



HEAR US



CROYDON USER COUNCIL

Croydon User Council

Meeting at: Fairfield Club

1.00 – 4 pm 1st September 2009

Ian Timms (IT)

Chair

Minutes: Jane White (JW)

Hear Us Administrator

ITEM	ACTION	WHO
1.	MINUTES, WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES & HOUSE RULES	
	Chair welcomed everyone and went over the ground rules for the meeting.	
2.	GUEST: Depression Alliance Speaker Hannah Proto	
	<p>The Guest Speaker from Depression Alliance in Croydon, Hannah Proto was introduced. She began by explaining that Depression Alliance is a National Charity that has been in existence for over 25 years and is the leading UK charity that specialises in depression. Hannah and her colleague are involved in an innovative project which aims to support people with depression and anxiety to maintain well being, both physical and mental, and to form a supportive network of friends. The project is called 'Employment and Well Being', and has been running in the Borough of Croydon for a year, building a supportive network of people across Croydon, who are there for each other and can help each other in recovery from depression, either ongoing or new. They don't, at present, support people with other mental health problems. Examples of groups that they run include a creativity group, a gardening team and a range of social activities, as well as physical activities and advice on exercise and nutrition. They have a committee of people to help with the project and produce a monthly newsletter.</p> <p><u>The Depression Alliance Time bank scheme</u></p> <p>The basic idea of time banking has been around for a long time and is not unique to depression alliance, but they have adopted the model which is based around the simple idea of sharing skills and attributes to build stronger supportive communities. The Depression Alliance Time Bank is based on the principle that everybody has something to offer to other people and that all of us at some time in our lives could benefit from some help and support from others, i.e. time banking is basically a swapping of skills. It works on a number of levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is a great way to meet other people • It is always rewarding to feel needed 	



- people can develop skills in gentle way
- people gain a sense of achievement.

The skills that you offer can vary enormously, from having a cup of tea and a chat with someone who may be feeling socially isolated and lonely, to teaching someone how to use their new computer, helping someone who can't read/write very well with filling out paperwork and so on. For every hour of your time that you give to the project or someone in it, you earn one credit to spend on having something done for yourself. For people who find it difficult to ask for support or help for themselves, earning credits by doing something for someone else can make this easier. In a way, the project is 'sort of one step on from volunteering'.

There are currently only two people running this project in the Croydon area which means that it is not usually possible to offer one-to-one support for clients, although **there would always be one organiser present at any event to make people feel safe**. The project is very flexible with no set criteria. In terms of being involved, volunteers/participants can dip in and out, i.e. can do some work for a month and then have time out etc. People can self-refer, or can be referred from job centres, GP's, CMHT's etc. Everyone who becomes involved in the project will then be invited to come and have an informal chat at their base, **East Croydon Medical centre**, to find out more about project and see if it is right for them. In time it is hoped that the project will expand and include more of a peer support contact scheme. The project works really well to help people manage depression and anxiety at their own level at a pace that is right for them. Social activities include going for walks, going to the cinema etc. Sometimes the skill sharing/activities take place in individuals' homes, e.g. helping with cooking or doing some gardening etc. The 'Employment and Well being' project also runs workshops in the library, helping people with applying for work and barriers to work, etc. The project is open to anyone who feels that they may benefit and would only not take someone on if it was felt it couldn't be of benefit to them. There is no waiting list.

Q. What sort of hours do you work?

A. Normal working hours at the moment (9-5pm). We hope as the project becomes more user-led to include more evenings and weekends.

Q. What kind of response have you had in the first year of the project?

A. About 200 referrals. About 130 people receive our newsletter at the moment and about 40-45 key people get evolved in 'skill sharing' on a regular basis.

Q. How are vulnerable people protected?

We have strict standards of care, but the project is also built on trust. Either myself (Hannah) or my colleague Emily is always present during a timebank swap, e.g. in peoples homes etc or when money is being exchanged, e.g. if someone is shopping for someone else.



