



champions of change
newsletter 2011 issue 2

Champions Celebration!!

Bright Ideas Nottingham, ACAF and 97.5 Kemet FM are hosting a 'thank you' event for volunteers and partner organisations at the Council House (Market Square, Nottingham) on Wednesday 30th March from 10.00am until 2pm.

Volunteers on different projects are inputting into this event and are having a say in everything from the food to what entertainment there will be on the day. Lisa Jackson and Simon Morley will be supporting input about the Champions of Change service.

This is YOUR day and YOUR time to celebrate YOUR achievements.

Champions are involved in planning and organising the day. You might like to get involved in the event – for example, you might want to entertain us with a special talent, do a reading from a favourite book or entertain us by telling us about a hobby you are passionate about. Please get in touch by

- telephoning us here at Bright Ideas on 0115 837 9474
- emailing to kathleen@brightideasnottingham.co.uk

All Champions can contribute by simply attending. We hope you will keep the date free – we want to celebrate with as many Champions as possible.

Yippee For Amity

Yippee! By popular demand we have decided to hold the March 23rd Chatroom at Amity Wellbeing Centre. You can drop in and leave at any time between 12pm and 3pm. The Centre is at 702 Mansfield Road (A60), so very easy to find. The number 58 bus drops you right outside. Amity Wellbeing is situated inside a large welcoming house. It's the stop for Trevoise Gardens, just before Woodthorpe Park and the shops.

The 'How to talk to your doctor & other health professionals' workshop was held there and we all took note of the beautiful calm atmosphere in the building. The centre is very spacious with a comfortable seating area outside the rear.

The walls are covered with art work created by people who attend the wellbeing centre. The place has a very homely welcoming feel to it, making it the perfect location to host the Chatroom.

If you have never been to a chatroom before then why not come along to the next one! It won't cost you a penny to attend as bus fares are reimbursed on the day - up to a value of an all-day travel ticket (£3.20). You can even bring a packed lunch with you if you like, although we will provide light refreshments and biscuits.

The Chatrooms for all are very relaxed, once you come along you will wonder why you never came before.

So hopefully we'll see you all on **23rd March from 12pm.**

All Ours, Souper Sunday Socials

If you have not been along before then get yourselves down to Sneinton Hermitage Community Centre on the 2nd Sunday of each month and join in with the Souper Sunday Socials run by the peer led community group *All Ours*. The sessions run from 1.15pm – 3.45pm, providing an opportunity to meet for adults of all ages who are looking for somewhere warm and welcoming to go on a Sunday afternoon. *All Ours* began as there was a need to have some sort of out of hours service that provided good nutritious food and social activities in a safe and welcoming environment.

Fresh homemade soup with a roll is £1.50 and with freshly baked cakes at around 50p and tea, coffee or juice charged at 30p a cup it's fantastic value for money. You can play pool, table tennis, and a variety of board games. There is a very peaceful calm atmosphere in the building, so even if you just fancy sitting quietly with a cuppa you would not feel out of place. At *All Ours* people come in to relax, connect with others, access relevant information and support and there is always a listening ear from one of the *All Ours* committee members or volunteers



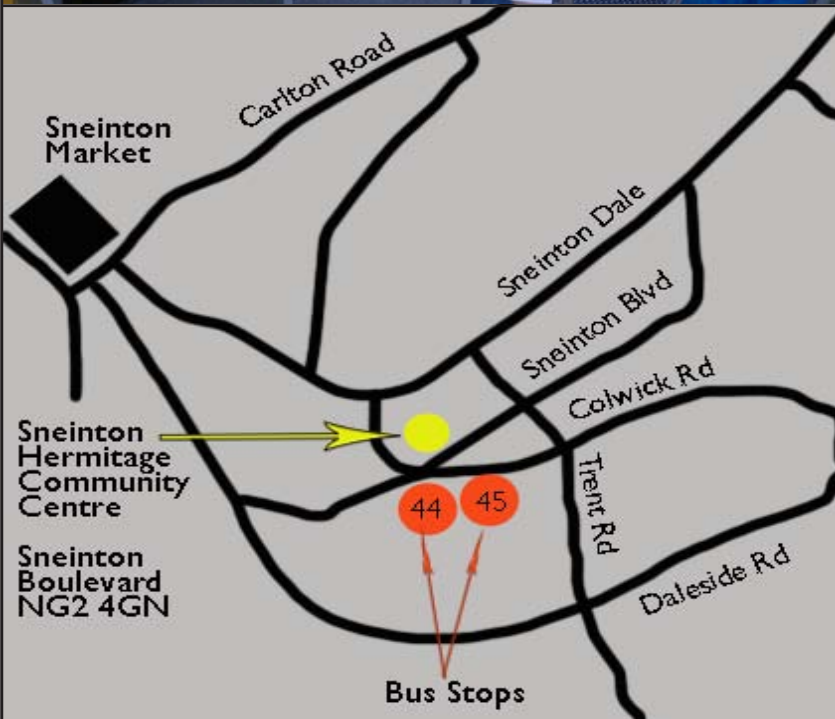
At each monthly session there are representatives from a number of organisations.

