I fully do now, will be a test of time. I'd like to think that I will be able to be the face of Crawley in the OCC and so, Sussex Oakleaf. We've had a challenging few months and it is important that our views are represented. The infectious enthusiasm of Paul (OCC vice chair) et al should keep me in good stead so, please be gentle with me, I'll do my best!

If any other Crawley clients feel they would like to become involved, I would urge you to seek me or anyone else in the OCC out. Help me to keep the voice of Steps alive!

**Alison - OCC Member**



# A Picture of Diversity

A huge thank you to Kara and Electra from Brightview who decided to paint their idea of Difference and Diversity for this year's Annual Conference. Kara and Electra very kindly decided to allow the painting to be sold through a silent auction with the proceeds being donated to Sussex Oakleaf.

Well done Kara and Electra!



# A HAUNTING AT OAKHOUSE



Clients and staff at Oak House celebrated Halloween this year with some pumpkin carving. Burgess Hill shops were scoured to find the best pumpkins for carving and a week before Halloween the fun began.

Stencils were researched on the internet and clients and staff chose the ones that appealed to them. After a great deal of time spent hollowing out the pumpkins, the designs started to come to life. All staff and clients that took part chose different designs and as you can see from the photos, they all looked fantastic!

The house was also dressed for Halloween and clients held a spooky film night.

***Julie Harper - Service Manager, Oakhouse***



# Decorating Brightview

A group of young adults on the Prince's Trust programme recently started a community project to help support Brightview Community Wellbeing Service in Eastbourne. Just five weeks into their Prince's Trust course with Sussex Downs College the group have already hosted fundraising activities to support their chosen project.

The hard-working group have been using the funds they raised to decorate Brightview's common room and have been busy fixing up furniture.

Sussex Oakleaf would like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved!



*If you would like to find out more about the work that the Prince's Trust does then why not visit their website.*

[www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)



## #WMHD2016

The theme of this year's World Mental Health Day was 'Psychological First Aid', which means making sure we all have the same access to immediate mental health support as we do for our physical health. Find out more at...

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

## FIRST AID FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Brightview marked World Mental Health Day by having tea, cake and live music played by our very own Dave Greenwood on his keyboard! It was a really lovely afternoon with singing, fab music and obviously lots of cake! Yum!

We created a 'mental health first aid box' for the theme of psychological first aid where clients and staff wrote down what makes them feel better and what helps them with their mental health. There were lots of really helpful and positive tips shared by all.

We ended the event with a group selfie, it took many attempts but we got there in the end! All in all, a great afternoon for us all.

**Sarah Donnelly - Recovery Worker**



# Annual Conference 2016

October 6th saw Sussex Oakleaf celebrating Difference and Diversity at our Annual Conference. Clients, volunteers and staff from across Sussex travelled to The Marltons Hall in Burgess Hill to learn more about each other and the importance of recognising and celebrating our differences.

Once again, the highlights of the day were the first hand accounts given by clients. Powerful, personal testimony of the difficulties caused by mental illness and the moving tales of their recovery journeys. Standing up in front of a crowd of people and telling your story is no easy task. Well done to all the clients who got involved!

The Conference provided an opportunity for individuals from different services to meet and this was helped by a quiz about Difference and Diversity titled 'Where on Earth am I?'. Well done to the winners (you know who you are)!

We were fortunate enough to be joined on the day by speakers from local organisations. Our three speakers talked to us about where they work and the importance of Difference and Diversity. Have a look on the next page to find out more about the services they provide.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along and to everyone who helped to make the day a success. We are already looking forward to next year's conference and hope to see you all there!

**'THE BEAUTY OF OUR  
WORLD LIES IN THE  
DIVERSITY  
OF ITS PEOPLE'**





### HELEN JONES - MIND OUT

MindOut is a mental health service run by and for lesbians, gay men, bisexual, trans, and queer people. They provide advice & information, advocacy, a peer support group programme, wellbeing activities and events, a peer mentoring service, an out of hours online chat service and a food & allotment project. Find out more at...

[www.mindout.org.uk](http://www.mindout.org.uk)



### EMMA RUSSEL - TIME TO TALK

Time to Talk is a friendly and approachable service offering talking therapies to people who are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. They are a team of trained and supervised, psychological therapists who see patients in GP surgeries or community venues within the West Sussex area. Find out more at...

[www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/  
services/time-talk-service](http://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/services/time-talk-service)

### IYAD DOUD - C.E.M.P.

Crawley Ethnic Minority Partnership (CEMP) is an umbrella, infrastructure and support organisation and has a membership of forty one ethnic minority organisations from Crawley and surrounding areas. Member organisations represent people from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. It welcomes membership from any ethnic minority group, including European, which is currently under-represented. Find out more at...

