

# HEAR US

Croydon's Mental Health Service User Group



## About Hear Us

Hear Us is Croydon's Mental Health Service User Group which acts as a coordinating body to facilitate, and ensure service users involvement in, the planning, delivery and monitoring of mental health services in Croydon. Hear Us:

- ✦ Represents the views of people that use local mental health services in Croydon to service providers and commissioners.
- ✦ Contributes to the local mental health agenda, and promotes positive mental health within the local community.
- ✦ Promotes mutual respect and equality of rights and opportunities, regardless of disability, with particular reference to local mental health service users and service survivors.

## Who We Influence

We regularly attend meetings with Croydon's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLaM), including; service development, planning and monitoring meetings. At these meetings we represent people living with mental illness, and ensure that their voices, views issues and concerns heard.

By doing this we are helping to improve the quality of the services commissioned and delivered in Croydon to meet the need of our community.

We are always looking for service users to join our Linkworking Project and Reachout Challenge, and, as office support volunteers.

If you feel you can contribute and would like to get involved please call us on 020 8681 6888 or email [info@hear-us.org](mailto:info@hear-us.org)

## Why We do it

We are people with lived experience of mental health, that use or have used Croydon's mental health services and understand the importance of peer support.

We developed our Linkworking project, Open Forum, Reachout Challenge, and our Welfare Benefits Surgeries to help our peers;

- ✦ Raise concerns and give constructive criticism about the quality of services we receive in inpatient wards and the community so services can improve.
- ✦ Fight stigma of mental illness and discrimination against those who struggle with it daily.
- ✦ Help people with mental health difficulties navigate the complex welfare benefits system.

## Our Aims & Objectives

Our aims and objectives are;

- ✦ 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.

## Opportunities

Become a Hear Us Member and get involved in the work Hear Us does in all sorts of ways. Potential opportunities include:

- ✦ Becoming a Peer Support Worker with the Linkworking Project; and supporting other service users whilst helping to improve our mental health services.
- ✦ Coming along to our monthly Open Forums to join our campaigns to have your voice heard.
- ✦ Joining our Reachout Challenge Volunteers and help fight stigma and discrimination.
- ✦ Helping fund raise to support the work of Hear Us.
- ✦ Help with office based opportunities.
- ✦ Or become a Trustee.

## Membership Form ✓

I am a resident of Croydon

Have a recognised interest in mental health service user issues in Croydon

Have had emotional, or psychological problems, or, some form of mental illness

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Age & DOB:

Gender:

Ethnic Origin:



Hear Us  
Orchard House,  
15a Purley Road  
South Croydon  
CR2 6EZ



020 8681 6888



[info@hear-us.org](mailto:info@hear-us.org)



[www.hear-us.org](http://www.hear-us.org)



[hearusmentalhealth](https://www.facebook.com/hearusmentalhealth)



[hearuscroydon](https://twitter.com/hearuscroydon)



[hearusmentalhealth](https://www.instagram.com/hearusmentalhealth)

Charity # 1135535

Company # 6891337

## WELFARE BENEFITS SURGERIES

Over 10 Years of Peer Support with Welfare Benefits Form Filling, Attending Assessments and Tribunals

Our Welfare Benefit Project was set up to fill a 'gap' in existing welfare benefit service provision in Croydon. We have been successfully doing so for over 4 years with real results; dramatically changing the lives of our people with mental illness, living in desperation and not knowing where to turn.

**Our aim is to 'hold people's hands' when they need it and then empower people to become financially more independent when they are ready.** The project also helps people to connect to activities unrelated to welfare benefits that have a positive impact on healthy wellbeing.

We have three welfare benefit workers that all go that bit further to help people struggling with their benefit claims.

We help people with mental health problems to maximise their income, respond to emergency situations such as lack of food, gas and electric, and to apply for Benefits they are entitled to. We support people who would otherwise struggle to access existing support.

**The uniqueness of our work lies in the fact we are a service user group;** we know how difficult it can be to manage your own financial affairs when battling emotional problems and mental illness.