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	<p><u>Q. Does it matter if you don't have a specific skill?</u> A. No. There is always something you can do that will benefit other people.</p> <p><u>Q. Is this project not the same as the buddy/befriending schemes offered by other organisations?</u> A. The project is similar in some ways. We look more at the practical ways that people can help and support one another, but yes, buddying goes on, people do meet up at weekends and socialise etc. so there is some overlap.</p>	
3.	<p>GUEST: Mind in Croydon's Active Minds Speaker Chloe Gay</p>	
	<p>Leaflets about Active Minds were handed round. Chloe gave a brief introduction to the Active Minds project (part of Mind in Croydon's Employment and Social Inclusion Services), which aims to promote physical and mental well being by supporting people to take part in activities that interest them. Active Minds came to talk at a CUC meeting about a year ago and have been active for a year and a half now. Chloe is based at Orchard House in South Croydon and works with Dora. Chloe organises the <u>physical activities</u> including going to the gym, walking, Boxercise etc. People can be supported to attend activities that they may be lacking the confidence to attend, or can suggest an activity which they want to try and Chloe or Dora will find out about/get in touch with local groups etc that can accommodate the individuals interests. Dora organises the <u>'non physical' activities</u>, basically anything else, e.g. the allotment group in South Croydon, helping people find music lessons, art and a whole range of other leisure and hobby activities. People can get support to become involved in activities that are already in existence and Active Minds also run groups themselves, e.g. Boxercise - A 10 week course, run by ex-boxer, duke McKenzie. This group is very popular, and there is a waiting list at the moment. All the activities ran by Active Minds are free, and they <i>may</i> also be able to negotiate reduced rates for activities run by other organisations. Thornton health, Purley, New Addington and South Norwood run supportive gym sessions – as part of an exercise on referral scheme for people who haven't exercised for a while. Activities run by Active Minds in Croydon (Orchard House) include Badminton on Tuesdays, which takes place at Thornton health (£2 per session), the Allotment project on Tuesdays and Thursdays and they have just a done short tennis coaching session. Active Minds are running a yoga course in September. Recently they have started up a buddying service with volunteers helping people take part in activities until they have built up the confidence to go by themselves.</p> <p>Active Minds are also part of 'time to change' – A big National campaign aiming to fight discrimination and stigma and create positive shifts in attitude to mental health as well as getting people more active. As part of the 'time to change' campaign, Mind in</p>	



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	<p>Croydon are organising ‘Get Moving Week’, 3rd -11th October. It involves a week of activities, bringing people with and without mental health problems together. The activities for ‘Get moving week’ are free and include dance sessions, yoga, walking, badminton, bowling and cheerleading! A copy of the timetable for ‘get moving week’ was handed round, and will be accessible on the Hear Us website and in the next issue of the Newsletter.</p> <p><u>Q. Do you need to be referred to Active Minds?</u> Individuals can refer themselves, i.e. contact Chloe or Dora directly at Orchard House, or can be referred by professionals e.g. care coordinators, GP’s etc.</p> <p><u>Q. I would like to learn guitar, is this the sort of thing that Active Minds can help with?</u> Yes. Once an individual has been referred to us, we can help with finding a tutor for music lessons etc.</p> <p><u>Q. Are ALL activities free?</u> No. All the activities ran by Chloe and Dora at Active Minds and the activities taking place during ‘Get moving week’ (part of the ‘time to change’ campaign) are free. Other activities that people express an interest in, and that Chloe or Dora help to set up/find out about, are not free, <i>although it may be possible to negotiate reduced fees.</i></p> <p><u>Q. Can I volunteer for Active Minds and do I need to be referred if I want to be a volunteer?</u> Volunteers are very welcome. To volunteer for Active Minds you need to make an appointment to come and have a chat with either Chloe or Dora, you don’t need to be referred. You can also contact Tim Oldham at Hear Us.</p> <p><u>Q. Is there an age limit for taking part in Active Minds or in volunteering?</u> There is no upper age limited. People have to be 18 years old or over.</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> I attended the tennis course ran by Active Minds – We had proper coaching and it was really good fun.</p>	
4.	HEAR US: Updates	
	Hear Us still need everyone to renew their membership. Of 300 forms that went out about 130 have come back.	
5.	MINUTES: 4TH AUGUST 2009	
	<p>Personality Disorder Day Unit – The name has been decided and the unit will be called Touchstone House.</p> <p>Minutes from August 4th CUC – agreed and signed off.</p>	



