We will be holding a series of Members Forums in Stoke, Newcastle and Staffordshire Moorlands asking our Members to input into NSUG’s business plan around what you think NSUG should be concentrating on over the next 5 years.

See page 3 for dates of up and coming Forums......
Do you attend the Sutherland Centre and have problems with one of the following:-

- Housing
- Debt
- Benefits
- Work
- Relationships
- Discrimination
- Tax
- Healthcare
- Education
- Fuel Costs
- Heating

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) will be delivering outreach advice at the Sutherland Centre until April 2015 under the Warm Homes, Healthy People Programme.

The advice is offered 1pm-4pm on a Thursday, and is by appointment only. If you attend the Sutherland Centre, please ask your support worker to refer you.

Please note the FREEPOST address has changed for NSUG

FREEPOST RTKL-XLKT-HJTX
North Staffs Users Group
The Dudson Centre
Hope Street
Stoke on Trent
ST1 5DD
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dates of NSUG Members Forums for 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Greenfield Centre</strong></td>
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<td>Thursday 12th February 2015</td>
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<td><strong>Sutherland Centre</strong></td>
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<td>Wednesday 18th Nov 2015</td>
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<td><strong>The Dudson Centre</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Holbrook House, Cheadle</strong></td>
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<td>(Crisis Care discussion)</td>
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<td>Wednesday 14th January at</td>
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<td><strong>BRIC, Biddulph</strong></td>
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<td>(Safe spaces network talk)</td>
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<td>Wednesday 21st January</td>
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<td><strong>Ramsey Road, Newcastle</strong></td>
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<td>(Crisis care discussion)</td>
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<td>Friday 23rd January</td>
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Dates contd/.....

**Higherland Church, Newcastle** (Stigma and Discrimination discussion)
Monday 26th January  2.00 - 3.00 pm

**Pennybank House**, (Leek Crisis care discussion)
Wednesday 4th February  1.30 - 3.00 pm

**Newcastle Library** (business plan)
Thursday 5th February  11.00 - 12.30 pm

**Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek** (business plan)
Wednesday 11th February  11.30 - 1.00 pm

NSUG staff treated the volunteers to a lovely Christmas party on Monday 8th December.

It was my first time at the annual event and I was welcomed at the door by Claire who gave me a raffle ticket. The room looked very festive with the tables decoratively displayed with crackers, candy canes and chocolates. We had a delicious meal of baked potatoes with a choice of fillings and salad followed by a selection of small cakes and there was fruit punch or tea/coffee to drink. After the meal there were activities introduced by each member of staff who had worked very hard to give us varied entertainment such as guess the Christmas film, charades, bingo and finally a quiz. Each person who won was awarded a prize and we were all given a present.

The atmosphere was very friendly and there was no pressure to join in with any activity if you didn't want to.

I would like to thank all the staff for making this a most enjoyable afternoon for us all.

*Lynn—Volunteer*
Emma Ford, Outreach Worker for Stoke

In my article this time I'm not going to concentrate on the traditional mental health services, but on the benefits to mental health that having friends can bring. This was mentioned to me by a member of social care staff, and since then I've really noticed it on two separate occasions. On both occasions it involved friends that people had made at groups 'rallying round' when a person became ill – in one case mentally and another physically. It is also something that happens between NSUG's volunteers – they are there for their friends to talk to, friends that they've made through volunteering.

So, if you are facing the New Year feeling alone and isolated why not think of visiting one of the Drop-in's, such as Bethel in Longton, or the Observatory in Hanley or American in Cobridge? Not only will you experience new services but you may also make friendships that may improve your mental health.

Oh, and don't forget to let me know what you think of the places you go to!

Emma

Hilda Johnson
Service Provider Development Worker,

NSUG have been working with Clinical Psychologists at Combined Health Care and they would like service users to be involved in helping to develop the Psychosis pathway. If you are a current or past user of the service and would be interested in being involved with this please contact Hilda at Harplands on 01782 441631 and we can arrange for you to meet with the Psychologists to discuss this.

