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

READ MORE INSIDE....

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
A few words from Jackie......

Hello! You have not heard from me for some time as I have been away from NSUG on long-term sick leave. You see on May 6th 2013 my whole world was turned upside down as I had a stroke.

Through lots of hard work and determination I have regained my speech and the movement in my arm and leg and am slowly reclaiming other lost skills like writing, cooking, computer skills and being able to put my make-up on again! The extreme fatigue I used to feel is now getting better too.

But these are all the easy things; the main battle I have faced on my road to recovery is combating the hidden things...the things that all of you will know all about - managing to keep my positive attitude during very difficult circumstances and going out in public when all I want to do is hide away at home.

Getting ill was probably the worst thing that has ever happened to me but I am determined to do something positive with the experience and not let it beat me!
My time at NSUG as a member of staff has been great and I have met with some very lovely people, but sadly it has now come to an end.

I would like to wish you all well on your individual journeys – may the sun shine for you often and when it rains, remember to look for the rainbows.

Jackie.......... 

NSUG would like to wish Jackie well on the next stage of her recovery journey and thank you for your time at NSUG and her commitment to ensuring that your voice was heard.

CHRISTMAS 2013

We visit the Activity Group at the Sutherland Centre quite often. Coming up to Christmas they were planning their Christmas party. Some of the Group were going to bake mince pies and cakes and some were doing sandwiches and tasty goodies. We sat there with our mouths watering and feeling hungry at what they were planning. Everyone was getting involved, which was good to see. We were pleased to be invited to the party.

On the day of the party all the planning had come together and we were made very welcome. We pulled Christmas crackers and wore Christmas hats and enjoyed lovely food which they had cooked themselves. It was a feast to be had. Music played in the background and they were all enjoying themselves together. Christmas had arrived at the Sutherland Centre which was good to see. We came away watered and fed and feeling good at what the group had done themselves. Well done.  

NSUG Volunteer.

On the topic of Christmas...
I realise that thoughts are turning towards Spring and the warmer weather, but I’d like you to let me know of any places that opened on Christmas Day.
Contd/....... 

The reason being, that when I was talking to people on my return in January, I realised that many people had nowhere to go on Christmas Day itself. So, what I’d like to do is compile a list of places that are open and place that list in the edition of The Voice that goes out prior to December. I’m thinking not only of mental health focused places, such as Hillcrest, but other places, such as Swann Bank Church in Burslem. If you know of any places please email emma@nsug.co.uk or ‘phone 01782 683043.

Christmas Party 'Thank You' Event 2013

Hi everyone – I would like to say how much I enjoyed the Christmas Party 'Thank You' Event on 13th December 2013.

It was quite well attended and everybody had a good time. There were plenty of party games going on and I took part in every one. I was lucky enough to win a couple of prizes. Our team won the '12 days of Christmas' game and I also won one of the raffle draws in which I won a cute and cuddly teddy bear. Unfortunately our team were only one point behind the winning team for the 'Guessing the Christmas Songs' game – we were pipped at the post by Phil Leese and his team. Many thanks to Shaun Stanley for organising the excellent party games.

I also enjoyed tucking into the magnificent and varied buffet – especially the mince pies and the fruit punch!

Also everybody was eager to sign a 'Thank You' book for Phil Leese, which was for all his dedication and hard work as a volunteer over the years for NSUG – I will miss you Phil.

Finally I would like to say Thank You to all the staff and volunteers for making the Christmas Party 'Thank You' Event 2013 such a brilliant event and for an enjoyable year, last year at NSUG!

Sue Johnson, NSUG Member & Volunteer
Mental health care: where did all it go so wrong?

You may be aware that Nathan Filer, the author of ‘The Shock of the Fall’, is a trained psychiatric nurse. In an article in The Guardian on Saturday 25th January 2014, he wrote about his experiences of mental health care as it was when he worked in a Bristol Hospital between 2004-2007, and the care his friend received on the same ward in 2011.

Although the whole of the article is worth reading if you have access to the internet (www.theguardian.com) we thought that there are pertinent points that are worth a mention:-

There is much to be said for the simple provision of respite – a safe, warm place to be away from the stresses of life. [Between 2004-2007]... medication; social work support to help people deal with defaulted bills, missed rent and other such complications that so often accompany a serious mental breakdown; and an occupational therapy programme, including walking groups and art groups.

