

# BADSUF NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 9



BOURNEMOUTH  
ALCOHOL & DRUG  
SERVICE USER  
FORUM

*Supporting Service Users through treatment journeys for 14 years*

## Another great year at BADSUF

**Manager, Chair, Advocacy & Community Support reports on the past year and looking forward to delivering more in the coming year**

### Glossary of terms:

DAAT	= Drug and Alcohol Action Team.
JCG	= Joint Commissioning Group.
DARG	= Drug and Alcohol Reference Group.
DIP	= Drug Intervention Programme.
BAT	= Bournemouth Assessment Team.
DHCT	= Dorset Health Care Trust.
PCT	= Primary Care Trust.
GP	= General Practitioner (Doctors).
CRI	= Crime Reduction Initiative.
NTA	= National Treatment Agency.
GOSW	= Government Office South West.
SHA	= Strategic Health Authority.



# Introducing BADSUF

## BADSUF AIMS

*"To engage with drug and alcohol Service Users by offering independent information, support and advocacy, ensuring maximum effectiveness of treatment provision".*



**Jackie**  
(Administrator)

**Frank**  
(Manager)

**Margo**  
(Community Support)

**Nigel**  
(Chair Person / Advocate)

## BADSUF ACTIVITIES

- Through our telephone helpline, we are able to give up to date comprehensive information on the various ways in which treatment services can be accessed in Bournemouth.
- BADSUF regularly visit service providers and hosts an annual **Open Day** to promote constructive discussion between Service Users, Providers and Commissioners.
- BADSUF represents Service User views on a range of various committees that have an effect on the delivery of Drug and Alcohol services within Bournemouth.
- BADSUF provides an Independent Advocacy Service to assist Service Users who encounter difficulties relating to their treatment.
- BADSUF is also represented at regional level through the South West User Forum.



## Nigel Seal's Chairperson's Report

Welcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the BADSUF newsletter. Firstly thanks to everyone who has contributed in any way towards this issue.

This has been another successful year for the charity with many exciting things happening within our organisation. Also there are changes being looked at in the structure of the Bournemouth treatment system and BADSUF will, once again, be at the heart of service development. All will be covered in more detail in the following pages.

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was well attended this year and resulted in a strong committee and board of trustees to help ensure that we give the best service we can. We welcome any feedback and ideas on BADSUF to help us improve our services. You will find our contact details on the back page.

Again I will take this opportunity to emphasise just how valuable every one of your views are. These are your services and your expertise must be listened to by the people who design and fund them so that they better meet your needs.

Our membership continues to grow and now numbers over 1500! So thank you for your support and I hope to see many of you over the coming year and please join us at our **open day (See back page)** where you will have a great opportunity to voice your opinions on the current treatment services and how you see the future of treatment in Bournemouth.



## Frank Bond's Manager's Report

BADSUF continue to work hard in order to maintain and progress our charitable aims and objectives. The Forum has also been more effective at gathering Service User feedback, assisting the Bournemouth DAAT in audits, and tendering processes.

I have been re-elected as co-chair of the Bournemouth Drug and Alcohol Action Team, and I will continue to ensure that the needs and views of Service Users remain paramount, and that they will be represented at the highest strategic level.

The pilot scheme for Supporting People has proven successful, and has resulted in the award of a three year contract. We have yet again seen a significant rise in our membership. The telephone help line continues to assist and support Service Users, and a variety of others, including both the general public, and professionals. BADSUF have also been awarded a contract to deliver a dedicated help line for Carers.

Our new Advocate has established himself in his role, and the Community Support Worker continues to strengthen existing links with Service Users and providers. BADSUF have also recruited a new Administration Assistant. We continue to not only meet our contractual obligations with our funders, but also to maintain our existing high standards of service delivery.

I would like to express the Forums gratitude to both the Bournemouth DAAT, and Supporting People for their funding.

