

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Director of Social Work Services

Social Justice Committee: 8 November 2006

Subject: Mental Health Recovery in West Dunbartonshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform committee of the outcome of a key local conference to promote positive mental health and well being and to develop the concept of mental health recovery in West Dunbartonshire.

2. Background

- 2.1** The conference was held at Dalmuir Barclay Church Hall on 12 October 2006 and attended by over 100 mental health service users, carers and Council, NHS and voluntary sector staff.

- 2.2** The overall aim of the Recovery in Mental Health Conference was to:

- Develop an understanding of the dimensions involved in recovery
- Form a shared understanding of recovery in mental health
- Identify what needs to happen locally, within West Dunbartonshire
- Network and liaise with the local community, service users, carers and service providers within the mental health field.

- 2.3** The conference was organised by the West Dunbartonshire Mental Health Awareness Group: a consortium of service user and carer committee members of the Clydebank and Dumbarton Mental Health Forums, staff of the Healthy Living Initiative, Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service, SAMH, Choose Life, WD CHP and Social Work Mental Health Services.

- 2.4** Funding for the event and the follow-up report and development plan was provided by Social Work Mental Health Services and WD CHP Mental Health Services.

- 2.5** The concept of Recovery is about much more than the absence of symptoms – it is about giving people the tools to become active participants in their own health care – it is about having a belief, drive and commitment to the principle that people can and do recover control in their lives, even where they may continue to live with ongoing symptoms. It is not about being *fixed* or back to *normal*. It is about having the chance to

live a satisfying and fulfilling life, as defined by the individual, with or without symptoms. It is not necessarily a linear process. There will be ups and downs on the way which are all part of the recovery journey. Because someone goes through a period where they experience symptoms does not mean their recovery has ended. People often describe themselves as being *in* recovery.

Many different things help people recover but there are commonly identified helps and hindrances. People often describe the key role of hope, involvement and control as well as having a chance to contribute or give back to others and society in some way.

3. The Recovery Conference

- 3.1** The conference was hosted by the chairs of the Clydebank and Dumbarton Mental Health Forums, both members of the West Dunbartonshire Mental Health Strategy Group – Harry McCormack and Paul McToal - and the Consumers' Issues Sub Group.
- 3.2** In addition to a range of discussion groups a topical drama piece was acted by members of Mental Health Who Cares? with interactive evaluation being provided by the Clydebank High School Drama Group.
- 3.3** The keynote speech was given by Simon Bradstreet; Director of the Scottish Recovery Network (SRN). The SRN is funded by the Scottish Executive's National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well Being which supports the shift towards the development of recovery concepts and local recovery networks.
- 3.4** Other speakers included Lindsay Johnson, National Development Co-ordinator of 'Voices of Experience'; a national group set up to give mental health service users a voice in the development of legislation, policy and practice and Harry McCormack, Chair of the Dumbarton MHF and company secretary of Argyll and Clyde United in Mental Health (ACUMEN), who described his own personal journey of mental health recovery.
- 3.5** Anne Connor, Director of Outside of the Box Development Support Ltd, presented a research study that looked at the key factors that keep people well, what services can do to help people be well and how people can be supported in their recovery. The research was commissioned by the Glasgow Network and the Dumbarton MHF supported by a grant from the National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well Being as part of its Small Research Projects Initiative.

- 3.6 The study was undertaken by two mental health service consumers (committee members of the Dumbarton MHF) supported by Anne Connor and Isobel Plunkett, Social Worker (MH Development). A copy of the research findings is attached for Members information.

4. Outcomes

- 4.1 The Clydebank High School Drama Group will report on participants' feedback.
- 4.2 The Ask Clyde Social Firm has been commissioned to develop and write a development plan which will act as a follow-up document from ideas generated at the recovery conference, and tie in with current national policy in order to help promote recovery throughout the West Dunbartonshire community.

5. Recommendations

The Social Justice Committee is asked to:

- i) note the extensive partnership work undertaken by consumers and staff in bringing this milestone event together
- ii) note the contribution to community capacity building by the recovery approach and
- iii) request that the Director of Social Work brings forward progress reports on further developments.



William W Clark
Acting Director of Social Work Services

Background Papers: 'Supporting People's Mental Health and Well Being - Action points for people who use services and for people who provide services'

Person to Contact: Mike Foley, Strategy Officer – Mental Health, Social Work Offices, 7 Bruce Street, Clydebank, G81 1TT Tel (direct line) 0141 951 6126