Metropolitan Floating Support offer a free drop in service for housing related support issues (e.g. help with housing, rent arrears, welfare benefits, debt, advocacy and repairs).

The Middle Street Jugglers add a further dimension some Sundays with the opportunity to learn some juggling skills or have a go at spinning plates.

The Lost Artists Club is a peer support group set up around 7 years ago. They have a room upstairs, where they have musical jamming sessions which you are welcome to join and bring your own instruments along if you wish. They also bring along art and craft materials. If there is an artist inside of you bursting to be set free, then come along and use the paint brushes, oil paints, wet and dry crayons and paper etc. The *Lost Artists Club* gives people who experience mental distress a chance to promote their artwork or music.

Champions of Change, run by Bright Ideas are also at *All Ours* every month to support, give information and talk to people about what they would like from services.



Simon at a recent All Ours and A map showing Sneinton Hermitage

All Ours is a grass roots community project, set up in 2006, run entirely by volunteers. If you would like to get more information please phone or text 07947656651 or email: all.ours@hotmail.co.uk

How Can You Influence Your GP And Health Services In Nottingham?

There are a small number of participation groups, forums and focus groups in Nottingham, where you can have your say on how services are operating in your area. You can help to shape local mental health services, by commenting on the services provided and future plans.

Most GP/doctor's surgeries have a Patient Participation Group, where you can be part of a collective voice and help to directly influence decisions about services in your area. There are also health panels where members receive a couple of questionnaires each year to fill out and send back. There are also opportunities to get involved in other ways, such as focus groups to discuss specific issues.

They need and value the opinions of local people who use these services, as these comments and suggestions are vital in helping shape NHS services in the future. You could make a difference to all of your health services including GP's, dentists, opticians, pharmacists or even your local hospitals.

To find out about how you can access these services come along to the next Champions' Chatroom where we will have some basic information. You could also ask for some information the next time you visit your doctor's surgery or health centre.

Look out for future articles where we will tell you more about influencing specific services.

Champions Take Part In East Midlands Libraries

Bright Ideas is helping to organise an event at the Nottingham Playhouse on 22nd March 2011 (10am to 3pm). The event is being led by Lincoln University and the Workers' Educational Association.

The event will involve interesting and engaging discussions about:

- How paid staff, volunteers and people who use libraries view the current situation
- The value and contribution of volunteers currently working for library services
- The use people make of libraries and what they value about their services
- The challenges facing libraries
- The support needs of volunteers in libraries

By attending the event, you will benefit from:

- Meeting and talking with library staff and volunteers and other people who use libraries
- Learning about the Take Part approach
- Complementary lunch, refreshments, and travel expenses for the day
- Acknowledgement of your contribution in the report about the event

Champion, Verity, will be reading from Life of Pi (see related article).

If you use library services and feel passionate about them you may want to join Bright Ideas staff on the day. Places are limited so please contact Kathleen or Karen if you are interested.

Clifton Mental Health Forum

On Monday 31st January Lisa Jackson visited the Clifton Mental Health Forum; which is one of the groups that is a part of the Champions' network. Clifton Mental Health Forum is a group made up of local people, along with health and social care professionals. The forum was initially set up by a local man and his wife who passionate and devoted to helping improve access to mental health support services for local residents of Clifton.

