

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1.30-3pm, Thursday 4 December 2008, Board Room, Royal Edinburgh Hospital

NOTES

The meeting was chaired by Lesley McDade, Chair of the Patients' Council, and was attended by 33 people.

1. Welcome, Apologies and Code of Conduct

Lesley welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought everyone's attention to the Ground Rules on behaviour at our meetings. Apologies were received from Rosemary Carter, Tom Carey and Elaine Dobbie. Lesley then introduced our speaker for the day, Marion Findlay from Volunteer Centre Edinburgh. Marion was standing in for Angela Farr, the Volunteer Hub co-ordinator, who was unwell.

Marion pointed out the many similarities between the Volunteer Centre and the Patients' Council – both are innovative, independent of the hospital, and pioneers in providing opportunities for people with mental health problems to volunteer. Volunteering means “giving up time, skills, energy, to help someone outside your family for no financial reward”. Volunteer Centre Edinburgh offers many opportunities including charity shop work, conservation, sports, arts and befriending. The benefits of volunteering include having fun, making new friends, work experience and health improvements.

The new Volunteer Hub in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital is being managed by Angela Farr and has funding for three years. It aims to promote volunteering to service users, staff and visitors at the hospital; to promote the health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering; to provide individual support and advice through a drop-in service and 1:1 interviews; to provide advice, information and training to organisations who involve volunteers to ensure volunteers have a positive experience and to support staff to create in-patient volunteering opportunities in the hospital. The Hub has now been set up and equipped. It has been promoted to staff in the hospital. Information sessions with in-patients have taken place at The Hive. Individual appointments have taken place with service users. And work has started on exploring and identifying in-patient volunteering opportunities. When the recruitment and induction of a development assistant has been completed, regular opening hours for drop-ins etc will be established.

To get involved, contact Angela Farr, Senior Development Worker on 0131 537 6229, email royal.edinburgh@volunteercentre.org.uk.

2. Notes of the Annual General Meeting on 6 December 2007

These were approved.

3. Annual Report 2007 – 2008

Lesley McDade, Chair of the Patients' Council, and David Budd, Collective Advocacy Support & Development Worker, highlighted some of the content of the report which will be circulated with the next newsletter.

4. Financial Report

Claire Lloyd, from our host agency, Circles Network, had kindly agreed to travel up from Rugby to present the financial report. The report has been fully audited. The bulk of the spend is on salaries. The structure of our management accounts is currently being revised to ensure items are fully budgeted for and to eliminate unused categories. The balance is healthy, with £16,014 being carried forward despite the funders reclaiming an overpayment caused by the budget not being adjusted when a post became redundant. Steps are being taken to address underspends for staff training and volunteer expenses. Some concern was expressed that the accounts might not conform to OSCR requirements – Claire and David will look into this for next year. Marion informed the meeting that the Volunteer Centre are going to be doing some work with the Patients' Council on governance issues. Claire and David are working on a budget for 2009 that allocates an appropriate amount of funds for Volunteer training. David reassured everyone that the Patients' Council accounts are audited as part of Circles Network accounts and are accurate. When opened up, no questions were put forward about finances.

5. Election of User Members of the Management Committee

The following people were re-elected:

Tony Chan, Elaine Dobbie, Shirley Gowers, Craig Ireland, Lesley McDade, Albert Nicolson, Alison Robertson, Patricia Whalley.

The following new members were elected:

Kate Cullen, Carol Manley.

There are two remaining vacancies. Ricky Quellor expressed an interest in applying. He will be invited to a meeting with current members in January to find out more about what's involved, then his nomination can go forward to the next Patients' Council meeting on 29 January.

6. Date of first meeting of Management Committee

The first meeting of the new Management Committee will take place on Wednesday 7 January 2009.

7. AOCB

a) Reprovisioning

The Patients' Council has been involved in the Options Appraisal Process to plan the reprovisioning of the services of the hospital. The Council tried to give patient views without putting in so many objections that the process ground to a halt. The first set of workshops were deemed 'unsound' but we were not given all the answers we wanted to our questions about this. The results of the second round of workshops were assessed as favouring a site at Little France. Concerns were voiced that it was not clear that Little France was the favoured site and the Patients' Council asked for their disagreement to be minuted. We have held meetings to garner feedback about the process. A further meeting will be held on Monday 8th December at 1.30 which everyone was invited to attend, or to phone, write or call in with views before the meeting.

b) Ward 3 closure

The closure of Ward 3 will facilitate better links with the new Intensive Home Treatment Teams. The space will be used to provide a Life Skills Centre.