

NEWSLETTER

July 2008, Issue No. 3

p1

Welcome back

It's been a while since our last newsletter and there have been some big changes at NSUN.

We regret to announce the departure of Chandra Fowler as Network Coordinator and Chris Wright as a member of the Management Committee. We would like to thank both Chris and Chandra for their contribution towards the development of NSUN and wish them both well in the future.

On a more positive note we would like to welcome Lisa Haywood as our interim Network Coordinator. Lisa has played an active role in the user movement for more than 20 years. She is also an experienced manager in the charitable sector and was Vice Chair (Policies) at national Mind for twelve years. She is now a full time freelance consultant and has been for the last three years, specialising in various aspects of User Involvement and Operational Management.

Lisa was very involved in setting up the original structure for NSUN and will be working with NSUN over the next 6 months.

Inside this issue:

Introduction to Management Committee

Local Groups

Funding and Grants Opportunities

NSUN Regional Events

International Conference Report

Interactive database goes live

Our fully active website will be up and running by the end of the summer. This now means that, in addition to finding information and news about the network, members will now be able to search our interactive database for other Service User organisations across England and access their contact details.

Our members will also have access to the network forum area, where they'll be able to join existing conversations or start their own on issues and topics concerning the Service User movement.

For more info about becoming a member please visit our website:- www.nsun.org.uk or call 0845 6020779.

Saturday 19th July is BONKERSFEST!



BonkersFest! is a free one-day mad arts and music festival illuminating and celebrating madness, creativity, individuality and eccentricity; combating stigma and promoting good mental health. A day of bonkers celebrations for everyone - bonkers or not - 12noon - 9 pm on Camberwell Green, London SE5. Dance like a loon to live bands in the big top, get dizzy at the fair-ground, take part in live arts, witness peas on earth, free your mind in the world's first 'de-normalisation room' or simply relax and re-connect in the healing tent... BonkersFest! - the biggest mad led arts festival in the world.

Visit www.bonkersfest.co.uk for more information

p2

p2

p3

p3

p4

Introducing the Management Committee

Chair: Rob Henderson

Rob began his involvement in the user movement 2000 after undergoing a major psychotic episode in 1995. In 2000 he was elected to the board of trustees of Mental Health Matters and became Vice Chair in 2003 – a position he currently holds.

In his role as Vice Chair he oversaw the development of the Service User Strategic Strategy for Mental Health Matters while developing his interest in governance for the voluntary sector.

Local Groups

Living in Both Worlds

“Living in both worlds” are a group of service users/survivors made up of employees from Nottingham Health Care Trust and Nottingham University. They are currently looking to expand their membership to people from other services and institutions.

The group is a research group which receives most of its funding from Nottingham university. Their aim is to research patient experience of services, to influence trust policy and procedures and to improve the services and support that the staff receive.

If you are interested and would like to learn more about the group please contact Craig Clark on the following :

Creative Arts Group

craig.clark@nottshc.nhs.uk

If you are a woman of South Asian origin of between 15 – 26 years living in or near Hackney give yourself the chance to:

- Be spontaneous, expressive, relax & de-stress
- Engage your imagination through role play and painting
- Improve your self confidence using drama games
- Be creative with emotional distress

The Group is run by a qualified Drama & Movement Therapist and will provide a safe, non judgemental & confidential space for express yourself.

His involvement with the National User Survivor Network began with an invitation to participate in the conference held in Birmingham in 2006 and continued through the planning group until his election to the management committee of the NSUN. He was elected as Chair of the management Committee in 2007.

He has wide-ranging interests from cricket to the socio-economic influence in the creation of disadvantage groups within society. His major interest is in the effects of isolation and exclusion in mental health faced by First Nation Peoples and BAME in western society and the role First Nation spiritualism plays in the treatment of mental illness.

There will never be more than 10 participants at workshop and participants are encouraged to experience creative emotional release. The class will run every Tuesday for 10 weeks between 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm and 3 pm – 4.30 pm

To book a place or for further information, please call:

Asian Women's Advisory Service (AWAS)
On 020 8533 5796

Morpeth Mental Health Group

Morpeth Mental health Group is a service user group based in the North East. The aim of the group is to offer support, care and social contact to those suffering from mental health problems and their carers.

Activities provided by the group include:-

Film evenings,
creative writing courses,
computer training,
life skills courses

An on site café

and many many more opportunities to meet people and learn new skills.

If you are local or would like to find out more, please visit the website or contact them on the following

01670 510652
contact@contactmorpeth.org.uk
www.contactmorpeth.org.uk

Fundraising

Small Grants For User led Mental Health Groups



Comic Relief's Mental Health Grants Programme supports people with experience of mental distress to get their voices heard and their needs met through funding advocacy and campaigning work.

Priority is given to organisations led by people with mental health problems. The final closing date for large grant applications this year is 15th August 2008. You can find details of the funding criteria on their website: <http://www.comicrelief.com/apply-for-a-grant/uk/>.

