



Cumbria Mental Health Group News

“Speaking up for the mental health community”

C U M B R I A M E N T A L H E A L T H G R O U P

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CMHG Team Successes: Jim Bradley, Chair

Our team of volunteer service users, carers, supporters and staff continue to champion the interests of the Mental Health Community. Successes include:

- Making additions to specifications for the mental health services delivered by Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and setting the outcomes from a service user and carer prospective. These are to ensure that services are delivered to the benefit of users of the mental health services.
- An improved understanding of the self-assessment process to decide whether service users and carers will be entitled to social care services, and influencing how this was introduced. A difficult topic which a group from CMHG are continuing to work on. (see page 4)
- Significant input into the development of the Cumbria suicide prevention strategy to ensure that appropriate preventative services will be in place. An important action agreed is recruitment of mental health specialists to work at each A&E department in Cumbria.
- Through our grant from Comic Relief developing a series of Portfolio Groups to enable service users and carers to work in co-production with staff from various organisations providing services (see pages 8 & 9).
- Working with NHS Cumbria on a mental health strategy, to be published in the autumn.
- Recognition by NHS Cumbria of the valuable contribution our organisation is making to the development and monitoring of mental health services in Cumbria. We are now taking part in both the Mental Health Commissioning Steering Group, Quality subgroup and professional leads group.

Cameron Demoted (to foot of CMHG Newsletter)



The gentleman is for turning? ...

well maybe just a little bit! The government has been dithering about their proposed NHS reorganisation, and the press have been having a field day with it. However the PM's announcement on 15th June does not make any fundamental changes to the way forward they had mapped out in their Health Bill.

Cameron Demoted (continued from front page)

Over the past few years in Cumbria, the GPs have been increasingly taking a lead role in commissioning services within the existing NHS structure and the Government's proposals are built on Cumbria's example. This basic principle of the local GPs collectively making decisions as to the services their patients in their locality need will remain at the heart of the reforms. The proposed changes which emerged on 15 June introduce: additional clinical expertise to inform and help the GPs in their decision-making; a greater non-discretionary role for patient involvement and accountability to the public; additional safeguards against privatisation; and a less rigid timetable for GP commissioning groups to get to grips with this new way of doing things.

However Cumbria is well-placed with lead GPs in each of the 6 localities working together, and with their local GP colleagues, already practising this style of commissioning. So it is likely that they will be fully up and running by April 2013 though they will need to recruit the additional clinical expertise from hospital specialists and two lay people. CMHG, as an organisation, need to make sure that the public involvement includes those in the mental health community.

The Government is making it clear that the working of the NHS trust must be "transparent" and the board meetings should be in public. If this openness is implemented it will make it easier for us to influence improvements to mental health services.

MEET THE TRUSTEES

John Asher . . .

one time/sometime carer, aged 66, a retired Principal Social Worker, Cumbria County Council. I have been a member of CMHG for 3 years and I am the portfolio lead on Suicide Prevention. I became interested and involved when the effects of



Mental Health touched our family. Poor service response, and the lack of advocacy and understanding were all too evident. Consequently I am passionate and driven to change this for Service Users. My physical disability is visible whereas often those with Mental Health problems it is not. Having a disability does not mean people are disabled, rather that sometimes they need to be

enabled to achieve their maximum quality of life. Ensuring those services are in place, is what CMHG does and should continue to strive for. As a newly elected Trustee my aspirations are for CMHG to continue to build on its well established foundations as a respected force to be reckoned with in championing the cause for the mental Health Community.

Evelyn Bitcon . . .

Why a Trustee and Vice Chair of CMHG?

I believe in People having rights!

From seventeen years of the lived experiences, around my own son, suffering ongoing



Complex Chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as well as a Learning Difficulty. From experiences gained during my years of varied employment, around Mental Health, Social Care and a Disability Welfare Environment. I feel I have an understanding and empathy with some of the problems mental distress can bring to people of all ages.

Having been involved in Volunteering since a teenager, I see that in our beautiful County of Cumbria we also have great unmet needs! I hope and try to make a difference!

