



Consultation Results Are Out What Now Gringos ?



Well as you may know the results of the consultation are out so without further ado lets have a look what we all decided.

The top 10 priorities to be included in any future service were as follows:

1. Day Time activities
2. Symptom Management Courses
3. Drop in Service
4. Having a Meal as part of activity
5. Sports, Fitness & Health
6. Help to use Leisure Centres
7. Skills Courses - DIY
8. Skills Courses - Hobbies
9. Skills Courses - Cooking
10. Skills Courses - Budgeting

There will be a meeting on Wednesday March 5th at 12.00 pm at Sunrise Club with Sue Yeoman and John Starky. The complete consultation results will be explained as well as what the Steering Committee will be doing over the next few weeks leading up to the production of the Service Specification.

If you don't already know who's on the committee from our side of the counter, it's me, M.D. and R.E. If any of you have some good ideas for venues for the service, or how to solve some of the problems we'll be glad to pass them on to the rest of the committee.

Now you may be wondering why someone like myself who has spent so

long 'fighting the power' should now wish to talk with these folks.

Well the past has not been great but the past cannot be changed. It seems they would now like to involve us in planning the future and if this is so then they are to be encouraged.

I'm not sure what the future holds, I have no crystal ball, but I'm prepared to spend a few weeks of my life and maybe more in the hope of building a better service for us all.

As a very sensible man once said "You've got to have a dream, if you don't have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?"

We must see that the choices we made in the Consultation are upheld in the Service Specification. Furthermore if we are to work, for example in the kitchen, we must be paid. This is about equality, basic human dignity and self respect. It works in Reading and it once worked in Slough. Bracknell's unpaid 'user-led' kitchen scheme has failed, while our own continues to falter. If they want us to be 'more normalized' and work then it's only fair that they should 'get normalized' and pay us. I guess we're not that different from the 'normal folk' - They wouldn't work hard for no pay and neither would most of us. We must see Gerry Crawford's promise that our 5 day drop in service is safe is also upheld.

I have made some explanation here of what I'm standing for, if I've missed anything then please tell me about it and I'll put it on my list.

I should say here that the purpose of the consultation and the committee is to build the new service rather than fix the old one. I would estimate that the new service may be in place by October or certainly before Christmas. Any questions? Come to the meeting and ask them.

Fiona MacTaggart To Visit Sunrise Club



Got any questions or concerns about Mental Health Services, or the way local or central government treat us?

Fiona MacTaggart, MP for Slough, will be visiting Sunrise Club (aka SADSAD) on Northern Road, Manor Park on March 28th 10.30 – 11.30.

Fiona may be able to answer some of your questions or help you with any problems you might be having.

It's not every day you get to meet your MP so come along, it should be interesting.

**What have
Reading
And
Bracknell Got
That We
Haven't Got ?
See Page 3 & 4**

Australia Day at Sunrise Club

January 24th is Australia Day, national day of the lucky country. Laura, our Aussie manager, held a party to celebrate with an Aussie buffet including Vegemite sandwiches, various Australian snacks and sweets and fried kangaroo and crocodile - them roos is good eating. Some people wore Aussie hats, modelled here by our special guest the inflatable kangaroo. There was Australian music including the national anthem, fascinating facts about Oz and its wildlife, plus a collection of useful phrases. Later we took part in the traditional sport of thong throwing (flip-flop throwing). This proved quite popular with us Poms and is surprisingly like frisbee or discus throwing with a slightly higher element of skill.

A bonza day in Pommiland, good on ya Laura, that was beaut, fair dinkum.



Fascinating Facts

Intelligent people have more copper and zinc in their hair.

'Hang On Sloopy' is the official rock song of Ohio.

The reason fire stations have circular stairways is from the days of yore when the engines were pulled by horses. The horses were stabled on the ground floor and figured out how to walk up straight staircases.

The airplane Buddy Holly crashed in was the "American Pie." Thus the name of the Don McLean song.

The Main Library at Indiana University sinks over an inch every year because when it was built, engineers failed to take into account the weight of all the books that would occupy the building.

Nutmeg is extremely poisonous if injected intravenously

Only one person in 2 billion will live to be 116 or older.