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6.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<p><u>Hear Us to have a party</u> TO suggested a celebration when Hear Us becomes a charity (October) maybe to coincide with mental health day (October 10th).</p> <p><u>Could we organise to have a stall in the Whitgift centre in Croydon during Mental Health Week?</u> The Chair asked for comments/ideas about the stall and if anyone would like to volunteer to help on the day if Hear Us gets permission. Several people put up their hands.</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Time to change’ deliver information packs (up to 200 packs per person for free) as part of the antidiscrimination/stigma campaign, which we could have on the stall and hand out to people. • Could APCMH be involved? APCMH had a stall in the Whitgift Centre about 5 years ago that went quite well. • Hear Us could also approach Mind and Imagine (who are responsible for the new mental health day services) in Croydon about getting involved. TO will speak to Kato from Imagine. • Hear Us could also ask Jamie Eccles about sending some leaflets for the S.U.N project (Service Users Network) which is being launched in Croydon shortly. <p>TO: Need to consider/be aware of possible negative connotations of having a stall, such as negative comments and poor feedback from the public (stigma/ignorance surrounding mental illness).</p> <p><u>We need a ‘meeting in progress’ sign for future meetings</u> There is still a bit of a problem with people wandering in and out of CUC meetings which can be disruptive.</p> <p><u>Next CUC meeting</u> The Police are coming as Guest Speakers to the next CUC meeting at Fairfield Club, November 3rd, to talk about section 136 and restraint and to get the views and opinions of Service Users. The next CUC meeting is at Orchard House (October 6th). It would be a good idea to use this meeting to discuss what we as Service Users would like to ask the police. For example, how do service users feel about arrests, contact with police, non-mental health related interactions with police etc? What do we want to ask the police that may not be on their agenda?</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> <u>What training do the police get on mental health?</u> Service User: Jim Ellis from SUITE, (Service Users Involvement in</p>	<p>TO</p> <p>TO</p>



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	<p>Training and Education – a SLAM ran project) is designing a course to educate the police on mental health issues. TO: We want to prevent the police using the CUC meeting as a tick box exercise and make sure that Service Users get to ask the questions we want to ask.</p> <p><u>There is not enough help/support for service users outside working hours, i.e. evenings and at weekends.</u> Service User comment: SANE line is good but it can be difficult to get through.</p>	
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Minutes Signed off by Chair.		
Name:	Signature:	Date:



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MEETING TYPE	DATE	TIME	VENUE	Guest
Closed	Tuesday 6th January	1-4 pm	Hear Us Office	None
Closed	Tuesday 3rd February	1-4 pm	Hear Us Office	CANCELLED
Open To All	Tuesday 3rd March	1-4 pm	Fairfield Club	John Clarke, from the Home Treatment Team & Psychiatric Liaison Service
Closed	Tuesday 7th April	1-4 pm	Hear Us Office	None
Open To All	Tuesday 5th May	1-4 pm	Fairfield Club	Welfare Benefits here to discuss the New Benefit; Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) & Permitted Work & A researcher from the IOP (Institute of Psychiatry)
Closed	Tuesday 2nd June	1-4 pm	Hear Us Office	None
Open To All	Tuesday 7th July	1.30-4.30 pm	Fairfield Club	SNAP Team & CroyCILL
Open To All	Friday 10th July	1.30-3.30 pm	Hear Us Office	Personality Disorder Service
Closed	Tuesday 4th August	1.30-4.30 pm	Hear Us Office	Personality Disorder Service
Open: AGM*	Tuesday 1st September	1.30-4.30 pm	Fairfield Club	Depression Alliance & Mind in Croydon's Active Minds
Closed	Tuesday 6th October	1.30 - 4.30 pm	Hear Us Office	Discussion about forthcoming CUC meeting with Croydon Police
Open To All	Tuesday 3rd November	1.30 - 4.30 pm	Fairfield Club	Croydon Police
Closed	Tuesday 1st December	1.30 - 4.30 pm	Hear Us Office	TBC

Please send apologies to Tim Oldham or Jane White on 020 8681 6888
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