This year, for the benefit of local Service Users. we hope to:

- \* **Take full advantage of our contract with Supporting People, and continue to provide a full range of our services to those in supported accommodation.**
- \* **Continue to build on community networks and relationships with local treatment and housing providers, so we are best placed to represent Service User views.**

I do hope you enjoy this edition of the Newsletter, your feedback is always welcome.



# Local Issues

What's going on in Bournemouth?

## DAAT Update - Chris Snelling DAAT Coordinator

Since the last update from the Bournemouth Drug and Alcohol Action Team, there have been a number of changes and developments. For a good part of last year, the DAAT were operating with a member of staff down and despite this the team maintained the level of support needed to ensure the services for the Service Users of Bournemouth were maintained to a high standard as well as continuing to develop service provision. This was supported by the Health Care Commission audit that rated the DAAT as excellent and within the top 14 DAAT's nationally, which is quite an achievement. Service user views formed part of the audit process and so thank you to all those that responded.

Staff changes have also been a feature, with myself coming into post in December as the DAAT Coordinator and Andy Omojevverha in March as the Performance Officer. Recently, Paul Rogers, a valued member of the team, left to develop his career and will be greatly missed and we wish him well for the future.

The DAAT see the views of the Service Users as a valued and important resource as part of the process of developing services and ensuring that the provisions already in place meet the ever changing needs. At the BADSUF open day last November, a number of issues were raised, most vocally around accommodation and in particular the need for a women only accommodation unit. There are increasing pressures on the Supporting People budget, with a need to reduce the amount available to fund spaces but even so, I am pleased to report that progress is being made and we hope to have this particular accommodation available soon, as it is seen as a priority.

Whilst on the subject of accommodation, I can report that in these times of reductions in funding, we are working closely with Supporting People to ensure the number of places supporting treatment options are maintained.

Tackling Drugs Week held a number of events around Bournemouth to raise awareness of the risks and dangers and where to get help, advice and information. These events were part of an overall theme on the journey of a substance user that was supported by providers and the police. Overall we felt we had a number of useful and helpful contacts and were able to get information into the public domain.

Finally I would like to say that the Bournemouth DAAT needs to have the comments, feedback and queries from the Service Users to ensure we are commissioning the right services for you. Please keep doing so, as the BADSUF open day showed, things are taken on and actioned as best we can, so a big thank you.

## THE BAT APPRENTICE SCHEME

Bournemouth Assessment Team currently has an apprentice within our team. Our apprentice, Ben, undertakes the same duties as a care coordinator; including the assessment and referral of clients for treatment for their substance misuse, outreach duties in the magistrates cells, the custody suite at Bournemouth police station and in the community around the Lansdowne and Boscombe areas. Ben holds his own caseload and is a valuable asset to a very busy team.

Ben is also undertaking an NVQ in Community Justice Studies which will qualify him for work within drug and alcohol services, as well as a variety of other criminal justice professions.

Ben believes that he has learnt a lot working within the team and that this knowledge and experience has assisted him in making future career decisions.

# BAT & DIP Updates

The Bournemouth Assessment Team is the single point of contact for individuals who are identified as having dependant substance misuse problems within the Bournemouth area. We take referrals from, GP's, probation, prison, police & hospitals. Self referrals are also accepted. We are an independent team who will assess the need of the individual. A care plan will be drawn up in consultation with the Service User as we advocate the right for Service Users to have a say in their treatment.

The DIP element to the project targets those substance misusing Service Users who are involved in crime. We sweep the court and police cells each day so that we can engage at the earliest point. We have good working relationships with the local prisons and once weekly will visit HMP Dorchester.

Our Criminal Justice aftercare group is now in its fifth year and is constantly evolving, the evolution of this group is down to the Service Users who have attended over the years. The group has a structured 12 week programme at the Clubhouse every Thursday morning, a referral to this programme needs to come from a care coordinator.

We have recently implemented an outreach team who will be targeting those Service Users who are given appointments and fail to attend.

