



HEAR US



Croydon User Council

Meeting at: Orchard House

1.00 – 4 pm 5th May 2009

AGENDA ITEMS	WHO
1. MINUTES, WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES & HOUSE RULES:	
Everyone was welcomed Apologies were given for the people above	
2. GUESTS: Shelley Leckey & Carol Waylett (ESA) and Kay Hicks (Permitted Work) & Sian Evans (Welfare benefits Coordinator)	
<p>Guest speakers were welcomed by all.</p> <p>1. Shelly Leckey & Carol Waylett from Welfare benefits;</p> <p>The new ESA (Employment Support Allowance) was introduced October 27th 2008 and replaces income support and incapacity benefit for new claimants on the grounds of incapacity to work. It was emphasised that people already in receipt of benefit will not be affected by the changes until 2010, after which everyone will be reassessed for the new benefit (which is likely to be a migration). In brief, the ESA has 2 components (contribution based or income related). During the first 13 weeks of the assessment period, all new (not those currently claiming) claimants will undergo a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) during which claimants receive a basic rate of pay (same as Job Seekers Allowance). NB: People who are considered unable to work on the basis of their initial claim will be put straight in to the 'support group' and the WCA will not apply.</p> <p>The WCA has 3 parts:</p> <p>1. The Limited Capacity for Work Test (Similar to current Personal Capability Assessment) which looks at physical and mental functions and awards points according to person's limitations to each function.</p> <p>2. The limited capability for work-related activity test. This determines whether people are placed in the 'support group' or the 'work-related activity group' which in turn determines the level of ESA they will receive and what they will need to do to retain the benefit. The test is based on 46 descriptors relating to physical and mental functions. Claimants only need qualify on one descriptor to be placed on the support</p>	



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side. (It was suggested that Hear Us will publish a list of the descriptors in a future newsletter)

3. Work focused health-related assessment

For claimants in the work-related activity group. This is aimed at focusing on what people **can** do as apposed to what they can't. They will be required to attend a series of interviews with a personal adviser and will be expected to adhere to strict work-related conditions in order to avoid possible sanctions to their benefit.

Q. This new benefit sounds very complicated and all the forms, talk of NI contributions, interviews etc, is making me confused and very anxious.

A. Yes it is having this affect on many

Q. Why do some people on income support get help with medical expenses etc, and there do not seem to be any healthcare perks for people receiving incapacity benefit?

A. People claiming ESA on the income based side will still be entitled to the same Healthcare assistance as before. People receiving ESA claimed on contributory grounds are not automatically entitled to assistance with medial costs, but are advised to obtain an **HC1 form**.

Q. Where can I go for more information/advice?

A. The Welfare Advice workers will be visiting Tamworth Resource Centre each week, and Purley, New Addington and Westways once every 3 weeks.

Q. Do the new assessment questionnaires cover mental health?

A. Yes - the sections on the back page of the form relate specifically to mental health and it is advisable to include any minor physical ailments in this section.

Shelly and Carol recommended

- photocopying all correspondence letters
- keeping a log of any phone calls to build up a case file
- taking a support workers/CPN/friend etc to interviews etc
- inform DWP as soon as possible if unable to attend any meetings, interviews etc

Q. Will my CPN/psychiatrist have any input in my assessment?

What if my views contradict the medics?