Trustee Volunteers

Cumbria Mental Health Group need more people to help by becoming trustees.

If you are interested please contact our Chair, Jim Bradley, on 07836 200253 or via the Kendal Office.

Trustee meetings take place once per month. The trustees are responsible for the overall running of Cumbria Mental Health Group. The work of the charity is carried out by staff and volunteers. Trustees develop the strategy, aims and goals for our organisation. Together they have also to ensure that the information prepared by the staff and volunteers monitors that the organisation is working properly. Training and support will be available to help you.

GRANT ASPINALL

An exhibition of portraits of jazz musicians by Grant Leonard Aspinall is open to the public at the 'Gatefoot Gallery' in Staveley on the Windermere road near Kendal, Cumbria. It will be previewed between 5pm and 7pm on the 24th of June and will run until 24th of July 2011. All are welcome.

Grant is a member of CMHG and a sufferer of Bi Polar for the last 30 years. He has painted portraits mainly of musicians from Rock; Folk and jazz genres since the 80's exhibiting in Monaco and in the U.K. The painting style is Expressionistic/Impressionistic, he is self taught and has made a career from playing music in



England and abroad , since leaving Leeds college of music in 1980.

WORDSEARCH



Prize of £10 book token for first name drawn out of hat from all successful entries received by Friday 29 July.

Words to find:

coping, culture, dependence, independence, networking, ordinary, potential, self help.

SOCIAL CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Cumbria Social Care has completed the process of introducing self directed support for their services and this brings a formalisation of the social care assessment process. **For the first time service users are being assessed to find out whether their needs are “critical or substantial” and so be entitled to receive social care.** If service users meet the criteria, their Carer Coordinator will work with them to develop a support plan. The Self Directed support gives service users the opportunity to make their own choices as to how their needs can be met. A financial assessment is also carried out to check whether and how much contribution has to be made. Everybody else with social care needs have had this formal assessment for many years.

If service users do not meet the criteria they will be helped to find other ways of support.

A number of people are not getting social care. Cumbria Mental Health Group is concerned about

the impact this will have on service users. Our Social Care Portfolio is:

- Checking out how the assessment process is working.
- What are the gaps in help for service users recovery and support to live independently in the community.
- Press the County Council to provide the necessary “preventative” services to support service users.

Senior social care managers are taking part in our meetings and being open about what is happening. This is greatly helping the portfolio deliver its work.

Please do let CMHG know your views and concerns about the impact of these changes. This will be very valuable for our work in getting the best support possible for mental health service users in these difficult financial times.

COMMUNITY GYM IN BARROW

The Community Gym has been in existence in one form or another since the early ‘90’s. It started in a mental health setting with very vigorous support of mental health service users led by David Ralph.

In 2006 Morecambe Bay PCT proposed to close the Gym in a financial review.

The Furness Locality of the then South Cumbria Mental Health User and Carer Forum and subsequently the Furness Locality of Cumbria Mental Health Group led by Wendy Kolbe the Development Worker and an enthusiastic, ‘Community Gym Steering Group’, have campaigned to support the Gym and encourage it’s development towards a sustainable future with improved facilities for its members.

There have been difficult times but the Gym has been retained and now the Local Commissioning Board has made a six months financial commitment to improve the working of the Gym,

while a further review takes place.

However, it has felt, at times like an uphill battle, without the tenacity of the Steering Group, many are convinced it would have been lost.

Members at a recent Locality workshop gave some of the following comments as reason why it is vital to have a Community Gym as opposed to a mainstream gym:-

Safer environment ~ Staff with understanding of mental health ~ Mainstream gyms can be intimidating ~ Staff and members are more approachable ~ Suitable for all disabilities, without the stigma ~ Non threatening environment ~ Staff are trained and experienced in mental health issues ~ Understanding and sympathetic environment ~ Feel supported ~ It is a free facility as part of recovery ~ Laughter

WORK CAPABILITY ASSESSMENTS

The coalition Government is continuing the policy of the last Labour Government in changing the benefits system. Both Governments maintain the belief that too many people are in receipt of benefits because they are not in work, when in the view of the Department of Work and Pensions, they could in fact be working. There has been a lot of discussion about this in the press. It is clear that both the Government and many Newspapers do not understand the impact of mental health needs on the ability of service users to get back into work.

