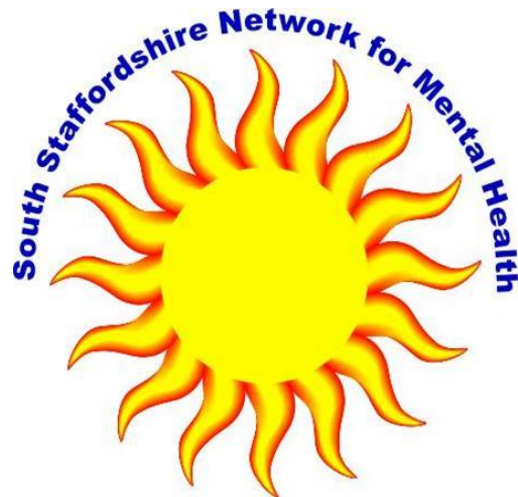


**REPORT ON SURVEY ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
AFFECTING THOSE WHO LIVE IN RURAL
STAFFORDSHIRE**

September 2012



Lloyds TSB | Foundation for England and Wales



Photo by J. Burrows



South Staffordshire Network for Mental Health

Mansell House, 22 Bore Street

Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6LL

01543 301139

sunetwork@ssnmentalhealth.co.uk

www.ssnmentalhealth.co.uk

Table of contents

About our charity.....	2
Findings of survey.....	3
Comparison and conclusion.....	4
Discussion points for further decision making.....	10
Blank survey.....	11
Stigma talk flyer.....	14
Rural Outreach Poster.....	15 and 16

About our Charity

The **South Staffordshire Network for Mental Health (SSNMH)** is a charitable organisation, commissioned by the Staffordshire Joint Commissioning Unit (JCU), to actively represent people with experience of mental illness, and to promote and champion involvement of people who use mental health services residing in the six districts of South Staffordshire in the design, provision and monitoring of mental health services.

We have a membership of around 615 individuals; this includes around 450 people with personal experience of mental illness.

Across the whole of the South Staffordshire area, the SSNMH team regularly visit 30 mental health groups/services, which include JCU commissioned third sector provided services, NHS provided services, and a number of informal groups run by people with experience of mental illness themselves. In the year 2011-2012, we had 1,633 meaningful contacts on a wide range of topics appropriate to service provision, signposting opportunities or the sharing of other useful information.

Introduction

This survey was originally carried out in September 2009. Since then, the Network has done more work in rural communities with a rural outreach worker and focused on tackling the main findings which were highlighted in the first survey. These were:

- *Stigma and discrimination*: tackled by delivering 42 talks to community groups, many of which were in rural areas.
- *Lack of services*: as the new Social Inclusion and Recovery Services were commissioned, the providers have set up more groups in rural areas such as

Marchington and Rocestor and service users have also set up their own peer support groups in areas such as Uttoxeter, Lichfield and Abbots Bromley.

- *Lack of information/publicity in rural areas about services and activities:* I have gone to many rural areas, advertising the Network and local services in places such as libraries, village halls, churches and doctors surgeries to try to improve this.
- *Cost of travel to get to services and lack of public transport:* two of the Network's volunteers compiled a Rural Transport Report¹ which was widely distributed and the Rural Outreach Worker took it to relevant forums sharing the findings.
- The Development Worker then made links with Mark Jenkinson from South Staffordshire District Council and ensured that we had some input into the new transport service 'Staffordshire connects' which is 'dial-a-ride' system linking villages together using a charitable provider.

As September 2012 is the end of the rural outreach project, the survey was carried out for a second time to show if any improvements have been made and to highlight areas which people think need improving.

The survey was sent out to all of our members and was taken out on visits to service users at day opportunities. The original survey had 72 replies over a three month period. This time, we had 82 replies in just over one month so the comparisons should be fairly easy to make. However, as the replies are anonymous, we are unable to tell if any of the same people have filled in a survey again and have found that the things they wish to see improve have changed. A copy of the survey is at the end of this report.

