



# Rethink Carers Lancashire

**Newsletter  
October 2017**

c/o Rethink Mental Illness, Suite 12 The Shakespeare Centre, 45/51 Shakespeare St., Southport PR8 5AB  
07534 369889 [rethinklancs@yahoo.com](mailto:rethinklancs@yahoo.com)

## **IMPORTANT MEETING**

**Thursday November 2, Brindle Community Hall, 10.30 -12.20, plus lunch and a short AGM, followed by a presentation by Matthew Hyndman, our Rethink Group Development Officer, about safeguarding – something we all need to be aware of.**

In the morning we'll welcome Charlotte Hammond, Head of Mental Health Services for Lancashire County Council. Charlotte has asked to come to hear our experiences of care from Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, particularly relating to care planning under the Care Act. LCFT is contracted by the County Council to meet the legal obligations of the Care Act, and there have been major concerns about how assessments of need have been carried out. **Our group has submitted a report on this to the Council's Health Scrutiny Committee – please ask if you'd like a copy of this report.** This meeting will be relevant to anyone, no matter which Council (Blackburn, Blackpool, Lancashire) you come under. We've asked Charlotte to give us a detailed explanation of how the needs assessment process should work.

**Please let us know if you'll be coming to this meeting, and particularly whether you'd like either hotpot or butter pie for lunch** (although if we don't have sufficient numbers for the catering company we may have to provide an alternative lunch) **Lunch booking deadline Thursday October 26th**

**East Lancs group: Wednesday November 8 6 – 8 pm Accrington.** Lorraine McDonald-Johnson, lead for all the East Lancs community mental health teams, will be attending this meeting. An excellent opportunity for you to discuss individual problems, information to follow about which speaker/topics we'll have

**Fylde Coast Family Support Group: Tuesday November 14<sup>th</sup>, 7- 9 pm,** meets at Sainsbury's in Blackpool. For further information email [fyldefamilysupportgroup@rethink.org](mailto:fyldefamilysupportgroup@rethink.org). Or phone **07999 332804**.

**Time to change event at Turf Moor:** this will offer guests the opportunity to listen and share stories and experiences as well as meet those who want to work together to make a difference and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. The event (including lunch) is free and will take place on **Thursday November 16 from 12.30 to 3.30 pm in the Jimmy McIlroy Stand of Burnley Football Club.** For further information contact Health and Wellbeing Manager Abby Turner on 01282 704716 or email [a.turner@burnleyfc.com](mailto:a.turner@burnleyfc.com)

**Can you help with a Lancaster University study?** Do you have a biological parent with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or experiences of psychosis? If you answered 'yes' and are aged 18-35, you can help us by taking part in a research study titled: *Experiences of individuals with a biological parent who has experiences of psychosis or a diagnosis of schizophrenia*. We are looking for people who are fluent English speakers; have not experienced psychosis or received a diagnosis of schizophrenia themselves; and are not currently accessing mental health services. The study involves taking part in an interview (60 to 90 mins) about your own life experiences. The interview can take place at your own home, or a suitable location of your choice (travel expenses provided); interviews can also be via phone or Skype. If you are interested in taking part in the interview and would like more information, please contact Max Homberger via email – [m.homberger@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:m.homberger@lancaster.ac.uk)

For winter 2017 to 2018, you or the person you care for, could get **£140 off your electricity bill** through the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money isn't paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill between October and April. The discount won't affect Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payments. Phone your electricity supplier to find if you're eligible and for an application form, which has to be returned by February 28 2018 (although it's better to do this earlier) or contact **Warm Home Discount Scheme 0345 603 9349** [www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)

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**Key  
Rethink  
report on  
Housing**

On October 16 Rethink published a report showing people with the highest needs, and the highest costs, are likely to suffer the biggest shortfalls in rent as a consequence of the cap on Housing Benefit. The charity says this will be most evident in parts of the country where rents are cheapest and therefore housing benefit payments will be lowest. Research has shown the cap will mean housing benefit will only cover about two thirds of accommodation costs in some parts of the country.

The new report, *Mental Health Supported Housing: Securing financial stability, supply and quality*, looks specifically at housing for people living with mental illness and how this is funded. The Government set out a plan to cap housing benefit at the same rate as the lowest rents in the private rented sector. A review, commissioned by Department of Work and Pensions officials, suggested average housing costs which are now shown to be far lower than the real costs of this type of provision. In some cases the Government's estimates were £80 a week lower than the real cost. Potentially, this creates a significant shortfall for those in need of the highest levels of support and would leave many reliant on a local 'top up' fund administered by hard-pressed local authorities.