A. Yes. It is still important to have as much information as possible.



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	<p>DLA (Disability Living Allowance) and JSA (Job Seekers Allowance) remain unaffected by new ESA.</p> <p>2. Kay Hicks - Permitted Work</p> <p>Anyone undertaking any amount of work while in receipt of benefit MUST inform the DWP and complete a permitted work form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People on lower limit ESA can earn £20 per week - People in the support group of ESA (i.e., those with CPN/social worker etc) can earn £92 per week indefinitely. NB. People claiming on the income-based ESA will be better off as they will receive up to £92 a week on top of the £85 benefit money indefinitely (for as long as the support continues). <p>NB: People who receive Housing Benefit may find that their housing benefit is affected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those undertaking permitted work in the higher group (i.e. no support worker) must be working less than 16 hours per week (calculated over a monthly average). These people can earn up to £92 per week for 12 months after such a time they must either enter full-time work (i.e. come off benefit) or will be put back on lower rate ESA for 52 weeks before being eligible to start again. <p>NB: disabled working tax credit is not related to permitted work. If you work more than 16 hours per week you can claim working tax credit from the Inland Revenue (tends to be equal to rent).</p>		
3.	HEAR US CHARITY UPDATE TRUSTEES		
	<p>JG - Visited the solicitor on 24th April. All paperwork has been sent to Companies House and the application should be processed in five working days. The application to the Charities Commission will take longer, the solicitor estimated 2 months. As part of the process all Hear Us members (except the opening company directors) must re-join the new charity. We will be sending letters to all our current members informing them of the change in status and requesting them to update their membership.</p>	TO	
5.	WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR CENTRE		
	KINGFISHERS	No representative. Will be supported by IMAGINE.	
	VOICES	No representative	
	D.A.N.D.A	No representative	TO
	LANTERN HALL	No representative	
	FAIRFIELD CLUB	No representative	
	OASIS	No representative	
	BME	Perspective volunteers to meet Friday	



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		May 8 th .	
	PURLEY USER GROUP	No representative	
	PARCHMORE	No representative	
6.	LINKWORKING		
	BETHLEM LINKWORKING		
	<p>Mixed ward on Gresham 1 to be closed in July and the women's ward Alex ground floor will move into Gresham 1, whilst Alex Ground Floor to become an outpatients for Personality Disorder patients. Personality Disorder Unit will need premises for the one month overlap period.</p> <p>Linkworking: When the mixed ward closes Linkworking to increase from fortnightly to weekly. AK and CG reported all going well. The questionnaire has been dropped but Linkworkers still have prompts if necessary, the aim being to allow an open forum for patients to talk about what <i>they</i> want to talk about. There will still be a quarterly 'gathering of information' using Hear Us owned Questionnaire.</p> <p>CMHT Resource Centre Reception windows. The thick glass screen at Tamworth Road is being removed and replaced by wire. Changes have been made to the Consulting rooms e.g. nice chairs! Medication is still being handed out in see-through rather than opaque bags.</p> <p>PRIORY Online Questionnaire completed and due to run. Our Questionnaire still needs to be linked to their website.</p>		
7.	LINKWORKING WHERE NEXT? CIPTS!		
	Linkworking to start at Foxley Lane on 28 th May. Selhurst Road has requested Linkworking at their Resource Centre.		
8.	NEXT OPEN MEETING: Tuesday 7 th July 1.30pm-4.30pm Fairfield Club		
9.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS		
	Cath Collins, Croydon Mental Health Forum. Next meeting will be held on May 20 th 12.30-3.00pm at the CVA Resource Centre. The guest speakers will be talking about Housing Issues.		

Minutes Signed off by Chair.

Name:	Signature:	Date:



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MEETING TYPE	DATE	TIME	VENUE	Guest
Closed	Tuesday 6 th January	1 – 4 pm	Hear Us Office	None
Closed	Tuesday 3 rd February	1 – 4 pm	Hear Us Office	CANCELLED
Open To All	Tuesday 3 rd March	1 – 4 pm	Fairfield Club*	John Clarke, from the Home Treatment Team & Psychiatric Liaison Service
Closed	Tuesday 7 th April	1 – 4 pm	Hear Us Office	None
Open To All	Tuesday 5 th May	1 – 4 pm	Fairfield Club*	Welfare Benefits
Closed	Tuesday 2 nd June	1 – 4 pm	Hear Us Office	None
Open To All	Tuesday 7 th July	1 – 4 pm	Fairfield Club*	Disability Croydon & SNAP Team
Closed	Tuesday 4 th August	1 – 4 pm	Hear Us Office	None
Open: AGM*	Tuesday 1 st September	1 – 4 pm	Fairfield Club*	TBC
Closed	Tuesday 6 th October	1 – 4 pm	Hear Us Office	None
Open To All	Tuesday 3 rd November	1 – 4 pm	Fairfield Club*	TBC
Closed	Tuesday 1 st Decen	1 – 4 pm	Hear Us Office	None

Please send apologies to Tim Oldham or Jane White on 020 8681 6888
 Email: tim@hear-us.org or <mailto:jane@hear-us.org>

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