

## VOX Winter Newsletter November 2011

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### VOX Moving Minds 3 Exhibition, Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum

On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011 VOX for the third year running, organised a one day diverse event in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum. Some of the workshops included:

- A showing of two documentaries called "Beyond Prejudice" and "Sanctuary" examining mental health and stigma within Scotland's black and minority ethnic communities.
- "Dreamscapes", a workshop providing an opportunity to recall special memories and dreams.
- Maryhill Integration Network and AlbScot presented "Handmade in Glasgow", a traditional Eastern and Western fashion show and dance performance, the Network also gave an interactive demonstration of Tai Chi.
- Community led Dialogue, working together to challenge discrimination. Gypsy/travellers led a workshop with the Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project to increase understanding of their situation in Scotland, including issues affecting mental health and wellbeing.
- "Mapping Memories" event when poet and writer Larry Butler and dance artist Satya Dunning inspired people to move, draw and write about places visited.
- "Reel Stories" was a workshop when people watched and later discussed three films "Seen and Heard" which told the stories of black and ethnic minority men, "Khamoshi" (The Silence) shared the experiences of men who were also deaf and "Our Vision-A Brighter Future" which shared the experiences of older people who had taken part in a peer mentoring project.

During the course of the day there were also Curator Tours which was a 30 minute tour of the Glasgow Stories exhibitions, exploring migration, violence against women and our

history of mental health care and R D Laing's legacy. Over 200 people took part in the workshops.



Maryhill Integration Network



Roma Singers



Maryhill Integration Network Fashion Show



## Women's Voices

"Women's Voices" is a project run by Voices Of eXperience through several sessions. The project aims to assist Minority Ethnic women to take part in informal creative activities and raise issues affecting their lives. The group activity will start from **end of October 2011** (*we will inform you the exact date and time in VOX weekly updates*). We invite all women from minority ethnic communities to come together and share their experiences, issues and take a step forward with well-being in Glasgow. All sessions will be free of charge and refreshments and travel expenses will be provided. For more information and show your interest please contact Atousa Khodadadyan by E-mail: [AKhodadadyan@mhf.org.uk](mailto:AKhodadadyan@mhf.org.uk)

## MEMBERS PAGE

## Two poems by VOX Member Glen Merrilees

### STIGMA

I've been stigmatised and traumatised, through no fault of my own  
Bestowed with dirty labels, flesh ripped fae the bone  
Look he's an epileptic, depressed and lazy too  
Never worked a day in years, still signing oan the broo

.....  
I want to tell my story, I promise you no games  
I'll give tae you the details, but I'll withhold the names  
There's some joabs ah did years ago, epilepsy sealed ma fate  
Sacked fur takin seizures, sacked fur runnin' late

.....  
Runnin' late... I'd took a seizure bloodied, ill and sare  
I'd try my best tae make it in, but they didnae seem tae care  
Application form no mention, of my illness no one knew  
Never would have goat they joabs, they'd have changed their point of view

.....  
A gift... unwanted labels, madman, weirdo, worse  
But remember I'm a victim, depressions sickly curse  
I've been stigmatised and traumatised, fur whit... I've done no crime  
Labels thrust upon me, noo I've got tae serve the time

.....  
I'm a victim; I'm a target, depressions deadly curse  
Y'er looks y'er twisted whispers, it only makes it worse  
We've goat tae stop this stigma, wipe it off the planets face  
We're just people with an illness, part of the human race

### AM I

I've sunk to the bottom, in a pit of despair  
Screaming for help, is there somebody there?

.....  
Cowering in terror, trembling with fear  
It's cold and it's dark, and it's lonely down here

.....  
Afraid of a shadow, I can't even see  
Stuck in an eddy, that's swallowing me

.....  
Am I free as an eagle, folk say I look well?  
My stomach in turmoil, my soul in a cell

.....  
Can't answer the doorbell, can't answer the phone  
Surrounded by loved ones, I'm still all alone

.....  
Can't express the feelings, that are cutting me in two  
Taking pen to paper, the best that I can do

.....  
Far too many questions, answers far too few  
Never looking forward, tears obscure my view

.....  
Try to stagger forward, my crucifix in tow

Am I going to make it, honestly don't know

.....  
Don't treat me differently, for I am just the same  
Though depressed and anxious, please just use my name

.....  
Although my world is clouded, my thoughts perhaps insane  
I'm a fellow human being, and I'm not insane