There is an average of 178 sesame seeds on a McDonalds Big Mac bun.

Ten percent of the Russian government's income comes from the sale of vodka.

The strongest muscle in your body is the tongue.

Americans on the average eat 18 acres of pizza every day.

Did you know that you are more likely to be killed by a champagne cork than by a poisonous spider?

In ancient Egypt, priests plucked EVERY hair from their bodies.

The first toilet ever seen on television was on "Leave It To Beaver"

When Heinz ketchup leaves the bottle, it travels at a rate of 25 miles per year.

On average, 100 people choke to death on ballpoint pens every year.

Many hamsters only blink one eye at a time.

Barbie's measurements if she were life size: 39-23-33.

Julia Smith Speaks at Sunrise Members Meeting

At about 11 am on Wednesday January 23rd I sent an email to the members of the Service Management Review Group outlining breaches of contract with respect to the New Horizons Service Plan 2004.

At 12 am at the Sunrise Club members meeting Julia Smith came to answer some of the questions. Firstly I'd like to thank her for her speedy response to our concerns, a rare thing in this business, she's set a new standard in customer service round here and so deserves our encouragement and respect.

Now to the answers to our questions:
When is a drop-in not a drop-in ?
When members must be referred.

A drop-in is a daycentre where people can just drop in off the street without referral. By this definition Sunrise is not a drop-in so I guess we call it a daycentre or social club or something.

What does 'move on' mean ?

To 'move on' does not necessarily mean get a job. Julia explained that to get out of bed twice a week instead of once a week could be considered a 'move on'. Indeed if someone were to come to a daycentre twice a week instead of 3 times a week because they had found something else to do in the community for the other day

then this would be considered a 'move on' too.

She further explained that the words "where possible" in clause 21.3 I:

"Achieve a move on rate of at least 90% of service users where possible, within two years of entering the Service to reintegrate into the community."

mean that no-one will actually be kicked out after 2 years. We know this to be true as, if it were not, many of us would not still be here.

When asked why we were excluded from the Service Management Review Group she said that Service Management Reviews were mainly concerned with financial details, that there were no minutes of these meetings and that mistakes had been made. Well some of us might not be interested in such meetings, some of us might, quite a few of us would probably understand the maths. The point is, if the contract says we can attend that group, it should be our choice whether we do or not. She also said that although we might not be happy with this breach of contract, there had been other breaches which worked in our favour. For instance, MIND had exceeded the 15 members stated for the 'social' side of New Horizons so

providing a service for a larger number of us. While I'm not sure if a wrong wrong and a right wrong make a right, I cannot deny her example was of benefit to us.

As I said in my email:

"I could spend the rest of my life trying to find out why you did what you did, whatever the true explanation is I'm sure it's no worse than what we're thinking, I'd probably die of shock if any of you could actually give me an innocent explanation, so feel free to try - you might get lucky. The only positive way forward is to say 'Never Again', draw a line under this whole sorry episode, rectify all breaches of contract and do it right next time. We have heard many fine words about user involvement but actions speak louder than words."

One member at the meeting asked me whether I would give Julia positive coverage, I said "I will, she's been very helpful". I hope I've been fair.

I report the facts and if I don't have the facts I ask questions.

Those who don't like the facts should take it up with the people who made the facts.

Everyone has the right to ask questions, even people we don't agree with.

Rethink Day Services at Bracknell New Horizons

Funded by Bracknell Forest Council this service has 150 members of which 30 - 35 come in daily. Rethink is a national mental health charity once known as The Schizophrenia Fellowship. The service is recovery based and open 4 1/2 days a week with 4 days of structured activities and 1/2 a day drop in service on a Wednesday afternoon. Apart from the New Horizons centre itself, some activities take place at community venues and there is an art shop which exhibits members paintings for sale to the general public.

Groups include:

1. Arts and Crafts with an Art Therapist.
2. Gardening with a Horticultural Therapist.
3. Needlework
4. Anxiety Management
5. Positive Thinking
6. Social Activities
7. Young Persons Group

Services include:

1. Benefits Advisor 3 days a week.

2. Politics Group - run by national Rethink discusses various issues and their impact on mental health. Visits the Houses of Parliament to talk with MPs & Lords.

