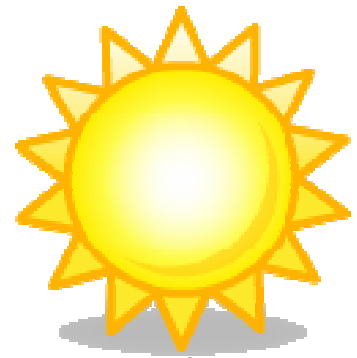


# SUSSED *news letter*

## Issue # 3 2007



ISSUE 3

2007

**SUS** Service users say: These are DSB service user groups that meet weekly. The Monday group meets in Handsworth and the Wednesday group meets in the city centre. These are for current DSB service users (or those who have completed treatment with DSB) ask your worker for details or contact Steve Cox, Service User Engagement Coordinator on 0121 233 7400.

SUS stands for service users say. It's a service users group. The first has been meeting since October 2005 the second since October 2006. These groups meet weekly. It's one way for DSB service users to be involved with their treatment service and one way in which DSB, The Birmingham DAT and NTA consult with service users in order to shape drug treatment.

The Birmingham Drug Action Team implement the national drug policy and commission's all drug services in Birmingham.

The National Treatment Agency (NTA) is an NHS body set up to improve the effectiveness of drug treatment in England.

Two groups meet weekly. At 2pm doors open, you can get a hot drink and chat with other members. Then there is a formal meeting for an hour. After a short break then group members stay for a range of free complementary therapies.

Ask your worker for details.

"My first ever SUS group there were six others there, by others I mean service users, trying to stay clean. They were friendly and not what I expected at all. Rather than sat moaning about how much the world owed, them they all gave Steve Cox (the main man who runs the groups at DSB) their opinions & ideas and other relevant stuff, like the newsletter, how good or bad they find their treatment and care plans, job opps, college, All things we as service users can come up against and without the support of DSB or other services in Birmingham we'd find it pretty hard to get past these things (and in worst cases it can cause lapse or relapse).

So there's a place that you can come and be part of each week that offers a safe place to air your views and find support and common ground with people in the same position as your self, Some may be further down the line, some may not but you are never Judged no matter where or who you

are.

There are also a list of therapies to be had in a relaxing environment such as Acupuncture, Reiki, Indian head massage and Reflexology.

Refreshments are available. Tea, coffee, juice and bickies are available as is a break half way through. Bus fares are refunded which is a big help!

Most of all it's a place where you are respected and heard and your input is valued.

Since being part of the group I've gone on to be part of a research into addiction team, I'm doing my level 2 drug awareness, I helped at a stall at the drug treatment directory launch party and I've met and become friends with so many people who have had similar experiences and been where I once was and its so encouraging to be part of getting well together rather than getting high with them.

Today I'm busy, I'm happy but mostly I'm proud."

*Sarah F*

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*"It's the first time in my experience of being in treatment that my opinion has been asked"*

*Pat .*

*S.U.S member*

*"Be part of the process."*

*Ian K.*

*S.U.S Member*

**Acknowledgement s:** This newsletter's concept and development has been made possible by the contributions made by members of SUS and other DSB service users. Steps to take in the event of a drug overdose on page four has been taken from the DSB Shared care leaflet Part developed by DSB. staff and members of SUS.

The reception area at DSB has been remodelled and there is now a waiting area on the ground floor that leads to client contact rooms.

There is a display board with service user group information, copies of the newsletter and other leaflets. There is also a comments post box where service users can get their comments back to DSB or request more information on service user involvement.

## DSB SERVICE REVIEW 2007

*In October 2006 DSB held its first service review at BVSC in Digbeth.*

*40 invitations went out and service users and workers attended*

*Members of the SUS (DSB service user group) attended to support new service users, tell people about what SUS do and help facilitate the day.*

*A work shop was held where service users produced a list of what was working well at DSB and what could be done better.*

*A presentation on what service user involvement meant was followed by a taster session on how a SUS group worked followed by Complementary therapies (which are available at each SUS meeting)*

*Service users who attended were able to sign up to join the second service user group which has run each Wednesday since October 2006.*

*We aim to have a service review each year and the 2007 review will be on November 30th at the DSB offices on Corporation Street.*

*For people who are unable to attend the service review there will be a service satisfaction survey that can be returned via a freepost envelope or posted in the comments box in reception. Contact Steve Cox on 0121 233 7400 or ask your drug worker.*

Opposite the reception area at DSB there is a new group room. This is used by the SUS groups and for the complementary therapy clinic on a Friday (ask your drug worker for details).