[My friend’s] breakdown in 2011... could have been prevented. His health had been deteriorating for months... I would make daily phone calls to his community psychiatric team, and also to a specialist service in Bristol called the Crisis team, or maybe it's the Home Intervention Team – there is a heck of lot of rebranding in this sector of the NHS. This service essentially holds the keys to all of the inpatient wards, meaning that requests for informal admissions must go through them. They have an incredibly difficult job, balancing risk with the availability of beds.

[Between 2007 and 2011] the threshold for inpatient admission had been rising steadily higher. Beds had started closing down, meaning patients now needed to be more unwell to get offered
Contd/…

one, and at the other end of the process were being discharged sooner – before meaningful recovery.

For all that…I had faith it could offer respite. When I was first nursing there was still such as thing as a planned admission; a structured stay in hospital to prevent a crisis. That's unimaginable now….it took an attempt on his own life before [my friend] was finally offered a bed.

[The ward] was about to shut down. [My friend] had arrived just weeks before a long-planned closure. "Job losses were imminent," he told me. "The tension was palpable."

That was my impression too... These were good nurses, excellent professionals. Only now they were exhausted, and worried about their futures. These are difficult times to be a nurse and worse still to be a patient. After a few days [my friend] was transferred to the adjacent ward... as part of the staggered closure of beds. I hoped that here he would find a more stable environment – only this ward was slated for closure too.

It's a trend that continues in earnest... across the UK. Since 2011 there has been a further 9% reduction in mental health beds... – that's more than 1,700 closures. Ten years ago there were 32,000 mental health beds in England and Wales, that has now fallen by almost half. In other news: the population continues to rise...

This week the government unveiled its "mental health strategy", including new rights for patients to choose the consultant who will oversee their care. This at a time when bed shortages are so critical that there are now frequent cases of unwell people being sent hundreds of miles from their homes. We're nowhere near being able to choose our doctor; we're lucky if we get to pick the city we're treated in.

Up and down the country care-givers are faced with redeployment or enforced reapplications for their own jobs. This uncertainty and the stress it causes affects our ability to offer quality care.
"Back in the day," [my friend] told me, "staff and patients would sit together in the common room playing cards and chewing the fat.

In this place there was a clear delineation, most attempts to chat to my care-givers were met with an efficient brush-off."

When I first qualified we ran shifts on greater numbers; more nurses and more care assistants. With enough feet on the ground we can manage security, medication, ward rounds, mental health tribunals, multi-disciplinary team meetings, the ever-increasing paperwork – and still have time to sit and talk meaningfully with the people who use our services. Or better yet, walk and talk.

For patients who are sectioned the low staffing levels are presenting another problem, which I believe amounts to an institutional neglect. This is a bit technical, but put briefly: if a detained patient requires leave from a ward, even for a very brief period, this must be written up in advance by their consultant psychiatrist. It’s called "section 17 leave". Often a person won't be well enough to go out alone so their section 17 might prescribe: half an hour ground leave per shift, with nursing escort. There are sheets of paper stating this in hundreds of wards all over the country. The problem is that often – worryingly often – there aren't the staff available to offer that escort. I consider this scandalous.

The Mental Health Act is about rights, not merely restrictions. It is my opinion that if a person is written up for escorted leave then it is the NHS trust's duty to ensure this can be facilitated. For an unwell person to have a piece of paper explaining that they are allowed some time out of the maelstrom only to be told it is not practically possibly, but maybe tomorrow – that's torture.

What about the continued bed closures? There were 18 years between my friend's two stints in hospital. In another 18 years, one
way or another, things will look very different. Quite how is in the hands of those who control the purse strings. What I am convinced of, however, is that right now we are moving in entirely the wrong direction. We are failing the most vulnerable of our society

*Taken from Guardian website*

What do you think? Have some of the issues mentioned here affected you? If so, please let us know.

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**Novel about someone suffering from schizophrenia wins a major literary prize? No way! ..........**

In 2013 Nathan Filer’s novel, “The Shock of the Fall”, was announced as the winner of the Costa Book Awards. Nothing unusual about that, you might think, until you’re told that Filer, as well as being a performance poet, is also a registered mental health nurse, and that the novel is about a young man’s drift into mental illness, specifically schizophrenia. I may be wrong, but I can’t think of any other novel of recent years which shared similar subject matter winning anything, never mind a major literary award.

