

**MENTAL HEALTH CARER REPRESENTATIVES FORUM**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019 from 10am to 1pm**

**At Oxlease House, Travellers Lane, Hatfield AL10 8TJ**

**Carers:**,MC,PD,CB,TG,RC,RT,GT,NHS,MN,LB,NY,MY,YMKH,CH,SA,  
CMD AE,VW,DA,WA

**Apologies:** JD,AD,


**Chair:** Dick Lovelace

**Staff:** Rosemarie Muldoon, Sarah Williams, Will Davis


**Presentation:** Sarah Williams (Carers in Hertfordshire)

**Guest:** Eve Selvarahan – Disability Employment Advisor from  
Hatfield Jobcentre Plus

Item	
1	<b>Welcome and Introductions:</b>
2	<b>Minutes from the Previous Meeting</b>
2.1	A carer asked if the Minutes could be sent out before the Forum date.
2.3	People commented that when Minutes are sent to them by the ebulletin it does not really work for them because they tend not to open them. There was a brief discussion about this with some people raising questions about the ebulletin.

2.4	<p>Sarah Williams (SW) explained that the paperwork for the Forums is attached to the ebulletin. This information included dates and times of the Forums.</p> <p>Carers talked about the ebulletin and some people suggested that they did not know much about the contents of the ebulletin.</p> <p>At this point Rosemarie Muldoon (RM) asked if she could do a quick head count as to how many people open the ebulletin. About one third of the room agreed that they opened the ebulletin.</p> <p>Other people said that they relied on the text they received from Carers in Hertfordshire (CIH) to prompt them to come to the Forum. They said that the text usually arrived a couple of days before the Forum date. People said that the texts were helpful to them.</p> <p>Approximately one third of those present at the meeting indicated that they accessed the Forum paperwork via the ebulletin.</p>
3	<p>Someone asked about the acronym DOLS, they were informed it was abbreviated Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. People agreed that they prefer not to have acronyms on future Minutes as some of the acronyms in the Minutes are not familiar to them.</p>
	<p><b>Presentation/Discussion</b></p>
3.1	<p> MH Forum Nov19 Effective_Communic</p> <p><b>Developing our Skills of Communication</b></p> <p>Someone said that not many people have seen the leaflet on Advanced Directives/Statements. They continued by saying that the document was not legally binding but that it was wise to do one anyway.</p>
3.2	<p>A carer commented that the news reports that morning reflected the increasing levels of “call outs” the Police are having that involve people</p>

<p>3.3</p> <p>4</p>	<p>with mental health issues. Police teams are being “stretched” as they struggle to cope with these increases.</p> <p>At this point people put forward their personal hints, and methods for coping with stressful situations. The suggestions included:</p> <p>Taking yourself out of the situation by going for a walk or cycle ride, or if you cannot leave the house go into a different room.</p> <p>Someone suggested that changing the environment by turning the TV down and the lights down can work.</p> <p><b>Presentation/Discussion – De- Escalation</b></p> <p>Someone said that research says that if you become stressed your ability to manage situations is only 30% of what it could be.</p> <p>The suggestion that people avoid things that they know trigger anxiety or anger in the person they care for. Lots of positive enforcement and avoiding negativity and criticism.</p> <p>Do not make suggestions like “you should get washed and dressed now” rather say something like “I always feel better after a shower”.</p> <p>If you know the person well, you might use humour to deescalate a situation as it might work in some situations.</p> <p>A carer said that it was extremely challenging to try to deescalate a situation when it was in a public space or if the person does not live with you.</p> <p>A carer suggested that if a person is in a public place and becoming anxious or angry you could take them to the car or possibly take them straight home.</p> <p>Boundaries and the importance of boundaries in relationship was discussed amongst the group. Drawing and redrawing the boundaries is important as it manages the relationship with the cared for person.</p>
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	<p>Carers need to protect their own health by agreeing boundaries with the person they care for.</p> <p>A carer said that people can ask for counselling, usually cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), from the Wellbeing team at HPFT for themselves if they would like to have it. This could be group work or one to one session.</p> <p>Carers could access services from New Leaf Wellbeing College. The programs on offer are Mindfulness, Daring to Dream, Sleeping Better and many others. There is a booklet describing programs on offer.</p> <p>Respite is important if the person you care for can access it. It is not always clear what is available.</p> <p><b>Break</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Information on Support Network for the Festive Season</b></p>  <p>MH Forum Nov19 Changes to Services</p> <p>SW described a factsheet that will be sent out to carers detailing opening and closing times of services and voluntary groups across the festive season. The information will be sent out to people by email.</p> <p>When the information sheet was produced it was not clear what times and dates the Nightlight service would operate. This is something that might be available soon to view on the Nightlight website.</p> <p>The up and coming festive season was discussed openly amongst the group. There was some negativity, and positivity expressed around individual experiences of the festive season. People put forward some more coping strategies and ideas for making the experience less traumatic.</p> <p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Guest Speakers for 2020</b></p>
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<p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>There are 5 or 6 Forums and the dates will be sent out soon for the Mental Health and the Drug and Alcohol Forum for 2020.</p> <p><b>Sarah asked for ideas for guest speakers or presentations for 2020 forums.</b></p> <p>Someone wanted to know if the NHS five- year plan would change if there was to be a change of government. It was agreed that someone could come and talk about this towards the end of next year as it was only recently that the plan was presented at Mental Health Forum.</p> <p>People would like to have HPFTs Sandra Brook the Director of the Service User Experience to come and talk to the group.</p> <p>A carer said that HPFTs John Murray was involved in the remodelling of the Crisis Service. The carer said it would be interesting to hear about how the remodelling is or is not working now. For example, how are the teams broken up and what do the individual teams do now. The suggested had been that the service was broken up into mini teams, so what does this look like?</p> <p>One carer said the person she cared for had physical and mental health issues and it is difficult to know how the professionals are going to adequately support the person.</p> <p>People with mental health issues very often have issues with their physical wellbeing. Medication and diet can have a negative impact on people’s mental health.</p> <p>There has been a lack of communication and inclusion in terms of the work being done on service users physical health. One carer representative who regularly attends Physical Health Committee meeting explained that carers and carers representative were recently excluded from a recent Physical Health Conference. This carer has been extremely proactive around contributing to matter relating to physical</p>
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	<p>health and regularly attends Physical Health Committees. However, responses as to why carers have excluded have not been forthcoming.</p> <p>It was suggested that someone come and talk at the Forum about physical health/mental health and service to improve physical health.</p> <p>Someone suggested that someone from Hertfordshire University come and talk about the training social worker and community psychiatric nurses receive.</p> <p>Someone suggested asking Healthwatch Herts to come back to give an update on the research they were doing earlier on in the year on discharging from acute inpatient units.</p> <p>A carer who is a qualified herbalist volunteered to do a presentation on alternative medications/treatments.</p> <p>Someone thought that it would be good to have a talk from the Police on place of safety sections (street sections).</p> <p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>7 Carers in Hertfordshire have organised a General Elections Hustings (political debate) in Welwyn and Hatfield areas so that carers can hear from and questions the candidates in the Welwyn Hatfield constituency. This will be held at Birchwood Leisure Centre, Hatfield on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 from 10.30 am to 12.30pm. Book through CIH.</p> <p>7.1 Carers UK are doing a survey for carers that can be completed online – please take the time to contribute to this survey if you have time.</p> <p><b>Meeting End</b></p> <p>7.2 <b>Next Forum will be at Oxlease House on Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 at 10.30 until 12.30. Tea will be available from 10am and a light lunch will be served from 12.30 to 1pm.</b></p>
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