

Summer 2007

*Islington Borough User Group – iBUG – is a group of people who either use or have used mental health services and have come together to monitor the provision of these services in Islington.*

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# Summer Newsletter

## Gay and Lesbian issues– an interview with Ayo Oyebade

By Suzy Lee

Ayo is a trustee of Islington Mind, a long standing member of iBUG, and an 'out' gay service user with mental health problems.

Ayo feels there is a reasonably healthy future for Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual (LGTB) service users with mental health problems in Islington; there are a whole raft of private and voluntary services available (see page 2), but Ayo feels this is not enough given the concentration of local LGTB people. Ayo also feels there are a number of further challenges to be met.

For example, since civil partnerships for LGTB people have been introduced, they have affected next of kin status, including nearest relative status under the Mental Health Act.

Ayo believes not everyone is comfortable being 'out', and describes a double whammy of stigma about mental illness and homosexuality. For those from

ethnic minorities this can become a triple whammy, as racism is added to the mix. Ayo also feels that there can be homophobia from some service users, and not enough support, in spite of some gay and lesbian staff in the trust.

Ayo feels homophobia is a big issue that needs addressing. Some churches, for example, are not always accepting, although he feels this is improving in North London. He notes it is easier to set up groups in liberal urban areas than in more conservative areas.

Ayo also feels that alcohol can play a negative role as some LGTB people are going to pubs and clubs and drinking too much. He says they are going to gay pubs and clubs too seek support and comfort from similar people, and also pursuing intimacy with others, but add mental illness to the mix and this can cause additional problems such as psychosis and depression. Also, coming out can get you barred from these places

as what he describes as a 'mad queen'.

HIV is another issue that Ayo does not feel is being adequately addressed. He speaks with some authority as he has worked for both London Lighthouse and the Black HIV/Aids Network (two voluntary organisations that both worked with people suffering from HIV/AIDS) in the past. He believes that service users may be sexually active and that services are not always picking up on this.

Growing older is another challenge for services– he compares LGTB'S needs as similar to those of the BME communities–they need appropriate care, venues to go out to, reminiscence therapy, etc.

On a brighter note, there are some positive role models–Ayo cites George Michael, Stephen Fry and the writer James Baldwin as all being successful gay men who have experienced mental health problems.

Ayo feels broadly positive about the future, but fears mainstream services are 'not there yet.'

Gay, lesbian,  
transgender and  
bisexual people  
should find this list  
useful



Are you aware of  
an issue that you  
believe more peo-  
ple should know  
about?

## Contacts for lesbian, gay, transsexual & bisexual people

By Suzy Lee

OUTCOME - Mind day centre offers support group, counsellor, lunch. Tuesdays 10:30-4:30 at 35 Ashley Road, N19

PACE - project for advice, counselling and education. Offers counselling 1-1 and group work, lesbian and gay group. Contact 0207 700 1323 [www.pacehealth.org.uk](http://www.pacehealth.org.uk) e-mail [info@pacehealth.org.uk](mailto:info@pacehealth.org.uk) 0207 697 0014 for counselling.

LONDON LESBIAN AND GAY SWITCHBOARD - 24 hours 0207 837 7324 London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, PO Box 7324, London N1 9QS or [www.londonfriend.org.uk](http://www.londonfriend.org.uk)

LONDON FRIEND - CALEDONIAN Road, N7, 0207 837 3337. Counselling and support services, free condoms, safe social space, campaigning, support groups, library, and info on HIV.

THE SISTERHOOD - 07985 196 340. [info@thasistahood.org](mailto:info@thasistahood.org) or [www.thasistahood.org](http://www.thasistahood.org). Professionally minded black lesbians ready to broaden their horizons. A social group based in Brixton.

