Dear

Further to your request for information dated the 7 July 2016 information requested is below

What does the CCG currently do to include people who use services and experts by experience in the commissioning and design of mental health services?

The CCG’s representatives regularly attend mental health action group (MHAG) sessions in order to link in with experts by experience and people who use services. The MHAGs are primarily to provide a support network but also for users of services and carers to input in the way mental health services are run and commissioned. During these group sessions, there is dedicated time set aside at each session specifically for carers and people that use services to express their concerns and thoughts to the chairman. People using mental health services are involved at various levels, but each group is encouraged to nominate a chair and co-chair who has accessed or is accessing mental health services.

The CCG also have a virtual Health Network to inform people of upcoming opportunities to get involved in reviewing and redesigning services which goes out to a cross section of the people who have registered their interest in health services.

We regularly liaise with voluntary sector organisations to promote and encourage participation. Depending on the area of commissioning, we promote specific focus groups, surveys and events so that respondents and attendees represent a variety of communities, including those who have experienced mental health issues and those that are likely to be affected by a change in service.
**Do you have any particular examples of services that you have developed with the input of people with lived experience of mental illness?**

There are a number of transformation projects underway which have already involved expert patients, which includes people using mental health services. More work is being planned to develop this area in order to increase public representation within mental health commissioning decisions.

- The Kent-wide **Good Mental Health Awareness Campaign** has been led by DGS CCG, with development and testing of concepts and messaging through Children and Young People’s focus groups and student/teacher feedback at a local secondary school. The project aims to increase knowledge and early awareness of emotional wellbeing and resilience to help prevent mental health problems in the future.

  The materials provide information, advice and guidance for young people and their parents and highlights simple ways in which good mental health can be maintained and improved and teaches them to spot early warning signs.

  The campaign aims to engage young people and their parents from all backgrounds and to de-stigmatise conversations about mental health and wellbeing. For this project, the focus group comprising eight teenagers were asked what ‘mental health’ meant to them, and what would be useful for them in terms of receiving non-judgemental information about mental health. Key points of specific feedback were focused around the tone and content of materials, preferred communications channels, concepts and event stand format. We responded to this feedback by using web and social media and designing digital content in keeping with the group’s views. The group also suggested that they would prefer an inclusive event stand layout as opposed to a separate booth format, which they felt may stigmatise the issue even further. The group felt that younger people should be involved in operating the event stand, and that they would prefer not to fill in forms or have lots of prescriptive information materials. All these suggestions and more were used in order to shape the format of the campaign.

- An **eating disorder project** (Psychoeducational Therapeutic Intervention Strategy (PETS) involved users of eating disorder services in the design and production of a staff training video.

  Their stories were used to give an empathetic insight into the lives of people living with an eating disorder. The participants also assisted with the overall concept of the training.

- The **Mind and Body programme** focused on younger people, was designed prior to transformation, but young people were directly involved in the development of it. Young people from the initial pilot programme took part in focus groups and interviews with an external evaluation team to explore how to develop the programme. Their recommendations to extend the programme and to have post-programme sessions have both been actioned.
Artwork from participants has been included in the information pack and two young people have also written a welcome letter to participants about what they could expect from the programme. Young people from the initial pilot sat on interview panels for the selection of each of the new Mind and Body practitioners. Young people from the programme attended the last two Public Health England takeover days in London, feeding in to Public Health England board meetings and wider focus groups.

Participants from the current programme are contributing prices of art, film, photography and creative writing to be displayed in exhibitions with the objective of promoting discussion of young people’s mental health with a particular focus on self-harm.

- **Engagement via survey and online forums** was undertaken with people who have **Neurodevelopmental disorders**, and their families and carers to help to design a new pathway for accessing relevant services across Kent and Medway.

- The CCG engaged with a number of mental health groups (MHAG and Rethink) in establishing what people with mental health services require at times of crisis from local **urgent and emergency care services**.

**What plans does the CCG currently have to expand the scope and scale for experts by experience to be involved in the commissioning and design of mental health services?**

- During recent procurement exercises of future community mental health and wellbeing services, potential providers were asked to detail the actions they would take to involve service users if they were successful in the bidding process.

- For the procurement of Children and Young People emotional wellbeing services, initially parents and young people were involved in the design of the service model. Further to this, engagement events such as focus groups are due to be held in north Kent and existing service users and their families have been invited as well as extending the invitation to the general public so that their feedback can be gathered and acted upon.

**Is the CCG interested in doing more to include people with lived experience of mental illness, and their carers, in commissioning and designed mental health service? Is there anything we can do to facilitate this?**

Yes, one of the ways that people can get involved with service design is to stay in touch with the CCG regarding this is to sign up for the local Health Network by sending an email to **dgs.communications@nhs.net** or visiting our website [https://www.dartfordgraveshamswanleyccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/dgs-health-network/](https://www.dartfordgraveshamswanleyccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/dgs-health-network/)

We keep the Health Network members updated with upcoming engagement opportunities which could include events, focus groups, surveys and campaigns.
Also, through the development of a Patient Participation Group Forum in Dartford Gravesham and Swanley CCG we will be taking mental health as well as other key service areas to these groups to further engage GP practice populations and clinicians.

Service users and carers with lived experience of mental health are welcome to attend their local Mental Health Action Groups and details can be requested via West Kent Mind via this email address: mhag@westkentmind.org.uk

If you have any queries or concerns please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the service that you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision you should write to Complaints, NHS Dartford Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group 2nd Floor Gravesham Civic Centre Gravesend Kent DA12 1AU or email at dgsccg.complaints@nhs.net

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint or review, you may apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioners Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
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SK9 5AF
Telephone: 08456 306060 or 01625 54 57 45
www.ico.gov.uk