



# PATIENTS COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

September 2017

NEWS, VIEWS AND COMMENT FROM THE ROYAL EDINBURGH HOSPITAL

## Patients Council Meeting – 24 July 2017

13 people attended the meeting which was ably chaired by Stephen Muirhead. We enjoyed an absorbing, thought-provoking and relaxing session with Maxwell Reay, Chaplain, Department of Spiritual Care. There are four chaplains based in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital – Maxwell works full-time with out-patients and in the community; Debbie and Joe work part-time with in-patients; and Lynn works part-time, mostly in the community and one day a week in the hospital. Employed by the NHS, they work to NHS policies such as confidentiality. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, not necessarily ministers of religion, and need a good knowledge of different faiths to enable them to offer spiritual care to people of all faiths and none.

They try to support people to make connections between their spirituality and their mental health – what enables them to feel better, to keep as well as they can be – who am I, what gives me meaning, gets me out of bed, gives me hope for the future, gives me joy? Many people believe in something greater than themselves – perhaps a god or nature. Chaplains help people with the big questions of life – why am I here, why does this keep happening, why can't I just get on with things? They journey with people in different ways, walking alongside them, supporting but not dictating the journey.

Some of us then built a trainset which made us negotiate working with strangers and think about life as a journey. We all chose a picture card and shared a little bit about ourselves to explain our choice – this also made us listen to others. It can be hard when you're in hospital, under scrutiny, to open up and share with others, you feel lost, unsure, find it hard to reconnect – spiritual care staff can help here.

If you're feeling stressed or anxious, you can attend the Mindfulness Group at 4pm on Thursdays in the Quiet Room. It's about staying in the present, encouraging you to see things as you've never seen them before, really looking at things closely such as daily routines – choose a task you do every and take time to look at it closely, e.g. washing dishes, cleaning teeth. It helps to slow down your thoughts. You can do it anywhere, even on the bus! It can help you to deal with stressful situations.

We then asked about out-of-hours cover, access to the Quiet Room and admissions procedure. We believe it would be helpful if staff could ensure when patients are admitted that they know what services are available to them, such as spiritual care and advocacy.

## Stories of Changing Lives Three

I can't believe it's already time for me to go!

The book is finished... It's really exciting to be able to finally share it with everyone – I've been blown away by the honesty, generosity, and talent of the people who have contributed their stories, poems, artworks and photos. I'm also excited about the Changing Lives film, which has been produced alongside the book.

Please do come and celebrate the project with us at one of the upcoming events – details below. You'll be able to pick up a copy of the book, hear readings from some of the contributors, and see the film as well. Hope to see you there!

It's been a wonderful eight months, and I've really learned a lot from all of you. It's been a privilege to be trusted with your stories – thank you.  
Katherine

## Preview: Stories of Changing Lives

The Hive, Royal Edinburgh Hospital  
19<sup>th</sup> September, 18:30

## Launch: Stories of Changing Lives

Summerhall Café, 1 Summerhall  
17<sup>th</sup> October, 18:30

## Stories of Changing Lives Exhibition

Part of the SMHAF Out of Sight Out of Mind exhibition, from Wed 11–Sun 29 Oct, 11am–6pm, at Summerhall, free entry. We are hoping to show the exhibition at the hospital as well, but this is still to be confirmed.

All venues have step free access and an accessible toilet. Please get in touch if there is anything we can do to make the event more accessible to you.

## **Group Advocacy**

Back in June, the new intensive rehabilitation ward, Braids, was one of the first to move into the new hospital, so we were glad to hear from patients that their first impressions of the new-build were very positive. People felt that their previous accommodation in the old hospital now seemed extremely old-fashioned; this is slightly bittersweet, because the remaining rehab patients in the Affleck Centre and North Wing will shortly be moving into the soon-to-be renovated Balcarres and Hermitage wards, left empty by acute wards moving to the new building. We want to make sure that these renovated wards are made as comfortable and home-like as possible and allow for the same degree of privacy as that now enjoyed by acute patients in the new hospital building.

Elsewhere, patients discussed staff attitudes and we heard about comments made recently to people, that didn't seem to fit into modern ideas of recovery at all: we'd thought that young people being told that "they'll never work again" because of their mental health, was something that had gone out with the ark, so were extremely dismayed to hear from patients that some staff don't appear to have fully taken on board modern ideas of recovery. We're still clinging to the hope that somehow the new hospital building will encourage full adoption of these newer ideas of recovery, human rights-based approaches and personalised, person-centred care that patients want to see.

A recurring theme across the wards during summer was the issue of passes. Unsurprisingly, when the nicer summer weather comes, people want to get outside into the hospital's green spaces and so find the restrictions on getting out on pass very frustrating. We discussed whether or not patients should have the right to expect a minimum standard of access to fresh air, in the same way that it is commonly understood that prisoners do. This is another situation that should improve in the new hospital, as each ward has access to its own little courtyard.

Increasingly, patients are raising issues with us about discharge, accommodation, support and access to welfare, education, training and employment in the community. We find ourselves increasingly talking about patients' right to an independent life in the community and are glad to hear patients expressing these strong expectations that services will be available in both hospital and community to allow this to happen.

**Have a look at our website**

**[www.rehpatientscouncil.org.uk](http://www.rehpatientscouncil.org.uk)**

**Lots of information about the Patients Council and links to other interesting items**

**[www.facebook.com/rehpatientscouncil/](http://www.facebook.com/rehpatientscouncil/)**

**[twitter.com/rehpatients](https://twitter.com/rehpatients)**

**The Royal Edinburgh Hospital  
Patients' Council**

The Patients Council is an independent collective advocacy project for people who use or have used the services of the hospital. We provide a forum for common issues about mental health treatment and care and represent patients' interests in order to improve services. We hold general meetings every two months. To get involved with mental health issues from the service-user's viewpoint, contact our staff.

**Telephone:** 0131 537 6462

**Email:** [info@rehpatientscouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@rehpatientscouncil.org.uk)

**Write:** The Patients' Council, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Morningside Terrace, EH10 5HF

**Our Management Committee**

Albert Nicolson, Martin McAlpine,  
Stephen Muirhead,  
Stephen Polockus, Alison Robertson,  
Patricia Whalley

*Co-opted members:*

Cathy Robertson, Isla Jack

**PATIENTS COUNCIL  
MEETINGS**

**2017**

**2 – 3.30pm**

**30 January**

**27 March**

**29 May**

**24 July**

**25 September**

**27 November:**

**Annual General  
Meeting**

**1.30 – 3pm**

**with refreshments**

**History of the Patients Council**

A few of our members have written a history of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital Patients Council highlighting some of our activities since 2000. Please contact us for a copy.

To receive the newsletter direct, by post or e-mail, please complete and return this section.

*I would prefer to receive the Newsletter by post*  *email*  *(tick as appropriate)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



The Royal Edinburgh Hospital Patients Council is a registered charity  
Scottish Charity No SC021800  
Our offices are between Outpatients and Mental Health Tribunal in the ADC  
[www.rehpatientscouncil.org.uk](http://www.rehpatientscouncil.org.uk)

**All patients, former patients, staff and visitors are warmly invited to attend**

# **PATIENTS COUNCIL MEETING**

**from 2.00-3.30pm on**

**Monday 25 September  
in The Hive**

**Guest Speaker**

# **Sean Harper**

**Psychological therapies in the  
Royal Edinburgh Hospital**