

# SUSSED *newsletter*

## Issue 5 2008



ISSUE 5

SUMMER 2008

**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. Its a service users group. The meeting took place in October 2005, a second group formed in October 2006.

The two groups merged in October 2007

SUS meets each Wednesday in the city centre. It's one way for DSB service users to be involved with their treatment service, and one way in which DSB, Birmingham DAT and NTA consult with service users in order to shape drug treatment.

Birmingham Drug Action Team implement national drug policy and commission all of drug services in Birmingham.

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

At 1pm doors open, you can get a hot drink and chat with other members. Then there is a formal meeting for an hour. A short break then group members stay for a range of free complementary therapies.

The therapies on offer are

auricular (in the ear) Acupuncture, Reiki, Herbal teas, Relaxation CDs, Reflexology and Indian head massage are also available on occasion.

Travelling expenses are also reimbursed for people who attend the group. Ask your worker how to join

DSB is part of Swanswell Charitable Trust.

It's website has recently been updated with a service user zone.

This has useful information produced by service users, Such as copies of this newsletter and other information on service user involvement at DSB/Swanswell & will grow over the coming year.

Please take a look at [www.swanswelltrust.org](http://www.swanswelltrust.org) and tell us what you think?

A gallery is planned for the future so if you are an artist, poet or just want to tell your story please send them to us.

*Please send your .....*

*Poems Stories and Pictures, Ideas for articles, that you would like to see in the newsletter*

via your drug Worker

Or sending them to the group **C/O Steve Cox**

**Service user engagement coordinator DSB 0121 233 7400**

Service user representatives and staff of Swanswell Charitable Trust met over several months last year to produce a Service User Involvement strategy,

which aims to spread service user involvement to across all parts of the Trust.

Service user Involvement had been active at DSB since October 2005 with a group that meets weekly, a welcome pack given to new service users, an annual service review and satisfaction survey.

Service users have started to become involved in recruiting staff Swanswell would like to recruit 2 service users to the Board. (who are responsible for the performance of the Trust) Details coming soon.....

### Inside this issue:

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What is S.U.S	1
Swanswell Web Site	1
'Nothing about us without us': Service user Involvement conference'	2
Birmingham Hypodermic	2
Stories, poems, letters	3
Naloxone	4
Involvement in Interviewing staff	4

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

*Pat .  
SUS member*

*"Be part of the process."*

*Ian K.*

**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.

# Nothing about us with out us !

"NOTHING ABOUT US WITH-OUT US."

1ST NATIONAL SERVICE  
USER CONFERENCE  
BIRMINGHAM 31/1/08

This day will stay with me for a very long time. The 1st National Service User Conference. To say this event far outweighed expectations for delegates attending is an understatement. 600 Service users/ex Service Users was a sight to behold.

The morning session was set aside for presentations, & was very lively.

Glenda Daniels (Oxford User Team)

asked for a show of hands to show "how many of you are happy with the level of involvement" not surprisingly there were few hands raised. She reminded us that we've

a long way to go to ensure consistency of involvement. Bravo Glenda, Sebastian Saville (RELEASE) & Jimi Grieve (National User Network) were brilliant & really useful, In spite of Jimi's CD of his presentation getting lost, he ad-libbed really well. Jimi said "We need to have focused ideas that have high impact..... some people have done this spectacularly well.....don't reinvent the wheel go with what works".

Sebastian's 10mins was excellent "Compare the £800m spent on treatment" he said "to the £5-6billion spent seizing the 10% of drugs coming into the country.....Addicts are the scapegoat of the age.....and little has changed".

My only critique of the day was there was a lot of "We demand this and that" from the floor. Well yes, of course, but maybe we need to deliver quality peer led HR education and interventions first.

Then raise your sights and target the bigger issues at regional & national level. When we're clued up & empowered then go for the complex issues'

but well done the ALLIANCE for informing us of the wider issues that will impact on us if we fail to see them coming. Great day with top people.