PINK THERAPY SERVICE- Private therapy for sexual minorities, LGTB. 0207 434 0367 or 07971 205 323 Archer Street, Soho [www.pinktherapy.com](http://www.pinktherapy.com)

PINK PRACTICE- Creative counselling LGTB Holborn 0207 060 4000 [www.pinkpractice.co.uk](http://www.pinkpractice.co.uk) [info@pinkpractice.co.uk](mailto:info@pinkpractice.co.uk)

RAINBOW RESOURCE- LGTB users group, Tuesdays 1:30, 07930 201 178 . [rainbow-southwarkuk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rainbow-southwarkuk@yahoo.co.uk) at Inspired Café, St Peters Church, Liverpool Grove, Southwark SE17 2HH

GAY, LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL DEPRESSION SUPPORT GROUP- PUBLICATIONS AND SERVICES Collier Street, N1 helpline 0845 123 2320 website [www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org) [information@depressionalliance.org](mailto:information@depressionalliance.org)

METRO CENTRE-LGTB mental health drop in service with social and support elements, activities and trips out, speakers etc. New members welcome. Thursdays 1-4pm, at unit 401, 49 Greenwich High Road, SE10 8JL tel 0208 2653311, [www.metrocentreonline.org](http://www.metrocentreonline.org), email [taz@t/metro.co.uk](mailto:taz@t/metro.co.uk)

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## Get Involved with the iBUG Newsletter!

By Beth Bear

Are you aware of an issue that you believe more people should know about? Do you have knowledge of a service or project that you think other people would benefit from? Are

you just looking for an outlet for your creative ideas?

If so, you could contribute to the iBUG Newsletter.

We encourage ideas for contributions and will help you to develop your idea into an item for our news-

letter. iBUG members in particular are encouraged to contribute, but all are welcome.

For more information please contact Beth Bear or Suzy Lee at the iBUG office on 020 7561 4140.

## Black, Minority and Ethnic Experiences in Mental Health

By Beth Bear

Before Robert Jones left the Camden and Islington Trust as Service User Inclusion Manager, he came and spoke to iBUG Members at our Business Meeting on 26 June 2007. He had recently finished a survey of inpatients on the wards and came to share some of that raw data with the group. The data he had collected would eventually make up the 2007 *Count Me In* report done by the Department of Public Health, and would highlight trends within mental health. However, as this report would not be ready until next year, Robert wanted to alert iBUG members of trends now. Also, while the *Count Me In* Report goes into great detail about the experience of all mental health service users, Robert Jones focused on Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) patient's experiences in Islington at the iBUG meeting.

Robert highlighted many inequalities within mental health faced by BME patients. His recent survey had found that BME patients were over-represented within inpatient settings. iBUG member Peter Jones has been visiting the wards for over ten years, and has consistently see an over-representation of BME patients – in particular he sees a lot of young black men.

Robert also said that BME patients, particularly black men, were more likely to be put in seclusion and have control and restraint used against them. But this was despite the fact that out of 85 incidents of service users assaulting staff, 31 were from black patients and 40 were

from white patients. Ayo Oyebade, an iBUG member who identifies himself as black British shared his experiences to bring these statistics into focus. The first time Ayo was hospitalized five male nurses used control and restraint against him and he was administered a strong dose of medication by injection. This was despite the fact that Ayo said he was willing to take the medication in tablet form. Suzy Lee, an iBUG member who also identifies herself as being BME and has experiences as an inpatient, often feels frustrated with what she views as institutional racism. She said that she sometimes felt that staff were coming down harder on black patients, and drawing on racist stereotypes that paint black people as being aggressive.

Robert Jones also said that black British individuals were more often referred by the courts and police than by doctors. Ayo's experiences support this assertion. He stated that each of the four times he had been admitted to hospital it had been on instruction from the courts or the police. Robert went on to say that referrals from the police often begin with calls from service user's own families. Suzy believes that if families of BME service users were given more support from the community they would not take the desperate step of phoning the police.

When asked about her treatment overall, Suzy replied that "When I first came into the system I fit the statistics. I was sectioned a lot, I was on a lot of medication, and I wasn't offered a lot of alternatives. I was

once told that I was too ill to see a counsellor, and at that time I was desperate for someone to talk to. I think things have changes somewhat – as professionals in mental health have gotten to know me I have been offered and used community support." Ayo had similar feelings to Suzy. He said, "I was given such high doses of medication when I was first sectioned that it affected by ability to care for myself. At that time, I was also not given many alternatives. Since that time though and as those involved in my care plan have gotten to know me, my care plan has evolved beyond heavy doses of medication and my treatment has improved."