There is also a small grants (up to £5,000) programme aimed at local user led groups which is accepting applications until early December 2008. If you have any queries about submitting an application you can call them on 020 7820 555 and ask to speak to a member of the UK Grants Team.

NSUN North East Regional Event

NSUN has now staged the first 2 of a planned series of regional events to held in all the Strategic Health Authority regions of England; the South West will follow.

These premier events were held in Newcastle and Darlington following discussions with local groups as how best to reach people. NSUN & and Mental Health North East funded the events in a very fruitful partnership with local groups involved in the organisation also benefiting from the funds coming their way.

These events looked at how local service user led groups wanted to work with NSUN and were useful in helping to develop links between local groups who are increasingly looking to work together as the commissioning climate in the North East changes.

So what did people say they wanted a national organisation to look at, what should be NSUN's priorities:

Big Lottery Programmes

For areas: England

Application closing date: See below for details

Minimum grant: £10,000

Maximum grant: £500,000

Total available: £60 million: year three

We want to bring about the following changes as a result of our funding through this programme:

- people having better chances in life, including being able to get better access to training and development to improve their life skills
- strong communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problems
- improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy
- healthier, more active people and communities.

You can apply to Reaching Communities if you are:

- a registered charity
 - a voluntary or community group
 - a statutory body, (including schools)
 - a charitable or not-for-profit company
 - a social enterprise
-
- making sure NSUN has effective and open communication links to know what is happening nationally and to enable NSUN to become a national voice for a growing number of user organisations.
 - Knowing what happens locally will help NSUN to signpost others where appropriate.
 - Raise awareness of gaps in service provision and of user groups.
 - Set up a forum to let all service providers and users share any issue and the way they deal with it.'
 - To share information regarding funding, bids for research and commissioning.
 - To offer practical guidance and support towards preventative activities. Use its position as a national organisation to influence the formation of policy.

These were only some of the comments received from the over 100 people who attended these events and certainly fit with how NSUN was conceived. A more complete report has been commissioned and will appear on the NSUN website in the near future.

NEWSLETTER

p4

International Conferences

I have just come back from a conference in Toronto run by INTAR, the International Network Towards Alternatives and Recovery (<http://intar.org/>). It brought together survivors and mental health activists with professional backgrounds who are critical of the biomedical model of mental health and are trying to change things in practical ways.

INTAR "believes that the dignity and autonomy of the person in crisis are of the utmost importance, that full recovery from distressing/altered mental states is possible, and that these two convictions should shape the social response."

The conference was hosted by a group in Toronto, and began with a survivor-only day, called the Psy'Cozy'Um. Several hundred people attended the main event and it was so inspiring to hear people from India, Germany, France, Canada, US, UK, Ireland and many other countries sharing what they have done that works - we all felt less isolated and more hopeful that we are in a process of real challenge and change.

The week before I also took part in a very different event in Geneva, run by the World Psychiatric Association (WPA). The WPA draws together national psychiatric associations (e.g.. the Royal College of Psychiatrists and their equivalents in other countries). Juan Mezzich, the President, championed a programme called 'Psychiatry for the Person'. ("The need for person-centred integrative diagnosis" - <http://www.wpanet.org/publications/docs/wpa022008.pdf>) At this and other events of the WPA on person-centred integrative diagnosis, I keep trying to remind the members that if they are serious about becoming more person-centred they need to involve us, as the 'persons' concerned, and our representative bodies, such as European Network of Users and Survivors in Psychiatry, and national bodies such as NSUN.

One piece of work common to WPA and INTAR is 'trialogue', which was developed in Germany and taken up in a number of other countries. A mental health triologue brings together mental health practitioners, service users, and families/carers, in an arena which is kept neutral, i.e. not on hospital grounds but in an accessible community venue, where people can talk freely and openly about mental health, in a way that can be personal, political, philosophical and practical.

There are criticisms by some service users who have been involved with German triologue, that it tends to rule out the most critical service users, but it does seem to be a format which might benefit us in England to deepen people's understanding of each other's issues and break down polarised thinking, stigma and ignorance. - **Jan Wallcraft**

The fascination of our own history

Historians and users met in London on May 29th to discuss over thirty five years of survivor/user history. Professional historians told how important it is to listen to users' voices and users spoke about the excitement of discovering what others have done and how what they are doing now is part of history.

The Survivors History Group runs a website that records the activities of mental health service users along with relevant historical documents that you can download. They want to build a network of user historians throughout the country who will preserve, and make available, printed and other material archives of the survivors' movement.

An illustrated report of the conference can be downloaded from <http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm> or can be secured from The Secretary, Survivors History Group, 177 Glenarm Road, London, E50NB. There is no charge.

27-29 Vauxhall Grove • Vauxhall • London
Phone 0207 820 8982 • Fax 0207 000 1272
Website www.nsun.org.uk • Email Info@nsun.org.uk

