North Staffs Users Group

the Voice

Issue 66   Summer 2013

Magazine

for users, refusers, survivors & allies of mental health services in North Staffordshire

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
The NSUG’s Chair says...

Stoke on Trent College – Psychology

Stoke on Trent College (nocn), National Open College Network offered a taster course on Psychology with Accreditation. The course ran from 3rd June to the 24th June and covered a general overview of psychology. The course has now finished and so I thought I would take this opportunity to tell you of my experience of the course. The tutor was excellent and made a good introduction to Psychology. I found her quite open to all forms of ideas. The tutor Nicole Johnson has led us through psychology and abnormality, behaviourist, psychodynamic and humanistic. We studied Sigmund Freud, and his psychoanalytical therapy right through to Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs. We had cognitive behavioural therapy (cbt), social psychology and finally one to one tutorials. An excellent course with an excellent tutor.
**NSUG Activity**

We attended the Combined Healthcare “Reach” Awards for staff, sponsored the Service User Award for the third year running and were also involved in promoting the scheme and selecting the winners. The event gives us the opportunity to celebrate good practice as determined by service users.

Since our successful applications to sit on Patient Congress (Clinical Commissioning Groups) in both Stoke and North Staffordshire, an NSUG rep has attended meetings where we hope to make a positive impact on the services that are commissioned and promote parity of esteem for mental health.

We have been raising issues picked up following the service redesign, particularly issues with accessing services, the change in care teams for service users and the impact this has. We are concerned to see that the extended hours seem to be of limited benefit for service users with only additional duty cover being offered beyond ordinary working hours, with no groups or routine appointments being offered during the additional times.

We have continued to raise concerns about the lack of stimulation and activity on the inpatient wards at Harplands. Boredom is a persistent issue that is raised with us and we are concerned about the impact this is having on recovery and service user experience at the Harplands.

We also raised concerns regarding old phone numbers for the Ashcombe Centre ringing out and not being diverted or ...........
dropping to message. We advised that new telephone numbers are not easily accessible to the public with directory information still directing to old numbers and requested that this be corrected.

We attended a meeting regarding the new 111 service and expressed reservations about how the service will work for those experiencing mental distress. We will be monitoring the feedback we have on this service.

We were invited to attend the Steering Group of the New Floating support service being offered across Newcastle and the Moorlands. We have been raising awareness about the new services amongst other mental health teams to promote appropriate referrals.

We raised issues at the Safe House Steering Group about access to the service and that it is being used more and more as a crisis response rather than to prevent a crisis. People are reporting not being able to gain access to alleviate a crisis or help manage their mental health, as with increasing demand those with the greatest needs gain places whereas previously people were being referred earlier in their relapses to prevent full escalation. We continue to push for this service to be available 7 days a week.

We responded to the draft police and crime plan regarding the lack of substance in this plan for issues around mental health and substance misuse, as although mentioned as areas in need of tackling there appeared to be nothing to address these issues in particular. We have worked with Brighter Futures and Mind to put forward a proposal as an alternative to A&E and the Harplands particularly for people who are in significant distress and might be intoxicated but whose needs are not urgent enough to require an admission to hospital.
We have been assisting Supporting People on the re tender of supported housing in Stoke and an NSUG rep sat on the selection panel for this service.

We continue to attend the Wider Welfare Reform forum with the City Council and were able to provide possible link information as to where health and the local authority could work more closely together. We highlighted that advice and support with benefits and housing was critical and that the council had it within its power to ensure living wages were paid to others by ensuring all contracts awarded were done so on this basis. Since then the council have indicated that they intended to pay all their staff the Living Wage.

NSUG was interviewed by the Care Quality Commission as part of their inspection of the Harplands.

NSUG was successful in obtaining a place on the Healthwatch Board for Stoke to ensure that Mental Health is high on their agenda.

NSUG reps have been helping with both Stoke and Staffordshire Suicide prevention strategies.

