

Written and edited by **Carer and Service User representative members** to the Lancashire Mental Health and Social Care Partnership Board

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The Lancashire Mental Health and Social Care Partnership Board was established in 2005 to lead and support a programme of change within mental health services across Lancashire and is made up of representation from Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, the Third Sector and **Service Users and Carers** (supported by the the Partnership Team).

Service User and Carer representatives welcome two new carer members Ian and Waheda to the Partnership Board

Ian Carer Representative for North Lancashire

"I'm delighted to have been selected as a Carer Representative for North Lancashire (including Lancaster and Morecambe) and look forward to representing carers from my area to the best of my ability. I have a close family member who has suffered with mental health problems for many years. Having been the proprietor of a respite home, I understand that a break can help carers, and as a deputy manager for a housing association, I worked with people recently having left large institutions helping them settle in to new ways. I am a former Deputy Mayor of Lancaster and was also a City Councillor, dealing with the every day problems of residents, which gave me great satisfaction. I currently work for Leonard Cheshire Disability as a home inspector with people's wellbeing being uppermost in my consideration. I am also a school governor actively involved in the running of a local primary school. I have gained a psychology qualification which I believe helps me to understand people. I hope to be available for carers to listen to their concerns and speak at future board meetings on their behalf. The Partnership Board can be in my opinion, a great help to the community, to which I will be proud to be involved."



Waheda - BME Carer Representative for Lancashire

"I am a carer for a close family member suffering from schizophrenia, finally diagnosed in 1996. Since then, caring responsibilities permitting, I have been involved both locally and nationally in consultation, teaching and campaigning with statutory, voluntary and community organisations. Furthermore, I have run a series of awareness raising sessions with VCS organisations in Preston which have proven to be very successful. Being from an Asian background, I often saw flaws in the mental health system. Therefore, I always put across the view with consultation of other carers of the Asian perspective as this has often been lost. My main motivation is to change the way mental health is perceived within Minority Ethnic communities. I believe that stigma is still attached to mental health illnesses within all communities but some of this comes from ignorance which needs to be tackled. I am happy to take any issues forward that people would like me to raise at Board level."

In June, interviews will take place for the Partnership Board's two remaining representative vacancies for a Fylde Coast Carer and an East Lancashire Service User. Our thanks go to previous members Martin (Fylde Coast Service User), and Sandra (East Lancs Service User), for their contribution and support during their time with the Board, with our best wishes for the future.

"Refreshing the vision"

At the Lancashire Mental Health and Social Care Partnership Board meeting in April 2008, all executive and non executive members met and took part in workshop groups, to identify and vote on new and existing issues to be included in "Refreshing the Vision" for the Board.

Each member selected key points that they wanted to see taken forward, further details of which are hopefully to be agreed in June. Service User and Carer members, Brian and Marjorie give their thoughts and views on the how the meeting went:-

Brian

Service User Rep - Central Lancs

"It seemed to me that those who attended the Partnership Board event on 18th April were very passionate about changing things. I was extremely impressed at the very good input from service user and carer members. I also thought that the Partnership Team organised the event very well indeed. Let's hope it has left our mark on the way funding will be commissioned in the near future."

"Refreshing the Vision" (continued)

Marjorie - Carer Representative for Central and West Lancashire

"The meeting was friendly and well organised. It gave an opportunity to meet with representatives of a variety of Groups/Organisations. The first group consisted of Service User and Carers Representatives - those people at the sharp end, i.e. receiving end of the strategies and the means and manner in which they are implemented at the present time. The second session gave some insight of the different approaches and thinking amongst the representatives.

1st Group - listed their priorities which were practical naturally and concerned with the effect on their well being and daily lives. The first and perhaps the main priority listed was the gap between the strategies and actual service delivery. This was discussed and more specific areas were added, all of which required more communication, flexibility and ease of access on the part of those implementing the services. When votes were counted I was disappointed that Services Users and Carers issues did not score so well. Does this show a different concept of what is needed and how to achieve it between the receivers at the sharp end and the statutory bodies and managers?

Commissioning and how to resource it, received the largest number of votes.

2nd Group - There was unanimous agreement that the vision as previously devised needs to be updated to fit the many changes in mental health services. Indeed it was suggested that the Partnership Board should be far more proactive and not just provide a vision. It was agreed that some means should be found to communicate and be all age inclusive. No one disagreed with the consistent views of the stakeholders, the problem is how best to achieve this complex and many faceted state. Commissioners are considered to play a vital role in this. As a carer representative, I have a concern that commissioners should know who, what, when and where to commission, to plug the gap between strategy and delivery. Quality and flexibility, not just quantity was emphasised. It was suggested that maybe the board was starting at the wrong end devising the strategies and then seeing who can deliver. Perhaps we should be starting with collating and spreading existing good practice. Social aspects of well being include jobs, housing etc. this needs to be tackled bit by bit. There was a willingness from the entire group to work together to achieve this agenda."

"Working together to improve mental health"

MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING

Following the series of service user and carer mental health wellbeing events held in Autumn 2007 and Spring 2008:-

- * All information gathered including workshop notes and event evaluation forms have now been recorded.
- * Paul Hopley (Mental Health Programme Manager) and researcher Dr Christina Lyons (UCLAN) have begun analysing the information taken.
- * A report providing the outcomes from the meetings will then be the subject of a series of similar events to be held for staff who work in mental health and social care services to seek their views on how the findings should be taken forward.
- * A final report will then be presented to the Partnership Board for their approval, with recommendations for the findings to be tested in a pilot area. Copies of the report will also be sent to everyone who attended the meetings who requested to receive a copy for their information.



SERVICE USER AND CARER INVOLVEMENT CHARTER UPDATE by Paul Hopley

Phase 1: Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust (LCT) established a group made up of representative Service Users and Carers to start initial discussions on the general principals of a Charter. This group developed a questionnaire which was distributed, and the members visited wider groups to seek views. The information was then collated by LCT's Governance Team (80 responses). This enabled a first draft charter giving top level principles of involvement but as agreed at this stage, with no underpinning detail.

Phase 2: After considering comments made at the October 2007 Partnership Board meeting, Paul Hopley (Mental Health Programme Manager) met with Jo Blofeld (LCT's Patient and Public Involvement Lead) to discuss the next phase in this workstream. Taking into account the upcoming Carers Strategy work, it was recognised that there was a risk of duplication and it was agreed to arrange a further 7 Lancashire wide meetings with service users and carers to explore the points raised at the Partnership Board. The meetings have already been advertised and are due to take place from 16th to 19th June 2008. Each meeting will comprise of two separate groups where numbers permit, one for service users and one for carers, to discuss the general principles of a Charter and to start looking at what detail will be needed for implementing, measuring and monitoring the Charter/s. The Carers views will then be fed back into LCT's Carers Strategy Group.

For more information about the meetings and/or to book a place to attend, please contact Dawn Kenyon at LCT on 01772 695366.

For further information and/or to register your details to be kept informed of our current work, please contact

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