

FIRST WORD Well Done!

PLUS became a Company Limited by Guarantee on 29th Jan 2009. It's taken longer than anticipated but nevertheless achieved. Thanks to all our members and staff, supporters and champions of PLUS who worked with us in making it possible.

Here's a brief timeline of our journey towards independence;

2001 'service users' began meeting once a month in the Gateway, North Methven St, Perth following a government drive to address the low levels of satisfaction and user involvement in mental health services.

2002 PLUS opened its doors for the first time on the 10th December at 77 Canal St. Perth.

2002-2007 PLUS develops as a service user involvement forum under the management of Perth Association of Mental Health.

April 2007 PLUS sets up a working group aiming to achieve independence in about 6 months.

January 2009 PLUS Perth & Kinross' becomes registered at Companies House. Charitable Status pending.

Our big job now is in consolidating the work that has been done and prioritising for what happens next. The first of our monthly members meetings took place earlier this month to bring together views and ideas for future developments. These will be the mainstay of determining our direction and making sure that the organisation remains member-led.

Informing people through Pluspoint will continue to be one of the core function of PLUS. Many consider it to be a valuable source of communication - regular positive feedback is received on this. However we are by no means complacent. There is room for improvement so please tell us if you have ideas on how it could be better. Keep up with the growing number of contributions too!

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

Most people contemplating suicide do not want to die; they just want to stop the pain and difficulties they are experiencing. In Scotland, suicide is one of the main causes of death among young people and around two people die by suicide every day. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy - whatever the person's age. One suicide represents lost life, lost talent, lost creativity, a lost mother or father, brother, sister, son, daughter or friend and a wound that does not easily heal in those who are left behind.

ASIST is part of a comprehensive suicide prevention framework arranged through the Scottish Government's Chooselife strategy and action plan which aims to reduce suicides in Scotland by 20% by 2013. The strategy and action plan aims to ensure we take action nationally and locally to build skills, improve knowledge and awareness of 'what works' to prevent suicide, improve opportunities to prevent premature loss of life and provide hope and optimism for the future.

ASIST stands for Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. It is delivered as a two-day interactive course designed to help people learn how to recognise the signs of suicidal thoughts and how to intervene to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. The course is designed to help all in communities to become more willing, ready and able to help persons at risk of suicide.

As with any first aid/intervention programme, the only requirement is a willingness to be involved and the time to attend a 2 day training course in the skills required to provide support in the first instance. No specific qualifications or skills are necessary other than those of empathy and an interest in the subject of suicide prevention. You would not have to provide follow up treatment as this would be carried out by appropriate professionals. While the course will be beneficial for those in health or social care related employment and for those working with people who could be considered at risk of suicide, it is not a necessary requirement.

In 2009, a number of ASIST courses are being delivered in Perth & Kinross, the first of which is this month. Following this another course will be delivered on the 6th and 7th April 09. Applications are invited from all members of our local community. If you would like to know more or to book a place, please contact: David Leslie at Blackfriars Learning & Development Centre on 01738 477897 or email dleslie@pkc.gov.uk

The cost for each two day course is:

- Free** - for private individuals earning less than £15,000
- £60.00** - for private individuals earning more than £15,000, and small voluntary organisations.
- £95.00** - for statutory bodies, private organisations and larger voluntary organisations.

Helplines

Breathing Space	0800 83 85 87
Depression Alliance Scotland	0845 123 23 20
Samaritans	08457 909090
Cruse Bereavement Care	0844 477 9400
Saneline	08457 678000
Eating Disorders Association	0845 6341414
Mental Health Out of Hours	08454242424
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide	0844 561 6855

PLUS

77 Canal Street, Perth PH2 8JJ

Tel.: 01738 626242 Email: plusperth@msn.com

www.plusperth.co.uk

Forth Coming Events

Perth & Kinross Council's Community Waste Fund Launch

Monday 16th February 2.00pm AK Bell Library, Perth

Visit www.pkc.gov.uk/recycle or phone 01738 476476 for more details

This is a new initiative to help build greater community involvement in the drive to reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill. Through the scheme, support and funding can be provided for community led initiatives such as promotion of reusable bags, swap shops, reuse of paint etc.

