

# Community Development Workers Newsletter

Edition 2 January 2013

## Since the last newsletter...

Since the last newsletter in May, the Development Workers have been busy, amongst other things, working on their 6 month action plans. They have been involved in many projects, some of their own work such as ward visits, ASB and mental health forum, mental health awareness sessions in schools, cultural competency training, a relaxation project, mental health and well-being project with service users empowerment and mental health week at Russell's Hall Hospital.

Community Development Workers (CDW) have also been involved in other community projects including a disability youth club, a Dignity event at Bloxwich Hospital, an open day at New Testament Church, a Black and Minority Ethnic engagement day at Dudley college and they attended a Sikh Mental Health conference in Birmingham. In addition to this, the team facilitated alcohol awareness

day, with the Wellington Road Senior Citizens Forum.

The work carried out is explained in more detail on the following pages.

In addition to the activities CDWs usually undertake they have also been involved with individual client work, providing support to people within the community, signposting them to suitable community groups and other areas, such as the Black Country Food Bank.

CDWs are still heavily involved in membership drives, in order to attain members of the public to be part of the Trust. Members are needed in order for Foundation Trust status to be achieved. Numerous events have been attended by the team in order to boost numbers.



## Black Country Food Bank

The CDW's have utilised the Black Country Food Bank, when working with clients. The food bank helps vulnerable individuals and families in crisis by providing them with 3 days worth of emergency food supplies. This is until a longer-term solution can be found.

The service relies on donations of food and toiletries, and in the last months the CDW Team has held collections to support the project.

Donations are always needed, so please get in touch if you would like to help.

## Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week took place again in May. Set up by the Mental Health Foundation, its aims are to promote a different theme around mental health each year. This year's theme was around 'Helping others' to help yourself. Included here were random acts of kindness, volunteering and peer support. Doing good things for others can reduce stress, improve emotional wellbeing and benefit physical health.

For the entire week a stall was held at the main entrance to Russell's Hall Hospital (the Health Hub). Alongside the Community Development Workers, professionals and volunteers from mental health services and other organisations were asked to come along. This allowed members of the public to ask a range of questions around mental health, and to get more information on a range of issues. Rethink, Dudley Mind and NHS Dudley's Public Health were some of the additional organisations asked by the CDWs to attend. Over 150 people were seen over the course week. It is hoped a similar event can take place this year.

## Disability Youth Club



In October the CDWs were asked to attend a Disability Youth Club open day in Lower Gornal. During the day they had over 100 young people attend, and many people approached the CDWs to find out what mental health was all about. We got them to write down words they associate with mental health, and words like

mad, bad and happy were used.

In December we were asked to return and hold 4 mental health workshops. This would be with a group of teenagers who would benefit from further help with their emotional well-being.

Two sessions have already been completed before Christmas and already the teenagers have gained a lot from attending the workshops. We hope the next two sessions will be just as valuable.

## Alcohol Awareness Day

In December, part of the CDW team worked with other organisations, including Aquarius and Dudley Public Health, in delivering an Alcohol Awareness Event, at the Wellington Road Centre.

This was the culmination of preparatory work carried out in the months leading up to the event. Originally, an application was made for funding by the Wellington Road Centre, with support from the CDW team. This idea was then developed to be a one off day, which would be aimed at the Asian community of Dudley.

Excessive drinking is very prevalent in parts of the Asian community; however problems associated with it are often overlooked. Issues are sometimes kept within the family, and adequate support is not provided. Alcohol and Mental Health problems have a strong correlation, and one will affect the other.

This awareness day provided attendees with a better understanding of the harmful effects of drinking alcohol. It allowed them to find out safe drinking limits and on where they can go for help. In addition to this, a stall was held by the CDW team, and by Rethink, which provided mental health information.



The event was a success and almost 75 people attended. From the evaluations carried out it transpired that the majority of people had learnt something on the day, and many would be interested in a similar

event in the future. A follow up to this day will take place in January 2013, where the next steps of the project will be discussed.

## Shaanti -

### A Project for Peace of Mind

After successfully applying for funding through the Small Grants Fund, a project was set up with the Shree Krishna Asian Elderly Centre.

This project focused on improving and promoting positive mental health within the Gujarati Community of Dudley. In addition it worked towards reducing some of the barriers and stigmas surrounding mental health, whilst providing members with practical skills and methods to manage their own common mental health problems.