Robert encouraged all BME service users who feel or have felt in the past that they have been treated unfairly to use the complaints system and have their grievances heard. He believes that this is an important step in ensuring better, fairer treatment. If any service users wish to pursue a complaint, please contact the iBUG office for more information.



*Ashley Road also link up with other services including Mindworks, (computing) Employment and jobs at risk team, Counseling and the Crisis Line (08451232373), as well as statutory services (e.g. CMHTs).*



## **The Ashley Road Day Centre**

By Suzy Lee

35 Ashley Road is a mental health day centre based in N19, run by Islington Mind. It is open 5 days a week- Monday, Wednesday and Friday are open access drop in days, Tuesday is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual day and Thursday is Women's day.

I must admit to some partiality as I attend myself regularly. The Friday community meetings where the discussion is lively and can become heated on occasion, is one of my favourite groups

There are also other groups which are mostly open to

new members-art, self harm, hearing voices and depression support groups, gardening. There is a blooming vegetable and flower garden and it is a popular place to sit and chat, especially now the smoking ban is in place and there is no smoking in the house. The garden is now the only place to smoke.

Lunch at Ashley Road is usually plentiful and delicious for £2; a menu is chosen at the Friday meeting and members volunteer to cook or wash up, for which they are given free lunch tokens. You can also do your laundry or

have a bath upstairs for free. Shiatsu sessions are also available by appointment, as is counselling.

Ashley Road is essentially a drop in providing a social space for all who wish to use it; as such the atmosphere is friendly and new members are usually quickly welcomed into the fold. People sit and drink the free tea and coffee, chatting and sometimes play music. There are also three members of staff who also do 1 to 1 work upon request, from attending CPA's to benefits work and provide emotional support to many who attend the day centre.

## **The Local Implementation Team – LIT**

By Peter Jones

The LIT or Mental Health Local Implementation Team to give it its full title is a working committee of the Islington Primary Care Trust (IPCT). The IPCT has the responsibility to provide or commission the appropriate level of services for all the Mental Health Needs in Islington. The way this is supervised is through the LIT.

All three mental health commissioners attend the LIT. They represent the IPCT.

iBUG attends the LIT and represents Islington mental health service users. It has up to 4 places on the LIT. The LIT is chaired by the Director of Housing and Adult Care from The London Borough Islington.

The Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care NHS Trust who provide the statutory mental health services for the London Borough Islington are represented by the Director of Islington Mental Health and the Director of Elderly Services.

Non statutory service providers are represented by the Camden and Islington Service Providers Forum. Several other providers also come to the LIT like Peter Bedford and Islington Mind. The LIT meets four times a year.

The LIT is the most important meeting in the London Borough of Islington for the commissioning and decommissioning of services. For example if bed numbers are to be increased or decreased the LIT must be informed.

The LIT has responsibility to consider the strategic needs of all mental health provision for Islington. The LIT is also charged with raising the profile of mental health services in Islington (e.g. Signposting to Islington residents where appropriate services can be found). The LIT is also requested to try and reduce the level of stigma and educate the general population into a better understanding of what mental illness is really like as compared with the tabloid press reporting of mental illness.

## Foundation Trust: An Update from CMHC

By Kate Crossby

As most of you know the Care Trust are applying for Foundation Trust status. CMHC and iBUG have service user representatives on the Care Trust's Foundation Trust Committee. The work of this committee has been looking at issues such as the results of the Care Trust's consultation regarding its quest to become a Foundation Trust, the Care Trust's Business Plan, the Foundation Trust's Constitution, the role of the governor's, etc.

CMHC and iBUG, have ensured that the Foundation Trust if successful now has a service user constituency. This originally was not being considered by the Care Trust, but was requested by service users during the consultation exercise. Initially the definition of service user was

very rigid and was if you had only used in-patient services within three years of applying to be a member. CMHC and iBUG took this rigid definition and argued for a much fairer definition which is now:

*An individual whose name is recorded as a patient on the Foundation Trust's patient administration system or other record maintained by the Foundation Trust for the purposes of identifying patients of the Foundation Trust and who has, within the period of five years immediately preceding the date of application to become a member of the Foundation Trust, attended any of the Foundation Trust's premises as a patient.*

For some service users who have not used any of the Foundation Trust's services

for five years or more, you can still become members via the public constituency, thereby still apply for a position of governor and/or be involved as much as they want.