Just to update you all on a few changes that have been made within the teams. We have been listening to concerns that have been raised by our services users with regards to those attending Progress Project. BADSUF had informed us that SU's found it frustrating that when they tried to contact their care coordinator while attending the programme, it was difficult because the times in which they were able to use the phones were limited to after group and break times, which meant that sometimes SU's were unable to speak directly to their care coordinator and a question regarding treatment would remain unanswered. This left many Service Users feeling unsupported.

To rectify this problem we now have two care coordinators based at the Clubhouse every day. This means that they can listen to Service Users and hopefully answer any question that you have quickly and if not they will have an answer for you when you return to the group.

The BAT continues to work hard in delivering Bournemouth the best services we can and we do appreciate your views on how we can improve our services.

**Just to remind you all that we have Drop In clinics every day at 43 Oxford Road, from 2pm - 4pm**

## Sedman Unit Update

On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2009 the Sedman Unit at Tower Road, Boscombe held a Guest Speaker Information Day. This event brought together already established Guest Speakers and newly identified agencies who work alongside and support substance misuse clients.

It was an open invitation to all individuals working within Dorset Healthcare Foundation Trust and an opportunity for agencies to talk to each other regarding referrals and share information about their services.

The event had an informal setting to allow clients in treatment at Sedman to chat with professionals and develop support networks in their recovery. It was also an opportunity for all the agencies involved to network with each other and find out what new services are becoming available.

Sedman clients prepared their own questionnaires which were completed by the visiting agencies to enable clients to increase their knowledge of support available. Visiting agencies included Disability Wessex, Crumbs, BCHA (Mental Health and Floating Support), SAFFA, Eddass (Bournemouth & Poole), AA, NA, CA and Vita Nova.—A delicious lunch was provided by Crumbs.

It was an enjoyable informative day for everyone and plans are in place for future Guest Speaker Days at Sedman.

### **Claire – Team Assistant Retires.**

Claire writes:

I retired on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009 after over twelve years at the Sedman Unit in Boscombe. Up until this time my record for staying in any one job was three years but as anyone who knows me will tell you I loved working at the Sedman and the reason for this was the people I met. Over the years I have listened to the stories of people's lives and I have laughed and I have cried with them. I have also learnt so much from so many of you. You have allowed me to share in the setbacks and the successes. I would just like to say a big thank you to all the people I have met for making my working life so happy and rewarding.

Claire asked if we could include this piece about her retirement which we were very happy to do, and to acknowledge the dedicated approach she had over the years. It got me thinking about a proposition which was discussed where training was to be given to staff who often are the first point of contact with Service Users and who may not be professional addiction workers i.e. receptionists, admin, pharmacy counter staff etc. I mention this as many people have said how Claire was an expert at putting people at their ease and dealt with everyone she met with fairness and balance. So take credit Claire, for the difference you have made in peoples' lives and all the best for your

## Jobcentre Plus links to local services

Paul Rogers has recently joined Jobcentre Plus as the District Drugs Coordinator across Dorset and Somerset. This is a new role within Jobcentre Plus, creating seventy three posts across the country. Paul has worked as part of Bournemouth DAAT and is aware of the excellent work carried out at both partnership level and within local treatment centres. Paul says "My hope for this role is to keep the issue of employment for those in recovery or stabilised, as part of the ongoing local agenda".

The role of the coordinator is to define a clear set of relationships between individuals, teams and key agencies in the drugs field; develop and encourage relationships with external agencies; and raise awareness of Jobcentre Plus and its programmes and services. Referral systems have been established in Bournemouth following discussions with the Bournemouth Assessment Team (BAT).

Government proposals intend to make it a mandatory requirement that those in receipt of certain benefits must engage in drug treatment – at the time of going to press any referrals made from Jobcentre Plus will be on a voluntary basis with the Service User's consent. Paul will be working closely with the local DAAT team and, of course BADSUF, to ensure that Service Users are kept informed should any new legislation be passed.