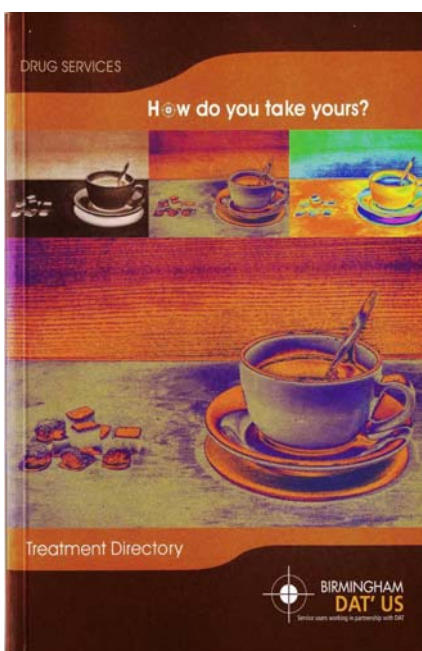
*DSB are part of the Swanswell Charitable Trust who have a history of providing treatment services in the field of Drugs and Alcohol for adults and young people.*

*In addition to Drug Solutions Birmingham the Swanswell Charitable Trust have services in Coventry, Rugby, Leamington, Nuneaton.*

*Service user involvement has been growing at DSB since October 2005 when the first SUS group formed.*

*Group members have been active since that date and are currently involved in a consultation group who are meeting with representatives from the staff, service users and board of the Swanswell Charitable Trust to draw up a draft strategy for service user involvement.*

## Treatment Directory: The treatment directory is for service users and drug users in Birmingham. Steve from DAT'US



The DATUS team are a service user involvement group that worked with Birmingham DAT to produce a treatment directory called Drug Services: How Do You Take Yours? The creation of the Directory is something the team has worked on for over eighteen months culminating in an event held at the crescent theatre on June 15th 2007.

This has been a unique user led project and the aim has been to produce a comprehensive directory of drug services for Birmingham, that's available in a printed format and is free to everyone in the community whether they are a drug user, parent or carer, or a service user trying to navigate their treatment options.

Each member that was involved took individual responsibility for researching, writing and assisting in the design

of the directory, as well as managing their own budget to fund the launch of the project

Steve Freer one of the first members to join the DAT'US team said, "the idea of the directory is to enable drug users to make informed choices about entering into treatment and empowering them to take control of their life".

Producing this directory has been a fantastic achievement for our group and we are here to celebrate this. This has been a collaboration between DAT'US, Drug Services, other supporting agencies and users still in treatment. I would like to thank everyone who has given their support and time in this very worthwhile endeavour.

*(Taken from the safer times issue #04)*

**Ask your worker for a copy**



Seans Story

My name is Sean and this is my story. I Was 14 years old when I first took speed, LSD, magic mushrooms and smoked cannabis. As I got older I went to prison when I was about 17 or 18

It was whilst I was in prison that I first tried Heroin, when I got out I started taking Heroin more and more I couldn't go with out it. So I became a user and I started to inject my self as all my mates were doing it.

Now I'm getting older I'm getting help and I am thinking about when I was a child.

When I was young I had always been in Kids homes I still don't know my Mom and Dad 38 years on.

But now I'm getting help and going to a group called SUS (Service Users Say) from DSB which can help people who are ex users to stay drug free, I have been going to the group for 18months now and I don't want to stop as its helping me a lot.

Sean

Let the fire from beneath  
Raise the dragon to its feet  
You gave him life you gave him rage  
Now you freed him from his cage  
What you feed from the pound  
Gentle as a pup  
Turned into a beast that swallowed me  
up  
Some get chained to this beast  
Some get lucky  
They get released  
But freedom has its price  
You get bit once  
You'll get bit twice

Mark H

Welcome to my world  
It's a world full of pain  
Welcome to my world  
Where there's no personal gain  
Welcome to my world  
You know nothing about me  
Welcome to my world where you have to  
steal to survive  
Welcome to my world where the weak  
just do not thrive  
Welcome to my world where not every-  
one is bad  
Welcome to my world where we never  
thought about the choices we had  
Welcome to my world where things do  
not change  
Welcome to my world It goes on for  
years not days  
Welcome to my world where its now  
that I want out.