[www.cemp.org.uk](http://www.cemp.org.uk)

## DIVERSITY

*We are all individuals,  
Each of us are different,  
diverse in our religions,  
our beliefs and way of life,  
the choices we make,  
diversity is what makes the world turn,  
it gives us something to talk about,  
it's our differences that make the world,  
the pieces of the jigsaw that fit together,  
that stops us fitting in pigeon holes,  
that makes us react differently to the same event,  
that clouds our judgment of others,  
and how we see ourselves,  
diversity makes the world go round,  
we all have our niche,  
we are all complex individuals,  
and I for one,  
would have it no other way.*

**Jan Clancy - Client, Brightview**



# Putting Pen to Paper

Hi my name is Paul, and over the past few months I have found that I have a lot more time on my hands. So I invested in a pen and writing pad and to keep from being bored I started writing a short story.

Using my imagination I can make just about anything happen in my story. Then I thought about other authors and their imaginations, J K Rowling, Terry Pratchett and Rudyard Kipling. They all had to start somewhere!

So you see, by coming up with what might seem the daftest of ideas, you could lead to something more.

Your imagination can take you anywhere you want, from outer space to a jungle, from New York to a new world, anything is possible.

So try writing for fun, it doesn't matter about correct spelling, just think of a subject and write, but don't forget, stories are to be told and shared, so share your stories with a friend or with us at Sussex Oakleaf. But most importantly, keep it fun!

**Paul Clark - Magazine Working Group**

Every Tuesday in Haywards Heath clients come together to learn about relaxation techniques. The group helps clients to manage their mental health by practicing helpful breathing exercises and learning about mindfulness.

*'Attending a weekly group helps motivate me to practice relaxation, and being with other people has a positive effect, too'*

**- Mid Sussex client**

*'Jan has a lovely soothing voice. She sounds very professional and is able to bring you to beautiful places in her guided relaxation. She gives very useful tips at the beginning of each session - like guided breathing, highly recommended!'*

**- Mid Sussex client**



## If you go down to the woods today...

...you will find a group of industrious Brightview Clients. We have just completed a six week course in woodcraft with Sussex Wildlife Trust. It was a great six weeks where we learned various skills. We made working mallets from tree branches that we used to help sharpen stakes. We learned about coppicing and planting wild flowers. But best of all was the open fire cooking. The final day was a big feast, and luckily the rain held off right to the end.

**Brightview Client**

## RELAX &

## BREATH

*Relax and Breath is one of the many groups run by Sussex Oakleaf Mid Sussex Community Wellbeing Service. To find out more visit our website or call the service on 01444 416391*





# Christmas and Mental Health



Christmas is meant to be full of fun and joy but for a lot of us, particularly those with a mental health condition, it can be a difficult time of year. The cold weather and the pressure can present a real challenge. But there are a few things that we can all do to help maintain our wellbeing over the winter months.

## Alcohol

Lots of people like to have a drink at Christmas but it is important to remember that alcohol is a depressant which can cause low mood, irritability and even aggressive behaviour. By only drinking in moderation we can help sustain better mental health.



## Stay Social

Keeping in touch with people and talking about the things that are worrying us can be great for our mental health. If you can't get out to meet people then why not drop someone a line or have a chat online. Christmas can be a great chance to reconnect with old friends, don't be afraid to send a card or drop them an email.

## Relax

Last minute shopping, entertaining friends, trying not to burn the dinner. Christmas can be stressful for us all. Try some breathing exercises to keep yourself calm. Mindfulness is a great tool for staying relaxed.

## Food & Mood

The old adage 'we are what we eat' is just as true at Christmas time. We all like to over indulge at Christmas but try to keep a good balance with plenty of fresh fruit and veg. A healthy diet is a key part of keeping a health mind.



## Lend a Hand

Helping others is great for our mental health and wellbeing. Doing something for someone else has been shown to reduce stress levels, improve your mood, increase self esteem and can even benefit your physical health. You could try some volunteering over winter or just remember to hold the door open for people while out shopping!

## Keep Active

It can be difficult to force ourselves out the front door when it's wet and cold but keeping active is a vital part of maintaining our mental and physical wellbeing. If you can't get out then you can still be active at home, why not put some Christmas tunes on and have a dance, even better, why not find a friend to dance with!