The 2008 Drugs Strategy and the recent Welfare Reform White Paper both recognise the importance of sustainable employment as a part of an individual's recovery. Paul will be working closely with aftercare providers in Bournemouth to ensure that where Service Users have completed treatment, they have a clear pathway relating to their education or training needs, facilitating a return to work where appropriate.

## Supporting People want to know what you think!

Supporting People is a government programme, run within Bournemouth Borough Council, which pay service providers to provide adults with housing-related support so that they can live independently in the community.

To find out whether the service you want to talk about is a 'Supporting People' service, ask your service provider or support worker, or get in touch with the team on 01202 458929.

### **SO HOW CAN YOU TELL SP YOUR VIEWS?**

Join the Supporting People Partnership - the forum for anyone using SP services in Bournemouth. It's your group where SP listens to your views.

Meetings are held every two months at Bournemouth Central Library, bus tickets refunded. To find out when the next one is, get in touch with Gemma (contact details below).

Visit and Review other services and help to set up the 'Peer Reviewing' project, where you visit other services and speak to Service Users and staff to rate how well services are working and decide how to improve them. Phone Gemma on 01202 458710, email: [gemma.flay@bournemouth.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.flay@bournemouth.gov.uk)





**CRI CLUBHOUSE ....  
IT HAS BECOME ALL ABOUT  
LEARNING...!!!**

CRI Clubhouse resource centre has gone through many changes and developments. It is now recognised as the Clubhouse Resource Centre since it began to host both pre-treatment and aftercare projects in April 2007. The Aftercare Project has gone through some significant changes including the introduction of packages of support for those individuals who are stable in substitute prescribing treatments.

In a process of evolution the Aftercare Programme has changed significantly from what was an open access support that was focussed on social and leisure activities to a programme that is structured; in stages and aims to enable and empower individuals to reach their potential.

The Clubhouse Aftercare Project staff have crafted and created a learning environment which includes more formal group settings with programmes that provide education and learning for individuals. The programmes include education around the effects of addiction that enable change in lifestyle and relapse prevention strategies. A goal setting programme offers people opportunity to set goals for themselves to make progress.

The STEPS to Excellence Programme is a programme to enable positive thinking for self development. CRI Clubhouse also provides an Accredited Peer Mentoring Programme for Service Users. This has been running now for over 2 years and has enabled individuals to progress from Service Users to become peer mentors and then volunteers. All of those people who have completed the accredited programme have gone on to employment in a wide variety of occupations. This demonstrates what can be achieved!

In our learning environment we have a number of student placements which have been highly successful both for the student and for the service. Currently we have a Community Justice Apprentice; NVQ III Health and Social Care Placements and Degree Social Work Students. So Clubhouse can certainly say we are learning and we are enjoying working with all those who are learning!

## **INFORMATION FOR PEER MENTORS AT CLUBHOUSE**

- \* The Peer Mentoring Programme gives access to a 6 month training and mentoring placement.
- \* The Programme enables individuals to make the effective transition from Service User towards independence occupation employment.
- \* The Programme involves 3 months (1 day a week) study followed by 3 month placement (hours to be arranged).
- \* There is opportunity to gain accreditation OCN (Open College Network) Level 3 in Mentoring Skills & Drug & Alcohol Information
- \* Ongoing guidance and supervision from the Mentoring Tutor is provided with supervisory support from staff in the placement.
- \* Following a positive final review, including successful completion of the accreditation, Peer Mentors can progress into volunteering within local CRI services with access to CRI training and supervision. This can lead to employment and/or further education

## **Flaghead Service User Feedback!**

Flaghead Unit is the Trust's 10 bedded detoxification unit in Christchurch. BADSUF are assisting Dorset Healthcare Foundation Trust Addiction Service to report the findings of their anonymous consumer survey at Flaghead Unit.

Every Service User who undergoes either detoxification from opiates and/or alcohol or stabilisation is offered an anonymous consumer survey to complete to give them the opportunity to feedback their opinions of their treatment experience.

