

Back of the Net



“I love playing football and I’ve made new friends”

Team Member



A Report by Hear Us June 2014

CONTENTS	Page
Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
The Questionnaire Results	7
Executive Summary	6
SWOT - Feedback	10
Team Photo	12
Findings	14
Recommendations	15
Active Minds Project	23
Hear Us Membership Form	24



Active Minds contacted details:
Alex Rolfe–Sanders: 020 8253 8205
Peter Rogers: 020 8253 8206
Dora Crookl: 020 8253 8206
email: activeminds@mindincroydon.org.uk
website: mindincroydon.org.uk

Orchard House
15A Purley Road
South Croydon
CR2 6EZ

HEAR US
Croydon's Mental Health Service User Group
Charity Number 1135535
Company Number 06891337
We are Funded By:



Acknowledgements

Active Minds Football Project A retrospective of the service through the eyes of it's members

This report is produced as a result of a request by Active Minds: That I gather information from their members and produce a retrospective assessment report of the service through the eyes (& feet) of its members.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of Active Mind's Football Project that kindly expressed views, sharing their experiences and openly expressing the impact on

“Taking part in the Active Minds Football project has been my way back onto my feet and fighting my mental illness”

Team Member

their lives, that participating in Active Minds football project has had on them.,

This report provides an insight into the experience of mental health service users that have forged friendships, improved thier fitness football skills and helped to improve each others mental health by supporting each other without prejudice of skills, talent or fitness.

Without the openness and honesty of the team members I interviewed, this report would be lacking the human element of their experiences. We hope that we have done justice to their words.

Tim Oldham



INTRODUCTION

This report aims to provide an insight into the experience of the mental health service users accessing Mind in Croydon's Active Minds Football Team

Project Aims

Through pre-developed questionnaire and with open discussion with members of the team, the project sought to explore the following questions:

1. What have been the benefits of participating in the football team?
2. What issues members may have about the project?
3. What challenges members face taking part in the project?
4. What recommendations can be made so the project can better meet the needs of service users as identified through this report?

This report presents and summarises the voice and experience of the participants in their own words.

Project Background

Active Minds aims to promote physical and mental wellbeing and provide social inclusion

opportunities by supporting people from the mental health community to take part in physical activities that interest them.

Active Minds football team have been playing and practicing football through partnership with Crystal Palace Foundation. Members are very proud of taking part in the team and of the collaboration between Mind in Croydon and their local football club.

Hear Us

Since 2007, Hear Us has managed a user focussed monitoring (UFM) project within mental health services in Croydon. This project is called the Linkworking Project, recruiting current or ex local service users (Linkworkers) to visit mental health services and conduct consultation sessions with service users. Through these sessions, Hear Us provides an opportunity for service users to raise their concerns, issues and needs as they arise, which can then be fed back to the service providers.

By providing a Linkworking service within mental health settings, Hear Us' objectives are to:

- Improve service users' experiences of accessing services, enabling greater involvement of people with mental health problems in the delivery and provision of services.
- Encourage Linkworkers to engage positively with services, providing an opportunity for Linkworkers to engage in meaningful work and develop attitudes towards mental health.
- Enable service providers to develop more inclusive and accessible mental health services for the mental

health community it serves

- and to enable service users to have their voice and issues heard by providers and commissioners

Using user Focused monitoring, peer to peer, We were able to reach out to the Active Mind's Football Team and encourage the service users to share their experiences about what benefits the project has brought them and allowing them to feed back issues that they feel is affecting the growth of the project.



“By joining the football project my life has improved I went from no physical activities to playing regular”

Football Project Member

The Questionnaire

1. How did you learn about Active Minds Football Team & Practice

“ I was referred by an
Active Mind worker ”

“ An open day at the
Fairfield Halls and speaking
to Alex (Active Mind Worker)
on the phone about getting
referred ”

“ I was referred through
other mind activities ”

“ I was referred by my
mental health team ”

“ I was referred through
Addiction Services based at
Lantern Hall ”

“ I was referred through
through my doctor ”

2. On a scale of 1 to 10
What was the reason
or your goals for joining
Active Minds Football
Team/Practise

“ I wanted to meet new
friends ”

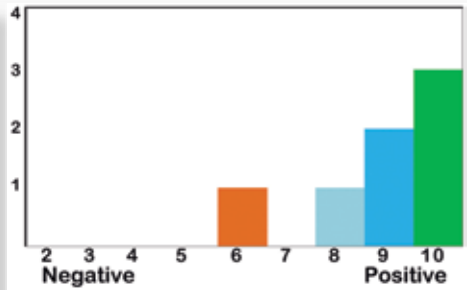
“ To enjoy playing and
watching football and needed
a reason to start getting out
and about more ”

“ For fitness and to just
play football again ”

“ To get active and lose
weight ”

“ To gain fitness and
confidence ”

“ To play football ”



What do you feel was the
reason for this?