As in the wider Asian Community, people from the Gujarati community are underrepresented in mental health services in the UK. They are less likely to seek assistance for mental health problems, and very often problems go un-noticed.

Ahead of the sessions beginning, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was completed by each of the group members. This scale allowed a base measure to be taken (so that any improvements could be noticed). The average score for the group, before the commencement of the program was 45 (the national average is 51).



The initial 10 week program, looking at relaxation and meditation started in May 2012.

Over its course, a range of different methods were looked at. The chakra system was explained, and a lot of work went into balancing the chakras. In addition, mandalas, mantras and crystals were used, to help the group to focus and meditate.

Stress was looked at in great detail and in addition to the alternative methods used, Progressive Muscle Relaxation and Yoga were also practiced.

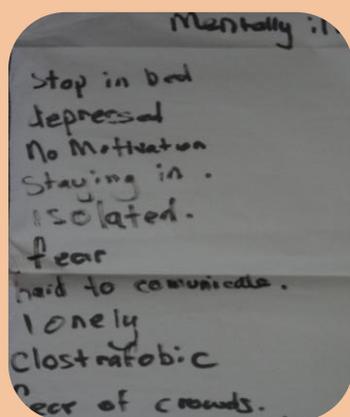
The WEMWBS was completed at the end, and showed an improvement in the groups wellbeing (an average score of 60 found).

The group enjoyed the workshops and were keen on having additional sessions, which will be looked at.

**A full copy of this report is available from the CDW Team.**

# Walsall Service User Empowerment

The Walsall Service Users Empowerment (SUE) is a group for people with any sort of disability or carers of people with disabilities, people can take part in activities such as art group, photography group, play bingo but also to provide support for other service users by doing ward visits to Dorothy Pattison and Bloxwich hospital.



In October, after discussions with the group, we began a 6 week program, looking at: Mental health and Mental illness in more depth; the signs and symptoms; cultural aspects; equality and diversity; healthy eating and exercise.

Week one began with an introduction into mental health. In all 10 people attended this session, and although far more than expected, interesting discussions around mental health were held. It was important that everyone felt comfortable, as they were sharing their own experiences.

Throughout the following weeks, a consistent number of service users attended the workshops. After the third week four new people started the workshops, they did a session looking at Equality and Diversity and human rights, especially when being detained under the Mental Health Act. We then went on to discuss the impact physical exercise has on our mental health and contributes to us staying positive.

To finish off this session the group completed a 20 minute relaxation exercise, they found this very helpful as they said they would not normally get chance to do any sort of relaxation at home. It also gave them a chance to collect their thoughts.

In the sixth week we looked at healthy eating and how the foods we eat affect our mood. We then finished that session with another relaxation exercise. However, even though this started off a six week project SUE wanted it to continue up until Christmas.



One of these additional sessions involved a pharmacist attending, and giving a talk about medication. As the group had many questions about their own medication and worries that their medication may not be working for them, we asked if the pharmacist was able to come back in the following week, which she could. She advised the group to bring all their medication for their physical and mental health with them the following week, so she could look at individual's medication to see if they were taking the right type of medication and dosage for their illnesses. These sessions were a great success and we hope to carry on delivering more on medication and inviting the Walsall Diabetes team to attend in the near future.

**These sessions will recommence in February, if there are any people who would want to attend please contact the CDW team.**

## Dignity Day

CDWs attended the Bloxwich Hospital Dignity Day where they held an information stand, to give out information on mental health, the local community groups and other resources.

The day was attended by over 50 service users and carers who were happy to get involved in discussions about their experiences. There was mention of service users facing some difficulties between hospital and community care, so this is something CDWs could provide extra support in the future.

## Patient Experience Trackers

The CDW Team, over the coming months, will be repeating the analysis first carried out in 2011. They will be asking Patients, Carers and Staff their views on a range of issues, including whether individuals cultural and religious needs are met, and whether interpreters are made available where necessary. More information on this will be made available soon.

