



For better
mental health

'Getting Started, Moving Forward' Modernising Day Services Wednesday 1st November 2006

About Oxfordshire Mind

Oxfordshire Mind was a finalist in the 2006 Oxfordshire Business of the Year Awards.

Our mission is to promote good mental health through the provision of high quality services with active user participation; and through campaigning for positive change. The services we provide include a network of day services, a range of supported housing provision, an information and advice service, and an evening crisis phone line for people in distress.

"Oxfordshire Mind continues to make important strides forward in promoting the mental health of the general population and those people who have suffered mental health difficulties. We value their energy and commitment."

Sophy Forman-Lynch (North Oxon NHS Primary Care Trust Partnership)

"Both impressive and inspiring, Mind's involvement and support of service users and carers is exemplary, as is the sheer hard work of Mind staff"

Oxford City Primary Care Trust

Modernising Mental Health Day Services

(without throwing the baby out with the bathwater)

The image of mental health day services has taken a bit of a battering recently – first Rachel Perkins took a pop at them in her OpenMind article *'Who needs a day centre?'* and then the Social Exclusion Unit got the bit between its teeth criticising *"the stereotypical image of a mental health day centre, where people sit around all day, smoking and drinking tea"*.¹

There has also been recognition of innovative practice where day services have helped bring people together, inspire people to believe in themselves, look outward to make all sorts of connections, and become fully part of their local communities. The best day services can be a route *into* the wider community – not a ghetto apart from it.

We believe the potential for day services is huge. We want to see day services changing and developing and a debate we are having locally is whether the description 'day centre' and 'day service' is still helpful. Does it really describe the range and diversity and aspirations of what we want to do – or what the Primary Care Trust and others want to commission? We have begun thinking instead about our services as a 'Community Resource Network'.

In 2005 the Oxfordshire Primary Care Trusts, Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxfordshire Mental Healthcare Trust held a detailed 'strategic review' of all mental health day services in the county. This was a model exercise in partnership working and involved extensive input from service users and the voluntary sector right up to the membership of the 'Project Board'.



¹ Mental Health and Social Exclusion, ODPM Social Exclusion Unit June 2004





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“Oxfordshire Mind has deservedly developed a strong and positive reputation across the county for its ability to work in partnership with both statutory and other voluntary sector agencies. Mind provides a significant range of day services in the county; these services provide a valuable and well regarded contribution to the rich tapestry of voluntary sector services in the county.”

Steve Appleton
(Head of Mental Health, Thames Valley NHS Strategic Health Authority, December 2005)

“Within this Local Mind Association’s report there is evidence, on a range of issues, of activities or approaches that could act as examples of good practice or excellence”.

Mind Quality Standards Review 2005

The Oxfordshire PCT review preceded the new commissioning guidance but anticipated many of the themes. What was important to service users was having a range of services and a genuine choice. What was important to providers was developing staff skills and expertise to work in new and different ways. And what was important to commissioners was that services were linked up and serious about social inclusion.

Oxfordshire Mind was involved in all stages of the review and the recommendations have certainly accelerated the pace of change. We provide a network of day services across the county. Some are in rural areas, others in the city and towns. One is a successful ‘women only’ service; others do specific work to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic communities. Last year there were over 32,000 visits to Oxfordshire Mind day services.

Behind each individual service there is a range of specialist services (internet access, benefits advice, training, groups) and activities (arts events, cultural celebrations, a music studio, sports programmes) and strong connections with both mental health provision and mainstream services.

The last two years have seen major changes to the way we work. We have shifted opening times into the evening and weekend, worked with local employers to promote the service to people in work, expanded our programme of CBT-based groups on coping with depression & managing anxiety, developed services with crèche provision to reach young mothers, and initiated joint work with the Primary Care Trusts’ new CDW (Community Development Worker) for BME communities.

Partnership is right at the centre of how we work - partnership with the local Mental Healthcare Trust, with employment and training providers, with arts groups, with community education, and with other local charities. The most important partnership though is the partnership with service users who are involved in decision making right up the organisation’s governing Board of Trustees.

We believe that day services (or ‘community resource projects’ as ours could come to be more accurately titled) have a real contribution to make to the future of mental health provision – but that involves all of us getting beyond simplistic ideas that day services are inherently ‘good’ or ‘bad’. To meet people’s changing needs day services certainly need to change. We are now working hard with our commissioners on a programme of change that, we believe, will genuinely modernise the service, but without throwing out the baby with the bathwater!

To find out more visit www.oxfordshire-mind.org.uk or get in touch:

**Patrick Taylor, Director
Oxfordshire Mind
125 Walton Street
Oxford
OX2 6AH
T: 01865 310830**

E: patrick.taylor@oxfordshire-mind.org.uk

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