



Rethink Carers Lancashire

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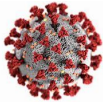
lancscarersgroup@rethink.org

c/o Rethink Mental Illness, Involvement Team, PO Box 201, TIVERTON EX16 0DY

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Remember these? They do still exist – allegedly - but would you know what to do with one these days? Smartphones, mobiles, cell phones – whatever you want to call them, they may get a bad press, but for many of us they’ve certainly been a big help with getting through lockdown, as are the laptops, tablets and Chromebooks that facilitate our communications. We’ve made this a bit of a theme in this newsletter, with plenty of useful numbers/web links, and a few light-hearted takes on our love/hate relationship with the technology.



Covid information from Rethink: The Advice & Information Service have been writing information and advice about Covid on the Covid hub: www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/covid-19-support/. They update this as legislation and guidance changes, so do please take a look. They have also just recorded some short videos on the top 3 questions about Covid; these will be hitting social media soon!

The Mental Health & Money Advice Service have provided some tips to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can find these here: <https://www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/en/top-tips/mental-health-and-money-advicefor-covid-19-outbreak/>

How to contact the Advice Service: they have taken on 3 new advisers, taking the total to 5.6. All the new advisers are now fully trained and are taking calls, replying to emails and answering webchats. It is still difficult for people to get through on the phones. This is because they have so many calls. But there has been a drop in the number of webchats and emails, so these can be good ways of contacting them. **Webchat** is available on the advice pages of www.rethink.org between 10am and 1pm every weekday. Look for the ‘Chat’ button in the bottom right-hand corner of the pages. This is the quickest way to make contact. They aim to answer **emails** within 3 working days, and the vast majority of emails are now being answered within that timescale.

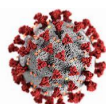
Freephone number We are delighted to announce that RAIS now have a freephone number: **0808 801 0525**.



Grandson’s phone (age 6)



My phone at age 6



Lancashire County Council Protection for Personal Assistants

People who employ Personal Assistants under the Direct Payments scheme should by now have received letters giving information about how their assistants can book Covid 19 vaccinations and also have weekly tests. If you haven’t received this letter, please contact the LCC hub on **0300 123 6701** and ask for the Covid vaccines team.

Dr. Sonia Ramdour is the Trust's Chief Pharmacist and has provided this explanation of when people under their care can expect to be invited to have the Covid 19 vaccination, as well as the steps the Trust will be taking:



“The Joint Committee on Immunisation and Vaccination (JCVI) determines priority groups for vaccination in the UK. The JCVI have included those with severe mental illness within priority cohort 6. Cohort 6 is defined by the JCVI as ‘All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality’. The current priority groups* for vaccination are anybody over 70 and the clinically extremely vulnerable (groups 1-4).

*(since Sonia sent this the priority has moved to groups 5 & 6 – see below)

In terms of how people will be invited to an appointment:

Please let us know if you hear from your GP, or if you've tried to contact them

- Each GP practice is required to keep a register of those patients in the practice who have a severe mental illness or learning disability. GP practices should therefore be able to use these registers to call people to vaccination appointments.
- Nationally, people are also receiving letters when they meet a particular vaccination priority group inviting them to book an appointment at a mass vaccination centre. The link to book an appointment is provided in the letter. There is also a phone number in the letter to book appointments. I am guessing it is easy to identify those meeting priority groups because of their age, to be honest I'm not sure how they will invite those with severe mental illness unless they are able to collate data nationally from the local GP registers.

The trust is also supporting patient vaccination as follows:

1. We are currently vaccinating inpatients in cohort 1-4 who have yet to receive their first dose of vaccine. This will extend to other priority groups in line with national vaccination timelines
2. We are speaking to NHSE about vaccinating those in secure mental health or learning disability inpatient facilities across Lancashire and South Cumbria, and other groups such as the homeless, rough sleepers
3. Our learning disabilities team will support attendance in primary care vaccination clinics if needed, however we will vaccinate where patients are unable to attend vaccination centres in the community
4. We are starting to plan how we best support those in our community teams with severe mental illness in readiness for when cohort 6 vaccination commences. I think we will likely try and encourage attendance at vaccination centres in the community where this is possible, but also support vaccination of patients who are not able to attend these clinics by offering an option for vaccination by the Trust.”

If you have any questions on this, Sonia has very kindly said that our members may contact her by email: sonia.ramdour@lscft.nhs.uk

Group 5 is people over 65. **Group 6** (hopefully vaccines for these people will be started from Feb 22) covers Chronic respiratory disease, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis and severe asthma • Chronic heart disease (and vascular disease) • Chronic kidney disease • Chronic liver disease • Chronic neurological disease including epilepsy • Down's syndrome • Severe and profound learning disability • Diabetes • Solid organ, bone marrow and stem cell transplant recipients • People with specific cancers • Immunosuppression due to disease or treatment • Asplenia and splenic dysfunction • Morbid obesity • **Severe mental illness**

Other groups at higher risk, including those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill, should also be offered vaccination alongside these groups.