The survey asks about various areas including staff treatment, the environment and the activities available. The results of this consumer survey will be made available to Service Users via posters at Flaghead Unit and will also be included in a presentation at BADSUF's open day in November this year.

### **Flaghead Open House Session**

Flaghead held an 'Open House Session' on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2009, welcoming a variety of guests from across the range of local addictions service providers to learn more about the unit.

The Flaghead Team decided to host the 'Open House Session' as part of their Practice Development journey to accreditation, to ensure partnership working and the provision of seamless care for all clients from pre admission to post discharge.

Prior to the day, clients were also involved in considering what they would like to tell other agencies about Flaghead, from their personal experiences. This input to the day was extremely beneficial, and greatly valued by all in being able to offer 'live' examples and experiences.

Other sessions offered guests the chance to participate in a Treatment Agreement Workshop, led by Susie Groves, (Charge Nurse), and took the format of one of the weekly treatment groups attended by clients at Flaghead. Guests then enjoyed a tour of the unit, led by Peter Hill (Mental Health Support Worker) providing information on the daily routine of the ward.

This was followed by a Question and Answers Discussion Group, led by Louise Kenchington, (Charge Nurse), which provided the opportunity for the guests to ask any question they had about Flaghead, and prompted some interesting and useful discussion.

Tony Deavin, Addictions Service Manager said "I was very impressed by the enthusiasm of staff and clients, who all worked very hard to demonstrate the excellent work of the Unit. I would particularly like to thank the clients for their enthusiasm and involvement in making the day a success."

## **BADSUF OPEN DAY 2010**

Clients of all Addiction Services (*past & present*) & their Carers are invited to meet at this **FREE** event

**This event is usually in NOVEMBER**

(Lunch and refreshments provided) **For details call the office on 01202 535 748**

## What does Margo Do?



1. Margo provides information and signposting to individuals and groups in the community who wish to access drug & alcohol services.
2. She supports and empowers Service Users and carers involved in services by giving (confidential) feedback and ensuring quality of services.
3. She also engages Service Users and Carers and assists to help them find local voluntary work in the community.
4. And she represents BADSUF at Clinical Governance Team Meetings, Clinical Audit Meetings and Managers' Meetings, etc...

### Margo attends regular treatment talks at the following services:

**Bournemouth Support Centre, Night Shelter, Quest, Clubhouse / CRI / Foundation, Flaghead Inpatient Detoxification Unit, Clouds Day Programme / Pre-treatment & Continuing Support Groups, Sedman Unit, Quinton House, CRI prison leavers group, the YMCA, and the Needle Exchanges @ Park Lodge and Body Positive.**

Contact Margo on 01202 535 748 or...  
E-mail Margo direct on  
[Communitysupport@badsuf.com](mailto:Communitysupport@badsuf.com)



## Community Support update

### Margo Benjafield

This last year has been yet another busy and productive one with more Service Users than previous years being introduced to and offered BADSUF services. This has resulted in our membership now nearing 1600!

As my role is very much about empowering Service Users and carers involved in local services to give feedback and helping to ensure quality of service, our annual open day is a highlight of the year. The 2008 open day was a huge success with approximately 150 people (Service Users, providers and commissioners) turning out to the all day event. Thanks to those who came and gave presentations, and to the individuals who took the time to come and share their views. The day began with a warm welcome and introduction to what BADSUF was about and the services it provides. Presentations covered subjects of how funding was spent, housing and specialist prescribing. There was strong representation for women only housing and a wet house for those engaged with drug treatment services. Also quicker access to prescribing services is required and more immediate and urgent support including for those leaving hospital. More funding for specialist alcohol services was considered an important issue for future service development. These and other issues were discussed producing high levels of feedback from both Service Users and providers alike. This feedback was then put together and presented to providers and Commissioners at the Bournemouth DAAT Treatment Planning Day where the treatment plan is produced for local services in the coming year.