NSUG Reps met with the Mental Health lead for North Staffs Clinical Commissioning Group. We discussed issues with the service redesign and particularly the extended hours service and our fears this would be cut due to lack of demand, when in fact it is not being offered to service users. We raised the issue re: parity of esteem and were pleased to hear that there is a lot of support from North Staffs CCG re: parity and that all areas in...
health are being asked to consider mental wellbeing as part of their commissioning processes.

They are seeing more physical health teams incorporating mental health workers and vice versa so there is positive progress on this. We raised concerns about the 111 service particularly the impact on other services if this does not work. We raised issues regarding the need to increase services that focus on prevention and promotion and ensure people can opt in when they feel they need to, as the straightened times appear to have generated the shift again towards an acute & “you are not ill enough” attitude due to general increases in demand. We stressed that this hinders people’s ability to access services at times they feel would be most helpful. We asked that readmission rates to Combined Healthcare be scrutinised as we are concerned that people are being bounced in and out when there are bed shortages.

**Issues being raised with us:**

We have picked up a number of issues around care coordination; actions not being carried out, care coordinators being difficult to get hold of, staff not returning calls made, lack of crisis plans. People have also advised that they have struggled to get back into services when they know that they are deteriorating. Benefits are still causing concerns with the first records of people being affected by the so called “bedroom tax”, the Work Capability Assessments are still causing people a lot of anxiety and concern.

If you have also had similar experiences, please let us know. Or, if your experience is not on the list and you think that we ought to know, get in touch.................
On last issue ........

In the last issue of the Voice we told you about the new NHS 111 service that was due to be launched in April, to replace the NHS Direct telephone service. This service was delayed locally and at the time of writing had not yet been formally launched. NSUG understands that at the last minute local commissioners had to make changes to the out of hours GP service to ensure that it could deliver a service without the telephone support of the 111 service. We understand that the service will still be launched at some point but in the meantime we would advise you to contact your GP or a GP walk in centre for non emergency Healthcare concerns in order to be directed to the appropriate service.

The GP out of hours service locally did change provider in April and as such we would like to hear from those who have had to use the service since April to let us know what they thought, good and bad. Please see page 25 for details of how to contact us.
Hilda Johnson,  
Service Provider  
Development Worker.....

Information Article, from Healthwatch  
Stoke-on-Trent Newsletter

The NHS Trust Development Authority reviews the progress each NHS trust is making towards becoming a Foundation Trust. They have recently announced that North Staffs Combined Healthcare Trust Board has informed them that they are not planning to become a Foundation Trust, and have put forward an option to become part of a larger existing mental health trust. This means that Combined Health Care could be absorbed into a neighbouring trust sometime mid 2015. Stoke Healthwatch would welcome any comments and feedback on this. If you have any comments to make contact them on 01782 683080 or email dave.rushton@healthwatchstoke.co.uk

Healthwatch have set up subgroups and they have just begun to meet. These are Primary Care, Secondary Care, Mental Health, Public Health, Social Care, Children and Young People and they will meet on a regular monthly basis. If you are interested in participating in any of these let them know by calling them on 01782 683080 for details of the meetings.

GP out- of- hours provider for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

Staffordshire Doctors Urgent Care (SDUC) are the GP out of hours provider for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and are part of the Vocare group. This service covers the whole of North Staffs and are contracted to provide this service by Stoke-on-Trent CCG and North Staffs CCG.

The new service is based at: Staffordshire House, Riverside 2 Business Park, Campbell Rd, Stoke. Call: 0300 123 0814.
In previous issues of the Voice we gave you information on the new NHS 111 service and told you that the service wasn’t up and running properly yet. Below is some up-to-date information on this from Healthwatch:-

**Important – Changes to NHS 111**

Due to continuing issues with the new NHS 111 service which should have taken over from NHS Direct in April our local CCG’s have contracted SDUC to handle the calls until the new NHS 111 service comes into full operation.