Summary of main findings:

Top Five key issues:

- 1st – Lack of services and activities in rural locations
- 2nd – Stigma and discrimination
- 3rd – Lack of public transport to get to services and activities elsewhere
- 4th – Lack of information/publicity in rural areas about services and activities
- 5th – The cost of travel to get to services and activities is too high

Top Five things people would like to see improved:

- 1st – Mental health awareness training in rural areas
- 2nd – Better/more publicity in rural areas of existing services and activities
- 3rd – More mental health services run in rural areas
- 4th – Improved transport availability to get to services and activities
- 5th – Someone to practically help with getting back to leisure/life etc

¹ This report can be found on our website at <http://www.ssnmentalhealth.btck.co.uk/NetworkNewsOtherDownloads>

Section A - Information about respondents (Questions 1 – 5)

Location:

Where	No.	Where	No.	Where	No.
Coleshill	1	Wheaton Aston	1	Leek	5
Market Drayton	1	Baswich	1	Burntwood	8
Brewood	4	Quarnford	1	Uttoxeter	6
Longnor	1	Abbotts Bromley	1	Lichfield	2
Barton – Under - Needwood	1	Stone	3	Flash	1
Stoke	1	Burton on Trent	1	Newborough	1
Doverbridge	1	Penkridge	4	Codsall	2
Pattingham	2	Kinver	1	Branston	2
Polesworth	1	Great Haywood	1	Meir Heath	1
Wombourne	4	Perton	3	Clifton Campville	1
Handsacre	1	Doxey	1	Hoar Cross	1
Rugeley	1	Billbrook	1	Heath Hayes	1
Ashbourne	1	Cannock	1	Chasetown	1
Didn't say	5	Village	2	Town	2
City	1				

Geographical spread:

Geographical spread: No. Of replies % of total	Stafford Borough: 6 7%	Cannock Chase: 2 3%
Tamworth Borough: 1 1%	East Staffordshire: 14 17%	South Staffordshire: 24 29%
Lichfield District: 12 15%	Outside of area: 13 10%	Unknown: 10 11%

Age and gender of participants:

Age	Male	Female	Undisclosed
Under 16	0	1 1%	0
17 - 25	1 1%	2 3%	1 1%
26 - 45	6 7%	18 23%	1 1%
46 - 65	11 13%	29 35%	0
66 - 80	3 4%	8 11%	0
80 +	1 1%	0	0

Gender of participants:

Male	22 (27%)	Female	58 (66%)
Undisclosed	2 (3%)	Total	82

Occupation:

Status	Number	%
Retired	21	27%
Employed	26	32%
Unemployed	4	5%
Education/training	2	2%
Volunteering	9	11%
Didn't say	2	2%
Long term sick	14	17%
Carer	3	4%
Home maker	1	1%

Interest in Mental Health: (most respondents ticked more than one answer)

Interest in Mental Health	Number	%
Experience mental health issues themselves	63	77%
Friend or relative of someone affected	27	33%
A carer of someone affected	13	16%
A professional working in this area	10	12%
No direct experience but interested	8	10%
Volunteering in mental health	3	4%

Key Issues: (including top 3 issues)

Issue (in order of popularity)	Highlighted issue as affecting them	Firsts	Seconds	Thirds
There is a lack of services and activities in rural locations	47 57%	8	5	7
Stigma and discrimination	47 57%	8	4	7
There is a lack of public transport to get to services and activities elsewhere	36 44%	7	4	3
There is a lack of information/publicity in rural areas about services and activities	34 41%	7	4	2
The cost of travel to get to services and activities is too high	34 41%	3	7	1
I feel isolated	29 35%	4	3	3
There is a lack of support to get re-integrated into what is considered normal life after being unwell	28 34%	3	6	3
There is a lack of privacy/anonymity in a small closely knit community	23 28%	1	5	3
I find it difficult to access services in a crisis	22 27%	4	5	5
I'm too busy with work/family and have no time to seek help/support	7 9%	1	2	0

Other key issues provided in previous question.

