

## Briefing of “Event on Mental Health Services and Needs in Hammersmith and Fulham”

### The event

Healthwatch Central West London organised a mental health event on 18th October 2017, 10:30-15:30 at the Irish Cultural Centre to bring together people who are using or might want to use mental health services, their carers, mental health professionals and providers in Hammersmith and Fulham. The aim was to explore what support services are available, how to access them, and if they meet people’s needs.



The event was very well attended by at least 100 people. It was facilitated by Vittoria De Meo, member of Healthwatch and founder of the Happiness Corner. It included:

- Presentations by commissioners in H&F and across North West London and the West London Mental Health Trust
- Local initiatives by residents that run their own projects related to mental health
- Group discussions on mental health and employment, carers support, crisis support and long-term support in the community
- Stalls by 13 statutory and voluntary organisations
- #healingwords - poetry and the journey to recovery by the Advocacy Project
- Raffle by Andy Slaughter

### How did we work with residents and organisations for this event?

We circulated a survey to our members and those of partner organisations to identify issues and interests of people using mental health services during the summer. This involved people early in the process and led to the formulation of a planning group that worked together for the event.

The planning group had representatives from MAD Alliance, HeadsUp, Elgin Resource Centre and Sobus, as well as residents that use mental health services. It met twice, in August and early October focusing on the agenda for the event and how to best promote it.

### What did we learn from the presentations?

- Like Minded is the strategy for establishing joined up care for better mental health and wellbeing across North West London. It is led by the North West London Collaboration of Clinical Commissioning Groups and you can find more information at their website: <https://www.healthiernorthwestlondon.nhs.uk>
- The MAD Alliance is a group formed by “experts-by-experience working collaboratively in partnership with others on mental health service transformation”. For example, it researches alternatives to hospital care and has evaluated the Single Point of Access (SPA) service.

- West London Mental Health Trust is working to improve better access to talking therapies.
- The work of the H&F Clinical Commissioning Group on mental health includes:
  - Ensuring access to specialist perinatal mental health services for all H&F residents
  - Recruiting new Dementia Link workers to work with GP's, patients and carers offering support and signposting.
  - Working with people with respiratory problems to improve access rates to the primary care psychological service (IAPT)
  - Commissioning a new Employment and Wellbeing service that will have three parts: Employment services, Befriending and peer support and Advice and signposting.

You can read the presentations from the event [here](#).

### What were the main findings from the group discussions?

A total of 60 people attended the breakout discussions sessions on a) employment, b) carers support, c) living a health life in the community and d) crisis support that were facilitated by representatives from Healthwatch, MAD Alliance, HeadsUp (Mind) and Sobus.

#### A) Mental Health and Employment

##### Recommendations

- Design and delivery of a legal help line open 24hours that can help people with mental health problems before, during and post-employment
- New service to be holistic, independent and staff to be empathetic to people
- More collaboration of the services with employers to address barriers and stigma and support people stay in employment.
- Mental health training designed by mental health service users to be delivered to employers. Users should be paid to do this.

These recommendations along with all the comments from this discussion have been provided to H&F CCG to include in the business case for the design of a new service.

#### B) Crisis in Mental Health

##### Key points

- There is a lack of collaboration and no joined up working between different services and professionals. As a result, patients do not get the support they need and their voices can be lost in the referral process.
- Participants said that people with dual diagnosis are experiencing difficulties liaising with the health system. For example, one participant said that they got turned away from mental health services and substance misuse teams because they were not equipped to work with dual diagnosis. Part of the problem is that H&F has only one Dual Diagnosis worker.
- Participants said that they come across professionals that are not empathetic, highlighting that they should be treating people as an individual not as a diagnosis.
- The decision about what can be considered as a crisis doesn't always involve the individual. For example, one participant said: "I don't feel included. I was told by the crisis team that I was too normal".

##### Recommendations

- People in a mental health crisis should be provided with options and choice.
- There are good examples of alternatives to medication that should be followed
- More training for GPs is needed. GPs usually don't have time, do not specialise in mental health and sometimes look online for support.

- There should be more crisis houses and peer support networks.
- Commissioned projects should be patient centred.

### C) Support for Carers

#### Key points and recommendations

- Carers said that they can feel isolated and guilty. There is need for psychological support through support groups, peer support and counselling.
- Carers expressed the need for support and domestic tasks
- There is need for regular breaks, a respite space that could facilitate this.
- Current challenges include lack of knowledge for welfare rights, difficulty with the medical assessment process and responding to a crisis.
- Some services can be invisible and not well linked. This creates barriers for carers looking for different aspects of support available and an understanding of the assessment process.



### D) Long term support (primary care and community)

#### Key points and recommendations

- Better integration between services is needed. The individual shouldn't have to repeat their story and being pushed from one service to another. One way to address this could be through a mental health passport held by the patient.
- Integrated support should mean a) accessible services, b) short waiting lists, c) adequate length for appointments and d) cohesion between the services, including NHS and the voluntary sector.
- Better knowledge of services available from the GPs, ranging from signposting to support available in the voluntary sector to providing prescriptions of different types of talking therapies.
- Well strengthened peer support and a range of preventative services are needed.
- Counselling services should last beyond the 12<sup>th</sup> week.
- Best practises should be followed. For example, the Smart Café at the Chelsea and Westminster hospital could be replicated in H&F.

- Communication should be in plain English and cultural barriers should be considered to meet the needs of different community groups.

## What did people say about the event?

Feedback collected at the end of the event suggested that people found the event useful, informative and inclusive. Comments received included:

- “Really well attended by services/service users. An atmosphere of equality between both.”
- “Everyone was given the opportunity to speak. Nobody was seen being more or less important.”
- “I have learnt about future proposals and what services are around in H&F.”
- “Excellent, well attended event! Thank you for organising.”
- “Lively, interesting, well organised”. Splendid. Everyone seemed engaged. Dynamic and accessible. Excellent, lack of jargon. Round tables discussions valuable.”

## Who had a stall at this event and where people can get more support?

- Action on Disability: <https://actionondisability.org.uk/>
- Advance: <http://advancecharity.org.uk/>
- Back on Track: <http://www.backontrack.nhs.uk/>
- Carers Network Rethink: <http://carers-network.org.uk/> and <https://www.rethink.org/>
- Crisis Assessment & Treatment Team (WLMHT): <http://www.wlmht.nhs.uk/service/hammersmith-fulham-crisis-assessment-treatment-team/>
- Elgin Close Resource Centre: <https://www.nhhg.org.uk/communities/elgin-close-resource-centre/>
- FORWARD: <http://forwarduk.org.uk/>
- H&F Clinical Commissioning Group : <http://www.hammersmithfulhamccg.nhs.uk/>
- H&F Mind and HeadsUp Project: <http://www.hfmind.org.uk/> and <http://headsupnetwork.com/>
- Healthy Hearts: <https://healthyhearts.org.uk/>
- Pohwer: <https://www.pohwer.net/>
- The Advocacy Project: <http://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/>
- Wand UK: <http://www.wanduk.org/>
- Vittoria - Happiness Corner: <https://www.vittoriademeo.com/>
- Claire - No hands massage: <http://www.touchforwellbeing.com/>
- Vicky - Reflexology: 0750 8037955
- Rob - Men’s Mental Health: <https://supmob.wordpress.com/>

We have also collected information of different services that people can use for their mental health. We gave this to HeadsUp to use for a project on mapping support for H&F residents.

Healthwatch Central West London works across Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. It is an independent charity with the duty to ensure that people’s voices count when it comes to shaping and improving local health and social care services.

[Contact us to help improve health and social care!](#)

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