Therefore until further notice if you need to use this service in Stoke and North Staffs area please call **0300 7900 246**

If you would like to see the full edition of the May Stoke on Trent Healthwatch Newsletter the website address is:

www.healthwatchstoke.co.uk

**Feed back from NSUG**

*Sutherland Members Forum* ........ Clare Cox the new Manageress at the Sutherland Centre came along to the last member’s forum. It was a very useful meeting as some of our members hadn’t met Clare before. Clare told us that she had worked at St Edwards and had worked at The Sutherland Centre a number of years ago as well as being Manageress at Greenfields and Lymebrook and is happy to be back at The Sutherland again. We discussed about having more groups using the centre and will be talking about this over the next few months.

Members said it was nice to see Anne back on reception as she is always welcoming and very helpful when they come in to the centre.

At the next forum Hilda will be giving some information around Cancer Awareness for Breast, Lung and Bowel cancer.

*Lymebrook Members Forum* ..........these are not very well attended at the moment but at the last meeting we discussed the need for extended provision at Brunswick and Phoenix House as more people need to access these services since the loss of the bedded unit at
Lymebrook. It was also mentioned that some of the services that Brighter Futures run in the City were not available for people from Newcastle as they are funded by Stoke Commissioners. We will ask about this and give some feedback on this at the next forum meeting.

**Members Forum at the Dudson Centre**....... The Forum on 22nd May was arranged as a follow up meeting from last year around the changes to services as a result of Phase 2. Staff from Combined Health Care and Commissioners from Stoke and North Staffs attended the meeting to listen to comments and answer questions from members about the impact the changes have had for service users. The main issue concerned the loss of groups and activities since the bedded units at the resource centres closed. Members have had to accept that Combined will no longer be running these groups and that any activities going on at the centres will be for people who have been assessed as needing these as part of the care plan. NSUG have, and are constantly, raising the issue with Commissioners about the need for groups and activities for service users to help them stay well and prevent hospital admission.

We do visit the Mind and New Days groups and have received lots of positive comments about these from service users but a regular comment is that these are getting full and some service users are sometimes finding this difficult as when they are not feeling very well they don’t like going if there are a lot of people there. Members asked Commissioners to look at funding more groups like this and also to extend the services at Brunswick and Phoenix house to 7 days a week. Again this is something NSUG are asking for at meetings we attend. Commissioners said they are reviewing these services with the voluntary sector but couldn’t promise anything because of reduction in funding.

There is also an issue with parking at the Sutherland Centre and a member said this can be quite dangerous at times when service users are walking across the car park.
Combined Healthcare said they will look into this and see if they can do something about it, perhaps staff car sharing.

A member raised the issue about a group that started off as a pathway group at the Bennett Centre and then moved to Hanley Library which initially had staff support but that staff no longer support this group and now not many people attend the group. We are waiting for feedback from Combined about this.

On a positive note a member said the Home Treatment Team had been fantastic to them recently.

The second part of the meeting was, again, a follow up from the previous forum where people had asked about an information card and we discussed with members what would be useful information for service users. Annie Roberts from Combined is going to let NSUG have a draft copy of the card and we can discuss this with members at other meetings. At the next Members Forum meeting at the Dudson Centre we will be having staff from the pharmacy department at Harplands coming to talk to members about medication, they have previously been to the Sutherland Forum and members found this very useful. If you want any information on your medication about side affects etc contact Hilda and she will make sure they have the information with them when they come to the meeting.

Members Forums

The forums are an opportunity for members to give us their views on the services they receive and also to receive information on what is happening in their area. NSUG will try to arrange for speakers to come along to talk about services that members are interested in, the forums are also an opportunity to meet other members so please come along you can come to any of the forums.