The novel is written from the perspective of Matthew Homes, a 19 year-old man trying to come to terms with the death of his brother, Simon, who suffered from Down’s Syndrome. His brother’s death took place during a family holiday when Matthew was only 9, and from then on it seems that he blames himself for what happened.
The only thing is Matthew’s grief remains bottled up. He is unable to articulate how he feels about the loss of his brother, and unlike his mother and father who openly weep, he can only feel “numb.” So instead, for Matthew, there is a gradual drift into mental illness.

It is clear from this that Filer views mental illness as rooted in some kind of emotional trauma. Indeed, there seems to be a clear meaning in Matthew’s “madness” when it begins to take shape. The voice he hears is that of his dead brother, and he also has hallucinations which make it appear as if his brother is actually there, alive, well and talking to him.

This is a far cry from the conclusion of the psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers, who maintained that many of the symptoms of mental illness were “un-understandable.” In Matthew’s case, however, there seems to be a clear causal link between the death of his brother and the nature of his symptoms. Indeed, perhaps this is all a little too neat, and when we learn that Matthew has smoked strong cannabis and also that he had a great uncle who was institutionalised, it does seem as if Filer is ticking off things from a list on the causes of schizophrenia.

Having said that, the novel is quite authentic when depicting life on a psychiatric ward. The boredom and anxiety of being on an acute ward are brought vividly to life when Matthew describes his daily routine, saying at one point that “there is literally nothing to do.”

Also, the novel dispels many of the stereotypes which surround schizophrenia. Matthew is both gentle and sensitive, not at all like the violent and unpredictable image most often portrayed in the media and film. More than anything, by creating a fully rounded character, whose voice is at turns sad, funny, moving and poetic, Filer humanises schizophrenic illness. In the end, it is as much about grief and loss as it is about being mentally ill, and as Matthew states in some of the final words of the novel, “this story has never been a keepsake – it’s finding a way to let go.”

Thank you to David Sweetser, NSUG member
Shaun Stanley, Volunteer Coordinator......

“We are excited to offer a range of training events for our members”

‘Assertiveness and Decision Making’ This course is accredited and takes five half day sessions to complete. Starting date 29th April 2014 at Newcastle Library.

‘Communication and Confidence Building’ starting date TBA takes four half day sessions to complete at The Dudson Centre.

‘Presentation Skills’ course which will help when you speak to people on behalf of NSUG or in your other roles. Starting 3rd June 2014. Three half-day sessions to complete, at Newcastle Library.

If you are interested in any of these courses or would like to know more please contact Shaun on Tel: 01782 683043 or email volunteer.coordinator@nsug.co.uk
Emma Ford
Outreach Worker for Stoke on Trent

This is my first Voice edition since I have been back off maternity leave. I am still getting around to visiting some groups, although there are plenty that I have visited and so am hearing what you think about services. Two things I am especially keen to hear about are:

What you think of any personality disorder groups that meet – are there any? Do they talk about the things you want to talk about?

Whether you prefer the traditional drop-in, such as those held at The Bethel, or places such as the Observatory and the American. The only reason that I ask is that since I’ve been back it’s struck me how very different these sorts of places are and I just wanted to know what you think and why you prefer one to the other – or what the good and not so good points of both are.

If you have a view on either of these please get in touch with me by emailing emma@nsug.co.uk, phoning 01782 683043, or writing to me at our Dudson Centre office.

On a slightly different note, NSUG is all about you speaking out so that we can use your voice to improve health services. This includes taking part in The Voice newsletter. So, if you have anything to say about anything that relates to mental health services, be it a book review or a current affairs news story, or a comment on the local services you receive; please get in touch with us. We are especially looking for people to write about the things that they do in their local area so that we can place this in the Local Voice.
Hilda Johnson  
Service Provider  
Development Worker  

Update from resource centres.

