

inform, represent, respond and highlight

Welcome to this edition of the Klacksun newsletter – a place where you can get information, give your views and communicate on issues and services within mental health. If you would like to get involved with Klacksun or find out any more about the articles contained in the newsletter please get in touch using the details on page 4. We hope you find the newsletter interesting.

Klacksun speaks up about changes to benefits system

Klacksun recently took the opportunity to respond to a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) request for feedback on Work Capability Assessment - the name for the medical review that people who are claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) must go through.

Since ESA replaced Incapacity benefit for new claimants was introduced in, 39% of people have been found "Fit for Work" and 60% of people who have appealed the decision have been unsuccessful.

Among other things, our response highlighted concerns over the way the system deals with people who have fluctuating health conditions as mental

health often is.

As you will be aware, from 2011, people who are currently receiving Incapacity Benefit, will be moved onto Employment and Support Allowance. Citizen's Advice Bureau in Alloa are often the first point of call for anyone looking for independent help with benefits claims or issues and, as always, their staff and volunteers have been doing a fantastic job. (CAB 01259 723880)

We will continue to monitor feedback from members and work across services to highlight issues and keep you informed of developments

The full response document will be available on our website.

Out and about

In June, we appreciated the opportunity to attend a Lanarkshire Links members meeting which took place in Hamilton. The organisation have 11 separate "issues groups" and take the opportunity every three months to meet up and hear about Lanarkshire wide developments.

There was an impressive turnout with a great cross section of people attending from Lanarkshire Links, other voluntary organisations, social services and the NHS.

As always, it's useful and interesting to hear how things are done in other parts of the country and to meet new friends in the involvement world!

CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER

Wednesday 22 December 2010

12.30pm—3pm

Klacksun Office



All Klacksun members and friends welcome.

Starring Role!!!

Margaret Whitton has been involved for the last year with the University of Stirling Social Work Department Service User and Carer Group. Members of the group have been involved in making a DVD in which they talk about their experience, good and bad, of social work services. The DVD will be used in social worker training and to encourage others to get involved with the group.



Get oan yer bike!



Congratulations to Tracy Kettles (pictured) on completing an 18 mile bike ride as part of the Pedal for Scotland initiative. Tracy is quite rightly proud of her achievement given that she only recently started cycling.

Read it!

Book review

Getting better bit(e) by bit(e)

A survival kit for sufferers of bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorders

by Ulrike Schmidt and Janet Treasure

The title really describes what this book is about. I found the book very useful and it gave me a better understanding of eating disorders. This book has helped me in many ways.

One of the things I enjoyed about the book is reading other people's stories and how they deal with their eating problems, which is interesting.

The book gives you tasks or activities to do which help you to better understand your own problems. It also suggests ways you can cope with the issues you experience and emotions you feel.

What the book says just makes so much sense and it's good to read that you can gain some form of control over your situation.

I have appreciated being able to borrow this book from the Klacksun library as it would have been quite expensive to buy especially if it turned out to be rubbish! However, I think I will buy it for myself now because it's good to be able to pick it up anytime and re read useful bits.

This is a book which really challenges you to do something to help yourself. There's no point in just reading it; you really have to put the effort in if you want to make a difference.

If someone told me they were suffering from bulimia or a binge eating disorder I would tell them about this book and would recommend they read it.

Klacksun member

Klacksun has a growing library of resources—books, leaflets, dvds, and cds. If you are interested in having a look contact us for a written list or pop into the office. You will also find the list online at www.klacksun.org.uk.

Long term conditions



Some much needed 'joined-up thinking' is taking place both nationally and across NHS Forth Valley. The connection between mental health and physical health is being considered from all angles. For those with a Long Term Condition (cancer, stroke, MS for example) one's mental health can take quite a hammering. And, suffering from a mental health issue does not make one immune from a physical illness.

Work is being carried out to develop a greater understanding of the impact one has on the other and to manage the ill-effects. Klacksun is also working hard to bridge the gap by providing information for service users and carers on a range of services and supports available to them. Having attended both national and Forth Valley events on the subject of Long Term Conditions in the last six months I feel confident in saying that much positive work is being carried out and, not unusually, Klacksun is impressing folk 'out there' with the work it is doing in its project, *Being Involved in Your Own Care*. If you would like to know more about this, please contact the Klacksun office. Bear in mind that this is still 'work in progress' though.

In the last month *Being Involved in Your Own Care* has been accepted by the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability as a positive example of Citizen Leadership and will be featured on it's web based gallery in the near future.

Payment of Service Users and Carers



The role of the general public, service users and carers – 'lay' people - in the development of NHS and other services has become increasingly sophisticated over time and is a very effective tool when it comes to improving services - as members of Klacksun have shown. I cannot see the role lessening over time, rather I think it will grow and grow.