“ Because I have new
friends ”

“ got me out of the
house ”

“ enjoyment ”

“ I did manage to lose a lot of
weight and got me busy during
the week ”

“ just very happy to be here
”

“ not sure ”

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, How would you rate your confidence was before you joined Active Minds?

What do you feel was the reason for this?

“ Because I was so low ”

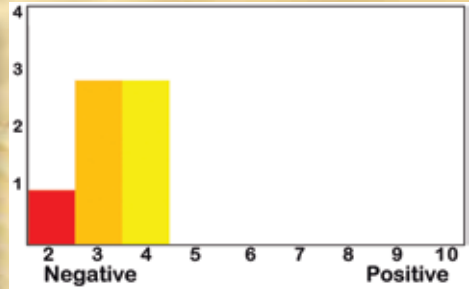
“ not socialising /been confined to home ”

“ Because I didn't get out and socialise much ”

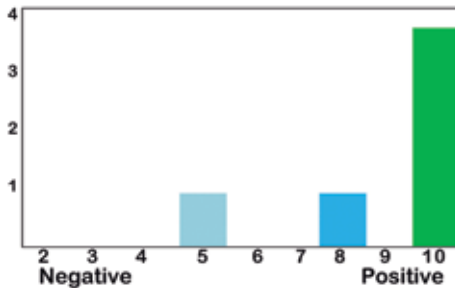
“ medication ”

“ everyone is great to be around ”

“ love football ”



4. On a scale of 1 to 10, How much do you enjoy playing with the Group



What do you feel was the reason for this ?

“ People were welcoming and friendly ”

“ Because of the friendly banter ”

“ Just being with like minded people ”

“ It helped me to understand how team work can achieve a lot of positive results ”

“ Playing football and being a part of the project ”

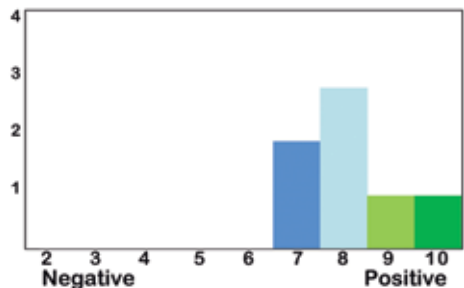
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, How much or less has your physical health improved

What do you feel was the reason for this ?

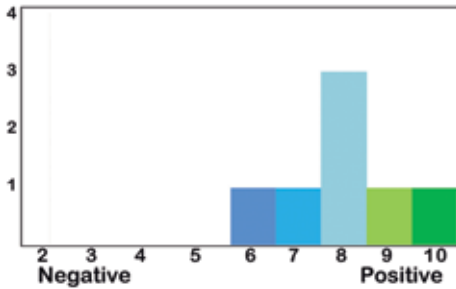
“ I feel much fitter ”

“ Apart from the continuous injury problem I’m feeling much fitter ”

“ I went from **no** physical activities to playing regular ”



6. On a scale of 1 to 10, How much do you feel your mental health has improved?



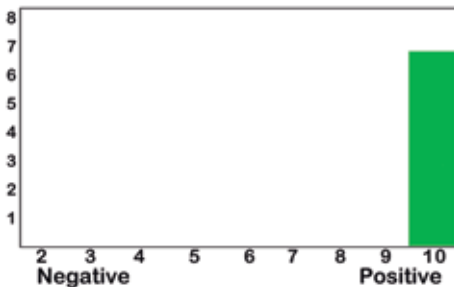
What do you feel was the reason for this ?

“ Because I have new friends who are welcoming and friendly its making me feel much fitter ”

“ I love playing football and have made new friends ”

“ Playing football regular ”

7. On a scale of 1 to 10, How much enjoyment have you got from being part of the group



What do you feel was the reason for this ?