Making Recovery Real

Thursday 26th February, 9.30am Perth Concert Hall.

Sponsored by the Scottish Recovery Network.

Exploring the ways forward for service user involved research -Valuing people as experts in their own lives

Friday the 6th March 09 University of Stirling, 10.30am to 3.30pm

This free participatory event will develop future plans for taking forward service user involved research in Scotland and will be aimed at anyone with an interest in mental health research but we would particularly welcome service users. Graham Morgan of HUG will be speaking at the event. Reasonable travel expenses and a bus link between Stirling train station and the university will be provided.

By coming together we have the opportunity to influence the direction and ethos of mental health research to provide service user expertise where it matters.

Contact (VOX) 0141 572 1663

Mental Health Problems Through The Lifespan

Wednesday 25th March. Teacher Building, Glasgow.

This conference focuses on a variety of mental health problems which start in childhood and continue well into adulthood, and is organised by the University of Glasgow. Tel 0141 2019353 for more details.

Personal Perspective

When I first became depressed, it started with irritability. I started to get angry with my housemates for little reason. I couldn't help myself. I would get annoyed about small things and I didn't know why I'd changed so much. I apologised, but sometimes it wasn't enough. I didn't know myself why I got so angry, so it was difficult to explain it to someone else. I just always felt unhappy and irritable. One night, I lay in bed listening to a couple of my housemates whispering about my bad behaviour outside my door. I felt lousy and my already low self-esteem hit the floor.

Life at home became horrible. I started avoiding my housemates and they avoided me. I would come in from work and hide in my room until everyone had gone out or to bed and then go down to the kitchen to get something to eat. I felt increasingly lonely and isolated, but I didn't have much energy to go out. I wanted to move out, but I didn't have the energy to arrange it, so I just went to work and hid in my box room. I wondered if it was possible get bed sores from the amount of time that I spent in bed, but I didn't really see any alternative. I did try to talk to my GP about how I was feeling, but I found it hard to express what was happening to me and he didn't seem to believe me anyway.

It was a good friend who lived in another town who helped me. When she came home, we went out for coffee and she listened to my problems. She didn't judge me, she had known me from school and she knew there was more to me than this. It was a relief to have someone to talk to. She suggested I come and live with her, as one of her housemates had moved out. It was a risk, but I was at such a low ebb, I decided to take her up on it. Making the arrangements was hard, but it was worth it. At first, when I moved into her house, I still wanted to stay in bed all the time, and she didn't criticise me when I did that. Gradually, I started to feel better and to take an interest in life. I started wanting to go out again and to feel good about life. I'm not saying things were perfect, but they were much better. Looking back, I wish I had sought treatment for the Depression, but at the time I wasn't really prepared to admit that was what was wrong with me.

(Courtesy of the Look OK...Feel Crap website)

Consultation on 'Smoke Free Mental Health Services'

PLUS has been gathering feedback on 'Achieving Smoke Free Mental Health Services' a consultation by the Scottish government which runs until the 6th April. Individuals and groups such as the Kinross Mill bridge day services have filled in a questionnaire giving their views on this.

There have been a range of comments so far, including;

"Totally disagree with smoke free-it is bad enough being in hospital without being told you cannot smoke too."

"I feel it is better if people smoke outside. There have been too many buildings with smoke and you just feel ill with it."

"Happy about buildings no smoking but unhappy about not being able to smoke outside."

"I am a smoker and have been for a number of years and find smoking a relief of boredom and a comfort. There is a need for a smoke room in hospital as many people need one and as long as there is adequate ventilation there should not be a problem."

"People have to want to stop smoking-it should not be enforced-more important to leave people and allow them to smoke when they are in a mental hospital!"

