Welcome from new Chair: Irma Mullins

I am delighted to be nominated as Chair for Viewpoint. My passion for putting people with a lived experience and their families at the centre is important. Inclusion involves looking at abilities, being valued for uniqueness, choice and active participation. Overcoming barriers to inclusion and co-production can be challenging. Services often believe they cannot become fully inclusive because they might lose the power. Working in partnership with, and to think differently can lead to positive change. Being curious about how service’s work, allowed me to visit, share learning and offer ways to make changes. I believe it’s about the person not the label that is often used to describe them.

I believe my desire to put people with lived experience at the forefront can complement the work of Viewpoint in supporting and encouraging people to self-manage and to have a voice. Viewpoint is a great organisation, with a value base that is central to ensuring people are heard. I am looking forward to working with the service in listening and actioning what people say and want.

Advocacy News

I write this article, to regrettably inform all our members and stakeholders that Angela Chalmers and Michelle Howitt our Community Mental Health (MH) Advocates that worked with us as part of the HertsHelp Community Advocacy Project, officially left the organisation on the 31st July 2018. They have both moved onto VoiceAbility who will now be delivering the Community Mental Health Advocacy services in Hertfordshire.

I feel that it important to state that in the 9½ years Angela has worked for Viewpoint, 3 years of that time as Community MH Advocate. She has helped to transform the lives of so many people with her fundamental and steadfast belief in people with a mental health and / or substance misuse issues having a meaningful voice to make difference to the services and support they receive and more control over their own lives. Michelle was with us for 3 years and her impact has been no less than, that made by Angela.

They have been marvellous colleagues a real privilege to work with and manage, committed to maintaining high standards of service user (SU’s) involvement and engagement in the advocacy process. Never wanting to speak for people but wanting to help them to find the right words for themselves (their own authentic voice).

Angela and Michelle have left an inedible mark on the organisation, so it is with a great deal of sadness that I say goodbye on behalf of all at Viewpoint and wish them the very best in their future endeavours. Leslie Billy CEO, Viewpoint
Presentation Skills Course 24th August in WGC, 10-2pm

This course will enable you to build confidence and /or refresh your skills in presenting your ‘Lived Experience’ of either Mental Health and / or Substance Misuse to audiences working within the statutory and /or Voluntary sector.

To sign up for this FREE course contact Leslie Billy Viewpoint at Viewpoint on 01707 386136, email: leslie@hertshelp.co.uk.

Reasonable travel expenses will be paid, & refreshments provided. Please bring your own lunch.
Invitation to a Trans Awareness Black Tie Event

Thursday 27th September
7.00pm – 12.00pm
£75.00pp - 3 course meal included
Hitchin Priory

Book now at: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/black-tie-trans-awareness-event-tickets-46062402887
for more information please contact Amanda on +44 (0) 7921 004132 or email amanda@adcfinancial.co.uk

Hosted by Amanda De Courcy - founder of Synestra’s Community Interest Company (CIC) - Herts County Council, the NHS and various charities who support the transgender community, this unique dinner aims to raise much needed funds to support members of the transgender community. Showcased during the evening will be the work of Gendered Intelligence, Stonewall and Mermaids. These are three prominent charities that are there for both adults and children. Their tireless efforts are helping to reduce the staggeringly upsetting numbers you see when reading about suicide within the community. Currently the suicide rate stands at 41%, with over 60% of trans people having attempted suicide.

Though awareness of trans issues is growing across the county, few of us can truly appreciate the gravity of the everyday difficulties trans people face in our society. Amanda’s daughter Synestra died in 2015 aged just 23. Transition Denied, a new book released in May managed to be at once unique - telling the story of Synestra, a trans girl who lived an exciting, individual life and sadly paid the ultimate price. Sadly familiar, it tells how Syn encountered the same ugly obstacles familiar to every trans person in the UK. Copies of Transition Denied will be on sale on the evening, signed by the author Jane Fae, and Amanda.

Hertfordshire is a trailblazer in terms of enhancing services for the trans community, and we want to spread the word; help and support is out there, but it’s not always easy to find. And of course, like everything, it costs money. But what price do you put on saving a life? On 27th September come and meet some of the wonderful people who do exactly that.

Viewpoint Forums - we need your help.

Our forums are held in different places in Hertfordshire. We would like to know how you think our forums could be improved to help you engage and get more from them? Would you like more speakers to come to the forums to talk about different topics for example, or do you have any other ideas? We are looking to update and renovate how our forums are run. Please call 01707 386136 to speak to a project worker or e-mail info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk with any thoughts you have. Thank you
HPFT are implementing a new staff training programme around gender identity in partnership with Gendered Intelligence. As part of this training they are wanting to include film clips of people sharing their personal experiences in relation to:

- Expression of gender
- Transitions and identifying as trans, non-binary
- Being a friend or family member and the experience of transition of a loved one
- Experience of care, trans and non-binary personal journeys

They are looking for people across the trans and non-binary gender spectrum who may be interested to be involved to share their story and be interviewed briefly on camera. All films will be used only for internal staff training (unless otherwise agreed with participants) and the filming will take place on 12th September in Hatfield.

If you know anyone (or are interested yourself) please can you ask people to contact hpft.equality@nhs.net - please note that someone will get back to people after 6th September due to staff leave.

Support Viewpoint
When you shop at smile.amazon.co.uk, Amazon Donates
Visit smile.amazon.co.uk

Viewpoint need volunteers to help improve the way we communicate with our members and the wider community. This is a great opportunity to be actively involved and engaged in shaping Viewpoint's future. If you would like to become involved contact Leslie Billy at Viewpoint on 01707 386136.

New Confidence and Resilience Building course
(For people who have or have had addiction issues)
Starting Thursday 27th Sept - 1st Nov 2018 10-3pm at The Living Room in Stevenage (every Thursday for 6 weeks).

This course is run by people with a lived experience and will look at: goal planning, assertiveness, identifying your strengths and resources, boundaries, creativity, fear and avoidance plus more. Call our office on 01707 386136 to book a place.

We have run this course for nearly 10 years and have received excellent feedback from participants.