This is made worse by the focus of the questionnaires and actions

of the organisation carrying out the assessment. Nationally, organisations like MIND and Rethink are campaigning and working with civil servants to try to get changes.

In spring 2010, Jess Stam, one of our trustees at the time, prepared an excellent report about the difficulties service users were experiencing with the inappropriate working of ATOS, the Government contractor for the assessments. Jess developed a list of “top tips” for service users going through the assessment. A copy is included in this Newsletter. The report was passed to the Government Ministers responsible for the work on Benefits.

The CMHG Financial Inclusion Portfolio team is working out what actions are possible to:

1. Give local Department of Work and Pension providers feedback from service users about how these changes are impacting on their mental well being.
2. Set out actions to improve the way services are delivered locally.
3. Provide service users with accurate information about what is happening.

As a first step, local Disability Employment Officers from the Job Centres came to our May locality meetings to brief us about changes.

SERVICE CHANGE

Cumbria Partnership changes to local mental health services

The Partnership Trust has to change the way Community Services work for two reasons.

1. Reduced NHS funding in the future means that planned cost reductions are needed across all services.
2. “Payment by Results” a Government Strategy which all Mental Health Trusts are having to prepare for. Payment by Results means that the service is paid for according to the cost of each service user’s pathway and not a lump sum to cover the total costs of service provision which is approximately £60m for services provided by Cumbria Partnership Trust.

Working will change in three ways:

1. Some staff will work much more closely with GP practices to enable GPs to refer into the services more appropriately.
2. Within the CMHTs staff will be allocated to specific pathways: Psychosis (Schizophrenia and severe depression and Bi-polar); Non Psychosis (anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorders, Bi-polar, personality disorders and eating disorders) and Organic (includes dementia.)
3. More training for staff to develop specific skills required within each pathway.

Cumbria Mental Health Group would be pleased to hear what impact these changes are having on the service you receive, so that we can report positive impact and areas of concern.