Please see next page for members forum dates .................
Dates of the Members Forum Meetings

**Sutherland Centre**
Wednesday 17th July 12-1.30pm; Cancer awareness information
Wednesday 18th September 12-1.30pm
Wednesday 20th November 12-1.30pm

**Greenfields Centre**
Thursday 29th August 1.30-3pm
Thursday 24th October 1.30-3pm
Thursday 17th December 1.30-3pm

**Lymebrook Centre**
Monday 5th August 2-3.30pm
Monday 7th October 2-3.30pm
Monday 9th December 2-3.30pm

**Dudson Centre - The Audrey Dudson Room**
Thursday 26th September 2-4pm

Staff from Pharmacy at Combined will be coming to give information and answer questions on medication.

**Holbrook House, Cheadle**

Wednesday 14th August please ring for start time
**English and Maths courses.**

Over the last 12 months NSUG have worked in partnership with Stoke College and Combined Health Care to deliver courses at the resource centres. An English course ran at the Sutherland Centre and service users have really enjoyed this. We also ran a Maths course at Greenfields but unfortunately this was cancelled as not enough people attended.

We have recently met with the College to discuss courses for this year starting in September. The courses have changed this year and the College can run eight week courses first then people can go onto follow on courses if they want to. The plan is to run an English course at the Sutherland and Maths at Greenfields. The College need a minimum of 12 people for each course before they can run the course.

If you are interested then contact Hilda at Harplands on:- 441631.

Hilda will be visiting Lymebrook, New Days and Mind groups in the Newcastle area to talk to service users while Jackie is off ill.

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It was recently reported that actor, author, presenter and comedian Stephen Fry had attempted suicide whilst filming abroad in 2012. The admission came from Fry himself in comedian Richard Herring’s Leicester Square Theatre Podcast. It has been long known that Fry has experience of mental ill health, namely bipolar disorder, and he is currently president of the mental health charity, Mind. While it may be said that tough social and economic circumstances can exacerbate the chances of people experiencing mental illness, such occurrences show that it can affect anyone, even the seemingly most successful. Even a man like Fry, who one would suppose has everything, can still experience lows and despair to the extent that such drastic action is taken. But perhaps the poet John Milton, in his epic poem of 1667, “Paradise Lost”, put it best, writing that, “The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven”.

*By a NSUG Member*
Shaun Stanley -
Volunteer Co-ordinator.....

This year volunteers elected to go to Lichfield, it was a great sunny day and a great time was had by all (well nearly all). The sights at Lichfield included the Cathedral, the Treasury, the birthplace of Samuel Johnson and a look at some of the Staffordshire Hoard. The trip also included an opportunity to visit the Nation Memorial Arboretum.

Here’s some of the things that volunteers said about the trip. “Very interesting day. Enjoyable. Arboretum memorial brilliant, even the weather was brill”. “I visited the Samuel Johnson Museum and Lichfield Cathedral which I enjoyed and the weather was very good”. “Lovely weather, visit to Cathedral and walk around”
Our volunteers seem to enjoy their time volunteering with us. If you are thinking of getting involved? Just look at what one of our volunteers says:

“The staff are all very friendly and supportive. It gets you out of the house. It helps self esteem. There is training. There is no pressure if you don’t feel well enough”.

The Initial Training will be offered again shortly and you can contact Shaun at the office on Tel: 01782 683043 for more information.

**Good Practice Forum at Lymebrook**

Service users are invited to come along to the above to give feedback on services at Lymebrook. It meets every first Wednesday of the month 11.00 am - 12 noon. The next meeting is Wednesday 7th August 11.00 am - 12 noon. North Staffs Users Group also attend the meeting.
NSUG are currently looking for Trustees......

Each year all NSUG Board members are required to resign and NSUG members are asked to nominate themselves at the AGM. All NSUG Board members are members of NSUG so all have personal experience of mental ill health.

Be Part of Shaping and Steering NSUG

* Make sure that the organisation complies with the relevant laws *
* Protect the aims of the organisation *
* Monitor the money and how its spent *
* Monitor the work of the Director *
* Shape the direction of the organisation *

If you would like to find out more about being a Trustee please contact Lorien Barber on 01782 683043.