PLUS will be continuing to collect views from people who have used mental health services until the end of the consultation period. Contact the office for a questionnaire if you would like to contribute towards this. 01738 626242.

How to be Happy in 18 Easy Steps

1. Realise that great love and great achievements involve great risk
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson
3. Follow the 3 r's - respect for self, respect for others, responsibility for your actions
4. Remember that not getting what you want is often a stroke of luck
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great relationship
7. When you realise you have made a mistake move to correct it immediately
8. Spend some time alone every day
9. Open your arms to change but don't let go of your values
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer
11. Live a good honourable life. Then when you get older and think back you'll enjoy it a second time.
12. A loving atmosphere at home is the foundation of your life.
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation, don't bring up the past
14. Share your knowledge. It is a way to achieve immortality
15. Be gentle with the earth
16. Once a year, go somewhere you've never been before
17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it

The Dalai Lama - Submitted by Lynn Wilson

NATIONAL NEWS

Cannabis Re-classified as a Class B Drug

Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary, moved cannabis from Class C to Class B in January because of fears of the impact of stronger strains of "skunk" on the mental health of young people. It reversed a decision in 2004 by her predecessor, David Blunkett, to downgrade cannabis.

HUG - 'A Mentally Healthy' Workplace

The latest Highland User Group report to be released, 'A Mentally Healthy Workplace' is an attempt to get beyond the normal mental illness approach and to look at what would make any workplace mentally healthy for any worker. For a copy of the report contact HUG.

Mental Welfare Commission Merger

On the 6th November 2008 the government announced its plans to reduce the number of scrutiny bodies in Scotland. Its proposals include the creation of a new health scrutiny body which would encompass the Mental Welfare Commission, NHS Quality Improvement Scotland and some functions of the Care Commission. The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland provides important and unique independent safeguards for people who are vulnerable because of mental health problems or learning disability. A spokesperson for the MWC said; "Health services, social care services and the Government must be open to independent challenge and scrutiny, especially when it comes to the care of individuals who often have no voice. We will work to ensure that the Commission's role is not diluted and that the safeguards it provides are retained and strengthened"

'Outside The Box' Launches Two Projects

'Outside the Box', have recently launched two new projects, "Stepping Out" and "Working Towards". "Stepping Out" is a project working with older people to hear their views on what keeps them well and improves their overall wellbeing. "Working Towards" is a community development project to support people across Scotland to develop new services that are led by the people who are going to be using the services. The project will include good practice examples and advice on how to work alongside user-led services, especially in the early stages, and on how this can fit with the wider policies aimed at giving people more choice and control around the services they use. Outside the Box are based in Glasgow and work with groups from all over Scotland, see www.otbds.org for more information.

Newspapers Taken to Task

The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) recently ruled nine online publications breached suicide reporting rules- Mirror Online, Sun Online, Telegraph.co.uk, Mail Online, Metro.co.uk, Independent.co.uk, thelondonpaper.com, dailyrecord.co.uk and the [crawleyobserver.co.uk](http://www.crawleyobserver.co.uk) were found to have given 'excessive' information in reporting a suicide. The print editions of the Sun, Daily Star and Daily Mirror newspapers were also said to have infringed the code.

Shift Launches DVD

Shift, the English equivalent of the Scottish anti stigma organisation 'see me', has launched an online DVD encouraging employers to discuss mental health issues at work. A new online expert panel will also give employers free advice on protecting and supporting employee's mental health and wellbeing. For further info contact www.shift.org

Sad Statistics

According to research by the Prince's Trust. 23% of 16 to 25 year olds said they are 'often' or 'always' down or depressed, For help for young adults, visit the Look OK Feel Crap website. www.lookokfeelcrap.org

MyDish for Mental Health

The Mental Health Foundation, and MyDish.co.uk recently launched a new recipe website for those interested in knowing more about the links between healthy eating and a healthy mind. The new website (<http://mentalhealthfoundation.mydish.co.uk>) explains what foods are good for the brain and shows how to eat healthily on a budget. The site also allows members to share tips and swap recipes – and reveals why sitting down for a meal with good company can be positive for your mental health. It is hoped the new website will be particularly helpful for people experiencing common mental health problems including depression and anxiety - and suggests how diet changes can help improve mood.