The issue of payment of lay people has long been around a long while and strong views held on both sides of the argument. My personal view is that, regardless of these conflicting views and regardless of the clinical area, the issue of payment – remuneration – needs to be *discussed*. I have been arguing my point with whoever will listen for well over a year now and believe it is a national rather than local issue – NHS Boards need a pot of money from which to pay folk and the 'dreaded' benefits system needs to be tweaked to ensure that folk are not penalised for the help they give. My persistent grumbling is beginning to pay off and the subject is being discussed once again.

At grassroots level work has been going on too, thanks to Klacksun, and Gina has been involved in discussions with service providers in Forth Valley. Hopefully, 'bottom' will meet 'top' one day soon. This is not a clear-cut issue and many folk hold interesting and opposing views. That they do is good; let's hear them.

Jude

Recently, services were evaluated by an external assessor and it's approach to Customer service was considered "Excellent".

Jane Menzies, Service Manager said she was delighted with the award which had been achieved because of the participation of people who use services as well as the hard work of staff.

However, awards are no reason to rest on one's laurels!!!! The services' approach to customer service is still being improved. Evaluation mechanisms are currently being reviewed (see previous editions of Klacksun newsletter) to ensure that every single person has a chance to give their views, in a way that suits them, about the services they have received and whether they have helped them.

More awards for local mental health services



How are services doing?

We have asked local mental health services to provide us with some facts and figures in relation to the services they provide.

Referrals to mental health services

In the last year there have been a wide range of referrals with the majority to the Phoenix Centre (31%), followed by Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (18%) and Day Unit services (14%) There are considerably fewer new referrals to the Community Mental Health Team and Outpatient services. All of which would tend to support the widely held belief that talking therapies and groups helping people to actively manage common mental health issues, eg anxiety management are what is in demand.

Meeting appointment targets

Services have self imposed targets of one week for an urgent referral and six weeks for a routine referral. Figures suggest that they are generally meeting these targets ranging from 100% for Supported Employment to 67% for the Hillfoots Community Mental Health Team.

Disappointingly about 20% of people failed to keep their appointments. However, in the Phoenix Centre additional options have been offered to people to make it easier to confirm their appointments, eg via texts.

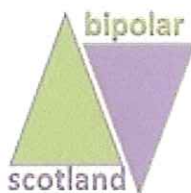
If you would like to see more details of the facts and figures available or have any comments to make please contact us.

Further details will be available via the Klacksun website

2010 Bipolar Scotland Conference

A carer's view....

Hi, my name's Maria. I have been a carer for the last 4 years for my partner, Andrew. Last month we went to a Bipolar Scotland conference in Glasgow.



I was well impressed because when we were greeted they knew we were there on behalf of Klacksun. (Later I heard it was because the Klacksun leaflet was so bright - good job Gina for sending it!)

First up was a very loud experience from "Buddy Beat", a drumming energiser. It was really uplifting and we all had the chance to participate which was fun!

Then William Lyons, a journalist, spoke about his own emotional journey with his wife Kate, who has bipolar. Hearing this encouraged other people to tell their own stories. It made me wonder if people get enough opportunity to open up! After that, there was a talk on self help groups and we found out that carers can go to self help groups along users. Who knew that? Made me wonder again if we are really getting all the info which is out there.

After lunch we signed up for a workshop, "Self Help Groups - Do they work?". It would have been interesting to learn from this but we got sent out as we had never been to a self help group!

However, the day ended on a positive as we walked round enjoying the sights and sounds of the city.

The whole experience made me realise that we are not

alone, there's lots of help out there, we just need to look out for it.

A Klacksun members view....

It was 19 years ago when I was first diagnosed with bipolar. But in that time I have never been involved with any bipolar group. So when I was asked if I was interested in going along to the Bipolar Scotland annual conference I was really looking forward to it.

As I'm not a member I was asked to have a coffee until the first part, the annual general meetings was over. Then Buddy Beat, a drumming group came on; they got everybody to join in and be "uplifted". It was a great idea and most people really enjoyed it. For someone like me who is sensitive to noise and a little uncomfortable with lots of people it was a little challenging!

There was a talk from Will Lyons, a journalist who is a carer for his wife Kate. He was nervous about talking about some very personal experiences in front of a big group. Having said that, it was the most honest and touching talk I have ever heard. I really felt for him. When he talked about he lack of help he has experienced over the years so many people were nodding that is was obvious that this was a common experience.

The talk on how Bipolar Scotland help to set up and train people to run self-help group was also very interesting.

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Recovery Journeys



Pat worked in retail and in offices most of her life. After being made redundant from an interesting job she loved she went, as she describes it, "down hill".

What followed, was a year of regular appointments with a psychiatrist who eventually referred her to the

Community Access Team (CAT). Her first reaction was, "What's that?" and admits that at the time she still wasn't motivated to do anything. Getting up and out in the morning was hard going! However, in time Pat started to open up to the possibilities which were around her. She went along to a Self Esteem course which, she says, was the best thing that she could have done, and she found herself opening up in a way that was quite different for her.

In much of Pat's journey "doing something different" seems to be the common factor. Pat is a "weel kent face" at SAMH's Devon House, where has her own kitchen corner, runs baking groups and leads the way in marathon cake baking activities. Her catchphrase, "You name it, I'll bake it!", has led her to trawling the internet (another new skill) for recipes including the one for her famous ice cream.