3. Newspaper reviews - members read local papers and feedback to publishers on mental health issues, fairness of articles etc. Members are paid for this work.

4. Training - they have links to Maidenhead Learndirect and their training courses. They have a kitchen which is used for training (you cannot get any food there, but you may buy tea & coffee).

Day Services in Reading - 'Compass' and 'Resource'

The Reading Service is a 4 tier service and is organised as follows:

1. A crisis service which aims to provide an alternative to hospital admission. It does this with 9-5 therapy groups at the therapy unit while the home treatment team provide support for evenings and weekends.

2. Psycho Educational Therapy groups in the community - anger management, assertiveness, stress management etc.

3. Social Inclusion & Self Support - Community based Social Focus Groups, Sports, Creative, Links with Reading College many groups run by volunteers & service users - Arts, Crafts, Sports, Jogging Groups, Self Help groups etc.

4. Moving on - Resource / Together, a drop in service with paid work, training, a café (open to the public), an art gallery (where café customers can buy the paintings).

This is the basic structure of Reading day services with tiers 1-3 run by a statutory service known as Compass, financed by Reading Council and operating from the Therapy Centre and a number of community venues. Tier 4 is run by Together, a charity financed by Reading Council and Lottery Funding from their Resource Centre, 'Resource' and some community venues.

Having talked to the staff at Compass we then visited 'Resource':

While Resource has a 'Moving on Focus' this is not compulsory and members may progress at their own pace. People who use Resource are

called Members and have access to all the services in the centre. There is a deliberately small number of staff who would be unable to run the service without the input of paid and voluntary members. Staff's most important function is to engage members in running the centre. Members can join by self-referral and Compass and Resource refer people to each other. Membership is not time limited and is unconditional providing a person has a mental health problem and does not present a threat to staff and members. They have 1200 members on their books and are open 6 days a week including Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Their services are as follows:

1. Social & Sport Activities - They run a successful Football team and Table Tennis team with a case full of trophies along with swimming, bowling, pool, films, quizzes and badminton.

2. Café / Art Gallery - Members are paid to run the café which is open to the public, paintings by members are displayed on the walls of the café and customers can buy them along with their tea and sandwiches.

3. Employment & Training Service - Training is available in Arts & Crafts, Woodwork & IT. 12 members are employed on 6 month contracts, helping to improve their CVs and self worth. They have an employment officer who places 5 members a month in mainstream employment. When jobs need to be done around the centre (e.g. Painting and Decorating) members do the jobs wherever possible. They also run the

Café / Art Gallery.

4. Information.

5. Outreach Services.

6. Women's & Men's support groups.

Other features of the service:

1. No changes are made to the service without agreement from a members meeting.

2. Fortnightly visits are made to all psychiatric wards to visit members in hospital and also to introduce the service to non-members who may wish to join later.

3. Members do fundraising for the service.

4. The Art Classes are run by a professional artist.

5. The Manager, Polly, has a lot of drive enthusiasm and expertise. She passionately believes in what she is doing and has the power to motivate others.

'Do we have a Polly in Slough' I hear you ask. Well I believe we do. Her name is Lynette Shelley and she works for the Assertive Outreach Team.

I have seen her motivational skills at Langley drop-in and she has done in Langley what I have never seen in Manor Park.

No manager of New Horizons / Sunrise Club has ever managed to get members to help cook the dinner and provide waiter service. Apart from this she is an NHS professional with at least 25 years experience of day services and a better understanding of her customers than anyone MIND has ever found for us.

Are You Getting It Every Month ?

You'd like it more often? Wouldn't we all... But for now SMH News comes out every month. You can pick up a copy at Sunrise Club, New Horizons, or Langley drop-in. The Man With No Fax Number will give you one if you can find him.

If you want to be really sure you can email subscriptions@sloughmental.co.uk and we'll send you the email version every month. Read the latest issue and any previous issues at www.sloughmental.com.

Have you got a story, a poem, an interesting photo, something I haven't thought of ?

Email it to editor@sloughmental.co.uk and see your name in print maybe (unless you wish to remain anonymous). .