Hilda
A Southern Clubhouse!

As some of you may know Brighter Futures are in the process of putting together a funding bid to the BIG Lottery Reaching Communities Fund so that they can open a Clubhouse in the Longton area. The first meeting that NSUG were involved in was a consultation event held at the Bethel Church in Longton in August. Some of our members didn’t feel that they were consulted enough at this event, so we passed on their questions to Brighter Futures (some of their questions are included in the answers below). Since this time two NSUG Volunteers, together with either Hilda or Emma, have attended a Project Management Group that has been set up to look at the wording of the actual bid. Although there is no set date by which the bid needs to be in, Brighter Futures have said that they want to submit it as soon as possible. We will keep you posted!

I’ve heard many rumours The Sutherland Centre is closing, are you moving in there?

In recent years there have been a number of occasions when the closure of various parts of the North Staffs Combined Healthcare (NSCHT) estate has been proposed. In some cases, like the Bennett Centre, this has actually happened. At the moment we are not aware of any plans to close the Sutherland Centre.
At various meetings over the last few years, the idea of Brighter Futures entering into some form of lease arrangement with NSCHT for the Sutherland Centre has been discussed, but no decision for that to happen has ever been taken.
What is the service for outpatients or will it have beds?
This is not a requirement and it could be that a new development in the South of the City does not include any accommodation...However depending upon the location chosen for the South of the City development, there might be accommodation opportunities similar to what we have elsewhere.

What happened to the plan to buy the Dunrobin Pub?
At the time that the Dunrobin was being marketed for sale, there was no money available to purchase the building.

Would this Clubhouse be in conjunction with Combined?
Brighter Futures will appoint the staff to run the service although, like at the Observatory, some elements of the service could well be run in partnership with NSCHT (and others)

Will you consult service users and ask them which building they would like to use?
Consultation with current and future Clubhouse Members and customers of the wider Brighter Futures services is extremely important to us in delivering this new service. We would want to ensure that we also listen to people who use other services in the City as well, such as Changes, Mind, and NSUG.

This is not a comprehensive list of the questions that were asked or answers that were given. If you would like a copy of the full list contact Emma on 01782 683043 or emma@nsug.co.uk.
Road Runners

The ‘Road Runners’ are a group of people, who use mental health services in Stoke, and who go for a day out once a month.

It all started in 2013 when someone at the Phoenix Group in Meir said they missed the day out that the day centres could not do owing, to the cutbacks, with NHS Combined Healthcare Community day Services. So 9 of us sat around a table and talked. First idea was a mini bus, but we needed 7 more people, so I asked around at the Bethel who’d like to come and got 10 more!

One Thursday, phone book in one hand, phone in other, I rang all bus companies in Stoke (lucky me I have free calls!) I found one that was the cheapest, and in the first trip to Llandudno 29 went. That was the start of it. With the same bus and driver, we now go somewhere every month. So far we’ve been to Leeds, York, Bury Market, Llandudno again, Blackpool, and Stratford-upon-Avon.

In the main 4 of us organise the trips and one person makes the food. (we sell baps and drinks on the bus, as motorway prices are so high). We charge £10 per person, for each trip. Anyone who wants to come with us would be quite welcome, just get in touch with Emma at NSUG (01782 683043) and she will pass your details onto us.

Everyone looks forward to the trips, enjoying themselves and lifting their spirits and morale.

Brenda Jones and The Road Runners.

A Big Thank You

Everyone at the Bethel Longton wish the Local Voice to express a big thank you to Barbara and Brenda for organising all their trips and other events. Thanks Ladies.
Shaun Stanley, Volunteer Coordinator..........  

‘Root ‘n’ Fruit’ allotment

Shaun had a great time at the allotment meeting Stoke City striker Victor Moses. Shaun helped Ann from Steelite and Alan from Prince’s Trust to dig over the new fruit bed and build some raised beds.