Currently the forum is reshaping and its members are inviting local people who use/have used mental health services in Nottingham and also carers of those who use/have used mental health services to come along and help develop a service that will benefit people of Clifton. On the 24th March the Forum will be holding a special event.

Champions of Change Community Troupe (our team of volunteers and staff who engage members of the public) will be there, so if you live in Clifton why not pop by. The time and venue are yet to be confirmed but if you are interested contact Lisa Jackson for an update.

The forum also recently started a self-help group. A Support Champion can support you to attend. The self-help group is run by the people who use it and will be held in the Clifton Cornerstone at 11am on 21st February, 21st March and 18th April. Again, if you live in Clifton and would like to attend give us a call or text.

February's Reference Group

At the last Reference Group meeting on the 10th February we had a great discussion around 'collective voices' it was a very productive meeting, and we would like to take this as another opportunity to send our sincerest thanks to all Reference Group members.

We know that sometimes certain subjects can be hard for people to speak about, but you have all still been brave enough to open up and express yourselves. You have shown amazing strengths and qualities and we appreciate you all.

Now as you will no doubt have heard, there is to be a big change to the benefits system. Many people affected by mental health issues are worried about the Government's proposed changes to the welfare system. The benefits that millions currently receive are to be radically overhauled over the next few years.

But thanks to the amazing work of Rethink campaigners, people concerned about these changes had the chance to hold Chris Grayling MP, Minister for Employment at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), to account.

There was a live on-line Question and Answer session going on whilst we were having the Reference Group meeting, so a Reference Group Champion blogged on the laptop on our behalf, giving us ten minute updates throughout the afternoon.

If you would like to know more about this, or view the whole debate then please go to the Rethink website at www.rethink.org

Here are some comments made by Champions at the end of the Reference Group meeting

- *Lisa gets us all well organised again.*
- *Shared experiences upsetting, but validation and support helps.*
- *Shared info, hope, help and support.*
- *Its good to get together to have discussions about mental health.*
- *Emotionally challenging when thinking about taking on commissioners, but ultimately worth it? We hope!*



Chris Grayling, MP

Champions at Nottingham Central Library for World Book Night (see right)



Vertiy-bly Passionate About Reading



Saturday 5th March every year is World Book Day, as part of this a fellow Champion (pictured below) won a competition and was selected to give away 48 books. Congratulations Verity!

Verity was one of 20,000 people chosen to give out a number of free books. This year a million books were given away to encourage the nation to read and celebrate literature. Verity was asked by Lisa Jackson how she planned on distributing the books and with a big smile she responded:

“Well, that’s one of the reasons I wanted to see you. I really enjoy being part of the Champions of Change network, I have found it beneficial on a number of levels, and when I found out I’d been chosen to hand out these books, I couldn’t think of anyone better to give them to than my fellow Champions on

the network. I know they will really appreciate the book I have chosen. It is my all-time, favourite book”.

The title of the book is “The Life of Pi” which is a fascinating story by a prize winning author Yann Martel and is one of the Champion’s favourite reads.

‘Life of Pi’ was first published in 2001. In 2002 it won the Man Booker Prize and since then has gone on to become the bestselling Man Booker Prize winner of recent years. It is a story to make you believe the impossible. It is a novel that has captured hearts and minds like no other. Many people claim that this book has changed their lives.

Nottingham Central Library kindly agreed for us to use the library to hold a session for Champions and friends. The session was on Wednesday 2nd March. Champions came along, talked about their favourite books, enjoyed a discussion about language around mental health and wellbeing and were given a copy of ‘The Life Of Pi’.

- “Really enjoyed today! Feel more interested in reading”.
- “I live and have Lived Mental Health, past and present”.
- “Acceptable: People with Life Experience. Unacceptable: Service User”.
- “Brilliant to meet with such empowered people, As for Service User- Don’t like the terminology”
- “I prefer Service User”
- “How wonderful to be swimmers in the sea of life, A reader on the shore, A rainbow light in the sky”.
- “We was a lovely bowl of cherries, I reckon every single one special! It was truley lovely thank you all too for organising good, good vibration.”
- “How wonderful to be here, and now sharing books and experiences and warmth”.
- “Experience, Life, Live, Suffer”
- “Understanding mental health, Coping with mental health”.
- “Families and mental illness”.
- “I found this very interesting! I think that mental illness word, should change to Mindest”.
- M. Mental
- I. Illness
- N. Needs
- D. Direction
- “Life experiences , coping with mental health issues”.