# Meet our Champions...



*Sussex Oakleaf is pleased to introduce you to our eight new Training Champions! Each champion is taking the lead in a particular area related to mental health and wellbeing. Our champions are hard at work developing training courses about their specialist subjects ready to deliver to our staff and volunteers...*

## **CASPAR MURPHY** RECOVERY & COMPASSION

My name is Caspar, and alongside being the Director of Operations for Sussex Oakleaf, I am the training champion for 'Recovery and Compassion' in the organisation. The principles of Recovery and Compassion underpin the work that we do supporting people with their mental health but through training, staff will also have the chance learn how to apply these principles to themselves.



## **GLYN MARCHANT** EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY

Hi, my name is Glyn Marchant and I am the training lead for Equality and Diversity. I have always had a passion for Equality and Diversity and all that this encompasses. I feel that it underpins all that we strive to achieve here at Sussex Oakleaf. I am hoping to support individuals and teams embed the importance of Equality and Diversity within each service and within the wider organisation.

## **IAN DYER** PERSONALITY DISORDER

My name is Ian Dyer and I am the Community Manager at Lighthouse Recovery Support in Hove which is a specialist service for people who experience Personality Disorder. My experiences before coming to Lighthouse made me realise how difficult it can sometimes be for people with Personality Disorder to get support that really meets their needs and to have their experiences properly understood by others. I hope to be able to share these experiences with the wider organisation.





#### **JULIE HARPER** SUBSTANCES

My name is Julie Harper and in addition to being service manager for Oakhouse in Burgess Hill I am the also the training champion for Substance Misuse. I have extensive experience of supporting adults with substance misuse issues and am looking forward to being able to pass some of this experience onto other staff and volunteers within Sussex Oakleaf.

#### **MARK SAVAGE** CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

My interest and experience in young people's mental health is something I will draw upon in my role as Children & Young People Champion for Sussex Oakleaf. Around half of all mental health problems start before the age of fourteen and three children in an average class will have a diagnosable mental health condition. I am looking forward to meeting with staff, volunteers and of course young people within Sussex Oakleaf to discuss this vital area.



#### **SARAH DONNELLY** KORSAKOFFS

Hello, I'm Sarah Donnelly and I am a Recovery Worker for The Lighthouse Recovery Service. All of our training team have chosen a specialism to champion and mine is Korsakoffs. For those of you who are unaware, Korsakoffs is a form of alcohol related brain damage. It is caused by heavy drinking over a long period and results in dementia like symptoms. I look forward to being able to share knowledge and information with the rest of Sussex Oakleaf and the wider community.

#### **SHARON MCINTOSH** DOMESTIC ABUSE

As the Champion for Domestic Abuse I will act as the point of contact for the organisation for information relating to this subject. Part of this role is to ensure up to date and accessible information is available. I believe it is important that the staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify possible signs of domestic abuse. It is a topic that is hard to talk about and may lay hidden for a long period.



#### **ALISHA PATEL** AUTISM & ASPERGERS

My name is Alisha Patel and I am the champion for Autism and Asperser's within Sussex Oakleaf. I hope to help minimise the amount of stress & anxiety someone with these diagnoses might have when using our services. We can do this by increasing our understanding of Autism and Aspergers and understanding the effects of having a dual diagnosis. Hopefully as an organisation we can continue to become ever more mindful of people's needs.





Sussex Oakleaf provides a range of support services to people with mental health needs, those with a personality disorder and individuals at risk of homelessness.

We empower people and also promote independence by providing recovery focussed community wellbeing services, residential care, peer mentoring, housing support and volunteering opportunities.

For more information about our services visit our website or contact us using the details below.

✉ Sussex Oakleaf  
The Orchard  
1 - 2 Gleneagles Court  
Brighton Road  
Crawley  
RH10 6AD

☎ 01444 459517

✉ info@sussexoakleaf.org.uk

## Useful Contacts

**NHS Direct:** 111

**Sussex Mental Health Line:** 0300 5000 101

**Mind:** 0300 123 3393  
info@mind.org.uk

**Samaritans:** 08457 90 90 90  
Text: 07725 90 90 90  
Email: jo@samaritans.org.uk  
Textphone for hard of hearing: 0845 90 91 92

**Shelter:** 0808 800 444

**Benefit Enquiries Line:** 0800 882 200  
Textphone: 0800 243 355

**Jobcentre Plus, Benefits**  
Claims: 0800 055 6688



Connect with us on Facebook  
and Twitter by searching for  
Sussex Oakleaf

[www.sussexoakleaf.org.uk](http://www.sussexoakleaf.org.uk)