‘Root ‘n’ Fruit’ is a community allotment project that links with schools, businesses, charities and the community, to help people learn about, grow, cook and eat fruit & veg. Root ‘n’ Fruit welcomes involvement from local people; supports wellbeing; and promotes healthy eating.

‘Root ‘n’ Fruit’ is looking for volunteers to help maintain the allotment plot, which is located at Trubshawe Cross Allotments, Mott Place, Middleport, S-O-T, ST6 3RH.

If you have a few minutes to spare, as and when it suits you, to help out with ‘Root ‘n’ Fruit’ please contact Burslem Regeneration Trust on Facebook, or email us at:-

info@burslemregen.co.uk

Or arrange to visit with Shaun next time he goes Tel: 01782 683043
Carol Burt - Chief Executive Officer

Who am I? I am a highly experienced health & social care professional with executive-level expertise. I have a driving commitment to tackle health inequalities taking account of the diverse needs of the community, where the individual is key and at the heart of service design, delivery and evaluation. Mirrored with a strong belief that services should be effective, efficient and of a high quality standard and more importantly accessible for all members or groups of the local community.

What can I bring to NSUG?
I am dual trained, having qualifications in both Health (Registered General Nurse part 1 RGN) and Social Care (Diploma in Social Work DipSW) supported with a Post Graduate Certificate in the Management of Public Service Partnerships. I also possess 2:1 Bachelor of Arts Degree in Applied Social Studies. With over 20 years hands-on experience of working within the field of Mental Health, General Health, Criminal Justice, & Substance Misuse Services. Hence, a dedicated ethos, culture and impetus in Health & Social Care working to a coproduction model and working better together.

I currently hold several Board Director Positions, for Healthwatch Birmingham the consumer champion for the community. SCIPE CIC a community engagement organisation covering Staffordshire, enabling the local community to be engaged in meaningful activities of their choice. Real Deal CIC Birmingham working with vulnerable groups to empower and support each individual to design shape and eventually deliver a personal leadership programme.

What brings me back to my roots in Stoke?
My strong values base and a recognition that I am in a stage in my life where I can give something back to my local community and share some of my skills, expertise and knowledge. More importantly learn something from individuals who have encountered mental health issues and fundamentally look at how North Staff Users Group can assist in making a difference to individual experiences of how services are delivered, commissioned and how society addresses mental ill health.
NSUG Trustees:

John Gibson (Chair)

I have been a member of NSUG since 1997, serving previously as Treasurer. I'm a user of local mental health services and am passionate about user engagement and empowerment. I bring extensive experience of project management, fundraising and tackling stigma and discrimination. If anyone would like to contact me my mobile number is 07587 550908.

Tasha Chinn

I am 40 and have two children aged 10 and 4. I've had bipolar since I was 21 and have proudly been a member of NSUG from around 1997. I have done voluntary work with NSUG and with Bipolar UK over the years - ward repping, training, fundraising and running a self help group. I currently work part-time in credit control in a firm in Stafford which exports mostly to Europe, which I find enjoyable, but I have worked in advice in the past, both at Stoke CAB and at Trading Standards.

I believe in the importance of self-management of mental health conditions and believe that the person with the illness is the expert on their own condition, so I am keen to see more mental health staff working in close partnership with clients.

The big challenge at the moment in mental health is getting services funded adequately; I would also like to work towards bringing back some of the resource centre beds locally.

Alison Trigg

I have worked in the private sector for 12 years and also in the public sector for 12 years. During October 2011 I was approved as a Business Mentor for the Prince’s Trust assisting new companies in the area. I have also experienced my own mental health issues, so I fully understand the issues faced by mental health sufferers.
NSUG members have a history of activism, so here are seven ways to influence and make perceptions change:

**Get to know your MP** Joan Walley (Stoke North), Tristram Hunt (Stoke Central), Robert Flello (Stoke South), Paul Farrelly (Newcastle) and Karen Bradley (Moorlands). Find out what interests them and what they care about? For example Karen Bradley is the Minister for ‘anti’- modern slavery and we know that people with mental illness can sometimes be exploited.