'How To Talk To Your Doctor' Success!

We would like to thank all the Champions who attended the workshop 'How to talk to your doctor and other health professionals' on 7th February. This was a pilot session that has been designed with Champions in mind. Part of the aim was to enable Champions to actually influence how the course is run in the future.

The session went really well and we all felt like we had learned something by the end of the day. During the session we discussed and explored ways we could make the most of a 5-10 minute appointment with a GP by using simple techniques. Champions were also shown how they could ask for a second opinion or challenge certain decisions about treatment they receive.

All were given information about the various local organisations and groups they could use if they had positive feedback or needed to make a complaint or to challenge certain GP decisions.

In the future we would like to co-facilitate this workshop in partnership with Champions on the network. If you are a Champion and would like the opportunity to be supported to help deliver a future course then please let us know. If you missed out attending the first time, don't worry!

We will be holding another course in the near future. The Champions who attended the first course have helped us improve the format and content. Suggestions included: To alter some of the time spent on certain content, to allow more

time, maybe by having the course as an all day workshop, also to spend less time talking about the parliamentary acts and more on the practical side of things. After the 'How to talk to your doctor and other health professionals' workshop had finished all involved were asked to state how they were feeling on a post-it. Below are their responses.

How do you feel at the end of the workshop?

- Positive, hope, prepared to say how I really feel
- Confidence
- More confidence. Going home to write down all the things I am more confident about and discuss this with friends who work in the NHS
- Overwhelmed, lots of information in a short space of time
- More empowered to empower others. Distressed/upset so many people have experienced such disempowering situations.
- Rushed in the second half
- Helped to feel more prepared in the sense of how to speak to GP. Very useful was one communication technique
- The course was very helpful to me and a lot more aware of things
- I feel more confident and a little empowered
- More knowledgeable

Champions noted how welcoming Amity was as a location and we will now be holding some Chatrooms and workshops there in the future.

Thanks again for your valuable input!

We are about to start a new consultation and engagement exercise called about GP services. We will be contacting you next month to ask if you wish to take part in it. The questions that we will be asking are based on the conversations we have had with Champions and other members of the public in the first year of the service.

We want to hear your experiences, both good and not so good so that we can learn about how services can be improved and pass this information on to relevant people.

If you want you can write your story instead or ask one of our team to write it with you. These experiences can hopefully give some headway into changing things for the better.

Facebook Volunteer Opportunity

Do you have a few hours a week to spare? Are you interested in social networking?

We have an opportunity for somebody to spend a couple of hours per week updating and chatting on our Champions of Change Facebook page. Own computer and being computer literate are a must. This is a volunteer opportunity although any expenses will be reimbursed, so you will never be out of pocket. If interested please call the Bright Ideas office on 0115 8379 474 or email: Kathleen@brightideasnottingham.co.uk

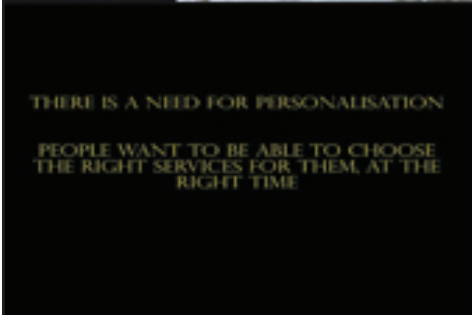


An Exploration Into The Needs Of The Unpaid Carer

Last year, we carried out an engagement exercise which looked at the *respite needs of unpaid carers of people who use/ have used mental health services or who have a 'lived experience' of mental health.

As a result of the activity a report was produced and sent to NHS Nottingham City. We also produced a short film starring two Champions. The film illustrated the findings of the report.

We would like to take this opportunity to send our many thanks to all those involved in the project. We will soon be able to produce the film, the Champions Report, and the NHS response on DVD and will send this to all involved.