*Release: drugs the law and human rights. Tel 0845 450 0215*

*The Alliance : User led advocacy. Tel 020 7299 4304*

Quotes taken from Drink and Drug News 25th Feb 2008.

Steve (from SUS)

## **www.birminghamhypodermic.com: A service user produced website.**

*The SUS group interviewed Steve & Nick, the editors of Birmingham Hypodermic*

The message behind Birmingham Hypodermic is to inject news, views, information about drugs, services, treatment, related media articles, harm reduction, with a focus on Birmingham. As well as national and international issues.

The website started out as a list of services, how to get there/ access treatment etc. it continues to grow and develop and now includes general information about different drugs – their effects, what form they come in, dangers, harm reduction etc.

There is a live 'blog' on the website for all who wish to add views and feedback. The editors would like to hear from people who use the site about what else could be added?

The target audience is anyone.

It could be an educational tool for anyone who wants to find out about drugs and related topics.

As a resource for professionals & family members, it can be used by drug users who may want support/ or find a service.

The website also aims to promote an international network of service users/drug users. "Why the world needs an international network?" – People around the world are discriminated against for using drugs. For example – more people are put to death in some countries because of using drugs, selling and import/exportation than other serious capital crimes.

### **Plans for the future :**

1) To interview representatives of Birmingham Drug Treatment services starting with – Kick it, Zephyr and DSB.

These interviews will be filmed and

shown online so people can see/ hear what the services are about. This will add to the ever expanding related pod casts/video footage already uploaded.

2) To inform drug users how to maintain a healthy lifestyle – i.e. diet, exercise.

3) To publish on the website service users/drug users' stories, poetry, journeys, art work.

4) To build a library where 1000's of articles/guidelines etc can be viewed with ease providing important drug related information that people may want to know. These are being added and updated on a regular basis.

5) To inform service users/drug users where they can find further help and advice.

[www.birminghamhypodermic.com](http://www.birminghamhypodermic.com)

## *Stories, poems, letters*

You start to crave  
Then it changes how you behave  
Then when you're at your worst  
It won't go away  
It's yours for years  
I've been there  
Down in the gutter  
Life ebbing away  
Life in a stutter  
One day I woke up  
After years of feeling rough  
So I started  
Enough is enough  
My battle then began  
Now I'm a happy man  
It is not just a story  
I wanted my life back  
And all its glory  
Waking up and not being told  
By you, addiction  
You're easy to do  
But not so easy  
To get back to you  
But I started and  
I'm on the right path  
It gets better every day  
No more am I addicted I say  
Welcome back to my life  
It was a hard path but made the right  
choice Nic M

### Nothin Bout us without us!!

*I'm really pleased to have joined the  
group at DSB  
As for two years I've been isolated you  
see  
Wanted to chat and make progress &  
goals  
And stop at least to look out for those  
hole's  
  
Shocked at how long its took to get the  
help  
No matter for how long I've asked &  
yelped  
Starting to feel isolated and alone  
Like taking a trip round the same dark  
dome*

*They see us addicts as cheats  
That's not us all, even if some of us  
walked the streets  
I feel it is time we are given a voice*

*Because everyone is usually given the  
choice.*

*Rehabilitation is somewhere to start  
Staying off the drugs is the hard part  
Structure support I feel is needed  
Then maybe getting clean we may start  
succeeding*

*So Wed afternoon is a must  
We were all there off our own backs,  
that you can trust  
Nothin bout us without us  
What a fantastic motto and its used in  
SUS.*

*Yvonne*

### My Autobiography in Five Short Chap- ters (Nov 25<sup>th</sup> 07)

**I walk down the street  
There's a deep hole in the sidewalk  
I fall in  
I'm lost, I'm helpless  
It isn't my fault  
It takes forever to find a way out**

**I walk down the same street  
There's a deep hole in the sidewalk  
I pretend I don't see it  
I fall in again  
I can't believe I'm in the same place  
But it isn't my fault**

**I walk down the same street  
There's a deep hole in the sidewalk  
I see it is there  
I still fall in...it's a habit  
My eyes are open  
I know where I am  
It is my fault  
I get out immediately**