“ Because I'm not low all the time ”

“ Because its fun most of the time and I feel part of something ”

“ I just really enjoy playing football ”

“ Playing football regular ”

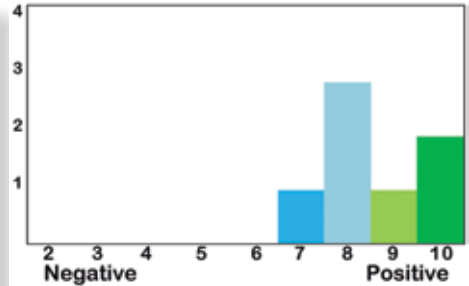
8. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you feel you confidence has grown since joining Active Minds

What do you feel was the reason for this ?

“ All of the reasons ”

“ Just being part of the group and helping them out has given me a purpose ”

“ I just really enjoy playing football ”



9. On a scale of 1 to 10, How much has social inclusion improved your life

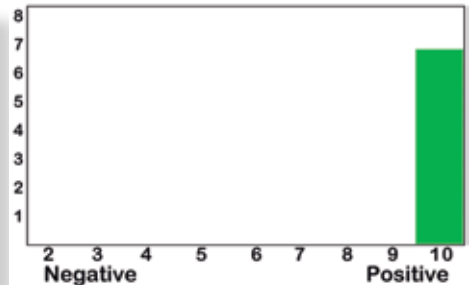
What do you feel was the reason for this ?

“ Because I'm attempting new things and feel part of the group ”

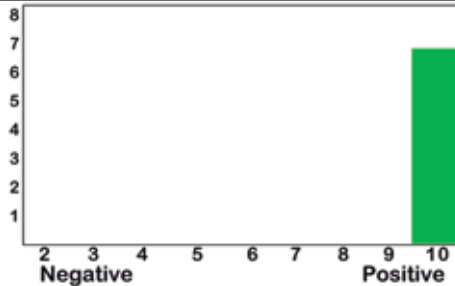
“ I feel more confident ”

“ Because I'm socialising with new people ”

“ I've made friends who I socialise with every week ”



10. On a scale of 1 to 10, How much has Physical Activity been important to you



What do you feel was the reason for this ?

“ I really feel part of the Football Project ”

“ Because I'm getting older and need to stay more active ”

“ I'm just more active all round ”

“ Because I'm taking part in the Football Project ”

11. Has joining Active Minds led you try other activities?

“ Yes I have joined Duke Mackenzie Boxercise Gym ”

“ I Joined 'Cook and Taste', tennis & running ”

“ Boxercise, archery & swimming ”

“ I joined the Cricket & Golf projects ”

12. Is there anything you feel could be improved about Active Minds Services

“ Possibly more football matches and more coaching opportunities ”

Executive Summary

More than just a game!

What did Bill Shankly say?

“Someone said to me ‘To you football is a matter of life or death!’ and I said ‘Listen, it’s more important than that’”

Shankly’s statement resonates to the core of Active Mind’s Football Project. Listening to the passion that has been built up within the project members, from being part of each others lives, it really is more than just a game and its more than just another mental health project. It really is a matter of life or death, to each project member.

Watching them play, you see a team, a group of mostly men that have expanded their abilities of kicking a football around a pitch to a refined team player. I got to meet a team of men who really have responded to the challenge of pulling themselves out of a revolving mental illness, to being able to participate, and enjoy, and return to playing football. The Football project has brought a group of men together to play and to improve their state of mind and mental health through

the game and through their friendship.

Team Support

The members support each other through camaraderie and good-natured humour. It doesn’t matter if a member has fewer skills or are less mobile; the team pull together and play as a team. They train as a team giving each other moral support. They also support each other by motivating each other, rewarding each other when they make a good run, or a good pass, obviously when they get the ball in the back of the net but also when the pass goes astray or the ball goes well over the bar.

The successes of the project are completely obvious and clearly plain to see: It brings together a team of men that has been struggling with mental health, living in a solitary dark place and giving them meaning and helping them to gain back their life through football and friendships.

Confidence and self-esteem has been growing throughout the team through play

**Active Minds Football Club with Brighton
Football Club
Wednesday 5th June 2014
*Active Minds won 5 - 2***





Awards and Recognition

On the day we held the focus group, there was a presentation where trophies were awarded and members were recognised for their commitment and successes;

- The team player that had improved in their footballing skills
- The team player that had scored the most goals - golden boot and
- the player that had taken the most damage to knees and wrists for the team, however

However the project members felt that another member of the project had helped progress, develop and expand the project, and felt that any project member that helps develop the project should be recognised in a similar way to the golden boot player.

Possible tension building

“Am I a member of the squad or a ambassador for Mind?”