Sue Mellor who was the Manager for the City team retired on 14th February and Combined Healthcare are not filling this vacancy as they have decided they will only have two Team Leaders now instead of three. Jude Rhead who is the Newcastle team leader and is based at Lymebrook has taken over the management of the Sutherland Centre and Nigel Jones who is the Staffordshire Moorlands team leader and is based at the Ashcombe Centre has taken over the management of The Greenfields Centre. NSUG will be meeting with Jude and Nigel over the next few weeks to discuss how this will work and any impact this might have at the centres in terms of services. NSUG has been assured that service users won’t see any changes in the services delivered at the centres with the reduction in Managers. If you receive services at the Resource centres NSUG would like feedback from you good or bad on those services to feed back at the meetings. Contact us either by phone, email or use our Have your Say forms.

The next Members Forum will be at
Greenfields on Thursday 10th April 1.30pm-3pm

Phil Reece will be coming along from Combined Healthcare to talk about Access to services.  
Please come along to this if you can it will be your opportunity to ask questions and give your comments on the Access service.
The Maccas Project:
Raising Awareness of Mental Health Issues Among Young Men

Tom McCauley, or Maccas as he was widely known, was a typical young man. He came from a loving and supportive family and was popular amongst his friends. In 2011 Tom was diagnosed with psychosis, a serious type of mental illness where symptoms can include strange and often unpleasant thoughts and experiences. Tom found escape in music and the creative arts but each day continued to be a battle.

In August 2012, aged 19, Tom committed suicide.

In the light of this sudden heartbreak, Tom’s family and friends began fundraising for North Staffs Mind Younger Mind in the hope that further tragedies like this could be prevented in the future. Out of this The Maccas Project set up in Tom’s name was born.

The Maccas Project is aimed specifically at young men in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire who are aged between 16-25, because mental health issues, and psychosis in particular, often first emerge in men in late adolescence.

The project aims to provide a base for young men to seek information and advice about their mental health. Staff members and trained volunteers will be going into schools and colleges across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire to give talks and provide guidance and support. The project will initially be mobile and also pop up in places frequented by young men, such as gyms, sports and social clubs.

For more information about The Maccas Project please contact Caroline Scol or Chris Abela at North Staffs Mind on 01782 262100, or see Facebook (TheMaccasProject) and Twitter @maccasproject.
Emergency support for people in mental health crisis is set to improve as part of an agreement between police, mental health trusts and paramedics. The agreement – called the Crisis Care Concordat – has been signed by more than 20 national organisations, including NHS England, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Local areas will now sign their own regional and local agreements to commit to working together across services to improve care.

The Crisis Care Concordat challenges local areas to make sure that:

- Health-based places of safety and beds are available 24/7 in case someone experiences a mental health crisis
- Police custody should not be used because mental health services are not available and police vehicles should also not be used to transfer patients. We want to see the number of occasions police cells are used as a place of safety for people in mental health crisis halved compared 2011/12
- Timescales are put in place so police responding to mental health crisis know how long they have to wait for a response from health and social care workers. This will make sure patients get suitable care as soon as possible
- People in crisis should expect that services will share essential ‘need to know’ information about them so they can receive the best care possible. This may include any history of physical violence, self-harm or drink or drug history
- Figures suggest some black and minority ethnic groups are detained more frequently under the Mental Health Act. Where this is the case, it must be addressed by local services working with local communities so that the standards set out in the Concordat are met
- A 24-hour helpline should be available for people with mental health problems and the crisis resolution team should be accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Contd/……

A recent independent inquiry by Mind highlighted not only wide variation in crisis care services across the country, but also that in some areas, round-the-clock provisions are inadequate. This prompted the Department of Health to review the way the emergency services and organisations like social services work together. MIND will continue to help local areas meet the commitments of the Concordat with a series of regional workshops. They will also work with the signatories to hold an annual summit to review progress.

It is vital that the principles of the Concordat are taken up in all localities in England. To support take-up, the Department of Health will work in partnership with the Home Office and Mind to promote and support local responses. The Government expects each locality to have agreed a Mental Health Crisis Declaration by December 2014.


**Community Mental Health Survey Questionnaires.**

The Care Quality Commission have sent out Community Mental Health Survey questionnaires to 850 people who have used Combined Healthcare community services in the last 3 months of 2013.