(Direct quotes are in quotation marks, otherwise I have summarised what was written)

- Would like more day opps in Stone
- Socially active, exercising, help at home
- "Psychiatrists don't listen and speak in jargon"
- Trips out of town, seeing friends
- "Closing of chapels, churches, pubs, village shops, workshops and factories, schools. Strangled by red tape, health and safety and political correctness. Deters organisers from arranging social events"
- Peer to peer support, more drop ins' and immediate access to crisis team/mental health professionals
- "Embarrassment when people know my problem, husband and wife suffering together is very hard"
- Access to services on bank holidays
- "Lack of joined up approach between agencies/services"
- Need to move, feel isolated, I'm depressed and need to sort out my anger
- More activities in Burton or Swadlincote or Derby in the daytime
- "Stigma and discrimination still goes on especially in seeking jobs and benefits"

- “Improvement needed in integration between NHS and semi-autonomous mental health providers. Provision of consistent mental health services-budget cuts are destructive to services”
- “Cost for over 20’s (under 20s have the Staffordshire card)”
- It’s a strain for people who have to cope every day. Where do they go for help, and is it right for them? The rural areas are the last places to get help, it’s hard to get there and no one wants to know.
- “Education to school staff about stigma and discrimination and an up to date list of services in the locality”
- Service accommodation that is fit for purpose and gives a good impression to service users, carers and family members. More affordable transport such as connect.

Potential areas for improvement: (including top 3 issues)

Improvements (in order of popularity)	Highlighted as area would like to see improved	Firsts	Seconds	Thirds
Mental health awareness training in rural areas	46 56%	12	5	7
Better/more publicity in rural areas of existing services and activities	45 55%	6	7	7
More mental health services run in rural areas	44 54%	7	11	3
Improved transport availability to get to services and activities	43 52%	10	4	6
Someone to practically help with getting back to leisure/life etc	41 50%	3	6	7
Chance to talk with someone who has undergone similar experience	40 49%	12	6	6
Use existing village groups/organisations to promote mental wellbeing	36 44%	4	4	1
Better use of IT to run virtual support groups and networks and share information	22 27%	0	4	6

Other improvements people would like to see:

(Direct quotes are in quotation marks otherwise I have summarised what was written)

- More social groups encouraging people to do something instead of nothing
- Not being judged. More understanding from health services
- A link, someone to call us and see how we are: not just a magazine. A personal contact, someone to show some care.
- “An awareness of services amongst medical professionals”
- “Mental health awareness to partners/agencies. Publicity of ‘what is mental health’”
- More local places to go in the morning

- “Services underfunded and underused. Until M/H services are taken seriously and properly integrated within the NHS’s referral system, the lack of use will be used as an excuse to underfund services”
- Practical help with family situations. Use of patient review groups to share information

A selection of further comments is shown below.

I have omitted ineligible or repeated comments.

- “When people know you have problems they can be very unkind and nasty which is not helpful”
- “We have no existing village groups for mental health”
- I am best not being stuck in a closely knit area where rash judgement happens. I am stuck on benefits with other health problems and home needs repair which won’t be easy to afford. The local peer support friendship group have been a very good retreat
- “Rural residents tend to be stoical about their health and in some cases may not even acknowledge or understand that they are experiencing mental ill health. Feeling low and finding life a struggle can become part and parcel of existence and may be endured for years. That’s why I feel that mental health awareness training is important in rural areas”
- “I think that the neighbours that I know who have problems with lack of contact with others, starved social life, low self esteem, will not even receive this questionnaire and so you will not get a true idea of the scale of people’s loneliness in rural areas
- “We need more volunteers to help mental health patients become engaged in outside activities”
- “A part of self management and recovery is not feeling isolated but to feel a part of something”
- “I’d like to see more trips and outings so people could get out of town”
- “The main hole in services is therapy groups such as assertiveness, relaxation etc that are open to secondary care service users”
- “No services for deaf people with M/H problems”
- “Supported volunteering is such a good service but funding is difficult to find. It makes such a difference to people’s lives”
- “Virtual support groups are vital for people who may not feel strong enough to leave the house or meet people face to face or speak on the phone”
- “Keep up the good work”
- “The stigma associated with mental health issues does tend to be more problematic in small isolated communities, so putting one’s head above the parapet to access local services might be difficult for many people. Although better public transport to existing services looks like an answer, many rural people do have a car but may not feel well enough to drive or use the bus so an expensive transport system could be under-used. Good, professional support at home backed up with some form of buddying, both physical and virtual could work well for some people”

Comparison and conclusion

Location: Replies were sent from 7 more locations than the original survey, covering a slightly wider geographical area. 10 more replies were received.