The report argues that wider Government plans to improve mental health and bring standards of care up are being undermined by these proposed cuts that could leave some of the most vulnerable people without housing, severely impacting their health. The research concludes that the Government must drop this proposed cap as soon as possible and work with people who live in and run supported housing to find a funding model that's fit for purpose. Brian Dow, Director of External Affairs at Rethink Mental Illness, said: "Supported housing is key to achieving the very welcome ambitions the Government have around parity of esteem. It is a hugely valuable and cost effective option for people with mental illness. The future of supported housing is in serious doubt because of Government plans to radically change how it's funded. "

## Two more important reports from Rethink

**4th October 2017, Theresa May announced an independent review into the mental health act.** Danielle Hamm, Associate Director of Campaigns and Policy at Rethink Mental Illness said, “The Mental Health Act is over thirty years old; it is out of date. We welcome this review as an opportunity to identify where the Act is currently failing people with mental illness, which it too often is, and make it fit for purpose. “It is vital that this review listens to and works with people who are, or have been, held under the Act. Last year over 60,000 people were detained under the Mental Health Act and many thousands more are affected as friends, carers and family members. These voices need to be heard. “It is only with their full involvement that we will get a robust review and the changes everyone needs. We look forward to working with the independent review to make this happen and make this change a reality.”

**Last summer, Rethink Mental Illness was commissioned by Mental Health Alliance to conduct the largest survey into the 34-year-old Act. The message from the research was clear: the Act is no longer fit for purpose and there is a growing need for it to be reformed.**



The research, the first of its kind, includes the views of over 8000 people who use mental health services, carers, and professionals working in the field. Half of those who responded did not think that people are treated with dignity and respect under the Mental Health Act.

Key findings from the survey, which was developed, disseminated and analysed by Rethink Mental Illness on behalf of the Mental Health Alliance, showed that:

- 49% of respondents felt that people are not treated with dignity under the Mental Health Act
- 50% said that they would not be confident that their human rights would be protected under the Mental Health Act if they were detained under it
- 72% disagreed that the rights of people living with mental illness are protected and enforced as effectively as those for people living with a physical illness
- 86% of respondents felt that it was very important that people be allowed to specify people close to them to be involved in decisions.

We can post you a copy of this report if you can't download it

This research makes a powerful and considered case for the Government to carry out a comprehensive review of the Mental Health Act. The Act is the only piece of healthcare legislation that starts from the premise that the individual is not in control – so it does not seek to maximise autonomy or decision making.

The report also shows that the Government should set out clear terms of reference and a timetable for a fundamental review of the Mental Health Act, starting with a review into Community Treatment Orders, which are sometimes in place when you leave hospital but you have to meet conditions to stay in the community; and the outmoded way that the 'nearest relative' is allocated.

The "nearest relative" is not the same as "next of kin" and comes in a specific hierarchy starting with your spouse, then son/daughter, then father/mother etc, which means a relative you have a difficult relationship with can be given control of your health and you get no say in it. We want to see individuals being able to make their own decisions.

## New survey shows schizophrenia widely misunderstood

**New survey from Rethink Mental Illness show that, although there have been significant strides forward in public attitudes towards mental illness in recent years, schizophrenia remains a widely misunderstood illness.** The new survey from the charity of 1,500 members of the public found:

- 50% of people mistakenly think that schizophrenia means you have a 'split' personality
- 26% wrongly believe that schizophrenia makes you violent
- 23% incorrectly think that someone with schizophrenia needs to be monitored by professionals at all times

One in 100 people have schizophrenia, but almost half of the general public (45%) thought the illness is much less common than this. Having schizophrenia can affect the way you think and behave. You might have problems concentrating or remembering, or experience delusions or hallucinations, such as hearing voices. It's hard for anyone to imagine what living with schizophrenia can be like, so Rethink Mental Illness has created a short video to help people understand what hearing voices is really like. To watch the video, visit [www.rethink.org/rethinkpsychoprehnia](http://www.rethink.org/rethinkpsychoprehnia) The new research also found also found that many of people are unaware of the inequalities and prejudice that someone living with schizophrenia can face: 61% didn't know that someone with schizophrenia will live on average, 15-20 years less than the rest of the population. This inequality is largely down to the fact that physical health problems are often missed or cast aside as symptoms of mental illness; or because of complications associated with side effects of medication. Whilst 60% of people think that someone with schizophrenia can do a full time job, the stark reality is that only 8% who are ready and want to work are currently employed.

Brian Dow, Director of External Affairs at Rethink Mental Illness said, "We've come a long way with mental health stigma, but schizophrenia remains behind many other conditions in terms of public understanding. Many of us are still dramatically misinformed about the condition. The symptoms of schizophrenia don't fit neatly into a box, everyone will experience it differently. However we can all play a role in rethinking schizophrenia, and helping to change attitudes, by learning to separate the myths from the facts."



**National  
Members Day  
November 11th  
London**

[Professor Sir Robin Murray](#), Professor of Psychiatric Research at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College He will be speaking in the morning on 'New developments in the understanding and treatment of schizophrenia and psychosis'. In the afternoon there are four workshops to choose from, you have the opportunity to attend two. **Workshop 1: A Calmer You** **Workshop 2: Presentation of clinical research linking some psychosis with a treatable auto-immune disorder, led by University of Oxford researchers.** **Workshop 3: Rethink Advice and Information Service** This workshop will look at recent changes to disability benefits and the introduction of universal credit, the challenges this presents and how some of them may be overcome. **Workshop 4: Planning for the future, led by Steve Howells**

**Get in touch if you're interested in attending the day.**