## Young People and Mental Health: Sandwell College

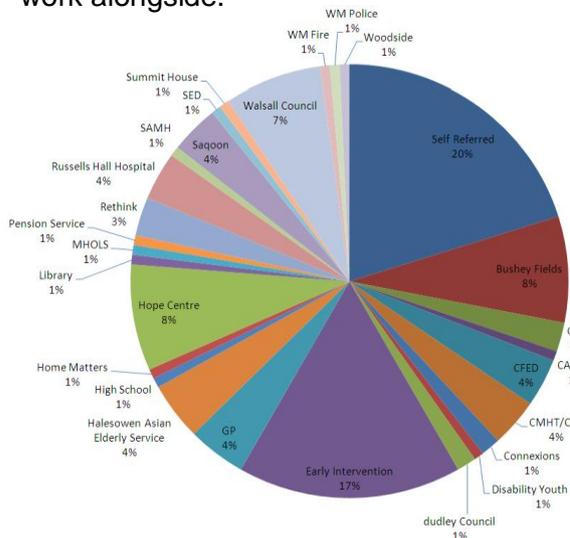
After CDWs successfully completed six mental health sessions with Sandwell College in 2011 the college have now asked the CDWs to return and deliver similar sessions with more groups. On 8<sup>th</sup> January CDWs delivered their first mental health session with their first group at Sandwell College and are hoping it is as successful this year as it was the first time around.

The students will be involved in doing activities to look at different mental illnesses and the signs and symptoms of different conditions. The students will also be asked to fill in The Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) survey so CDWs can look to see whether there are any mental health issues within the group but also to compare their mental health state before and after completing the workshops.

## CDW Client Contact

In addition to the work carried out with groups and communities, the team have over the last year been working with individuals.

Clients come to the team in a range of different ways. This includes self referral but more commonly from other agencies, both internal and external. Walsall Council, The Transfer and Transition Teams, Early Intervention and CRS are just some of the services who the CDW Team work alongside.



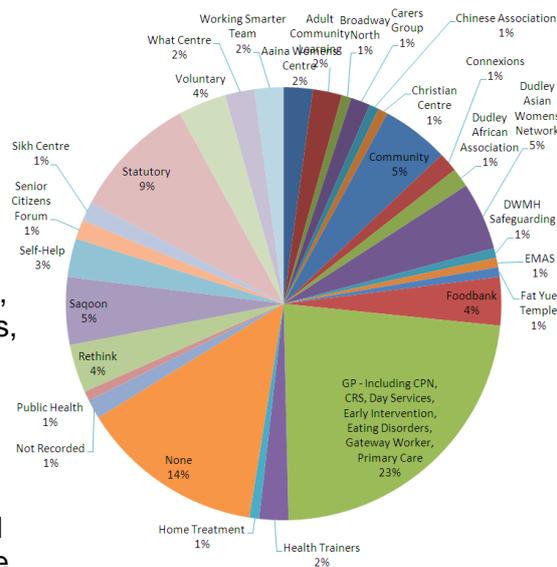
This graph shows the agencies and services that have referred to the CDW Team since 2011.

The varied work we carry out with the clients includes ensuring they are getting the best service, and that their cultural needs are met.

Through the relationships the CDWs have built up within the community, we are able to signpost clients to the groups that best accommodate their individual needs. We also refer clients to other mental health services, including Primary Care and Day Services (which is done via the client's GP).

The graph below shows the areas to which the team have signposted or referred clients over the last year.

The highest proportion overall is GPs, which, as they are the single point of access, also include CRS, Day Services, Early Intervention, Eating Disorders, Gateway Workers and Primary Care.



A full copy of this report will be available from the CDWs in the coming months; however Quarterly Reports are available now.

## Training Sessions

The CDW Team have delivered many training and awareness sessions to a range of different audiences. To health professionals, this has included Cultural Competency and Prevent. In addition to these, with community groups and other professionals, the type of training offered looks at basic Mental Health Awareness and Dementia Awareness.

Some of the organisations we have offered training to include: Kerying Support, Radleys Primary School, Sandwell College, Dudley Libraries.

The feedback received is very encouraging, and comments have included:

'Very therapeutic and revealing. Good foundation and understanding. Great speakers, very approachable and understanding. Would have liked more time.'

'I found the trainers and their training style really impressive. They knew their stuff and delivered the information in a professional yet relaxed approach'

## To Get in Touch

Contact details for each CDW, along with their respective service are:

**Roy McFarlane** 07887 797 420 and **Stephanie Ledgister** 07766 420 098

- Early Access Service (EAS)
- Community and Recovery Service (CRS)

**Kuldeep Singh** 07766 368 373

- Transfer and Transition Team (TTT)
- Early Intervention (EI)

**Lorien Hays** 07766 252 782

- Older Adults Service

**Michelle Raouf** 07766 421 207

- Acute Services

**The Team are based at:**

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