Age and gender: Roughly the same mix of age and gender replied to this survey as they did to the original.

Interest in mental health: 4% less professionals answered this survey and 19% more people with experience of mental health issues and 3% more friends or relatives of someone affected compared with the last survey.

Key issues: Virtually the same key points were highlighted in the same order of preference in both surveys

Areas for improvement: Again, the top three issues for improvement are the same as the previous survey showing that there is still a need for awareness training in rural areas. People also would like to see more services in rural areas with promotion about these services.

Discussion points for further decision making

The results of both surveys show that although improvements have been made in the last two years, much more can be done to help people living with mental distress in rural Staffordshire.

Improvements relating to the points made that the network are aware of, are schemes such as the new Staffordshire Connects minibus service linking villages together². There are now more day opportunities, though services such Richmond Fellowship Life Links and Changes Mental Health and Wellbeing, in rural Staffordshire, examples include groups at Rocester and Codsall. There has also been the increase in the number of independent peer support friendship groups.

It would seem that more needs to be done to promote these in rural areas as people are still highlighting the issues they are in place to tackle. The Network can still do a lot of work to help these issues such as delivering more workshops and Stigma and Discrimination talks in rural areas and by working with more partners to keep a presence in rural locations. We can encourage publicity and take an even greater 'joined up' approach which will help service users, carers and professionals alike.

² For more information see <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/publictransport/buses/South-Staffordshire-Connect/South-Staffordshire-Connect.aspx>



RURAL SURVEY 2012

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AFFECTING THOSE

WHO LIVE IN RURAL STAFFORDSHIRE

Thank you for completing this short survey. We are really interested in your views and experiences. This was first completed in the Spring of 2010. We would now like to compare the results and will compile and publish them at the end of September. We hope to distribute our findings as wide as possible. This will include our free quarterly newsletter 'Network News' and our website <http://www.ssnmentalhealth.co.uk/> .

1	Where do you live? (Please state village/town)	
2	How old are you? (Please tick the box that applies)	0– 16 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 17 – 25 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 26 – 45yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 46 – 65yrs <input type="checkbox"/> 66 – 80 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> over 80yrs <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Are you:	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Are You:	Retired <input type="checkbox"/> In education/training <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Carer <input type="checkbox"/> Long term sick / disabled <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Please tick the boxes that are most relevant to you:	Have experience mental health issues yourself? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you a carer of someone who is affected by mental health issues? <input type="checkbox"/> A friend or relative of someone affected by mental health issues <input type="checkbox"/> No direct experience but I am interested <input type="checkbox"/> A professional working in this area <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state what)..... <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Key Issues Please tick the box if you agree with any of the following?	1. There is a lack of services and activities in rural locations <input type="checkbox"/> 2. There is a lack of public transport to get to services & activities elsewhere <input type="checkbox"/> 3. The cost of travel to get to services and activities is too high <input type="checkbox"/> 4. I'm too busy with work/family and have no time to seek help/support <input type="checkbox"/> 5. I find it difficult to access services in a crisis. <input type="checkbox"/> 6. There is lack of information/publicity in rural areas about services & activities <input type="checkbox"/> 7. There is a lack of support to get re-integrated into what is considered normal life after being unwell <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Stigma and Discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> 9. There is a lack of privacy/anonymity in a small closely knit community <input type="checkbox"/> 10. I feel isolated <input type="checkbox"/>