**Parliamentary Questions** – Contact an MP or a Lord to raise a question, especially one who has an interest in mental health.

**E-petitions** – You can create a petition online about anything but you will need 100,000 signatures to ensure it will be eligible for debate in the House of Commons. **Parliamentary Debates** – Allow MP’s and members of the House of Lords to raise constituency issues and get a response from the Government.

**Select Committees** – Highly influential, set up to scrutinise specific areas of work, individuals can submit evidence to inquiries. **Cross Party Groups** – MP’s and House of Lords, not involved in decision-making.

**Early Day Motions** – Allows MP’s to show their opinion on a particular subject and can be used to draw attention to an issue.

**Public Bill Committees** – Appointed for each Public Bill that goes through Parliament, take evidence from experts outside Parliament, members of the committee can ask for changes to the Bill.

**Petitions** – Where individuals and groups can appeal to Parliament through their MP.

Check out [www.change.org](http://www.change.org) or [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk). Search for ministers and senior government officials [www.gov.uk/government/people](http://www.gov.uk/government/people). Your MP: walleyj@parliament.uk tristram.hunt.mp@parliament.uk flellor@parliament.uk paul.farrelly.mp@parliament.uk and karen.bradley.mp@parliament.uk
A Reader Writes......

Some of you may not be aware, as I wasn't, until I read "Cracked - Why psychiatry is Doing More Harm than Good" by James Davies, that in 2013 there were more categories added to what is termed mental disorder. This was because of changes made to the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) which is the manual used by psychiatrists to diagnose what they see as mental disorders. This means that more people, including children, are increasingly being diagnosed as needing treatment for what may be normal responses to difficult life situations, including bereavement.

I am concerned that these normal reactions to life are being 'medicalised' in this way and about the use of psychiatric drugs to enable us to deal with these problems. I have found in my own life, after being a reluctant service user for twenty years and being advised that drug treatment was the way ahead that this has had adverse effects on my life. I am now drug free and have been helped by psychotherapy that aims at preventing relapse and by taking a different approach to life.

I think that it is only by us, the service users, becoming involved that changes will come about in psychiatry, and the way forward towards a more compassionate and less ‘medicalised’ approach to our distress.

If you are interested in this I would be very pleased to hear from you through the NSUG magazine and will do my best to reply.

Beverely, NSUG Volunteer
This year’s AGM took place on 16th October at the Dudson Centre. The NSUG’s Chair, John Gibson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced NSUG as a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

After the apologies for absence, approval of the minutes and the presentation and adoption of accounts, the staff reported on the year 1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014.

Carol Burt, NSUG’s new Chief Executive, commented that it was a pleasure to join the organisation, and had already had good success with networking with Commissioners and Combined Healthcare etc. Carol also said that NSUG as an organisation has a good 20 year track record of engaging service users with mental health issues.

The Independent Assessors and Bankers were then appointed, and finally John Gibson gave his Chair’s Report. John thanked staff, volunteers and Trustees for all of their hard work, and also Shaun Stanley and Hilda Johnson for taking on extra hours and extra responsibility when 2 staff members were absent. Following this, John wished former member of staff Jackie Galletley all the best, and thanked Dave Conlon (former Chair) and Lorien Barber (former Director).

During the AGM a Members Survey was given out and then everyone who completed it was entered in a draw for £50 INTU Shopping Centre voucher which was won by one of our new volunteers.

Finally, as this AGM was also a celebration of NSUG’s 20th Anniversary, a cake was cut to mark the occasion.
John Gibson and David Conlon cutting the cake

Carol Burt, Chief Executive
The Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline is for anyone who is concerned about their mental health or the mental health of someone they know. We support people who are over 18 and live in Staffordshire. The service is **FREE** to call from landlines and mobile phones (all major networks) and is completely confidential.