.....  
Yes we all cry and we all bleed, a fact that's sad but true  
Perhaps I cry a little more, but I'm as good as you

### **Over 50's Coffee Morning Group**

The over 50's coffee morning group has been meeting on a regular basis since the last edition of the newsletter. Much of the agenda has been around the topic "memories and dreams" which was one of the workshops at the "Moving Minds" event held in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011. One of the members of this group has added his own version of memories and dreams below:-

#### **My favourite memory by James Caldwell Shanks**

"My favourite memory is when I used to go away for the day to either Ayr or Saltcoats with my Mum and Dad on sunny days or in the car when we went to visit my Uncle's house at Kilcreggan, but they have since passed away and also because my health is getting worse. I now go out with Linda and David from Community Lifestyles for pub lunches and also to various coffee mornings and meetings at various venues. I also get to meet new friends, which I really enjoy, but my favourite friend is William Durham who I used to go to Clydebank College with, which I enjoyed.

#### **My favourite dream by James Caldwell Shanks**

"My favourite dream is to wake up in my own house and not surrounded by four brick walls and nurses in white coats when I was a prisoner in Lennox Castle for 23 years. But I can now go anywhere I like without having to tell people where I am going and what time I will be back again. Also I sometimes dream about my Mum and Dad and think of all the happy and good times we had before they sadly passed away, but they are always in my thoughts and dreams every day.

At one of the regular meetings held on Monday 3rd October 2011, 8 members of the Over 50's Group attended a focus group facilitated by Hannah Biggs, a researcher with the Mental Health Foundation, on the impact of participating in the arts on people's mental health and wellbeing. Participants discussed their own experiences of participating in a variety of different art forms including creative writing, music and visual arts. The group feedback the impacts people can gain from participating in the arts which included many mental health and wellbeing benefits. Participants also discussed whether the arts provide any benefits that are unique to the arts. Participants then went on to discuss what makes an arts project successful which

included discussions on the people that deliver the projects, the location and accessibility of the project and how participants hear about and access the project.

The focus group took place in the People's Palace in Glasgow and lasted for approximately an hour and a half. The focus group was part of a larger project commissioned by Creative Scotland which consulted with key stakeholders across Scotland to develop best practice guidance on delivering arts projects as a way to improve people's mental health and wellbeing, particularly those who are / have experiencing mental health problems. The guidance is aimed at policy makers, funders, referrers, service providers and participants. The VOX Over 50 Group was one of many sources providing a participant perspective to the project.

The Mental Health Foundation facilitated focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders across Scotland to explore their experience and views on arts on referral as a means to improve people's mental health and wellbeing. MHF is also carrying out a literature review outlining the existing evidence base for the impacts participating in the arts has on mental health and wellbeing.

The Mental Health Foundation is now in the process of writing the guidance based on the evidence they gathered. Once the guidance has been completed, it will be shared with all participants.

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### **VOX/Scottish Government Consultation on new Mental Health Strategy**

VOX and the Scottish Government will be facilitating a consultation day on the proposals for a new national mental health strategy.

The new proposals intend to build on the current approach and seek Stakeholder's views on the direction of work for the next 4 years to further improve mental health outcomes.

This event, built in as part of VOX's winter members meeting, is part funded by the Scottish Government and will offer our members, group members and associates the opportunity to directly feedback and respond to the Governments representative on the new Mental Health Strategy.

To access a copy of the consultation please click on the following link:  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/01163037/0>

One of the confirmed speakers on the day will be Isabella Goldie the Mental Health Foundation Head of Scotland.

We would like to invite all our individual, group and associate members to attend and take part in voicing their views on the strategy. Lunch and refreshments will be available as well as travel expenses on the day.

The event will be on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> December from 10.30am – 3.00pm in the Grand Central Hotel, Gordon Street Glasgow. Further information and programme will be available closer the time.

To book your place or for group booking please contact VOX on 0141 572 1663 or e-mail [jsteel@mhf.org.uk](mailto:jsteel@mhf.org.uk)

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### **Hate Crime Focus Group**

VOX in partnership with Strathclyde Police and Glasgow Community & Safety Services held an information session on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September in the Renfield Centre Glasgow. The session included information on the subject of Hate Crime, the law, and how to report it in relation to mental health.

The session was led by Pauline Kelly, Hate Crime Policy Officer from Glasgow Community & Safety Services and Constable Elizabeth Reid, Asylum Seeker & Refugee Liaison Officer from Strathclyde Police.

