

Minutes of the VASP meeting of 14th February 2013

Held at MSDC offices, 1pm to 3pm

Present:

SP	Sue Parker	Mid Suffolk VASP – Chair
SC	Sally Corker	Inspire
WS	Wendy Shepherd	SNAP + Advice project
LA	Linda Attwood	Bury PD group and SUF
DR	Daniel Richards	Suffolk Family Carers
BS	Bev Stearn	Suffolk Family Carers
DW	David Whitefield	Suffolk User Forum
CW	Cathy Walsh	Suffolk User Forum
JC	Julia Carr	VASP co-ordinator
PF	Peter Fleming	Together Support Worker
JA	Janis Emstrong	Together Senior Communication Officer
SB	Suzanne Britton	MAP/Green Gables/VASP - minutes

Apologies:

Christine Cantwell
Kerry Overton
Barbara Bilston
Liz Roper
Nigel Moyes
Lorna Small
Guenever Pachent
Jon Seed

1. Welcome and apologies

2. Minutes and matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. NSFT Day on Thursday 7th February

SB attended a NSFT conference in Norwich.

Aidan Thomas, CEO of NSFT, spoke of a closer working partnership between the Trust and the voluntary sector.

Stonham Housing was cited as a voluntary organisation that was already working with NSFT's Bed Management and Discharge Facilitation Team.

After the coffee break, there was a table exercise and participants were asked to answer the following questions:

- 1) What's already working well?
- 2) What needs developing?
- 3) What are the obstacles and how can these be overcome?
- 4) What actions are needed by the VCS and the Trust to achieve user benefits?
- 5) What would you like to see happen next? Eg. 6 months, 18 months, 24 months.

The answers to the questions were:

- 1) Map the voluntary sector to find out who is doing what and where?
- 2) Publish a directory of services available to people with mental ill health.
- 3) NSFT jargon buster
- 4) Better communication
- 5) Funding

4. CYPS conference

A joint conference for Mid Suffolk and Babergh district councils will take place on 17th April at Hadleigh Pool and Leisure Centre.

SP announced the speakers:

- ◆ Lulu Preston – NSFT EIPS
- ◆ Sarah Jackson – Kernos Counselling
- ◆ Jacqui Martin – Suffolk Family Carers
- ◆ Brian Tobin – Icen
- ◆ Anna Vizor and Dr. Siri Robling – NSFT.

- There will also be opportunities for networking at coffee break and lunch.
- There will be stands but not in sufficient number to accommodate all VASP members. Space will also be allocated to schools, Children's centres etc.
- CW suggested inviting the Suffolk Constabulary Disability Officer.

5. ASDA Stowmarket Event on 28th March

- SP asked for volunteers for the event. WS volunteered.
- SP also mentioned that she would be attending 'Beat the Winter Blues' at Hadleigh Library on 2nd March.
- A Mental Wellbeing event will be held at Thornham Walks in August and SP will take the VASP display stand and leaflets from our partners.

6. Updates from Attendees

DR SFC are running a 6 week course for carers.
SFT are working in Woodlands ward.

SB Green Gables Mental Wellbeing, based at Red Gables Stowmarket, were running successfully with a good attendance of the Wednesday afternoon drop-ins and the Tuesday and Wednesday garden project activities. SB also

spoke of the merger of Suffolk Local Infrastructures on 1st April 2013. MAP will be integrated in Community Action Suffolk.

- WS SNAP's grant has been extended for 1 year. The tendering process will start in October 2013.
The 'bedroom tax' was scaring people. CARA has a backlog due to people ringing, worried about being able to afford their rent.
People with disabilities will still be entitled to an extra room.
Ipswich BC will be charging 8.5% of the rent and MSDC will charge 5%.
- DW SUF AGM will take place on 21/3 at 2.30pm, in The Friends Meeting House, St John's St. Bury. The morning session will focus on PD and will start at 10.30. SUF are also looking for trustees.
- LA NHS direct has been criticised by some but she had a good experience with the service.
Linda volunteers at Age UK, as a befriender. She wanted to become a benefits adviser but was not able to be available for the 16 hours per week that were required from volunteers. It was felt that this was a considerable commitment.
- CW The Bipolar UK group meets in Bury the 2nd Monday of the month, and in Ipswich on the 1st Thursday of the month. The Ipswich group want to extend their hours.

Cathy attended a course run by Lorna Small and Claire Tolliday, about direct payments.
The rate will be £10.57 per hour if carer was working 2 hours or more, but there was a £80 employer liability insurance.
Direct payments do not cover petrol costs or telephone calls made by a carer.
The tender is up for renewal so anomalies should be ironed out.

Personal budgets: what is the difference between social care needs and health needs? The money must cover the costs of the carer and the administration on top of that. Some people are losing out because of having to pay Suffolk Independent Living.

MIND – Suffolk Wellbeing has closed down activities groups. NSFT has guaranteed weekly to fortnightly meetings but there is nothing in Stowmarket. There is one group in Bury.

Suffolk Wellbeing won't assist people with PD although it's in the contract. Legal action has been taken.
In Brandon, there is no money for premises so the group meets in a pub which isn't easily accessible.
An equality impact assessment was conducted in 2011 but the groups weren't included.

Warm Front - £135 is available for people on Income Support and Disability Benefits. The cost for an assessment is £150. Warm Front is ceasing but Green Deal will be available to all.

SC Inspire course on anxiety at Red Gables is running well. They are at week 5 of 7. 12 people have attended. They have no funding for that course but have had received a grant to run a pop-in on Saturday mornings, where the focus is on fun activities.

JC Re: VASP online hub. Julia has been speaking to other organisations who are also working on their websites. East have been chosen for a pilot: relief of mental distress.

There is now a Suffolk-wide calendar for the VASP meetings.

There will be a Street Fair organised by SUF in Ipswich, for WMHD. They want to run it elsewhere as well.

Sue said that MSVASP have extended their events beyond the WMHD timeslot. They have 5 events before the autumn.

PD is a priority on the main VASP agenda. Reg McKenna, from the Haven Project, has been invited to speak at a main VASP meeting.

Housing is also on the agenda. There is a possibility of creating a director online or on paper.

Julia will be contacting VASP forum members to ask them why they attend meetings or why they may have stopped coming. SP said that, regrettably, a surgery practice manager had asked to come of the MSVASP mailing list. Many organisations don't have capacity to send someone to the meetings. SP said that there were a lot of people who didn't turn up but are still interested, eg: CMHT turn up at events and many partners keep in touch with our Forum by e mail.

7. AOB

CW Cathy reminded the meeting that an event was being held at the Cedars Hotel in Stowmarket, organised by NSFT, on the radical redesign pathway.

SP Sue asked the forum for suggestions for speakers. She will investigate proposals made.

Date of next meeting: 5th March, 1pm to 3pm in the Lecture Theatre, MSDC Council Offices, Needham Market