Do you have an idea for an article for The Voice? Want to share your views with other members? Or, have a mental health related issue that you feel passionate about? If so, contact us On 01782 683043 or email: mainoffice@nsug.co.uk
NSUG
WILL BE HOLDING THEIR
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN

OCTOBER

Please look out for your invite in the post nearer the time and if its the only meeting you go to this year, make it this one!

UPDATE

Jackie Galletley, our Outreach Worker for Newcastle and Moorlands is currently off on long term sickness leave. Please be aware that Hilda Johnson will be covering Newcastle and Shaun Stanley will be covering Leek & The Moorlands. We wish Jackie a speedy recovery.
We are having the first issues raised about people having difficulty with their money following the changes to housing and council tax benefit that came in in April.

We have also attended a meeting about welfare reform with Stoke Council who made clear that they will make no efforts to find out about your circumstances; if you do not pay they will presume that you are refusing to pay – not that you can’t. If you do not pay and do not contact to make arrangements this could lead to you losing your home or having bailiffs turn up; the council will not make efforts to check you are able to pay. So, if you are struggling, you, or someone on your behalf must contact them to let them know you are having difficulties or you will be presumed unwilling rather than unable to pay.

Top tips for managing your money:

- List all your money coming in and all the money that you pay out so you know what your real situation is.
- Pay Rent / mortgage, council tax, gas and electricity first. It is important that these are paid before any others due to the consequences of not paying, such as losing your home, having bailiffs sent or disconnection of supply.
- Get advice on whether you can increase your income. Are you claiming all the benefits you are entitled to? Can you get some overtime or extra shifts? Could you take another part-time job? Could you get a lodger? Are other adults living in your home contributing their fair share to the cost of the house?
- If you owe money get help and advice on how to renegotiate payments to ones that you can afford. Loans, credit cards and overdrafts can potentially be renegotiated. Get back in control of your money and how you spend it.
- Look at your shopping bill and see where savings could be made. What is essential? What could you live without? Use our tips on page 24 for healthy eating on a budget.
If you need help managing your money contact any of the following for free advice and information:

Citizens Advice Bureau - 08444111444
http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england.htm

Step Change - 0800 138 1111
http://www.stepchange.org/#

National Debt Line - 0808 808 4000
http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/

Money Advice Service – 0300 500 5000
https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/


.........STOP PRESS.....................

“The fitness-for-work test used to determine whether hundreds of thousands of people are eligible to claim sickness benefits substantially disadvantages people with mental health conditions, a court has said, in a landmark ruling hailed as a significant victory by mental health charities.

A three judge tribunal panel ruled that the Department for Work and Pensions had failed to make reasonable adjustments to ensure people with mental health problems were treated fairly by the system” (as reported in the Guardian Wednesday 22nd May).

We understand that the DWP does intend to appeal the decision so it will now be up to the Supreme Court to Decide, so watch this space......

Le Monde

Stoke and an NSUG member even featured in French newspaper ‘Le Monde’ regarding the impact of the changes to benefits.
I have been an NSUG member and office volunteer for a few years now. I had a Breakdown in April 1994 through excessive stress whilst at university. Amongst other things I am a keen chess player, playing in local league and tournament matches. In the 70s and early 80s I watched the BBC's Play Chess during summer holidays and joined a school chess club in the games lessons merely to avoid playing rugby. I remember trying to lose a game of chess so I could go and have my lunch...

