



PATIENTS COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

May 2017

NEWS, VIEWS AND COMMENT FROM THE ROYAL EDINBURGH HOSPITAL

Patients Council Meeting – 27 March 2017

Guest speaker: Shulah Allan

Shulah helped form the fledgling Patients Council in the 1990s! She joined NHS Lothian's Board as a patient representative some years ago and is now Vice-Chair. With the advent of Integration, she joined the Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board, a planning and governance partnership between health, social care and the third sector.

At the heart of integration is locality working, so Edinburgh is now divided into four areas. Shulah strongly believes grassroots-style working could lead to many benefits for Edinburgh's residents, as long as we avoid a postcode lottery and ensure all citizens get equal access to services (especially third sector services).

Major issues the IJB is currently working with include:

GP services: there's a recruitment crisis and more GP surgeries are needed. Five GP practices are now managed directly by the Health Board.

Shift of balance of care: More people with long-term conditions (including mental health) are cared for at home, not in hospital, but the system currently suffers from delayed discharge and lengthy waits for packages of care to be put in place.

Drug and Alcohol misuse: combining mental health teams with drug and alcohol teams has led to a reduction in overall funding. We discussed the links between mental health and drug and alcohol use.

More honesty is needed - much drug use in mental health being under-reported and unacknowledged.

Mental Health Strategy: of particular relevance to us at the REH, is how hospitals will help meet the current strong emphasis on prevention.

Shulah then facilitated free-ranging discussion which covered topics including the new Older People's Rapid Response Team, bed closures, welfare reform, housing, the role of carers, difficulties retaining care staff, ring-fencing of NHS resources being transferred to social care and proposed changes to wellbeing services in Edinburgh.

We asked Shulah if she felt there was true parity between third sector organisations and the statutory services. Shulah thinks the situation is better in Edinburgh than in many other areas but accepted the difficulties imposed by commissioning, tender processes and contractor-type funding arrangements.

Stories of Changing Lives Three

The Stories of Changing Lives Project is moving fast! We're putting together a book of writing, poems, photographs and artwork about experiences of mental health and the REH.

Over the last couple of months, we've run workshops on writing, film, and photography. I was particularly excited by a great afternoon of poetry-writing in April, and Artlink ran a series of art sessions which resulted in some gorgeous pieces.

I've met loads of brilliant people who have come to workshops and got in touch to tell me their stories – and the book is starting to shape up...

Meanwhile, Peter Ross of Chiaroscuro is working hard on creating a film to go with the book, Margaret Drysdale is supporting people to get photographing, and CAPS is talking to people about the ways that activism has changed the hospital.

We're also planning a book launch and exhibition in October – watch this space!

Want to be part of Stories of Changing Lives? There's still time! Get in touch by 16th June.

Tell the world about your experience of mental health and the REH through writing, poetry, art, or photography. Or if you prefer to tell it out loud, we can have a relaxed conversation, which will be typed up. You'll have the final say in editing, and you can decide whether to use your name or be anonymous.

Professional photographer Margaret Drysdale can work with you to tell your story through photos as well.

Get in touch on 0131 537 6462, or katherine.mcmahon@rehpatientscouncil.org.uk

Group Advocacy

In March and April, patients continued to raise issues around the smoking policy: often people either complained about other patients smoking on the ward, or were unhappy about the restrictions being placed on their own smoking. The Patients Council have attended the hospital management's smoking policy meetings to reflect all these views and asked questions about the impact of the recent decision of the UK Supreme Court about the smoking policy at the State Hospital. This case found that the State Hospital ban on the possession of tobacco products and policies about searches for and confiscation of cigarettes etc. were illegal. This was because they didn't give consideration to the "minimum/ least restriction of freedom" principle in the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. It's not yet clear what impact this decision may have on policy in the REH, although patients could reasonably expect local policies about possession, search and confiscation of tobacco products to be in accordance with this decision.

Another major theme over Spring was the perennial problem of patients' personal property. People regularly complain about not being able to properly secure their belongings and of their phones, clothes etc going missing during admissions. Previous attempts to solve the problem (like the hotel-style safes available in some wards) just haven't worked. Leaving property with nursing staff is inconvenient to patients and staff alike. The claim form system for reporting missing property is bureaucratic and takes ages to come to a decision. In the spirit of "prevention is better than cure", we've raised this problem in relation to the new hospital building. As things stand, patients in the new REH Building will not have lockable cupboard space in individual bedrooms, nor be able to lock their bedrooms themselves when they're not in their rooms. There will be no safes either. One possible solution that's been suggested is a bank of school-type lockers to be made available on ward corridors. We'll keep raising this issue with managers in the hope that a workable solution can finally be found.

Have a look at our website

www.rehpatientscouncil.org.uk

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

www.facebook.com/rehpatientscouncil/

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

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 member:
Cathy Robertson

**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

followed by buffet

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)*

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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

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

PATIENTS COUNCIL MEETING

from 2.00-3.30pm on

**Monday 29 May 2017
in The Hive**

**Dr Jane Cheeseman
and Maria Holancova**

**Introduction to Quality
Improvement**

**Find out about the growing QI movement within
the NHS**

**and why patients need to understand it to get
the changes we want**