



Report of the August 17, 2010 meeting of the Mental Health Forum in Tynepark Arts Centre, Haddington

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Who was there:

Kelly Nicoll	Lothian Recovery Network
Mairi Anderson	Lothian Recovery Network
Ross Macphail	Forum representative, JPG
Claire Thomas	Community Mental Health Team
Anne Jones	Chaplain, Herdmanflat
Rosemary Bayne	Chaplain, Herdmanflat
Nikki Moran	ELIG Development Worker
Marie	ELIG volunteer
Michael Elder	Service user
Andrew Kernohan	Support Worker
Linden Ross	Home-Start
Mary Stevenson	Home-Start
Alan Brown	Convener, ELCCF
Myra Waugh	Strive Befriending Service
Lesley Aitkenhead	ELCCF Development Manager
George Paterson	ELCCF Information Worker

Previous Report:

A draft report of the May MH Forum report was circulated. Claire Thomas' input to the meeting was to be added.

Lesley suggested an agenda covering: current response from the last meeting, which included members of the MH Joint Planning Group being asked what progress had been made on the Mental Health implementation plan (2007-2010), now coming to an end.

She asked what new means of communication and reporting back from the JPG could be achieved, involving representatives from the MH Forum.

Next on the agenda was the possible change of name from EL Mental Health Forum accompanied by a review of the remit of the Forum.

Also, representative was to be appointed to **Lothian Recovery Network**.

Presentation: Home-Start

Linden reported that **Home-Start** is ten years old this year. The group were focussed on the Scottish Government's **Equally Well** pilot in East Lothian - a partnership project known as **Support from the Start** involving Home-Start, **East Lothian CHP** and **ELVON**.



The initiative sets out to tackle inequalities in health from the youngest years.

Linden pointed out most of the parents who came into contact with Home-Start had mental health problems. The organisation had discovered a need in East Lothian for a support group for people who used self-harm as a coping mechanism.

Linden introduced Mary, a volunteer who described **Home-Start's** support project, Look Forward. The parent-led group has received backing from the Royal Edinburgh Hospital's **Merrick Pope**, a specialist from the REH's own self-harm project, and has gained positive endorsements from all taking part.

Andrew said future plans for the group included training for members and for other volunteers. The promotion of links for access to support for professionals, and the development of funding for health improvement were also on the agenda.

Linden explained that the hope was, that more groups would spring up to cater for a need which is more widespread than generally thought.

Presentation: Lothian Recovery Network



Kelly Nicoll explained the Network had begun five years ago with a group of people who met to encourage a more positive, optimistic, route to promote Recovery on mental health issues.

Kelly and Mairi had come to the Forum to forge stronger links in East Lothian and invite forum members to LRN's steering group. Main objectives of the Network are to support people on their own personal route to recovery, peer support and to promote Recovery among professionals.

The group had its third annual conference last year. It runs training sessions and workshops to promote awareness of the Recovery ethos.

Kelly suggested an event gathering groups and individuals together to inspire connections with LRN. The suggestion was welcomed, and some discussion was had, sketching out what kind of event could take place and what needs were.

Among ideas mentioned were an annual awareness fair, similar to the one held recently at the REH. However although there was a will to set up a stronger linking between groups in East Lothian, a sticking point was identifying who would do the development work.

It was agreed that details of an event could be taken further at the next meeting of the Forum.

Ross, Michael and Anne offered their help as members of the LRN steering group.

Respite Services

Tony Segall, of Carers of East Lothian, has been charged with reviewing respite services for East Lothian as respite redesign manager and has been seeking views on the issue from ELCCF Forums and other groups.

His review is to cover:

- respite where carers benefit as well as the person they are looking after
- overnight respite
- planned and emergency respite.

Tony presented papers to the Forum summing up the main points of his research work so far. The estimated number of people referred to specialist mental care services in East Lothian is 1,200.

The current focus of the MH joint planning group was day services - one area, said Tony, which provides some kind of respite.

He pointed out that in the MH implementation plan there were only two references to respite; as a national theme, and as an aim to improve respite services for mental health. On the latter there was a specific reference to a supportive landlady scheme.

Lesley explained that thought had been given to such a scheme in the past, and that it would be particularly useful to people in crisis. Service users could use such a facility for up to two days with a sympathetic 'landlady' and support worker.

Forum members saw the system as a priority for East Lothian, as a better alternative to supporting people during times of social crisis. Seen as another priority was the establishment of a respite bureau.

Myra pointed out that the Befriending Service, as an offshoot, offered respite to carers, and that the service should be taken into account when developing a strategy.

There was discussion over entitlement funding for any respite options and how such options, from In Control for example, can be organised.

Social Events

There was a request from ELIG volunteer Marie for the Forum to fund a social evening or a disco at Tynepark or elsewhere. She felt it was difficult for the local MH community to meet socially in the evenings, as opposed to day activities, and social evenings would encourage integration in the wider community.

Nikki suggested the request could be fed to the JPG in the form of a monthly social event. The general consensus was that funding was outwith the remit of the Forum and the although the need was well recognised, the organisation of a social event needed more thought and organisation.

Ross pointed out that such funding could be sought under the Mental Health Act in that, among provisions, 'wellbeing' was catered for.

Forum members offered support to Marie to work out a project which would be open to all service users in East Lothian.

Renaming the Forum

There was little time left at the end of the meeting to discuss a new name, so Lesley charged those present to come up with an uplifting new title to present at the next Forum meeting.

Hand in hand with this, she asked for suggestions as to the future work and direction of the Forum.

Next meeting of MH Forum

The next meeting will take place at 10.30am-12 on Tuesday October 26 at 10.30am in Tynepark Arts Centre.

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Lastly...

ELCCF has moved

from Tynepark House,

**to 3-4 Sidegate, Haddington EH41 4BT.
Tel: 01620 822212, email info@elccf.org.
Visit www.elccf.org.**