CMHG EVENTS DIARY



DATE	EVENT	VENUE	TIME
JULY 2011			
Monday 11 th July	Locality Meeting	St. Matthew's Church Hall, Barrow in Furness	1.30-3.30pm
Monday 11 th July	Non psychosis Portfolio meeting	To be confirmed	10.30am-1.30pm
Tuesday 12 th July	Locality Meeting	MacPherson Room, Evergreen Hall, Penrith	2 - 4pm
Thursday 14 th July	Locality Meeting	The Botcherby Centre, Botcherby, Carlisle	2 - 4pm
Thursday 14 th July	Psychosis Portfolio meeting	Keswick	10.30am-12noon
Tuesday 19 th July	Coffee/ Chat	Community Centre, Kirkby Stephen	10am-12noon
Thursday 21 th July	Medication Portfolio meeting	Barrow in Furness	10am-12noon
Tuesday 26 th July	Locality Meeting	St. Thomas's Church, Stricklandgate, Kendal	2 - 4pm
Wednesday 27 th July	Locality Meeting	The Bridge Church, Workington	2 - 4pm
Thursday 28 th July	Locality Meeting	The Senhouse Centre for Holistic Care, Whitehaven	2 - 4pm
1 st Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Alzheimer's Society, New Oxford Street, Workington	2 - 4pm
1 st Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Egremont Methodist Church, Egremont	7pm-9pm
3 rd Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Egremont Methodist Church, Egremont	2 - 4pm
2 nd & 4 th Thursday of every month	Coffee/Chat	The Senhouse Centre, Whitehaven, Cumbria	11am-1pm
3 rd Thursday of every month	Coffee/Chat	The Meeting Room, Penrith Library, Penrith	10am-12noon
AUGUST 2011			
Tuesday 2 nd August	Social Care Portfolio meeting	Keswick	1pm-4pm
Tuesday 16 th August	Coffee/Chat	Community Centre, Kirkby Stephen	10am-12noon
Wednesday 17 th August	Coffee/Chat	St. Mark's Halls, Barrow in Furness	1pm-3pm
1 st Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Alzheimer's Society, New Oxford Street, Workington	2 - 4pm
1 st Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Egremont Methodist Church, Egremont	7pm-9pm
3 rd Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Egremont Methodist Church, Egremont	2 - 4pm
3 rd Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Carlisle Town Hall, Carlisle	2 - 4pm
2 nd & 4 th Thursday of every month	Coffee/Chat	The Senhouse Centre, Whitehaven, Cumbria	11am-1pm
3 rd Thursday of every month	Coffee/Chat	The Meeting Room, Penrith Library, Penrith	10am-12noon
SEPTEMBER 2011			
Monday 5 th September	Coffee/Chat	Kendal, venue to be confirmed	2 - 4pm
Thursday 8 th September	Locality Meeting	The Botcherby Centre, Botcherby, Carlisle	2 - 4pm
Monday 12 th September	Locality Meeting	St. Matthew's Church Hall, Barrow in Furness	1.30pm-3.30pm
Tuesday 13 th September	Locality Meeting	MacPherson Room, Evergreen Hall, Penrith	2 - 4pm
Thursday 22 nd September	Locality Meeting	The Senhouse Centre for Holistic Care, Whitehaven	2 - 4pm
Tuesday 27 th September	Locality Meeting	St. Thomas's Church, Stricklandgate, Kendal	2 - 4pm
Wednesday 28 th September	Locality Meeting	The Bridge Church, Workington	2 - 4pm
1 st Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Alzheimer's Society, New Oxford Street, Workington	2 - 4pm
1 st Wednesday of every month	Coffee/Chat	Egremont Methodist Church, Egremont	7pm-9pm
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Desmond Tutu Foundation



Your letters: The voice of Furness and South Cumbria Week was a great success

DURING the week January 17 to 21 the Cumbria Mental Health Group held a mental Health awareness week hosted by Barrow Sixth Form College.

The CMHG put on a display of information, photographs and a section that had on show a list of famous people, both from history and modern celebrities, who have been affected with mental health issues.

While co-hosted by Furness CMHG and Barrow Sixth Form College, a guest charity had a display each day to signpost its role in mental health. The guests included, CADAS, Stonham Housing, SAFA and MIND.

The original idea came about after a course for local charities/volunteers, entitled Conversations for Change, organised by the TUTU Foundation, with the ethos

of bringing communities together.

It has certainly achieved that. CMHG group would like to thank all the staff and students for all their kindness and for putting up with us all week.

We would particularly like to thank Josie Field, Matt Coward and the student union for the wonderful example they have set, in fact Josie and Matt have been an inspiration to our group. Literally lighting us up with their enthusiasm.

The CMHG volunteers who deserve our gratitude for all their hard work and effort are Janet Bury, Linda Ogilvie, Mary Mullin, Pat and David Ralph.

And our wonderful development worker who leads by example from the front, Wendy Kolbe whose dedication to our

group never fails to amaze us and who has been a driving force for Furness Volunteers and Members of the CMHG.

The success of this week in bringing links and contacts has been wonderful for the community in general, but by enabling our group to get the message of mental health issues to the youth of Furness, it is immeasurable.

Especially if it will help people realise they don't have to be alone with their thoughts, and there is someone out there to listen and point them in the right direction for support. Many thanks to all those who helped make this campaign such a wonderful success.

STEPHEN TURNER

c/o 57-58 Hartington Street
Barrow

Parent/Carer/Family Support Drop-in

Empowering families & friends of people with alcohol and/or drug related problems, by providing mutual support, information and offering a place where experiences or anxieties can be shared.

Come along and have a chat and a cuppa Mondays 3.30 - 5.30pm at CADAS, 17a West Tower Street, Carlisle CA3 8QT. Along from the Market Hall towards the castle.

