



Autumn Conference

Friday 24th November 2023

etc.venues 155 Bishopsgate, London



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A light blue stylized virus icon with a circular body, a wavy line inside, and several protruding spikes, located in the top right corner of the slide.

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

Gavin Armstrong, Service User Forum Belfast (SUF)

Carol Emerson, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust





“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

Speakers are required by the Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians to disclose conflicts of interest at the beginning of their presentation, with sufficient time for the information to be read by the audience. They should disclose financial relationships with manufacturers of any commercial product and/or providers of commercial services used on or produced for patients relating to the 36 months prior to the event. These include speaker fees, research grants, fees for other educational activities such as training of health professionals and consultation fees. Where a speaker owns shares or stocks directly in a company producing products or services for healthcare this should also be declared.

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



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.”



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*

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

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

2014-2023 Complaints to Compliments



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



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