The team feel, that when they are acting for the benefit of the project rather than as a member for the team; such

as when they volunteering for Active Minds in organising or being the motivating force in training sessions or preparing for match days. Then they feel their role needs to be recognised and rewarded.

“When I take an actively leading role 'in' organising or participating in meeting with Crystal Palace FC to arrange for a new Kit or meeting with other organisations and speaking as a representative for Mind in Croydon, than I'm doing a role of a Mind member of staff, even if that is voluntary”

There is some tension building amongst the team. They feel that when their role changes from being a participant in the project to becoming a volunteer for the benefit of Mind, then this needs to be recognised

Expenses

Members also want out of pocket expenses to be reimbursed when acting for the benefit of Mind;

“I'm on sickness benefit. Money should be set aside if members are incurring costs for the benefit of Mind in Croydon's Active Mind project”

Expanding Skills

Several of the project members have been encouraged to expand on their skills by taking a football coaching course. This has been supporting other players to improve their game as well as their mental health.

This commitment is more than just being involved in the team, but also being involved in supporting and running the football project of Active Minds.

Possibilities that trained service user coaches could become more involved in the Football Project to a degree that this could be established as a recognised outcome and target for the project.

What are the outcomes of the players?

At this moment I feel that the outcome is that they want to continue playing as a team, but are players solely going to keep being involved with the Active Minds team until;

- Their health improves to a state that they will naturally want to move on.
- A Service User trained coach could eventually run the football project allowing the Active Minds staff more time to spend on expanding other Active Minds projects expanding

- Could they, by taking up training to be a coach, help other local mental health stakeholder groups around the borough develop and expand on the services to have and compete against each other or
- Will they feel that they are not being recognised for their commitment and up and leave, ending their involvement with bad feelings towards the project which could in turn impact on their mental health

Conclusion

Above all including negatives the Football project is a complete success. The members of the team are enjoying playing football, either again or for the first time. Their responses to the questionnaire show that their health both mentally and physically has been much improved by the project. One member stated that

“ I did nothing, I rarely left my flat before joining the team. Now I have some meaning back into my life. I have actually have started to enjoy myself ”

Training with the coach from Crystal Palace has

enabled the team to improve their individual skills and also improve them as team players supporting each other to reach their goals whilst netting a few at the same time. The team bonding has also brought friendships between members where before many were living their life in solitude.

Wanting More

The team are really enjoying themselves and consequently have been improving their mental health, and have been benefitting physically from the project, so much that they want more. They want extra training sessions and if possible another match day per week. The team have shown that they have benefitted so much that many are taking up other sports and activities

Taking up much more than involvement

They suggested that one of the team become a member of the Active Mind staff taking responsibility of managing the team. This would take pressure off current staff and allow the project to expand within the team. This shows that the project is giving the team members a growth in their confidence and self-awareness of how the project

is benefitting the team as a whole. This isn't just one of the team saying this. All of the team think this could be a way forward for the project

If the team was disbanded; how would the individuals of the team react if the football training and the match days were to end? Would they go back to solitary lives? From talking with this current squad, I feel some would be impacted and would badly retreat, either feeling anger or feeling failure. However a core of the hardened players would seek to keep on playing by forming their own team.

They have the skills; this is very evident from watching them play, the way they pass the ball to each other in attacking play and how they show awareness by supporting each other in defence. They also have the passion, not just for the game but also for the friendships that they have forged with each other. They support their goalie, they support the less mobile and they support the development of the project.

So they have ability to take this forward. Individual players have taken up 'coach training' and have

taken responsibility on their shoulders to already take the project further by seeking to move into another league. The team as a whole; all spoke as one in stating that

Taking part has given each member of the project real meaning back into their lives. 'It is evident that the football training and match days are more than just turning up for a kick around; it is a matter of life and death to each of team member. Something they want to retain and keep playing.

Project Members were also give a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats) tanalysys to enable open discussion. The following is the resulting comments.