Opportunities from Rethink



The new Rethink Phoenix group is based in North Lancs but welcomes people from all areas. Sue and Pete Flowers coordinate this group, which for now is meeting online only, on the third Wednesday of every month, 4 – 5.30 pm, as a recurring Zoom meeting. The plan is to use the first hour to discuss issues arising and support each other and the last 30 minutes to consider our own wellbeing. Please have pen and paper to hand and a jam jar if you have time to track one down! Details to join the meeting are:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81433489241?pwd=aFpQK0UyL0wvbVpWSVM0UXNpU0Rvdz09>

Meeting ID: 814 3348 9241

Passcode: 024556



“Free Training in England” are promoting a lot of government-funded online courses, and there are a number of Ofqual recognised Level 2 mental health courses that are fully funded by the UK Education & Skills Funding Agency; these include

- Awareness of Mental Health Problems
- Children and Young People’s Mental Health
- Counselling Skills
- Principles of The Mental Health Care Worker
- Self-harm & Suicide Awareness & Prevention
- Understanding Autism
- Mental Health First Aid & Mental Health Advocacy in the Workplace

If you want to find out more about the courses offered, the website is https://freecoursesinengland.co.uk/mental-health?utm_medium=email&utm_source=zoh where you can look at more information about the different courses offered and register your interest in them

Involvement Opportunity Rethink Mental Illness is looking for adults with direct lived experience of Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) services in England, or carers of someone with direct experience, to be part of a half day online workshop on the 4 th March from 10am-1pm. The purpose of the workshop is to reflect on how well EIP services have been delivering eight different parts of care including CBT, Family Intervention and Physical Health Checks over the last year. You will need to be able to draw on your own experiences to reflect on how EIP services have been delivered. Your thoughts will help to identify the most important parts of care and will be included in the National Clinical Audit of Psychosis’ annual report. If interested in taking part please contact Gabriella Hasham (Campaigns & Policy Officer) on gabriella.hasham@rethink.org.



Seriously useful help with your PIP claim form

Our group has produced a very detailed list of examples of phrases to help with completing the 40-page PIP form. We’ve long known that finding the right expressions and relating symptoms to each of the sections on the form is a hugely daunting prospect, so our **11-page ‘mix-and-match’ chart** enables someone to cross-reference each daily-living activity with differing conditions (schizophrenia/psychosis, bi-polar disorder, autism/anxiety) and find suggestions for what they might want to put. Not ‘advice’ as such, it will be up to the person completing the form to select what might apply to them, and hopefully get a feel for how other aspects could be worded. **We can email or post this**, along with the **Rethink factsheet** and our **‘PIP tips’** document which lists all the things you might forget to do when making a PIP claim.

This has been a big piece of work, thanks to those who have compiled all the ideas and especially Ian Rose who not only prompted it but contributed a large section of it.



The word is 'Integration'! Carers have never needed to be told that care services need to work together (and that includes working with unpaid carers). **Integrated care systems (ICSs)** are new partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs across an area, to coordinate services and to plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups. The aim is to remove traditional divisions between hospitals and family doctors, between physical and mental health, and between NHS and council services, so as to avoid disjointed care. In the past, these divisions have meant that too many people experienced disjointed care.

Unfortunately, here in Lancashire we're still facing the challenge of care services failing to communicate with each other, so we'll be watching very carefully to see how soon provision becomes more joined-up. * The Lancashire and South Cumbria system covers a region made up of five local areas (Central Lancashire, West Lancashire, Pennine Lancashire, Fylde Coast, and Morecambe Bay). These areas provide a way for organisations and groups involved in health and care to join up locally. Partners include: **CCGs:** Greater Preston, Chorley and South Ribble, East Lancashire, West Lancashire, Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre, Morecambe Bay, Blackburn with Darwen; **Five acute and community trusts:** Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS; Foundation Trust, East Lancashire Hospitals Trust, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust; **Two upper tier councils** (Lancashire and Cumbria) and **two unitary councils** (Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen).

The vision is that the system will work to invest in health and deliver high quality healthcare within the resources that all the partners have at their disposal. This will drive the health, wellbeing and cohesiveness of all its towns and communities, so that all of the diverse populations have the fairest access to good care.

**New roles/people
tasked to achieve
integration**

Sally Crighton is recently new in post as Leadership Support Manager, Commitment to Carers Programme, North West Region, Nursing Directorate NHS England and NHS Improvement. This programme is intended to provide improved support for unpaid carers. Our three Lancashire groups will be talking to Sally next month to find out what her role is and how we can influence developments. For our NHS Trust (LSCFT) new appointments to the Executive Team are **Steve Christian** as Chief Integration Officer, who will lead on specialist commissioning and the Lead Provider Collaborative (LPC), working with Integrated Care System colleagues across Lancashire and South Cumbria. We know that Steve is particularly keen to learn directly from people such as ourselves and this group will certainly be helping him to do that! And **Alex Heritage** has been appointed as Chief Strategy Officer to lead on strategic plans working with the Trust's partners.

(*Talking of 'joined up'..... An investigation has been launched after a whistle-blower spoke out about their experience working in IT at the NHS offices in Bamber Bridge where the LSCFT IT department is based. It was claimed that patient care was impacted by poor systems and processes. This won't help!)

NEW RESEARCH ABOUT CARERS

Researchers from the University of London investigated the specific risk factors among carers of people with psychosis. They looked at the associations between the carers' demographic, caregiving characteristics and mental health and compared these with general population norms. They concluded that carers of people with psychosis have poorer mental health than non-carers. And that it was partners, lone carers and those spending more than 35 h per week on caring who were found to be *most* at risk of poor mental health. Based on the results, the researchers advocated that the details of carers for individuals with psychosis should be added to the existing carers or severe mental illness registers at all general practitioner surgeries and they should be screened routinely to monitor their wellbeing.

"Is everything ok?
You haven't
photo'd your food
yet"



**Hard to believe
I once had a
phone
attached to a
wall**



**I'd pick it up
without knowing
who was calling.
And I'm still
alive!**