As well as the telephone service on **0808 800 2234**, we also have other ways to get in touch:

- **Text:** **07860 022821**
- Instant messaging service: [www.brighter-futures.org.uk](http://www.brighter-futures.org.uk)
- Email: **staffordshire.helpline@brighter-futures.org.uk**
- Ring out service (subject to professional referral)

The helpline is open when many other services are closed:

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Weekdays 7pm - 2am
Weekends 2pm - 2am
Every day of the year
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The Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline is a Brighter Futures service. For more information about the range of services we offer, visit - [www.brighter-futures.org.uk](http://www.brighter-futures.org.uk)
Now that Christmas is over and we start a new year it is all too easy to let the grey days get us down. At this time of year I remind myself that the shortest day has now passed so every day will now begin to be a little longer and the dark mornings and evenings will slowly get shorter. I also look out for signs of spring – snowdrops starting to appear and buds on trees.

I have arranged some Forums for Newcastle and Staffordshire Moorlands, where Ron Daley from Staffordshire County Council will be talking about crisis care in mental health – please see the article in this Voice and come along.

We are also busy planning Members Forums across all areas as we ask you to get involved in the future of NSUG – you as our members are at the heart of guiding us where you want us to go. We have a five year business plan to write and we want you to be involved at the beginning, so we have Forums planned for February. These will then feed into the plan which will be completed for the end of the financial year.

So please go along to a Forum near you and make your voice heard!
- see all of the Forum dates on page 3 -
Volunteering for NSUG

I'm Neil and I have been volunteering for NSUG since July 2013 and until recently have exclusively worked with Hilda Johnson at the Harplands Hospital, where I've attended virtually every Tuesday for a year.

I enjoy my visits to the wards and try to pick-up on any comments made by the patients regarding their views on the in-patient care they receive from Combined Healthcare. Some patients are not in the Harplands voluntarily and I soon learned how to instinctively address different people with different kinds of approaches or maybe, to spot when they prefer to be left alone. I feel it important to try to show some empathy and to relate any issues back to Hilda, via the issues sheets we complete at the end of our visits.

I think NSUG is a good place to volunteer, being a particularly meaningful and worthwhile cause for which to work. I have comparisons, since I have volunteered elsewhere. I was volunteering for a community drug/alcohol service, where if I was not careful I would find myself working there 37.5 hours a week, due to chronic lack of staff. Then I volunteered for another, different, community drug/alcohol service charity, where I volunteered a day per week for seven months and was never given any tasks to complete, except making tea. At both establishments there was such a high turnover of staff I was often not sure who I was supposed to be working for and it was always difficult to get any expenses refunded, which can be important when hard-up oneself. At NSUG I don't get all that kind of hassle and there's Volunteer Coordinator, Shaun, if I need any help.

A few fellow NSUG Tuesday volunteers have passed through the Harplands Hospital along their way elsewhere during my year there, although Dot and Carole remain there religiously and others bow in
and out, depending upon how well or unwell they feel themselves and a couple of other volunteers attend wherever possible, depending upon other commitments. Dave and Andrew are also regulars and I gather we have a couple of new volunteers starting soon. I enjoy working with the other volunteers, who are a bit of an eclectic bunch although I’ve found I get along with all of them.

There have been, on occasion, incidents which are not funny, yet which I also can’t help sometimes raising a smile. For example, on one occasion whilst the door to leave a ward was just being unlocked for me, I was vaguely aware of a gentleman slowly and gingerly shuffling along with a Zimmer-frame about twenty yards further along the corridor, yet the very moment the door opened, he suddenly sprinted out like Usain Bolt and it took several of the nurses to catch him!

In recent weeks I have already been volunteering with some community based projects covered by our Outreach Workers, Emma Ford and Carole Stone, such as The Observatory, Hillcrest, The Sutherland Centre, Greenfields and Bethel Church Hall and, amongst other groups. I want to learn more about other things NSUG is involved with. I am looking forward to soon visiting groups at Stoke Baptist Church, Hanley Library and Echo. I didn’t realise how many there were! It’s interesting to see the wide variety of different kinds of groups available, whether it is just a meet for a coffee and a chat, an art or craft group, through to more serious things, like Echo self harming organisation.