**I walk down the same street  
There's a deep hole in the sidewalk  
I walk around it**

**I walk down another street**

**By8  
Sarah**

Some junkies have got feelings  
Some junkies really care  
So don't tar us with the same  
brush  
Cause we're not all beyond repair  
We live in a bad society  
Where number one counts  
No-one wants to help cause  
They're full of doubts  
A junkie will rob you and take all  
you got.  
Well that's their perception  
You keep what you've got  
I'm a junkie and don't want to rob  
you.  
Just give me a chance  
See what I do.  
Help old ladies across the road  
Even give them my coat if they're  
cold.  
We've got a problem and we know  
that.  
But I don't want to rob you  
Simple as that  
Just want to get clean  
And be given a chance  
Cause no longer with the Devil  
I want to dance

*Everyone has got their own battles  
to fight.  
Addiction's the hardest and will take  
all your might.  
Admitting you got a problem is the  
first big step.  
You're on the Respect Road and  
have a lot to protect.  
Addiction comes in many forms.  
Drugs, drink or gambling it becomes  
a nause  
They can all get bad when they take  
their toll.  
Are you beyond repair lost your soul  
Start the battle to reach your goal.  
Step one you're back on road.  
It becomes less painless and cold.  
There are people that can always  
help you.  
But you got to want it that's so true.  
Come on people there's more to  
you.  
Than letting something tell you what  
to do  
Once addicted*

Nic

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

**Naloxone:** Is a short acting drug that can reverse the effects of a heroin overdose allowing time for someone to get to hospital for life saving treatment. 7 members of SUS completed training on the 26th March that will enable them to work with a specialist Dr to deliver training to other service users on how to administer a Naloxone injection if someone has overdosed on opiates. Once trained, service users will be prescribed Naloxone for emergency use.

There will be further training in Naloxone use available to service users from July ask your worker for details.

*At the time of going to press a service user who has undergone the above training in Birmingham has administered Naloxone to revive someone who overdosed. This allowed time for an ambulance to arrive and take the person to hospital for further treatment.*

## **Service User involvement with Swanswell Charitable Trust.**

Hello again, Sarah here just giving you the latest on Service User Involvement alongside the Board of Trustees at Swanswell. After the first occasion when a SU was invited along to their head office to give a presentation as to why we think it is important to have a SU on the Board of Trustees, (this being important as we are specialists in the service user field!) we were then invited to go and be on an Interviewing Panel for a prospective new Head of Marketing. There were 3 places allotted so myself, Steve and Jason volunteered to go along on the 9th of April 2008 to Head Office in Rugby.

We were chauffer driven, in a taxi over to Rugby. On arrival we were greeted by the team and given the use of an office in which to do our interviewing in. We were briefed on our role and given a prop advertisement to use during interviews to gauge the candidates opinions. (the advert was very poor and had washing powder boxes suggesting a get clean quick scenario) There were 3 candidates. The interviews started off a little shaky, I think nerves played a part with us all, but in true SU style by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> interview we were in full swing It is true to say that all of them had very different strengths and weaknesses and all brought something different to the table. After the interviews were complete we were then shown the food and a very nice spread it was too! Finally we went into the board room along with about 8 board members and the Director (Chris Robinson) and Chief executive (Debbie Bannigan). We were then invited to give our views and me being me and that being very outspoken and direct, (more through mishandling than careful thought haha) I had to express my views on a particular candidate, but apparently I wasn't the only one with these views which was good to know. So the final decision was left to be made. We had done what we were sent to do so off we popped back into a different taxi and all fell asleep on the drive home...!!

A few days later we were all contacted to let us know that none of the candidates were in fact offered the position and it had been readvertised, which I think everyone agrees was the best decision. We have now been invited back again to do the whole process again on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008. It just goes to show how valued SU are here at Swanswell and it's a pleasure to be involved.

Sarah F

## **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.



*Please pass your comments, suggestions, poems, and stories for consideration to appear in upcoming editions of S.U.S. 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.....Edition # 6 coming soon*