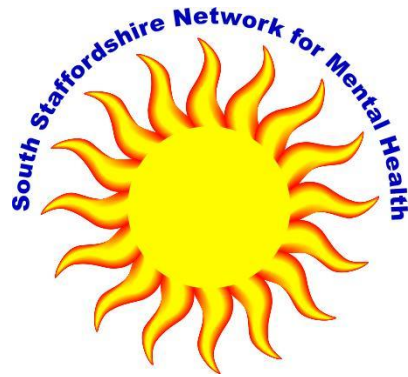
7	Please list your top 3 priorities from the list overleaf (Q6), or feel free to add your own.	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____	
8	What would you like to see improved? Tick the box if you agree with any of the suggestions	1.Improved transport availability to get to services and activities 2.Mental health awareness training in rural areas 3.Better/more publicity in rural areas of existing services and activities 4.More mental health services run in rural areas 5.Chance to talk with someone who has under gone similar experience 6.Use existing village groups/organisations to promote mental wellbeing 7.Someone to practically help with getting back to leisure, life etc 8.Better use of IT to run virtual support groups and networks and share information	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Please list your top 3 priorities from the above list, or feel free to add your own.	1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____	

Further Comments - If you have any further comments please put them below

Please return survey (before 31/08/2012) to Tracey Hackett, South Staffs Network for Mental Health, FREEPOST MID23594, Lichfield, Staffs, WS13 6LL

e-mail: tracey.hackett@ssnmentalhealth.co.uk

Thanks again for taking the time to complete this survey



Mental Illness - Fighting Fear and Stigma Together

A talk by Stella

- 1 in 4 people will experience mental health problems sometime during their life
- 1 in 6 people will have depression at some point in their lives
- 1 in 10 people have a disabling anxiety disorder
- 1 in 100 people will live with bipolar or schizophrenia

Problems such as these affect men and women of all ages, races and backgrounds. Chances are we may have some personal experience ourselves, or know someone close to us who does. Yet people who are experiencing mental health problems are often stigmatised by society and experience discrimination on both a personal and professional level. This often compounds the original problem, creating a 'double whammy'.

In this talk we hope to create a better understanding of how mental wellbeing affects us all. By looking at the facts, challenging the myths and drawing on some of her own personal experience, the speaker aims to shed some light and clarity on a subject that often gets ignored or misrepresented.

For more information please contact: South Staffordshire Network for Mental Health

Mansell House, 22 Bore Street, Lichfield, WS13 6LL Tel: 01543 301139

E-Mail: sunetwork@ssnmentalhealth.co.uk

Internet: <http://www.ssnmentalhealth.co.uk/>



South Staffordshire Network
For Mental Health

rural outreach

South Staffordshire Network for Mental Health is an independent charity founded in 2000 which exists to support people in the districts of southern Staffordshire access mental health and well being services. We can support those living in the local authority areas of Stafford Borough, Tamworth Borough, East Staffordshire, South Staffordshire, Lichfield District and Cannock Chase.

We promote the interests and rights of people who use local mental health services and give them the opportunity to take part in the planning of future services.

We signpost people to services they may want to access, press for new improvements in services and act as a voice for the people who use them so they can influence the design to fit their needs.

We now have a dedicated rural outreach worker who seeks to promote both our service and mental health and well being services in rural parts of southern Staffordshire. We value everyone's opinion and will reach people in as many ways as we can including via local community networks and groups.

We recognise that many people in rural areas experience stress, anxiety, depression and other issues and would like to reach out for help. Many people are fearful of being labeled or ridiculed, can be proud or self-reliant and suffer in silence, yet 1 in 4 people are affected by mental health problems at some point in their life. We want to promote awareness and also reduce stigma and discrimination by giving talks to local groups.

Tel/fax: 01543 301139 email: sunetwork@ssnmentalhealth.co.uk
www.ssnmentalhealth.co.uk



@ssnmentalhealth

South Staffordshire Network for Mental Health is a Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales.
Registered Number 4693666
Registered Office Mansell House, 22 Bore Street, Lichfield WS13 6LL.
Charity Registration No. 1097461