So I knew how to play, but hadn't really caught the bug yet. But in 1991 things changed and, for whatever reason, I began to take my chess seriously, as well as commencing a degree course. I purchased a little calculator-like Novag Solo chess computer and Teach Yourself Chess by Bill Hartston. Reading and playing became my routine. It took me 11 games to beat the Novag Solo on level 1, but before too long I could compete with it on the top level 8 - with patience (waiting for its moves) being the chief requirement! Next I joined various chess clubs and even tried my hand at correspondence chess (sending moves and playing a game through the post – more likely to be by email these days! See ads in ‘Chess’ magazine). With chess players their rating or grade, a numerical indication of playing strength, is a big thing. Chess magazine has a regular feature called How Good is your Chess? which consistently rates me as ‘Strong Club Player’. But I have never quite lived up to this standard, (apart from when I won outright the 2008 Leek Congress minor section and received £150 for my efforts).

So England’s Grandmaster Nigel Short was runner-up to Garry Kasparov in the 1993 PCA World Championship, inspiring new players – both young and old - as well as cross-channel television...
coverage. I remember keenly writing down the moves of the daily games in the code which chess players call *algebraic notation*.

**If you can play you’re okay........**

And so there I was at university, missing sleep to finish a seemingly endless run of assignments before deadline after deadline. Something had to give and in April 1994, mid-degree, I was struck down by acute mental illness. (And here comes the interesting bit – in fact leading to the crux of this article...) When I went to hospital for assessment I took my beloved Novag Solo with me. But on finding a moment to play some chess I was quite astonished to find that I couldn’t... This is difficult to put into words, but basically I couldn’t *think* chess. Chess is renowned for being logical and rational and I certainly wasn’t that at the time! It was as though my mind was ‘buzzing’ or in a ‘spasm’ which stopped it functioning in some ways. So basically, if you can *play* you’re *okay*. I now use chess in this way as a *gauge* or *measure* of my mental health, and find that these days I’m not too bad at all – often playing better than people who are quite rational and have never been ill.

**Chess v. Dementia 1 - 0**

Chess certainly improves concentration, confidence, academic ability, people skills (with opponents in person, not online!) and is a beneficial mental exercise for all, especially in keeping an ageing mind active. Contd/.....
But now there are claims that regularly playing chess, or other deep-thinking pursuits (my parents enjoy Wordsearch, Sudoku and crosswords etc.) may not just delay the onset of dementia, it could reduce the risk of it by up to 74%. Just Google ‘chess dementia’ if you don’t believe it. For anyone interested there are several chess clubs across the North Staffs area, and you would be most welcome to participate.

Local Mental Health Independent Inquiry
CALLING ALL USERS !..........

We are currently working in partnership with a number of local agencies. Brighter Futures are leading on producing a report over the next 12 months that shows what it is like to currently live in Stoke on Trent if you have a mental illness, to tell the real story about real lives.

Any user that would like to share their story of what it is like to live in Stoke-on-Trent with a mental health issue is invited to contact us.

Preferably you will have had direct experience of mental health services in Stoke within the last 12 months, it doesn't matter which.

You can remain anonymous if you wish, but you need to be willing to share your experiences and potentially have that information published.

If you think that people ought to know what real life is like, the good the bad and the ugly then please contact us. Details of how to get in touch are on the back page.
Healthy eating on a budget

Eating healthily need not be expensive; eating healthily can easily be done on a budget. There are no special foods, drinks or diets needed to simply eat healthily, and it is important to give your body all the goodness it needs to function properly.

Good value, healthy meal ideas........

**Beans on toast:** Pulses such as baked beans are a cheap and filling source of protein. To be super-healthy, try not to add butter to the toast.

**Eggs:** Omelette and salad, scrambled eggs or boiled eggs on toast; eggs are a great versatile and economical food.

**Porridge:** With semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, topped with honey or a little sugar, porridge is a great way to start the day.

**Bread:** Whether you like sandwiches, toast or bread and butter, go for wholemeal as it is more filling than white. A cheap and nutritious starchy food, wholemeal bread is also a good source of iron.

**Baked potatoes:** With cheese, tinned tuna or baked beans, potatoes are a great way to make sure that you get some protein and starchy carbohydrate in the same meal.