P O R T F O L I O S

The Development of CMHG's Portfolio Groups...

is now well underway. Following our successful funding bid to Comic Relief, CMHG now has 8 Portfolio (or working) groups covering a variety of topics that significantly affect the lives of individuals with mental health needs and their carers. The Portfolio groups are comprised of individuals who have experience of mental health difficulties, carers, others with an interest in mental health and professionals working within a

particular field. The overall aim of the Portfolio Groups is to influence the future development of mental health and related services in Cumbria to really make a difference and enable those with mental health needs to recover, or to achieve the best outcome for them.

Managers in Health and Social Care services understand the importance of CMHG's portfolio work for the future development of services and real changes in service will come from our work.

Can you help?

The work can only be developed by those who have experience of mental health services as service users/carers or those that are interested supporting work to meet the aspirations of those who need help with their mental well being. For those involved it is:

- Rewarding to see the improvements to services which come from our work.
- Valuable to gain much more detailed knowledge of how services work.

- Enjoyable to work together with a common goal.

For service users is it also valuable support for their recovery being part of a team, gaining or refreshing their skills in meetings and thinking through recommendations for making change.

CMHG will provide support and ensure that volunteers are not out of pocket while carrying out tasks for the organisation.

IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN TAKING PART PLEASE TALK TO OUR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT WORKER or RING or EMAIL JO NICHOLSON at KENDAL OFFICE 01539 737012 or EMAIL office@cmhg.org.uk

The portfolios working at present are:

- Criminal Justice
- Social Care
- Suicide and Self Harm
- Medication
- Financial Inclusion
- Psychosis
- Non Psychosis
- Dementia



For more details on the portfolio groups please see below and the next page.

Criminal Justice – Lead, Evelyn Bitcon

This Portfolio is working to promote changes to the way that the Criminal Justice System, NHS Social Care and Voluntary Sector Services in Cumbria react to people with mental health or learning disability problems who come in contact with the criminal justice system. The government requires the recommendations of a report by Lord Bradley to be implemented. The Lord Bradley report is based on the view that prison may not always be the right environment for those with severe mental illness and Custody can exacerbate mental ill health, heighten vulnerability and increase the risk of self-harm and suicide. The core of the work at present is to look at the 82 recommendations from Lord Bradley's report and how any of those are being met and implemented within Cumbria, comparing these with the North West Region and looking at good practice. We need to develop improved multi agency working together from early interventions in a holistic way to reduce isolation, stigma and re-offending.

Social Care – Lead, Peter Lee assisted by Jim Bradley

This portfolio aims to promote the development of community social care in Cumbria. The “whole system” pathway for mental health service user’s recovery is support more by social care than medical care. Key work this year is to investigate how service users are allocated social care; establishing the gaps caused the tighter control of assessment and preparing to influence the allocation of spending by Cumbria Social Care in the future.

Suicide and Self Harm – Lead, John Asher

This portfolio has had input into the development of Cumbria’s Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy, and will continue to monitor how this is being implemented across Cumbria and work with the statutory services and other organisations in raising awareness of the issues relating to this. The group has also supported the development of a SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide) self help group in Cumbria.

Medication – Lead, Mike Corker

This portfolio aims to review current research and practice for prescribing and monitoring psychiatric drugs whilst highlighting other evidenced based therapies and treatments. The group is working to obtain the views of service users and carers experiences of psychiatric medicine and will also work with GPs and other prescribers to ascertain their views and experiences of prescribing, monitoring and reviewing medication practices.

Financial Inclusion – Lead, Gill Puncher

This Portfolio will focus on benefits and the support for people to get back to work. It will cover the work of Department of Work and Pensions, including local contracts to support people back into work, Job Centre plus, and support from Health and Social Care. The group is currently working towards defining its priorities.

Psychosis – Lead, Wendy Kolbe

The work and purpose of the portfolio group is to be very much service user and carer led. We are looking to recruit members to the group who have an interest in any aspect of psychosis; we would like to incorporate into our work the unique perspective of individuals using the services and the experiences of carers. It is envisaged that the portfolio will scope and plan the work, and this will be based on several aspects of psychosis, care pathways, development of services and will research the current position nationally and in Cumbria, looking at best practice in the field.