Pat also volunteers one day a week for Alzheimer Scotland in Alva, where she helps with practical tasks looking after the garden. Her office skills were dusted off when she got

"Recovery is being able to live a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by each person, in the presence or absence of symptoms. It is about having control over and input into your own life. Each individual's recovery, like his or her experience of the mental health problems or illness, is a unique and deeply personal process." Scottish Recovery Network

Every issue we like to include a story about someone's recovery journey. It can be encouraging to read how different people cope but recognise that recovery is different for us all.

involved in redesigning the leaflets and handouts for the Self Esteem course which had been a key part of her recovery.

Pat says she had come a long way but admits that she still has a fight with herself on the days when she just wants to hibernate; just to stay in a cocoon and wake up only when she feels better. However, Pat says, "I realise now that there is no short term fix when you have mental health problems - two weeks on tablets will not make you fine." So what helps her? Listening to suggestions people (those who are trying to help you) are making, taking baby steps, concentrating on one day at a time but most of all, even when she doesn't feel like it, getting out there, staying involved and connected to people.

Thanks to Pat Hall who agreed to share her journey with us.

Got any ideas about what you would like to see in the newsletter? Or have you any views or opinions you would like the raise through the network? Contact us:



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'see me' Creative Writing Competition 2010—enter by 10 December!

This year's theme is 'support'. So get your thinking caps on and tell us what it means to you. Each winning entry from the three categories will get £250 of Amazon Vouchers to spend. The winners and runners up of each category will be published on our website. And, an anthology featuring the best work will be released next year. You can enter your piece in one of our three categories. A short story (1500 words max), a poem (500 words max) or a tweet (140 characters max). Enter online at www.seemescotland.org.uk/getinvolved/writing-competition

see me...oo

2010 Bipolar Conference (continued)

After lunch (very scrummy) it was time for workshops. I was a bit worried about this as I have never taken part in these type of activities. I was looking forward to the workshop about self help groups. Unfortunately about seven of us were asked to leave as we had never been to a self help group?! I was a bit angry about that and ended my day there.

Overall I enjoyed find out about an organisation that I think will be of help to me in the future. As for getting angry about the last part of the day my brother soon sorted me out there, as only a brother can do! He told me that if I was "thrown out" of a self help workshop it must be that I am either, beyond help or that I look so well I don't need help! He, of course, thinks it's the first one!

Andrew

Contact details for Bipolar Scotland:-

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Business Centre, Seedhill Road, PAISLEY, PA1 1JT,

Tel: 0141 560 2050,

Email: info@bipolarscotland.org.uk

Web: www.bipolarscotland.org.uk

You've been Klacksunned!

Rosa Serrano is one of two Psychiatrists working with Integrated Mental Health Services and covering the Clackmannanshire area. Not being from these part (she is Spanish!) Rosa manages with the unmistakable Clackmannanshire accent remarkably well. She was only too happy to agree to be "Klacksunned"



Q: When would you like your TARDIS to land?

A: I like where I am. Never wanted to go back on time....and better not to know what is there awaiting in the future.

Q: Which animal do you see yourself as?

A: A Wolf; beautiful and strong, independent but needs support from the rest of the group to survive.

Q: Would you travel to the moon or around the world?

A: Definitely WORLD. One of the things I mainly enjoy when travelling is meeting different people with totally different views and cultures. Not many people on the moon!

Q: With whom would you like to be stuck in a lift?

A: With somebody that can open it quickly! But if I have to choose... my mum...so many things I would like her to teach me yet!

Q: What three things would you take to your desert island?

A: A good pair of walking boots, a sharp knife and a cosy blanket...survival!

Q: What job would you like to do if you were not doing the job you have now?

A: Always wanted to be an archaeologist. It is a way of bringing the past to the present..and I would love the physical contact with the earth.

Letters

Dear Klacksun members

We would like to apologise to you for all the uncertainty caused by changes in staff over the past year. We expect a high quality of service from our workers and believe the person must be someone we would want advocating for us. The role can be demanding and challenging and sometimes it takes time to find the person who is a 'natural born advocate'.

To this end we have now changed the way we interview. We have a service user involved throughout the whole process and have changed the format for interviewing.

We will be interviewing this month for a new Clackmannanshire Advocacy worker and have had an excellent response to our advert. We have extended one of our part time workers hours to cover Clackmannanshire and are giving priority to any person detained under the Mental Health Act, but we are also considering each referral as it comes in and will not turn away any person in urgent need.

Please contact me if you have any concerns at all or want to have a chat about this. If you want to meet me face to face I am happy to do so, I'm sure Gina will be happy to arrange this or you can contact me directly.

Wendy Sharp, Manager, Forth Valley Advocacy

Direct dial 01324 574318

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Last Word

'A lack of evidence doesn't mean something doesn't work, it just means there is a lack of evidence.'

Angela Donaldson, Chair of Better Together Programme Board