**Desserts:** Try these three desserts to ensure you have some calcium containing dairy produce and fruit in your diet.

- Bananas and custard
- Rice pudding and canned fruit in juice
- Yoghurt and a piece of fruit

A little bit of effort before you hit the supermarket will help you enormously. Work out how much you’re going to spend on food...
Be wary of special promotions........

Just because it is 'buy one, get one free' doesn't necessarily mean that you have to buy it! If the offer is for rice or pasta (or something healthy) take advantage, but if the offer is for chocolate, crisps or biscuits, try to resist.

Cook in bulk and freeze in portions........

That way you will never be caught out, you will always have a “ready meal” in that is healthy and quick to prepare. Invest in some basic cookbooks & learn how to cook from scratch — convenience food (ready meals) is an expensive option

Be healthy all year round........

Use the seasons for the best tasting and best value produce - in winter you'll pay more for summer produce, so try leeks, parsnips, broccoli and winter vegetables instead of asparagus and other summer vegetables. However, in summer make the most of summer fruits such as strawberries, raspberries and blueberries while they last!

Frozen vegetables and fruit........

These are an alternative to fresh, and due to long transportation or storage periods of some ‘fresh’ produce on offer in the supermarkets, frozen can be just as nutritious and very often they are cheaper. They are also very convenient to keep in the freezer for when you have little time for preparing fresh vegetables.

North Staffs Users Group

We are
- A democratic organisation
- Independent
- A registered charity
- Open to past and present users of mental health services

We stand for
- Active participation by users in improving local mental health services
- Working in Partnership with Health and Social Care to bring about change

We offer
- Free membership
- Information
- Support
- Training
- Opportunities to participate and volunteer
- Mutual respect and Equality of Opportunity

We can be contacted at:

NSUG, FREEPOST ST 1947, Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5BR

Phone: 01782 683043
The Voice is distributed free of charge to all NSUG members. If you have enjoyed reading this copy and would like to receive a regular electronic copy please complete the form below. Similarly if you no longer wish to receive The Voice or would prefer to reduce your carbon footprint by having an electronic copy instead of a paper copy please let us know.

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Return completed forms to: NSUG, Freepost ST1947, Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 5BR

Please don’t throw this edition of the Voice away.

Pass it on to someone and/or RECYLE IT
Thanks to all contributors

This issue has been devised, produced, printed and published by members of the NSUG and written by its members and supporters. Thanks to all contributors and members of the Editorial Board.

All photographs (unless otherwise stated) taken by Frank Squire.

Articles and contributions wanted!

The Voice welcomes contributions on any relevant topic. You may wish to express a view about mental health services, or send in an article or cartoon. If so, send them to NSUG, FREEPOST ST 1947, The Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. ST1 5BR. If you would like to know more contact us on 01782 683043.

The Voice is published by the North Staffs Users Group. The views expressed by contributors to this issue of the Voice do not necessarily reflect the policies of NSUG or the views of the current Board of Trustees. We have gone to considerable lengths to check the accuracy of contributions and, as far as we know, details are correct at the time of going to press.

Whilst every effort has been made to check the content of websites mentioned in this publication, no responsibility can or will be taken by North Staffs Users Group for their content or that of any external links from them.

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The Voice At The Back...

Have you checked out our website
www.nsug.co.uk.
As well as telling you more about our work and volunteering opportunities we offer, there are links to other websites that you may find useful.

Helplines

Please check with your network provider the cost of making a call from your mobile.

Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline—0808 800 2234
(Calls are free)
Mon—Fri 19:00—02:00, Sat—Sun 14:00—02:00
www.staffordshirehelpline.co.uk

Samaritans—08457 90 90 90 (local rate call)
24 hours—listening service
www.samaritans.co.uk

Hearing Voices Network—0845 122 8642 (local rate call)
Mon—Fri 10:00 to 16:00
www.hearing-voices.org

Anxiety Alliance—01926 851608 (national rate call)
Daily 10:00 to 16:00
www.anxietyalliance.org.uk