If you receive one please fill it in as it is important to give your feedback on the services you have received. The results of the survey will be used by the Care Quality Commission to monitor whether Combined Healthcare are delivering a good service or not to service users in the community so please take the time to fill it in and send back to them.
Smarter Advice : Stronger Communities

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) - Capita Assessment Centre

Capita (the company carrying out the assessments) has obtained planning permission to use the ground floor offices at Winton House in Stoke Road (opposite Signal Radio) as a PIP assessment centre. We have seen the plans and are concerned about the lack of suitable parking near to the centre and the distances that PIP claimants will need to walk from the disabled entrance to the main office door. The centre is not yet in use as they need to refurbish the offices, so Capita is still carrying out home visits to do assessments; if anyone is asked to attend the assessment centre and has problems with mobility you should contact Capita to request a home visit.

PIP Complaints
Complaints about the way in which Capita is handling PIP applications can be sent to:-
Telephone: 0808 1788 114 (England and Wales)
Textphone: 0808 1787 177
Email: complaints@capita-pip.co.uk
By post: Capita PIP, PO Box 307, Darlington, DL98 1AB

Bedroom Tax Loophole
The bedroom tax loophole closed on 3rd March 2014. However tenants who were protected by the loophole can still claim a
refund for the shortfall in their Housing Benefit for the period 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2013 to 2\textsuperscript{nd} March 2014, although they will be subject to the under-occupation deductions (bedroom tax) on their Housing Benefit from 3\textsuperscript{rd} March. The loophole protected the following tenants:

Social housing tenants who had their Housing Benefit entitlement reduced because of the bedroom tax will be entitled to a refund up to 2\textsuperscript{nd} March 2014 if:

- they have been receiving HB continuously since at least 1 January 1996,
- they have lived in the same home continuously since that date, except for any period when a fire, flood or natural catastrophe made their home uninhabitable.

**Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) Campaign**
Citizens Advice is running a national campaign throughout 2014 which is aimed at improving the ESA work capability assessment process. The CAB service is asking people to Tweet or share their ESA story on social media accounts such as Facebook using #FitforWork. These stories will appear in a blog, which can be found online: [http://blogs.citizensadvice.org.uk/blog/was-it-fit-for-work-for-you](http://blogs.citizensadvice.org.uk/blog/was-it-fit-for-work-for-you)

**The NSUG Board of Trustees** will be recruiting to replace Jackie for the Newcastle and Moorlands area, so please look out for the new person in the coming months and help us to induct them into the whys and wherefores of Mental Health Services in North Staffordshire.
Members Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey, here is an overview of the results:

50 of you said it would be good if NSUG could focus on benefit changes over the next 12 months, closely followed by 88% of you saying changes/cuts to mental health services, 80% improving care in the community, 46% improving care in hospital, 44% Access to services, 40% GP care, 38% crisis care, 32% gaps in service and 20% personalisation.

94% of you said the information we provide is useful with 48% saying it is sometimes useful, 2% person saying its not useful and don't read it.

82% of you said the quality of the newsletter was excellent, 52% good, 4% said it was poor and 2% said needs improvement.

54% of you said you were interested in assertiveness and team working skills training with 50% of you interested in confidence building and 32% communication skills training.

For the involvement opportunities 90% of you say you read the Voice, 52% attend our meetings, 34% help out with the mailing and 28% of you are user reps.

100% of you would recommend NSUG to someone else with mental health needs, 36% would likely recommend, 2% unlikely and 4% extremely unlikely.
Update on the Future of North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust

In the last issue of The Voice we told you about the plans for the future of North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust (who provide services at Harplands and the Resource Centres).

We reported that the Trust is not suitable to become a standalone Foundation Trust and so was considering other options (such as being acquired (taken over) by an existing NHS Foundation Trust) so that its future would be secure.

However the situation has now slightly altered, as we heard in February that the Trust, and the areas Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), have decided to undertake a 6 month review to improve how mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services are integrated with physical health and social care services.

This means that the Trust has agreed that further work on options for the future sustainability of services will be paused for 6 months while the service review is carried out.

NSUG has been involved in some of these discussions and hopes to be able to involve you our members in future discussions.

We will update you when we know more...
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

DHPs provide further financial assistance towards housing costs for people in receipt of Housing Benefit.