I have enjoyed my time volunteering for NSUG and hope to continue contributing something in the future. I would advise people who are thinking about volunteering it to apply to try it, even if on an occasional basis.

Neil, NSUG Volunteer
As a member of NSUG your opinions are valued and we would like you to feed into the Five Year Business Plan.

The Five Year Business Plan will lay out the direction NSUG should take 2015 - 2020. The main way we will be asking for your thoughts and ideas is through the Members Forums we will be holding in Newcastle, Stoke-on-Trent and the Moorlands. The questions we will be asking at these Forums are below, so if you would like to comment, but can't attend a Forum, please answer these questions and either email your answers to: mainoffice@nsug.co.uk or post them to FREEPOST RTKL-XLKT-HJTX, NSUG, Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5DD (no stamp needed).

1. What do you think should be our values?
2. What do you want NSUG to look like in five years time?
3. What do you think we should prioritise to get there?
4. How should we go about attracting new members?
5. How should we engage with and motivate, service users and members to become involved in campaigning and the work of NSUG?
6. How do you suggest we take forward some of these ideas?

The Members Forums will take place:

Sutherland Centre Wednesday 14th January 2015, 12noon-1.30pm
Newcastle Library - Thursday 5th February, 11am-12.30pm
Audrey Dudson Room, Dudson Centre, Monday 9th February 2.30pm-4pm
Greenfields - Thursday 12th February 2015 1.30-3pm
Library Facilities ........

A lot of libraries across Staffordshire have coffee mornings, knit and natter groups, family history groups, IT support, reading groups and a whole range of activities. If you are looking for something to do during the day, which is free or very low cost, it may be worthwhile popping in to your local library to see what they have to offer. Below are details for some Knit and Natter groups and coffee mornings:

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<td>Newcastle</td>
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NSUG TRUSTEES WANTED

As NSUG is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Trustees are no longer personally liable

NSUG is a user-led organisation and as such values the experience of our members who may wish to become Trustees

New Trustees co-opted between now and the next AGM in October 2015 have full voting rights as full Trustees under our constitution

‘If you are interested come and have a chat with us’
The Green Door Project is offering free workshops at the following venues:

**Blurton Hub**
- Tai Chi Workshop 17th January, 1.30pm-3pm
- Bollywood Dancing 21st February, 1.30pm-3pm

**WRVS Hanley**
- Tai Chi Workshop 20th January, 1pm-2.30pm
- Bollywood Dancing 24th February, 1pm-2.30pm

**Christ Church Tunstall**
- Tai Chi Workshop 17th January, 11am-12.30pm
- Bollywood Dancing 21st February, 11am-12.30pm

Bookings only. Call for details – 07824 473 432
www.stoke.gov.uk/greendoor

Also

**Singing for Health!**
Do you know just how good singing is for your health? Singing can improve your posture, breathing and lung function, strengthen your immune system, improve your mood, help to relieve stress and depression and boost your confidence...And it’s great fun too!

Join Kate Barfield at the Green Door Singing Workshops.
Anyone can do it – even if you think you can’t sing!
Friday 23rd January 2015, Penkhull Village Hall, 6pm-8pm
Or
Wednesday 4th February 2015, Tunstall Floral Hall, 2pm-4pm
Singing workshops are free of charge. To book, contact the Green Door Team on 07824 473 432
Who to talk to when in crisis, or longer term

Samaritans – 01782 213555 / 08457 909090 (24 hours)
Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline – 0808 800 2234.
Open 7pm–2am Mon to Fri, 2pm–2am Sat & Sun
Access Team – 0300 123 0907
*For anyone who is not already in mental health services. You can self refer or ask a friend or GP to do it for you. Offers assessment and referral on to other services.*
Open Monday to Friday open 8am-8pm, weekends and Bank Holidays 9am-5pm.
Resource Centre – if you are already going to the Sutherland, Greenfield, Ashcombe, Lyme Brook or Bandon Centre, then call their number as they have a 24 hour telephone loop
Your GP
NHS Direct – 111
Open 24 hours a day 365 days a year.
For anyone who needs urgent need medical help or advice but is not in a life-threatening situation.