Good Mood Foods

The feel-good chemical, serotonin, cannot be produced by the body without tryptophan. Without serotonin, people feel low. Ten natural sources of tryptophan are - **1. Mung Beans 2. Lobster 3. Turkey 4. Asparagus 5. Sunflower Seeds 6. Cottage Cheese 7. Pineapple 8. Tofu 9. Spinach 10. Bananas**

British Turkey and Banana Balti

Serves 4 Cooking Time: 50 minutes Fat Per Portion: 21.5g

Ingredients

- 550g/1¼ lb diced turkey
- 2 tablespoons seasoned flour
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 onion, peeled and sliced
- 2-3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 1-2 red chillies, deseeded and chopped
- Small piece root ginger, peeled and grated
- 1½ tablespoon Madras medium hot curry powder
- 600ml/1 pint turkey or chicken stock
- 150ml/¼ pint coconut milk
- 3 firm bananas
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 4 tablespoons low-fat yogurt
- Lemon zest and sliced red chilli to garnish, freshly cooked basmati rice, raita and green salad to serve.

Method

1. Toss diced turkey in seasoned flour and reserve.
2. Heat oil then gently sauté the onion, garlic, chillies and ginger for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally Add the Madras curry powder and continue to sauté for 3 more minutes.
3. Add turkey to the pan, and cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until the turkey is sealed.
4. Gradually stir in stock and then the coconut milk. Bring to boil still stirring then cover with a lid. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes.
5. Slice the bananas and add to the pan with lemon juice and cook for a further 5 minutes or until turkey is tender.
6. Stir in yogurt and heat through for 3 minutes then serve garnished with zested lemon rind and sliced chilli.

ICE Campaign

If we were to be involved in an accident or were taken ill, the people attending us would have our mobile phone but wouldn't know who to call. Yes, there are hundreds of numbers stored but which one is the contact person in case of an emergency? Hence this 'ICE' (In Case of Emergency) Campaign. The concept of 'ICE' is catching on quickly. It is a method of contact during emergency situations. As mobile phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is store the number of a contact person or persons who should be contacted during emergency under the name 'ICE' (In Case Of Emergency). The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when he went to the scenes of accidents there were always mobile phones with patients but they didn't know which number to call. He therefore thought that it would be a good idea if there was a nationally recognised name for this purpose. In an emergency situation, Emergency Service personnel and hospital staff would be able to quickly contact the right person by simply dialing the number you have stored as 'ICE'.

LOCAL NEWS

The Ramblers Association

The Ramblers Association and PKC have developed a map with walks emanating from the Concert Hall. This is linked to The Ramblers developing "walking hubs" as part of their "Walk the Path to 2014" Campaign.

PLUS Writers Group

Next meeting Tuesday 3rd March 10.30-12 Soutar House, Wilson Street in Craigie. Buses 5 & 6 go from Mill St, town centre. Tel, Ajay on 01738 643687.

A Day of Health and Wellbeing for Carers

Tayside Carers Support Project is holding "A Day of Health & Wellbeing" for carers, families and friends of people with mental health problems. The event will feature speakers, information sharing and fun workshops. Discovery Point, Dundee, Saturday 14th March, 10:00-4:00, Coffees, teas and lunch provided. Contact Elizabeth on 01382 305713 for more details.

Asperger Club Open Night 25th Feb

An open evening for about an hour or so will be held on 25th February at 7.00pm at the Adult Resource Centre, in Jessie Street, Blairgowrie to explain how 'The Spectrum Club' runs and how it tries to raise self esteem and confidence for members. The club hopes to attract some volunteers in this way. The meeting is also to raise awareness of autistic spectrum disorders, and to let people know that a specialist club is available. If anyone would like to ask any questions beforehand, then they would be more than welcome to send Ann Barrett an email ann@lorntyglen.org.uk "The Spectrum club" is for adolescents with Asperger syndrome or higher functioning autism.

