

Mental Health News

Keeping a seat warm on the MHIP Steering Board

The Mental Health News e-bulletin is a daily bulletin issued by the Mental Health Improvement Programme (MHIP) containing an item relating to a Mental Health issue, development or outcome in the North West.

The aim is to bring awareness to our stakeholders about service improvement and innovative projects underway in Mental Health across the North West, and to encourage you (the reader) to act as vehicle for ensuring that your organisation is engaged with the work where applicable.

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First, a brief look back. The Commission to review Mental Health Services spent a year listening to stakeholders in the North West – particularly users and carers, to find out where and how services are falling short. If there was one thing the Commission heard loud and clear it was that users and carers want a real say in which services they get and how good they are.

Users and carers are at the heart of the Commission's report ([A better future in mind, October 2008](#)) and recommendations now accepted by all stakeholders. NHS North West has set up the Mental Health Improvement Programme (MHIP) to deliver the recommendations and all stakeholders have had their say in how this will be done.

[Collective Voice North West](#) has been established to give users and carers in the North West an equal voice on the Stakeholder and Steering Boards.

"It is my belief that users and carers in the North West are now able to have a real say at the highest level in which services are commissioned (bought) by Primary Care Trusts and how well service providers are doing based on their experience of services".

There is hard work still to be done. In the year ahead, those who represent users and carers on the Steering Board will play a central role in working with North West partners to deliver the Commission's recommendations which puts users and carers at the heart of service decision making at every level. I believe users and carers will want partners to be clear about what is expected from commissioners to meet the consultation competency of World Class Commissioning. Moreover, [High quality care for all: NHS Next Stage Review final report](#) places a need on service providers to understand the patients' experience of services when their quality is being assessed. Users and carers will want to see and contribute to progress in these and all other programme areas.

I've been proud to keep a seat warm; and what a seat it is!
Terry Lewis, User Representative, MHIP Steering Board

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