Keep your eyes open for the Bournemouth Treatment plan leaflet which highlights additional services from the previous year and which demonstrates how your views are acted upon.

As always I will be visiting treatment and supported housing providers to gather views and to ensure that Service Users

## Advocacy Update

### Nigel Seal

**BADSUF believes that independence from service providers and purchasers enables the advocate to fully promote a client's basic human rights and choices, often by voicing the concerns and interests expressed by an individual engaging with, or wishing to access an Addiction Service.**

**Our service aims to help Service Users gain a fuller understanding of both their rights and options that are available to them, assisting them to make informed decisions.**

I have been in post as BADSUF's full time Advocate for over a year now and the Advocacy service has been as busy as ever; with more calls to the helpline (which is now linked into carers' services), continuing visits to treatment providers and more advocacy drop-ins and surgeries .

The drop-ins enable Service Users to talk to me about any issues they may have about treatment or housing which sometimes, though not a burning issue is never the less something which has been on their mind. So when you see the drop-ins advertised, or if you happen to be in a service when I am there, please let me know your concerns, views and any matters that I may be able to assist you with.

The new three year contract with supporting people (S.P.) is a tremendous opportunity for the Advocacy service to have a continued presence within dry houses and ensure that

### Q What is an Advocate?

**A** Someone who speaks up on someone else's behalf

Service Users have an independent voice. This enables BADSUF to form an even better working relationships with housing providers. We all recognise how important good housing is for creating a stable environment which facilitates progress through recovery. BADSUF will continue to visit all providers funded by S.P. to support Service Users there.

It was noted by a treatment provider that as a result of the BADSUF Advocacy service within housing, some of the barriers between treatment and housing providers have been resolved with more communication occurring when an individual needs extra support. This has resulted in a joined up approach to be utilised when a person needs help.

It's been a pleasure to have met so many of you over this last year and to have been able to help those needing an Advocate. Many thanks also to those providers who are happy to work with BADSUF, to get their clients issues resolved quickly and ultimately improve the services for all.

Contact Nigel on 01202 535 748 or...  
E-mail The Advocate direct on  
[Advocacy@badsuf.com](mailto:Advocacy@badsuf.com)



## Bournemouth Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

The Bournemouth Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy ("Getting the Balance Right") was launched in the autumn of 2008. It proposed a number of strategic initiatives and since then more detailed action plans have been put in place. Progress will be formally reviewed in the coming autumn but a number of things have already happened:

The **Town Centre Safe Bus** was launched as a pilot project on 24 July 2009 and will be in place for six weeks on Friday and Saturday nights. The intention is to provide more immediate and confidential access to services by locating them closer to the club area in Bournemouth town centre.

In particular, staff from the Ambulance Service and the Brief Intervention Therapy team are available on the bus. By being able to treat people in this way it is hoped to reduce the numbers of people who have to attend the Accident and Emergency Department.

As well as treating any injuries the intention is to help people to recognise the potential harm from their drinking and to access help which is appropriate to them.

The **Brief Intervention Therapy service** is now up and running and offers a range of interventions to people who might require help and support following screening of their drinking patterns.

The service works closely with staff in the Emergency Department to screen and identify people who might require help, advice and support. In due course the service will follow people up to see how their drinking patterns might have changed.

**Alcohol screening by GPs** was introduced on 1 April 2009 and involves screening people who register as new patients with a practice. To date nearly 6,500 people have been screened through this scheme and in due course information will be available to show what has happened to people as a result of their being screened.

A new post of **Substance Misuse Liaison Practitioner** has been set up in The Royal Bournemouth Hospital and the person appointed will come into post shortly.

Essentially, the role is to work closely with nursing and medical staff to assess the nature of the needs of individual patients, and to help those patients to access the most appropriate service for their needs as they leave hospital. Finally, the Bournemouth Assessment team is now being used as a **single point of entry**

to alcohol treatment services according to the assessed needs of an individual. In 2008-09 there was a 22% increase in the numbers of people who were referred to services through this route.