Strenghts

“ The project helps develop confidence through play ”

“ Given me some very good friends and helped me feel part of something ”

“ I now look forward to being a part of a group. ”

“ it means the world to me ”

“ Giving me love for the game improving my skill and goal tally. ”

“ I've met some really cool team mates ”

“ Unity though commitment ”

“ I want to keep playing its good for my mental health ”

Weaknesses

“ The regular coach is not always available, but even though his role is covered I really appreciate his commitment ”

“ Maybe an hour a week is not quite enough. ”

“ More playing time would be good ”

“ Session are not long enough, I need more time to warm up and get changed. ”

“ Expenses should be paid for travel and other out of pocket expenses of all participants especially those who take responsibility and structure the team ”

Opportunities

“ It helps us meet new people ”

“ It helps increase our self esteem and confidence ”

“ The physical exercise really helps with the mind ”

“ The chance to allow players who have passed coaching badges to coach team ”

Threats

“ The worry that the project will end ”

“ Losing the Crystal Palace Football Coaches ”

“ Losing the structure to my life ”

“ I don't feel it is fully understood what playing football is having on my life and what it means to me ”

Findings

Through talking with the team, analysis of the data gathered using focus groups and from the survey questionnaires, several issues were identified. Below are themes that emerged.

Positives: Players Stated

That the football training and match days are having positive impact on both their mental and physical health

- That they are forging good friendships and bonds between players which is helping with their confidence and building on their self esteem
- That it is helping those that were suffering in isolation to leave their home and venture out and become part of a group
- That they are learning and pushing themselves to take part in training to be a coach, and receive qualifications
- That the football and social contact is giving meaning and stability back into their lives
- That some are able to take up other sports and

activities

Negatives: Players Stated

- That they want their involvement recognised when their role changes from participating in the football to actively being an ambassador for the project and for Active Mind's benefit
- That they are feeling frustrated, when they pay for expenses out of their own pocket when they are representing Active Minds
- That there is not enough training and that they would want more than once a week. This also goes for matches - they would like more opportunities to play

Recommendations

1. Players need to be recognised for when their role changes from player to volunteer, and also need to be thanked.
2. Players need to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses when acting/volunteering for the benefit of the project and for Active Mind's benefit
3. Players would like to have the opportunity to have more training and more matches
4. More players need to be offered and encouraged to, access the 'Coach Training'
5. Members are benefitting from social contact with each other. Arrange for more social events to happen
6. Continue the football project as it is bring:
 - Meaning back into players lives.
 - Improving mental health
 - Improving physical
 - Creating friendships.

Active Minds Response to the reports findings and recommendations

The Active Minds team would like to thank members of the football group for their time, honesty and input into this report. We would also like to thank Tim and Hear Us for facilitating the focus group, designing the questionnaires and producing this report.

The football group has grown and developed considerably from its first days in the local park and we recognise that without the dedication and hard work of the members the group would not be the great success that it is. Of course success brings its own problems but in the words of the old football cliché 'they're good problems to have.'

Members of the football group continue to grow as individuals and their ambitions for the group grow alongside this which is a positive outcome for both Active Minds and participants. With this success, the increasing level of skill and trophies and tournaments won by the team it's important we continue to reach the projects founding aims of increasing social inclusion, tackling isolation and building members mental and physical wellbeing.

From this report, the focus group and discussions with all of the players, Active Minds have responded by putting in place some of the ideas suggested and will aim to address the concerns raised

We Have:

- We have started a second football session for less able or mobile players as the fitness and skill level of the players and sessions has increased more than anyone envisioned. This session also aims to be welcoming to new members and provides longer term members of the group with the opportunity to do some coaching
- Crystal Palace Foundation have made available for our members some places on coaching courses
- A member of the team has successfully applied for funding for travel to away games which will allow us to have a minibus for most matches

We Will:

- We will put in place more opportunities to move into mainstream football when

players mental health improves

- In consultation with the group we are developing a clear role description for football volunteers to avoid confusion and strengthen the group and team by formalising the volunteer role and the support given to the volunteers
- Make our guidelines for when expenses can be claimed clearer and more widely available to the team to ensure we continue to pay expenses to volunteers when they are agreed in advance in accordance with Mind in Croydon's Volunteer Handbook and policies

Active Minds and Mind in Croydon are extremely proud of what the football group has achieved and the partnership forged between the participants, ourselves and The Crystal Palace Foundation. We look forward to its continued growth and success, and ever more positive outcomes for the participants



About Active Minds

The aim of our service is to give a taster of activities which will stimulate a new interest, promote a healthy lifestyle and help to improve confidence so that you feel better able to access activities within your local community.

Boxercise and Cook and Taste

Active Minds run Cook and Taste and Boxercise as six week stand alone courses regularly throughout the year, both require registration before the course starts.

How do I register?

You need to contact the Active Minds team to put your name on the waiting list. Courses are very popular so places will be allocated on a first come first service basis, with priority going to new members.