Non Psychosis – Lead, Jay Richardson assisted by Gill Puncher

This Portfolio aims to promote the development of seamless, integrated service provision across all aspects of the Non Psychosis Care Pathway to enable mental health service users, and those supporting them, to access prompt and appropriate services which will assist in their recovery and help them to achieve their potential. The Non Psychosis Care Pathway covers a wide range of mental health conditions and disorders, and includes: mild to severe depression and anxiety; Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder; Bi-polar; Personality Disorders and Eating Disorders.

Dementia – Lead, Sarah Roberts

The focus of this portfolio is to evaluate the services provided in Cumbria to support individuals living with dementia, through obtaining the views and experiences of those individuals and of their carers. The Portfolio will work to promote the development of these services to enable individuals to live well with dementia. This is especially important because of Cumbria’s ageing population.

IF YOU HAVE IDEAS, COMMENTS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE PORTFOLIO WORK SET OUT ABOVE, PLEASE DO LET US KNOW.

PLEASE TALK TO YOUR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT WORKER or RING or EMAIL JO NICHOLSON at our KENDAL OFFICE on 01539 737012 or EMAIL office@cmhg.org.uk

TOP TIPS ON BENEFITS ASSESSMENT

In every locality, Development Workers are reporting that service users who are going through the benefits assessment process are becoming very stressed. As a small step to help, we publish again Jess Stam's top tips.

“Top Tips” is to offer useful advice for mental health service users from those who have experienced the process of claiming Employment Support Allowance, to other mental health service users. Many of the useful tips below can be equally helpful with regards to negotiating the benefit system in general.

1. Assume the “worst day” scenario when completing forms and attending medical assessments. Whilst this is essential to indicate the impact and severity of the condition, it is not in the best interests of a Mental Health Service User as the whole focus is negative and does not help them to challenge negativity and adopt a positive attitude which is essential for recovery.
2. Seek specialist advice from Citizens Advice Bureau or other professional welfare benefits advisory service at the beginning of the claim and before filling in any forms.
3. Send supporting evidence (e.g. from professionals involved in Care Plan) together with copy of care plan and any other relevant information with the medical questionnaire Employment Support Allowance 50 form and also take that to the medical assessment. Make sure that all professionals who submit evidence on your behalf understand the Employment Support Allowance process and are familiar with the “descriptors” and how your symptoms / illness meet them.
4. NEVER GO TO A Work Capability Assessment ALONE – as this will be recorded as able to travel / use public transport without problems. Also it is VITAL that a witness is present in case incorrect information is recorded in the medical report and an appeal has to be submitted. Whilst ATOS says in the information leaflet that you may take someone with you during the medical assessment, Mental Health Service Users have reported that advocates were not made to feel welcome and that they are able to give little or no input to the questioning. Mental Health Service Users need to make it clear that having an advocate present as support may well mean that they present with less demonstrative anxiety due to having support and are therefore seen as being less affected by their illness than they actually are.
5. Fully brief advocates / support workers / carers before medical assessment so that they know whether their input will be required to help Mental Health Service Users describe symptoms, confirm statements etc, provide proof of treatment etc.
6. Make written notes about your symptoms, side effects of meds to use for form filling and during medical assessments. Always try to give evidence to back up statements, with examples of symptoms and how you are affected, what you can and can't do, and make it clear whether you are under Primary or Secondary Services care.
7. If in doubt about a question during the medical assessment (Work Capability Assessment), ask for further clarification about what is meant.
8. Always request a copy of the medical report even if the claim is successful. Give a copy of the report to your GP / Care Co-ordinator / Psychiatrist and discuss and make notes of their opinion.