Murray Royal Staff Promote Wellbeing

Staff Nurse Hazel Evans, Moredun B, MRH has been successful in completing a 9 month accredited 'Psychosocial skills' course at Glasgow University. Psychosocial interventions is an approach aimed at improving people's well-being. Funding has been made available for a further two nurses to attend the course in April.

'Staying Well' Ideas Wanted

Ideas are being sought for the 'Staying Well' project, a series of talks and open discussion forums focussing on wellbeing and self management of symptoms, held in Moredun B MRH. As the most recent set of meetings was poorly attended suggestions for new topics/wellbeing activities as part of the project would be most welcomed. Speak to Phil Dellanzo MB or telephone Susan@PLUS 01738 626242.

Birnam Institute Information

Open Studio Time - Birnam Institute of Arts continues with Open Studio Time, when they open their doors to a visual arts room for free each Friday 9am-4.30pm. Artists of all mediums are invited to come and use the workshop to create - as well as encouraging the opportunity to meet like minded people.

Writing for Children with Kenneth Steven - 21 February. Kenneth Steven has published a number of picture books for children and several novels. To date, these books have been published in 14 countries. In this talk and workshop he will explain how it's possible to break into this competitive field as a new author, and offer guidance on writing for children in general. Tickets: £10. starts 10am Contact Birnam Institute on 01350 727674.

New Staff for Walled Garden

Debbie Butler has been appointed as the new co-ordinator at The Walled Garden. Previously to taking up the post Debbie worked in Dobbies Garden Centre for six years, and prior to that PAMH. Debbie said "I m delighted to be working in this beautiful place."

Gaberlunzie Playing at Tulloch Institute

The Visor group are holding an event at the Tulloch Institute on Friday 6th March featuring the popular folk duo Gaberlunzie. Tickets are £10, contact David Millar (07988719739) for more details.

Recently Appointed Carer Advocate

Rona Spowart has been recently appointed Carer's Advocate at Independent Advocacy in Perth. Independent Advocacy offers a free and confidential service to help people make informed decision. They often attend meetings with the person as a moral support or to speak on their behalf. Sourcing information on social work, housing, benefits legal matters etc. is another example of Advocacy Support. At present the Perth office employs nine paid staff and has over fifty trained volunteers. Rona is specifically as an advocate for carers. There also specific advocates for people who use mental health services themselves. For more information tel. 01738 587887.

Dementia Café for Perth & Kinross

Dementia Cafe for Perth & Kinross will be held regularly on the first Wednesday of every month from 10.00am - 12.30 at North Church, Perth. Refreshments will be available. This service will be open to anyone with Dementia, their carers, family and others wishing information. Contact: Andy Bennet 01738 636358 or Debbie Howie 01738 562201.

MRH - Demolition Starting Mid Year

MRH nurses home will be one of the first buildings to be demolished as preparation for the building works to start on the hospital site. This is scheduled to happen anytime from late Spring onwards and will herald the start of the works on the former Victorian Asylum. The future of the listed main building and 'surplus' land will be discussed at meetings involving various community groups, including PLUS. The meetings will be chaired by non executive NHS board member Peter Withers. The project which gained outline planning permission at the beginning of January 09 is due to start actual building at the beginning of 2010.

For more info contact PLUS or mhdproject.scot.nhs.uk

Friendship

Friendship to me means helping each other
Like the things you would do for a sister or brother
Lending them things and borrowing them
Feeling sad and lonely and needing your friend
Having a shoulder to cry on
Someone to rely on
Going out and having some fun
To laugh with to cry with
Whatever you do
You know you'll have a friend
To pull you through

Poem submitted by Vonnie Mack