**If you are finding the welfare benefits system complex and difficult to navigate please complete our [Referral Form](#)**

David Ashton, Welfare Surgery Manager  
Cheryalin Wilfred, Welfare Advisor

Orchard House  
15a Purley Road, South Croydon, Surrey  
CR2 6EZ  
Tel: 020 8681 6888

**If you go to voicemail please leave your name and number and the reason for your call**

Email: [surgery@hear-us.org](mailto:surgery@hear-us.org)  
Webpage: [www.hear-us.org/surgeries/](http://www.hear-us.org/surgeries/)

## LINKWORKING PROJECT

15 Years Supporting Service Users, to Navigate and Gain the most out of Croydon's Mental Health Services

The Hear Us Linkworkers are a team of current or ex-service users who visit Croydon's inpatient and community mental health services with the aim to:

**Listen without judgement:** Having had our own mental health problems, we know how helpful it is to have someone to talk to in confidence. As Linkworkers, we offer a safe space to talk about any issues without any fear of repercussions, so that service users can get the help to feel better.

**Support & Raise Issues:** When someone shares something that is worrying them, we are there to give support and try to help get the issue resolved. To do this we can either; support them to raise the issue themselves with their care team, or raise the issues on their behalf, anonymously or directly, depending on what is preferred.

**Refer & Signpost:** Sometimes we aren't able to help someone directly but we can usually point them in the right direction to get help. For example, someone might be worried about benefits or need support to find work. In these cases, we can usually let them know about organisations that are able to help.

Linkworkers want to **listen, support and signpost** service users to help them with recovery, however, we also know that sometimes just talking to someone who cares and understand or can offer a bit of hope that things will get better.

**If you are interested in becoming a Linkworker please contact:**

Barbra Davison  
Linkwork Manager  
Hear Us  
Orchard House,  
15a Purley Road  
South Croydon, CR2 6EZ

Tel: 020 8681 6888  
Mobile: 07749 156 828  
Email: [linkworking@hear-us.org](mailto:linkworking@hear-us.org)  
Website: [www.hear-us.org/linkworking](http://www.hear-us.org/linkworking)

## REACHOUT CHALLENGE

For Over 10 Years We Have Been Raising Awareness and Fighting the stigma of Mental Health

The Reachout Challenge are a team of people with a variety of mental illnesses, who visit organisations across London to raise awareness and fight the stigma of mental illness discrimination. We encourage the organisations we work with to have a more 'open policy' towards mental health, enabling their staff to be able to talk about their mental wellbeing without shame and embarrassment.

Many people spend their working day filled with stress and anxieties and are unaware of where to turn to for help and support. The Reachout Challenge gives organisations and their staff the opportunity to; gain a greater insight into life with a mental health illness and to talk about their own mental health and wellbeing.

We encourage the organisations we work with to be better equipped to; support their staff with their mental health and provide their staff with a safe space to express their struggles, stress and anxieties, and, how they impacting on their life and work.

Almost half of all long term sickness is due to mental health problems. However, with the right support, people with mental health problems can thrive in the workplace and enjoy the same opportunities as their colleagues

**If you are interested in becoming a Reachout Challenge Volunteer please contact:**

Barbra Davison  
Reachout Manager  
Hear Us  
Orchard House,  
15a Purley Road  
South Croydon, CR2 6EZ

Tel: 020 8681 6888  
Mobile: 07749 156 828  
Email: [reachout.challenge@hear-us.org](mailto:reachout.challenge@hear-us.org)  
Website: [www.hear-us.org/reachout](http://www.hear-us.org/reachout)

## MENTAL HEALTH OPEN FORUM

For Over 10 Years We Have Been Bringing Together; Service Users, Commissioners & Providers

The Hear Us Mental Health Open Forum is a safe place for people with a mental illness to come together and discuss Croydon's mental health services.

Our forums give service users a chance to voice concerns about mental health services to commissioners; the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Council, and service providers such as SLAM (the South London and Maudsley Trust) and the voluntary sector.

Our forums enable service users to have a face to face discussion with commissioners, and, a constructive voice in the commissioning and design of services. It gives an opportunity for people to express concerns about mental health services.

Each forum will start with a 'Shout Out', where organisations can have the floor to inform the community of their activities that our community would benefit from.

Our forum takes place on the 1st Tuesday of each month (except for January & August where we don't hold a forum as we take a break). We invite guest speakers to talk about topics requested by our service users.

The Open Forum is held at the:  
CVA Resource Centre, 82 London Road, West Croydon, CR0 2TB.

Meetings start at 1pm and usually finish at 4pm and you are free to come and go as you please.

**If you are interested in joining us at the Open Forum please feel free to come along or contact:**

Claire Hawkes  
Open Forum Chair  
Hear Us, Orchard House,  
15a Purley Road  
South Croydon, CR2 6EZ

Tel: 020 8681 6888 Mobile: 07784 334 379  
Email: [forum@hear-us.org](mailto:forum@hear-us.org)  
Website: [www.hear-us.org/forum](http://www.hear-us.org/forum)