The success of the strategy is being monitored by a multi-agency group which brings together NHS Bournemouth and Poole, Dorset Police, Bournemouth Borough Council and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team. Each agency recognises that their efforts to reduce harm from alcohol are closely interlinked and beneficial to each organisation as well as to those people who need and use services.

## SU involvement - a National View

As our annual conference, in association with The Alliance, goes from strength to strength I thought it might be interesting to look at SU involvement from a national perspective. I organise the Service User Group part of the conference so am in touch with many user groups across the country which gives me a unique perspective in terms of what's happening at "street level," so really, this is my view of how it looks right now.

Service User Groups in certain parts of the UK are doing some great work, up to and including involvement with relevant commissioning groups and making strategic decisions about ongoing service delivery and funding allocation.

## Local Carers Services

The parent support group (for parents of U18's) is a partnership between EDAS & YADAS and gives parents an opportunity to meet with an EDAS professional trained in Drug and Alcohol awareness. The group will take place weekly with a purpose of providing support and advice to those concerned. For more information please contact **Valerie** on **01202 311 600**.

Sharp Family and Friends support group and 1:1 Support is designed to inform and support adult individuals or couples, including parents, grandparents, sibling's partners, family members or friends.

The programme is roll-on roll-off for 12 sessions. 1:1 support is for 3 sessions to provide information and advise and support entry to the 12 week programme.

Contact: SHARP Bournemouth and Poole  
The Clouds Building  
1a Station Approach  
Ashley Road - Boscombe  
Bournemouth. BH1 4NB

Contact Number 01202 399723  
Helpline Number 01202 535748

Your good selves down there in Bournemouth being a fine example! However I don't think it's so rosy in everyone's garden. I have heard of and indeed witnessed some commissioning groups who are downright obstructive in terms of letting Service User Group's be involved.

Feeling as strongly as I do about SU involvement, I have a massive fear of a return to some kind of punitive, three strikes and you're out system - where the Service User returns to being just the 'outcome' of some, set in stone, draconian policy and individual treatment is just a memory.

The NHS personalisation issue is also just around the corner and there's no way that drug/alcohol treatment can be left out. I recently attended the Conference Consortium event "In Someone Else's Shoes" (which should have been attended by three Members of Parliament and one ex-minister come ex-jailbird, Jonathan Aitken...I say, should have, because Aitken was the only one who bothered to turn up!). Delegates were separated in to four groups, each one dealing with the issues faced by commissioners, treatment providers, Service Users and criminal justice workers. The results at lunch time were reasonably predictable but in the afternoon session it was thrown in that 'personalisation' had happened and it was asked what differences there would be for individuals, if indeed they held the purse strings. A few of the issues that were raised included size of individual budget, how many attempts people might be allowed to try and whether the larger, wealthier organisations would push out the competition in terms of value for money.

Hope to see you all at our next annual conference at The Holiday Inn in Birmingham on Feb 4 2010 and hopefully we can get our voices heard!

Marcus Wilson Drink and Drug News

# The South West Regional Carers Forum



I'm Ian MacDonald, and with my wife Irene I run CPSG (Cheltenham Parent Support Group) [www.cpsg.org.uk](http://www.cpsg.org.uk) a service for anyone concerned about another's drug or alcohol misuse. We provide a telephone helpline, e-mail, & a one to one service.

We lost our younger son to an accidental heroin overdose in 1997 and at that time found that there was little support or even reliable information for carers or concerned others, and we had absolutely no knowledge or experience of the drugs world. We therefore resolved to provide for others the kind of service that we had so desperately needed, and nearly four years later, after lots of study and training, started CPSG.

The good news is that things *have* improved, but regrettably stigma is still a huge issue for concerned others and users alike. How this can be overcome we don't know but we *do* know that it prevents many people from accessing the information and support that they need, and we're usually contacted for the first time when a crisis has occurred.