You will be asked to attend a registration session. During this you will be asked to provide some details about yourself, complete some questionnaires and to pay your fees where applicable.

Active Minds Drop-In Activities

Some activities you do not have to register for and you can come and join at any point. However, you need to contact Active Minds to discuss this first.

Will it cost?

We have strived to make all of our activities as low cost as possible. Where we have had to charge a fee you can pay on the day of the activity.

Contact Alex, Peter or Dora at Active Minds

Active Minds contacted details:

Alex Rolfe–Sanders: 020 8253 8205

Peter Rogers: 020 8253 8206

Dora Crook: 020 8253 8206

email: activeminds@mindincroydon.org.uk

website: mindincroydon.org.uk

GROUPS

Yoga Classes

Gentle relaxation using breathing and stretching techniques

Location: Fairfield House

Time: Monday 3 - 4pm

Cost: £3 per week or £10 for 4 weeks

Cook and Taste

Learn about healthy eating while cooking tasty recipes

Location: Orchard House

Next group: JAN 2015

Time: 11.30am - 1.30pm

Cost: £25 per 6 week course.



Table Tennis

Matches and practice

Time: Wednesday at 12pm

Location: Orchard House

Cost: FREE

Tennis

(weather permitting)

Come along and join us for a few sets at Park Hill Gardens Tennis Courts

Time: Thursday 1.30-2.30pm

Cost: FREE—please call to check sessions

Ballroom Dancing

Six week course starts 19th Nov 2014

Where: Fairfield House

Time: 11-12am Wednesdays

Cost: FREE but please call us to check dates

Boxercise

Come and train with three times World Champion Duke McKenzie using non-contact boxing techniques.

Location: Crystal Palace

Next group: JAN 2015

Book now to secure a place

Time: 12pm - 1.30pm

Duration: 6 weeks

Cost: FREE



DROP IN ACTIVITIES

Horticulture Groups

Learn gardening skills, grow your own fruit and veg or meet new friends at our allotment site in South Croydon .

Where: South Croydon Allotment

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Cost: £2 per session



Football Sessions

With an official Crystal Palace FC coach. If you want to get fit and have fun developing your ball skills come to our football fitness sessions. All abilities welcome. There is even an opportunity to join our team 'The Croydon Eagles' and play in the Surrey FA Inclusion Football League.

Location: National Arena, Crystal Palace

Time: Wednesday 3.30- 4.30pm

Cost: £2.50 per session

New Football Group

2nd football group aimed mainly at those getting back into the game or just wanting to improve fitness

Time: Wednesday 2.30– 3.30pm

Details as above

Swimming Sessions

South Norwood Pool

Ladies' Session Time:

Monday 11.30am

Men's session Time: Fri 2pm

Cost: £1.30 per session
(depending on concessionary rate) Please call to check sessions



Badminton

Join a small, dedicated group at Thornton Heath Leisure Centre for a few games

Time: Tuesdays at 12pm.

Cost: £3.00

Relaxation Sessions

Location: Orchard House

Time: Fridays at 1pm

Cost: FREE

Hear Us Membership Application Form

Resident in London Borough of Croydon	
Have a recognisable interest in mental health service user issues in Croydon	
Have had emotional psychological problems or some form of mental illness	
Name:	
Address:	
Tel:	
Email:	
Age & DOB:	
Gender:	
Sexuality	
Ethnic Origin:	
Do you have a disability:	
Hear Us will not use the information you provide for anything other than distribution of newsletters and invitations to meetings.	
I would like to become a member of Hear Us, and to receive your free newsletter	
Please read the form thoroughly and check that the information you have provided is correct before signing.	
Signature:	

Hear Us Aims

- To relieve the needs of people living in the London Borough of Croydon and surrounding areas who have mental health problems by provision of services and advice
- To advance education about mental health for the public benefit in the London borough of Croydon and surrounding areas with the object of creating awareness and reducing the stigma attached to mental health
- To reach out to all service users to encourage and support participation in the Hear Us Open Forum.
- To actively oppose discrimination against service users in Croydon.
- To support a user forum in which to discuss and debate current concerns.
- To offer service users a communication platform for the constructive exchange of ideas on issues affecting them.
- To campaign for improvements in mental health services.
- To provide a wide range of information about local/national services and issues that concern users of mental health services in Croydon, through our Newsletter and Web site.

Orchard House

15a Purley Road

South Croydon

CR2 6EZ

020 8681 6888

hear.us@hear-us.org

www.hear-us.org

Company No. 6891337

Charity No. 1135535