**Housing costs may include:**
- A shortfall in the customer’s rent.
- Deposits and rent in advance - where the property is affordable for the tenant; and the tenant has a valid reason to move; and the rent in advance / deposit is reasonable. We may also be able to help to secure a tenancy by paying rent to directly to the landlord.
- Removal costs - to support the customer in moving to more affordable accommodation.
- Other lump sums associated with a housing need

**Extra help for under-35s:**
- To provide financial support to customers whose Local Housing Allowance is restricted to the shared room rate.

**Welfare Reform:**
- To provide support to customers affected by ‘bedroom tax’ and the benefit cap

**For more information**
In person: Visit one of our Local Centre surgeries
Telephone: 01782 212882
Email: benefitservices@stoke.gov.uk
Online: www.stoke.gov.uk
Raise Money As You Search!

Are you one of the 6.4m people that use a search engine every day? Did you know you can raise money for North Staffs User Group while you search?

http://northstaffsusergroup.easysearch.org.uk combines the results of several search engines such as Yahoo!, Bing and Ask to ensure you can always find what you're looking for. But the fantastic thing is that EVERY TIME you search, half a penny is raised for North Staffs User Group. Search just 15 times a day and you can raise around £25 a year for us.

See what people are saying about easysearch

"easysearch is a great idea and just as good as Google for the results! I've recommended it to my friends and I think this site is the best around as it does something for people. Well done!"

"What a fantastic idea! I was using Google anyway but this way I get to raise money for my good cause every time I search...brilliant! I've made easysearch my homepage!"

So the next time you need to find something online, please use

http://northstaffsusergroup.easysearch.org.uk and raise money for North Staffs User Group with every search you make.
Expert by Experience – Can you help?

I am looking to create an expert by experience register. This will be a register of our members who have lived through a mental health illness and who would be willing to talk about it to groups within the community. If you would feel comfortable in talking to a group of people about a direct experience you have been through then I would be really pleased if you would let me know. I have outlined a few topics below, but maybe you have experience on another topic. Please indicate below what you would be comfortable talking about. You will be supported in this activity and will be offered presentation skills training. Hopefully it can make a difference to others.

Please complete the table below and return to me at the Freepost address — Thank you

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Claire Jackson, North Staffs Users Group, FREEPOST ST1947, The Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, ST1 5BR.
The Mental Health Foundation has some tips on how to get the most of your visit to your GP:

- If you need to see your GP for longer, you can book a double appointment
- Say if you would like to see a male or female GP
- Write down a list of things that you want to talk about. You could include how long you’ve felt this way and how it affects your life. (One of our members did recently write a list of things they wanted to talk to their GP about. They said that they found it very useful, and that it was also useful for the GP as they got the full picture. This resulted in a blood test being taken.)
- If you want to, ask a friend or someone from your family, to go with you.
- Be honest with the GP
- Ask questions
- If you think you know what will help you, tell the GP
- Write down what was said and ask for information to take home
- If you are unhappy, you can see another GP at your practice

The Voice Editorial Board thinks that some items from this list could also apply if you’re seeing a psychiatrist, psychologist, or Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN).
‘Choose Well’ Mobile Phone App

If you are technically minded (and have the right type of ‘phone) there is a free mobile phone App that gives you information about local health services. The App contains sections on self-care, pharmacies, GP out-of-hours, GP surgeries, dental access centres and minor injuries units. It will also show where the nearest services are, opening times, if the device is GPS-enabled.

The app is available now for free download, for Android users from Google Play Store and iTunes App Store for iPhone and iPad users – search for “Health care - Choose Well”.

As a Voice Editorial Board, we tried out the App. It does cover the whole of the West Midlands, and so you do have to scroll over the screen to find the area where you live. We found this to be a little tedious. If you do use the App, please get in touch and let us know what you think of it.
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
Can you help save cost to NSUG and help the environment?

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Please don’t throw this edition of the Voice away. Pass it on to someone and/or RECYCLE IT
Thanks to all contributors

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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.

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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.

If you don’t have a computer that is linked to the internet, you could use one at a library or The American Clubhouse.

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

Access Team
For people who feel they need to be seen by a NHS mental health professional.
0300 123 0907

Echo
Provides mutual support and information for people who have experienced self harm age 18 and above. For more information:
01782 683192
info@brighter-futures.org.uk

NHS 111 Service
dial 111 for physical & mental health problems

The NSUG’s website has the details of many different organisation that can offer help and advice to people experiencing a wide range of mental health issues.

www.nsug.co.uk