TOP TIPS (CONTINUED)

9. Get help to fill in the form IB50 (or Employment Support Allowance50) from a benefits advisor and / or Care Co-ordinator. This form will help Department of Work and Pensions decide whether you need to attend for a Work Capability Assessment so the more information you give the better. Include copies of letters from GP / Psychiatrist / Care Co-ordinator and copy of care plan if possible
10. Ask for the Work Capability Assessment to be done by a doctor (preferably with a background in psychiatry) rather than a nurse or an Occupational Therapist.
11. The Big Book of Mental Health Benefits is a valuable and recommended guide from Neath MIND.
12. Find out as much information as possible about Employment Support Allowance and other benefits – there is a lot of info available on line at www.direct.gov , the Disability Alliance website, Rethink website and Mind website.
13. Talk to other people about their experiences – it helps to know that others are in the same position and you might be able to help them
14. Be completely honest with your advocate / CPN / support worker – they need to know the real extent of your illness / problems
15. During Crisis periods, the Crisis Team and / or Psychiatrist can confirm that you are too unwell to attend a Work Capability Assessment, and that attendance could cause deterioration. A home visit can be arranged if too unwell to travel but again this can be postponed with the help of the Crisis Team.

GILL'S BLOG

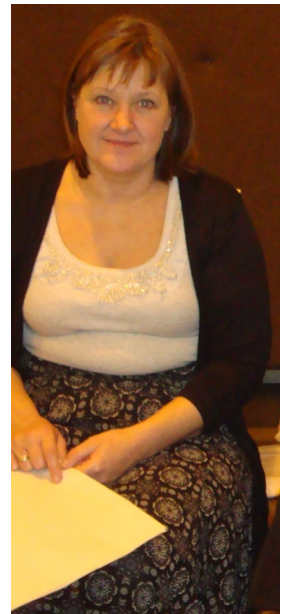
Hello All,

Just a few lines to let you all know what's been happening in South Lakeland and Eden. We have begun to develop the South Lakeland Locality Team and have held two meetings so far, focussing on how we can encourage our local members to become more involved with the work of the CMHG. I feel very lucky and privileged to be able to work with a team of people who have such a wealth of knowledge and experience about mental health matters and of the work of CMHG.

We are also very fortunate to have a team member who was an active member of a successful mental health service user and carer organisation in another area. We will continue to develop good links with the organisations and other service providers across the local area and work with them to try to ensure that service users and carers in South Lakeland have the services and support they deserve.

In Eden, I have held monthly CMHG Forums at Penrith and Kirkby Stephen and continue to visit service users and carers on a regular basis, through invitation by other local organisations. I have also had contact with the Eden Community Mental Health Team, who are keen for a group of service users to give a talk at their team meeting about the mental health service provision in Eden from a service user perspective. If anyone is interested in being part of this, please let me know.

I have also started to work with University of Cumbria, developing ways in which people that have mental health difficulties can be involved in the training for Social Workers.





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Cumbria Mental Health Group is a service user and carer owned charity. We work at the grass roots level with people whose lives are affected by a range of mental health problems. Our main aim is to help influence and change the way mental health services are delivered in Cumbria. Our small and informal community based meetings are held regularly throughout Cumbria. These are run by our Development Workers with the assistance of our members. Cumbria Mental Health Group also facilitates bi-monthly Locality Meetings which are hosted by the local Development Worker.

Thanks to Kevin Jackson who has worked hard at pulling together the contributions for this newsletter.

"Speaking up for the Mental Health Community"

Joining CMHG

Becoming a member is free. You will receive regular updates on our activities via our website and newsletters. You will also receive invitations to our bi-monthly Locality Meetings where you can come along to discuss any issues you may have regarding local service provision.

Sharing

**Sometimes in fear we freeze alone,
From humanity's hearth left out.
The need, we have, for sharing,
Is what this poem's about.**

**Sharing is a comfort,
Sharing is a bridge.
It links us with each other,
It defrosts our ego's fridge.**

**Like isolated icebergs
We put on an outward show.
Whilst our need for sharing
Is an ice pang from below.**

**Sharing is our sunshine,
Sharing is our dark.
Sharing, airing, caring:
Sharing from the heart.**

By Robert Armitage