Stills from the film

Feedback On The Third Sector Review

Many Champions were involved consultation and engagement activities around the Third Sector Review which took place last year. The purpose of the review was to evaluate mental health service provision and propose changes in what will be commissioned in the future. Champions

- attended and participated in Bright Ideas' review meeting with commissioners,
- attended and participated in the NHS consultation event,
- discussed the draft report at Champions' Chatrooms, and
- completed surveys with Support Champions

Groups and organisations who deliver mental health services in Nottingham can attend the 'Mental Health Providers Forum' which meets regularly. At the meeting on the 7th March the attendees were given an update.

The majority of people at the meeting wanted clarification on issues relating to the Report on the commissioning of mental health services in the City. Commissioners, Charlotte Wilcockson and Claire Holland were invited to the meeting. There were a number of questions, and the main points were as follows:

- Pathfinder Status means that Nottingham City is in a state of readiness to share its learning with future GP commissioners as from April 2011. GPs will shadow current commissioners for 2 days a week.
- Marcus Bicknell (GP) will continue to be the lead on mental health. It was said that he is very supportive of, and positive about, the 3rd sector.
- The Report has not fundamentally changed and is close, in substance, to the draft that was sent out. However there are some slight changes. This latest delay is a result of the consultation with GPs and Local Authority.
- There is a slight increase in the overall budget.
- The commissioning process will adhere to the programme and timeline as previously announced. It will commence in April 2011.

We still await the final report from the NHS and will share it with Champions when we receive it.

The beautiful accompanying music to the film is by Gileah Taylor, who generously gave Champions of Change permission to use the song. If you would like to view this moving film then please go to the Bright Ideas website at www.brightideasnottingham.co.uk and in the news section you will see the screen to click on. Alternatively you can go to YouTube. Type in Bright Ideas Nottingham and there you will see 'an exploration into the needs of unpaid carer's'. Enjoy!

And, by the way, if you would like to visit the website but don't have the computer skills, look out for the Champions course: "I Don't Do Computers!" coming soon.

*'Respite' simply means taking time off or taking a break

How Does Your Family Doctor Care For You?

In the last newsletter (Issue 1, 2011), we mentioned the survey 'What your doctor does for you'. The survey relates to how people feel about the care, support and treatment they have received from their GPs – particularly when they first had concerns about their mental health. The survey also gives interviewees the chance to share ideas and thoughts about other options in relation to where people can go to discuss mental health concerns. The questions in the survey are based on the conversations we have had with Champions and other members of the public in the first year of the service. Champions and a range of health professionals have given feedback on the survey and their comments and suggestions have been acted on. Thanks to those who helped with this.

Unfortunately this engagement and consultation survey has been held up but this is because GPs wanted an opportunity to comment, which is great news. We have now had feedback from GPs who are passionate about mental health including Dr Chris Packham (the Director of Public Health) and Dr Marcus Bicknell who is the new lead GP for mental health. We thank them both for helping to improve the survey. Dr Bicknell asked us to change the name of the survey to 'How does your family doctor care for you?'

We will be starting the engagement activity this month. All Champions will be given the opportunity to take part in the engagement. We will keep all Champions informed about progress, results, findings and recommendations.

We would still love to hear your experiences of when you first accessed services. Let us know where you first went to get support and/or treatment in relation to your mental health and how you felt about it. We want to hear positive feedback as well as your suggestions for improvements.

If you require any support getting your thoughts onto paper, then we will be happy to help. Just call your Support Champion or ring the office on 0115 8379 474.

Training Courses Available Totally Free.

Here is a list of qualifications available. Please get your show of interest in as soon as possible to ensure your place, as some of these opportunities have limited places and are going fast.

These qualifications start from entry level through to NVQ level 3 which is equivalent to an A level. Literacy and Numeracy levels 1 and 2 (equivalent to GCSE's), Business admin NVQ's (apprentice route available), Customer service, Cleaning, Housing, Health & social care (apprentice route available), ITQ, Childcare, Information Advice and Guidance (apprentice route available), Hospitality & Catering and Housekeeping

If you have even the slightest interest then please call, or let us or let us know when you come to the Chatroom and we can help you with it. These courses are tailored to go at your own pace, so you can more or less take your time or speed through as you like, so no pressure! Some can even be done in a one to one setting, so you don't have to worry about being in a classroom full of people. Dates can be set around you, perfect if you have other commitments.



www.brightideasnottingham.co.uk
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