BHIVA

British HIV Association

Autumn Conference
Friday 24th November 2023

etc.venues 155 Bishopsgate, London

BHIVA WORLD AIDS DAY

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PANEL 2 - Northern Ireland
Listening to Our Service Users
Belfast Trust HIV Service User Forum

Gavin Armstrong, Service User ForumBelfast (SUF)

Carol Emerson, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

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"Listening to our Service Users:
The Belfast Trust HIV Service User Forum"

Dr Carol Emerson

Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinic, Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Gavin Armstrong

Chair of the Service User Forum

Conflict of Interest

Carol Emerson received a Gilead speaker fee

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Background

October 2013

Service Manager for the GUM clinic initiates research into establishing a forum where service users could communicate directly with those involved in HIV treatment and support

Patient dissatisfaction around:

- Telephone access to clinic

- Appointment waiting times

- Distance to pharmacy

- Pharmacy waiting times

- Clinic environment

- Staff attitude

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October 2014 – first meeting of the HIV Service User Forum

"The HIV Service User Forum will provide a platform for partnership working and engagement between Trust Services, service users, and relevant support agencies in order to improve services."

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First meeting – 10 service users, representatives from 2 local agencies providing support to people living with HIV, and representatives from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Purpose:

- *To collaborate with BHSCT in seeking views of service users*

- *To contribute towards policy development with a service user perspective*

- *To develop new networks*

- *To feed back to other Trusts regarding policy, procedure, and good practice*

- *To make recommendations for improving services*

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Some early successes:

- A review of the appointment system

- Improvements to GUM telephone system

- Development of an email system for appointment cancellations

- Development of a GUM/HIV website

- Discussion on information sharing between departments

- Review of clinic accommodation

- Ongoing feedback regarding policies, procedures and good practice

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Enforced temporary hold on new forum meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic

April 2023

The Service User Forum was relaunched with a new Chair – Gavin Armstrong

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Future Plans

- Increase service user representation

- Continue to seek the opinions of service users on service changes

- Increase representation of women, people of colour, and other underrepresented groups

- Make contact with and learn from other service user groups across the island

- Promote peer support as a means of reducing isolation and increasing involvement of people living with HIV in their treatment

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The Service User forum promotes:

Community

Providing a space for those living with or affected by HIV to feel part of something bigger

Communication

A means of sharing information with our service users

Collaboration

Working with our service users so they feel included and that their voices matter