

Nothing For Us Without Us

Hello, Everyone! My name is Jackie Chapman and I facilitate the PDR Team User Group.

The Group meet every month at the Cynthia Spencer Study Centre on the Manfield Site with an agenda based on what the users want to discuss. A Team member often attends for the first part of the meeting so that we can all share information, ideas and concerns, and the remainder of the meeting is given over to a guest speaker or to other group issues. Minutes are recorded and distributed and actions are followed up, but we have a laugh also!

The Team and the User Group work to the Social Model of Disability, which asserts that it is society and the environment that often disables people, not the physical impairment that we have to live with! As facilitator I write to and meet with many professionals who provide services for disabled people, both within and outside the health service, taking views and concerns, comments and congratulations from the people who use the services. The aim is to ensure that all people living with a disability can access, utilise, and benefit from what is being provided in our local area.

The User Group works closely with the Team to ensure that what they provide is what disabled people want, and regular questionnaires are commissioned to ensure that the views of all the users are sought and not just those who want to attend meetings. The User Group is involved in recruitment interviews for new Team members and training for the necessary skills is sought through the Healthcare Trust.

We continually look to furthering user involvement and also provide a social element for users coming to meetings. Travel expenses are always paid and accompanying carers are welcome.

The Roles of the PDRT User Group

- To constructively monitor the Team
- To identify issues concerning people with physical disabilities
- To establish the User's voice with those in authority
- To ensure Users are consulted at the initial planning stage of any initiative before any decisions are made
- To promote active user involvement
- To provide mutual support for the empowerment of physically disabled people
- To provide peer support
- To ensure there is active recognition of disabled people as employees within the Trust
- To lobby relevant bodies as appropriate

Responsibilities of PDRT User Group Members

- To identify issues arising from personal experience that the Group can take on for the benefit of others
- To take responsibility for being a User Group member by:
 - Attending meetings
 - Taking part in activities as necessary
 - Offering peer support at a level required
 - Remaining positive and enthusiastic about the Team and the User Group
 - Remaining committed to the User Group's activities

Responsibilities of the User Group Facilitator

Facilitate: To make easy, to promote *

Facilitator: A launchpad; catalyst; spur **

- To empower PDRT Users to say what they want to about the service in a constructive manner
- To ensure that the User Group members realise that the group belongs to them
- To take responsibility for the activities and outcomes of the group
- To be actively seek out information relevant to the group
- To write and distribute a quarterly newsletter
- To obtain funding for member's expenses
- To accurately record minutes of meetings and send them out
- To inform the group of developments as necessary

* Reference: The Oxford Pocket Dictionary

** Reference: Microsoft Office Professional 2000

If you would like to know more about the User Group's activities please contact me, Jackie Chapman, by e. mail:

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