The next big task for CMHC and iBUG will be to ensure that the role of governors does in fact have 'teeth' and do have an active influence on the Board. There also needs to be mechanisms for ensuring that members of the Foundation Trust have a real opportunity to be involved and to have a say in how services are delivered by the Foundation Trust.

If you have any comments which you want CMHC or iBUG to feed into the Foundation Trust committee, please contact us.  
CMHC 020 7419 4196  
iBUG 020 7561 4140

*'The next big task for CMHC and iBUG will be to ensure that the role of governors does in fact have 'teeth' and do have an active influence on the Board.'*

## Get Involved! The iBUG Business Meeting

By Beth Bear

Each month iBUG holds its Business Meeting. Business meetings are an opportunity for iBUG members to share information about the projects they have been involved with and the meetings they have attended in the last month. iBUG also invites guest speakers to address the group, and have had individuals come to discuss everything from getting help to quit smoking to direct payments. By coming along regularly to

business meetings, individuals who wish to do so will also get the chance to represent iBUG at other meetings within the community. If you're not comfortable going to other meetings, that's alright too. We have many members who only attend and contribute at the Business Meeting. Business Meetings are held at the Hanley Road Education and Employment Centre, 75 Hanley Road. We encourage all Islington service users to come and check us out.





Highgate Mental Health Centre  
Dartmouth Park Hill  
London  
N19 5NX

Phone: 020 7561 4140  
E-mail: [ibug@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ibug@hotmail.co.uk)

Peter Jones, Director  
Suzy Lee, Director  
Beverley Martin, Director  
Margaret Newton, Director  
Shirley Scott-Norton, Company Secretary  
Beth Bear, Coordinator

## The Isledon Road Service User Participation Scheme

By Peter Jones

We are very pleased to announce that the PCT Commissioners have informed us that the Isledon Road Service User Participation Scheme is now funded up until March 2008.

The Out Of Hours service was under threat because the funding stream for this service was going to be diverted and used to fund the User Participation Scheme. As the Service user participation scheme is now adequately funded for this year, the Out of Hours Service is also now secure. Although both services are currently funded until March 2008 both services may face cuts in future years.

The Isledon Road Service User Participation Scheme is a very successful employment taster project that has been running at Isledon Road for many years. It has never had core health funding, but has been funded by 3 yearly and special council regeneration funding. The Out of Hours Service is a Islington borough wide service for any Islington service user. It runs on different days after hours (after 6:00pm and at weekends). The service is available to all Islington residents.

## The iBUG Diary

*The iBUG Business Meeting and the iBUG Patients Council are held monthly. Please contact the iBUG office for further meeting dates.*

**14 August 2007, 2:00pm**  
**iBUG Patients Council,**  
HMHC, Dartmouth Park Hill, London, N19 5NX

**15 August 2007, 12:00pm**  
**iBUG BBQ,** HMHC,  
Dartmouth Park Hill, London, N19 5NX

**28 August 2007, 2:00pm**  
**Regular iBUG Business**  
Meeting, 75 Hanley Road, N4 3DY

**11 September 2007,**  
**2:00pm, iBUG Patients**

**Council,** HMHC, Dartmouth Park Hill, London, N19 5NX

**9 October 2007, 2:00pm,**  
**Regular iBUG Business**  
Meeting, 75 Hanley Road, N4 3DY

**23 October 2007,**  
**2:00pm, iBUG Patients**  
**Council,** HMHC, Dartmouth Park Hill, London, N19 5NX

**11 September 2007,**  
**2:00pm, Regular iBUG**

**Business Meeting,** 75 Hanley Road, N4 3DY

*iBUG sends out an extended monthly calendar of all upcoming events to all iBUG members on our mailing list. If you would like to add an event to our calendar, be added to our mailing list, or know someone who would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact the iBUG office at 020 7561 4140.*