North Staffs Mind’s Befriending service – 01782 262100
Provides one to one support to people. Activities can include meeting for a coffee and going to the cinema. Befriending lasts for 3 months and is only available to people in Newcastle-under-Lyme.
Groups for specific illness e.g. Bi-polar Group. See www.nsug.co.uk

Changes Health & Wellbeing – 01782 413101
*Offers service user lead mutual support groups throughout North Staffordshire.*
Rethink – 01782 523034
*Offer mental health services in the Staffordshire Moorlands*
How about enlisting the help of your friends, and make a calling circle?
North Staffs Carers Association - 01782 793100
*For anyone who is a carer*
Anxiety
Anorexia
Bulimia
CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse)
Depression
Dementia
Psychiatrist
Psychologist
Psychology
Psychiatry
Personality Disorder
Schizophrenia
STR (Support time and Recovery Worker)
Psychosis
Occupational Therapist
Taichi
Relaxation
Manic Depressive
Therapeutic
Bipolar
North Staffs Users Group

Our aims are:-

To **IMPROVE** Mental Health Services.

To **EMPOWER** and protect the rights, needs and interests of people who use mental health services in North Staffordshire.

To **INFLUENCE** the way those services are planned and delivered.

To **BRING TOGETHER** people who use mental health services, in order to increase their influence on services and strengthen their voice.

To **INFORM** people who use mental health services of their rights, about local services and any planned changes to those services.

To **REDUCE THE STIGMA** towards mental health service users.

We can be contacted at:

**FREEPOST RTKL-XLKT-HJTX**, North Staffs Users Group, The Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Stoke on Trent, ST1 5DD

**Phone:** 01782 683043

**Email:** mainoffice@nsug.co.uk
Can you help save cost to NSUG and help the environment?

If you have enjoyed reading this copy and would prefer to reduce your carbon footprint by having an electronic copy instead of a paper copy please let us know by filling in the form below. Similarly if you no longer wish to receive a copy of the Voice complete the form below.

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Return to: FREEPOST RTKL-XLKT-HJTX
North Staffs Users Group, The Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Stoke on Trent, ST1 5DD
Alternatively email mainoffice@nsug.co.uk

Please don't throw this edition of The Voice away, pass it on to someone and / or RECYCLE it.
To all contributors, Thanks

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.

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 FREEPOST RTKL-XLKT-HJTX, North Staffs Users Group, The Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Stoke on Trent, ST1 5DD. If you would like to know more contact us on 01782 683043.

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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.
The Voice At The Back...

Have you checked out our website www.nsug.co.uk

For those who struggle with reading, the website now has a facility to speak the text including reading The Voice to you. Click on the BrowseAloud icon to discover more.

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.

Please check with your network provider the cost of making a call from your mobile. All of the services below are free, confidential and hold a standard accredited by the StepChange Debt Charity.

This online service is secure and offers immediate personalised help 24 hours a day. StepChange Debt Remedy provides you with the expert advice, budget support and solutions to help you manage your debts. http://www.stepchange.org.

0800 138 1111
This allows you to speak directly with an expert advisor. It is usually open throughout the week as well as evenings and weekends. StepChange helps change the lives of thousands of people every week. Their expert advice is impartial and personalised to each individual situation.

National Debtline
This online service is secure and offers immediate personalised help 24 hours a day. National Debtline offers free debt advice online through its My Money Steps tool and its web guides, fact sheets and sample letters. www.mymoneysteps.org

0808 808 4000
This allows you to speak directly with an expert advisor. It is usually open throughout the week as well as evenings and weekends. National Debtline has helped millions of people with their debts. They’ll talk you through options and give clear advice on how to take back control.