Since starting CPSG we've developed a wide range of contacts and links with other organisations in the substance world, and are firm believers in joined-up working, collaboration and information exchange, as this is the way forward for carer services. I'm now chair of the NTA's SW region Carer Forum which meets bi-monthly in Taunton and Bristol and our local DAAT's Carers and Concerned Others Steering Group, and we work closely with our local Drug & Alcohol service The Independence Trust here in Gloucestershire, who allow us the use of a room on their premises for our one to one work. Irene has been a part time volunteer there for 5 years, working in the needle exchange and open access, and co-facilitates an alcohol support group run by the trust. It's a privilege to have 'a foot in both camps' and gives us quite a balanced view of the substance world. We're also key members of Prof. David Clarke's Wired In online recovery community [www.wiredin.org.uk](http://www.wiredin.org.uk)

We also have free access for some clients to a weekend Family seminar for parents or concerned others of substance misusers, at a local rehab, funded by our DAAT, and to a series of CRA (Community Reinforcement Approach) family therapy sessions run by Gloucestershire's Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service.

Over the last 12 years things have improved both nationally and in our region, and it's significant that the government and the NTA have recently taken a much more direct and active role in developing carer services, by involving local DAATs and non-statutory services, providing access to appropriate workshops and conferences, and maintaining regular contact. Back then, carers appeared to be largely ignored, and not taken very seriously, but this has slowly changed and the statutory services and the agencies take much more notice, actually recognise and involve carers, and work *with* us.

Things we'd like to see:

- \*  A drive to address stigma, for both carers and users.
- \*  More publicity and public education about carer issues and the services available.
- \*  Better information for carers on the addiction and recovery process.
- \*  Advocacy for carers.

Finally, I think I can sum up the improvements by quoting the title of a talk that Irene gave to a local conference, drawn from two comments she'd received – one at the start and one recently: ***'From bloody pest to esteemed colleague in 12 years'!***

For information on the South West Regional Carers Forum: **01242 222872**

## BADSUF contact details

Flat 1, 29a Alma Road  
Winton Bournemouth BH9 1AB

### 24 HOUR HELPLINE

Tel/Fax: 01202 535748

Mobile: 07786 166120

### E-mail the team

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[www.badsuf.com](http://www.badsuf.com)

Charity No: 1079780

### Disclaimer

The contents of this newsletter are independent and do not reflect the views of any Purchaser, Provider or Outside Agency.

Unless otherwise stated the contents are compiled based on our research and discussions with Service Users in Bournemouth, some articles therefore may appear subjective (based on individual experiences) and may not necessarily reflect the opinions of BADSUF.



SURF began after an open event hosted by BCHA to encourage their Service Users to get involved and have their say about the services provided for them by BCHA. A small number of Service Users were intrigued by this and decided to meet to discuss how we could take this forward. Some of the founder members still being actively involved these being Sue Salmon, Linda Rowlands and Paul Heath who although not a member now still pops in to give his advice and who is currently involved in his own project S.O.N.G (Self Organised Network Group).

After securing funding from BCHA, the first thing we needed to do was come up with a name. We all agreed on "SURF" (Service Users Representative Forum). Although now we are known as Service Users and Residents Forum, since we merged with BCHA's Tenants Forum. We have our own office in Boscombe Bus Station.

We started visiting projects asking Service Users for their opinions of the services BCHA provided, reporting back to BCHA with the findings and recommendations of how BCHA could improve their services. As a result, living conditions of Service Users were improved and continue to be improved.

Members of the group are involved in looking at BCHA's Policy's and Procedures, and have a say in all BCHA's leaflets and plans. We have members on BCHA's and Hypeds board, and also all of BCHA's committees.

The fun elements include planning various events. Training has been provided for the group, as well as workshops specially designed to meet our needs.

SURF office is open weekdays 2pm – 4pm committee meetings every Tuesday. The Chair is Darren Bradley Tel: 01202 720350, Mob 07966808839 [surfoffice@bcha.org.uk](mailto:surfoffice@bcha.org.uk)