Nic M

Welcome to my world  
Now I've worked it all out  
Welcome to my world  
Now I want to get back to yours  
Welcome to my world  
If you want pain and heartache and its  
so bad, its yours  
Welcome to my world Its about the  
choices that we had  
Welcome to my world  
Where now I'm clean and not so sad

Nic M

The silent awakening at dawn  
Winters here  
But you are gone  
Like the birds you took the sky's  
On silver wings and freedom eyes  
Free to sour and rule the sky's  
With no comments and no ties  
Free from pain on silver wings and  
freedom eyes

Mark H

In May 2005 I was a registered Heroin addict living In a probation hostel in Aston, In December of that year I was Introduced to DSB (Swanswell charitable Trust)

I was allocated a Drug Worker C.P. and two support workers from floating support worked with me first SS then A O.

They have been giving me help and support for the last 15 months.

They have supported me to find my own flat and helped me to set up my bill payments which has taken a lot of the pressure off me and helped me to tackle my drug problem.

I am now drug free and I'm looking to find full time employment. Without the help that I have received from my support workers I don't think that I would be sitting here today. I would just like to take the opportunity to thank everyone at DSB for all the help and support that they have given me.

John M

[www.Birminghamhypodermic.com](http://www.Birminghamhypodermic.com) is a new service user focused web site with lots of useful information on service user involvement, services, life stories and much more.....

**Service  
Users**  
*Have your Say at D.S.B*



*Taking your Prescription on Holiday.....Ian C*

*If you are going out of the country for more than one month and will be taking your medication with you then you do need to get a license from the Home office. It is wise to also get a letter from your GP if you are going for less than a month and are not required to get a home office license.*

*You need to let your Dr/ Drug worker know as soon as possible so that they can support you. Take a confirmation letter of your Holiday with flight timings and return dates to your GP and your Dr can write a letter "To whom it may concern," confirming what medication you are on. It is advisable to get a letter from your Dr in case you are stopped, never take your medication out of the original packaging. If you are taking methadone see if your pharmacist can issue your medication in plastic bottles in case you drop them when you are on holiday.*

*It really is advisable to get a letter from your GP /home office license.. If your medication gets taken off you then your holiday could be ruined or even worse you could go looking for gear in a foreign country which could lead to overdose or poisoning (as it may be cut differently, be potentially stronger and could lead to overdose). You could be ripped off, beaten up or get arrested from a police operation.*

*Its important to remember that a license covers you for this country. Some countries don't allow methadone/Subutex so always check first. (you can do this with your worker)*

*Don't forget travel insurance this should cover you for major health expenses. Hospitalisation returning to the UK with medical help (check the policy) . The E1 11 which entitled people to basic health treatment when going to other countries in the European Union is no longer valid and has been replaced by a EHIC card .This can be applied for (free of charge) online or from your post office.*

*Remember to allow plenty of time before you go away to get a letter or license as these take time to organize.*

*Speak to your G.P or drugworker for further advice..... Ian C*

*If you are going on holiday in the UK and receive your medication daily then it would be necessary to set up daily pick up or supervised consumption at a pharmacy in the area that you are travelling to. Speak to your drug worker.*

*Also not all pharmacies may stock your medication so again its worth finding out as you don't want to be stuck unable to get your prescription issued.*

*If you are going to be away when your next prescription is due again it is important to let your drug worker or Dr know with as much notice a possible so that this can be planned for.*

*Where ever you are going away have a happy safe holiday.*

*Please pass your comments, suggestions, poems, and stories for consideration to appear in upcoming editions of SUS. c/o Steve Cox service user engagement coordinator....your worker can do this on your behalf. Thank you from the members of SUS to everyone who contributed to this edition of SUSSED the articles by individual contributors are their own copyright and may not necessarily be the views of Sussed or DSB. Sussed strives for 100% accuracy.....Next edition Winter 2007*

**Steps to take in the event of a drug overdose**

**Don't Panic**

- 1 Lie the person on the floor.
- 2 Put them in the recovery position (on their side with one arm bent, and tilt their head back).
- 3 Call an ambulance - dial 999. Speak calmly and clearly to the operator.
- 4 Do not leave them alone unless you go to get help yourself. If you have to leave them make sure they cannot roll over onto their back.
- 5 When the ambulance arrives, if you can, tell them what the person has taken.
- 6 This could save their life.

