



Experts hear how local people can improve mental health services in Nottingham

According to the Mental Health Foundation, the UK's leading mental health research, policy and service improvement charity, 1 in 4 of us will experience some kind of mental health problem in the course of a year.

So who knows best when it comes to improving mental health services in Nottingham?

One groundbreaking service called Champions of Change would answer that it's people who have experience of mental health issues and their carers that know best.

The service has been piloted in Nottingham since 2009, run by local organisation Bright Ideas Nottingham in partnership with NHS Nottingham City, with the aim of involving users of mental health services and their carers in improving those services for others – by listening to their experiences, views and recommendations.

Now, the service is planning to share the learning from the last two years with mental health professionals and organisations around the city, at a special film screening and celebration event called 'We are the Champions' on Tuesday 18th October from 10.15am to 2pm at the Broadway Cinema in Nottingham.

The event is part of Nottingham's Mental Health Awareness Weeks, which are aiming to boost public awareness of mental health.

How the service works

People who use mental health services and their carers have joined 'Champions of Change' as volunteer 'Champions'. Their role has been to talk to other people who use mental health services and carers and to feedback people's experiences, views and recommendations to senior decision-makers at NHS Nottingham City and Nottingham City Council.

This feedback has helped to shape the future of mental health services in Nottingham.

The service has also recruited other volunteers who are interested in improving mental health services in Nottingham as Champions. They have helped to spread the word about mental health in communities around the city, whilst encouraging people to get involved in having their say in how services can be improved.

The film screening and celebration event



The event at Broadway will include a film about the service and a debate on how local people can influence mental health services in Nottingham, especially those with experience of mental health issues and their carers.

The film has been made by 22-year-old Rebekah Gough with music composed by 23-year-old Lorna Poole, who is a volunteer with Champions of Change.

Special guests will include Marcus Bicknell, GP Lead For Mental Health Commissioning in Nottingham; Dr Chris Udenze GP; Eric Adjaidoo, Independent Mental Health Nurse Specialist Consultant; Rob Gardiner, Deputy Chief Executive of the Carers Federation; Maqsood Ahmed OBE, Director of NHS Equality Delivery System, Department of Health; Dr Joanna Copping, Consultant in Public

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Health Medicine, NHS Nottingham City; Andrew Hall, Acting Director of Health and Well being Transition, NHS Nottingham City; and Charlotte Wilcockson, Commissioning Manager, NHS Nottingham City.

The event will be hosted by Champion Andrew Downs; Nigel Cooke, Chief Executive of One Nottingham and Trish Adudu, TV and BBC radio presenter.

Lisa Jackson from Bright Ideas explains:

“The service has worked because it’s been led by local people themselves.

For example, people who may not have had the confidence to feedback to mental health service providers have been happy to talk to volunteer Champions because they know the Champions have experienced mental health issues themselves.

That has been good news for decision-makers, because they’ve gained a great deal of valuable insight into how mental health services are experienced by the people that use them.

The service has had some interesting side effects for Champions as well, and in some cases has helped to aid their recovery.

The event will give us the chance to share what we’ve learned and celebrate with Champions.”

Andrew Downs, a Champion from Bestwood:

“Other Champions from the service put me forward to represent their collective voice. I have taken the views of the service to Nottingham City Council’s mental health forum. This has really raised my confidence. Change doesn’t happen overnight but it’s great to know that our voice is heard and our concerns and ideas are taken onboard.”

Champion Don Tinsley has put forward Champions’ collective views to NHS Nottingham City and was also selected by Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust (Nottingham’s largest provider of mental health services) to sit on the interview panel selecting a very senior mental health services manager recently.

Don says:

“I have developed a lot of confidence as a result of being involved in the service and I am in the process of setting up a self help group around mental health issues. I would never have done this if it wasn’t for Champions of Change!”

Dr Chris Packham, Executive Director of Public Health, NHS Nottingham City concludes:

“A vibrant and independent voice for service improvement is vital. Champions of Change can provide that, and help those with a less powerful voice to be heard.”

Anyone with an interest in mental health is welcome to attend the event but booking is essential as spaces are limited.

Please call Karen Lock on 0115 837 9474 or email karen@brightideasnottingham.co.uk