The presentation included information on the following:-

- a) The need for Hate Crime Legislation
- b) The commitment to stop Hate Crime
- c) The legal context
- d) Key issues for services
- e) Racist and Homophobic incident hotspots in Glasgow

The session proved to be extremely useful and there is a possibility that we may repeat it at a later date.

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### **Shirley Doig at the IIMHL 2011 Conference in the USA.**

VOX in association with the Scottish Government was delighted to send member and service user Shirley Doig to the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership conference which was held in San Francisco from the 12th to the 16th September. The IIMHL is a government to government endeavour of 8 countries and aims to facilitate the sharing of best practice.

The first 2 days of Shirley's trip were spent in Oakland, California at Bonita House. This is a homeless facility which caters for up to 90 individuals who suffer from severe mental illness. Many of the service users had faced adversity particularly through addiction and with the help of Bonita House had gone on to live happy and fulfilling lives. Shirley had the honour of speaking on the first morning of the conference on the subject of "Through the Eyes of People in Recovery - Envisioning Success". She spoke about her diagnosis of clinical depression and more recently her diagnosis of Bi Polar disorder. She states the whole experience was 'amazing' and hopes to present a full report at the next VOX members meeting in December.

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### **Change Fund**

As part of the Scottish draft budget announcement on 17th November 2010, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth announced the allocation of £70m in

2011-12 to a Change Fund to enable health and social care Partners to implement local plans for making better use of their combined resources for older people's services. The Change Fund will provide bridging finance to facilitate shifts in the balance of care from institutional to primary and community settings, and should also influence decisions taken with respect to the totality of Partnership spend on older people's care.

Implementation of the Fund will draw heavily upon the work that has been ongoing across the country on IRF mapping, and lessons learned from the IRF test sites regarding making best use of joint resources - money and people's time. Practical aspects of getting the Fund working - including development of Guidance - have been delegated by Ministers to the Health and Community Care Delivery Group, which is chaired by Tim Davison (Chief Executive, NHS Lanarkshire).

Guidance that sets out the arrangements to enable local partnerships to access their allocation of the Fund has now been formulated. This guidance has been agreed by the Ministerial Strategic Group (MSG) for Health and Community Care and requires local partnerships to prepare Change Plans that set down how the funding will be used to achieve a shift in the balance of care. The MSG will oversee the development process nationally and will look for assurance that partnership arrangements are in place to deliver change locally. Local Delivery Plans will be submitted to the MSG to ensure that a coherent national picture is achieved.

[Please see link to Change Fund Guidance](#)

[Please see link to Workshop Flyer 2nd February 2011](#)

[Please see link to Change Plan Template \(at Annex B\)](#)

Local health, housing and social care partnerships were asked to submit Change Plans by 28 February 2011 in order to access the £70m Change Fund. Plans received from all 32 partnerships were considered and noted by the Ministerial Strategic Group for Health and Community Care (MSG) at its meeting on 15 March. In confirming the release of Change Fund monies to all partnerships at this meeting, the MSG commented that overall, partnerships have made a strong start and their Plans provide a good platform for progressing local Reshaping Care programmes.

Further work is planned as part of stage two of the Reshaping Care programme to more accurately establish funding and demographic projections for future years. Advice on this will follow in autumn 2011, taking account of wider developments both in Scotland and at UK level on the future funding of care and support.

To encourage sharing of ideas and good practice - and as previously notified to partnerships - all 32 Change Plans have been made available on the Joint Improvement Team's [website](#). In addition, the JIT is developing an Improvement Network jointly with the Community Care Outcomes Framework's CCOF Benchmarking Group. An initial event, jointly run with the CHP Association, took place on 1 April 2011 and provided some good opportunities for collective feedback and shared learning within and between partnerships. Further information regarding the network will be published on the JIT website.

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## **VOX Media Policy**

This is what we feel at VOX is important when accessing social networks such as our own Facebook page and groups

### **Who are VOX?**

VOX-Voices Of eXperience is a national organisation made up of, and for, people with mental health problems of any kind, past or present.

VOX is dedicated to ensuring people's views and experiences in relation to mental health issues are supported and encouraged.

VOX are committed to equality and diversity and that peoples, Age, Gender, Religion, Sexual orientation and ethnicity are not discriminated against.

### **Why did we create this policy?**

VOX values social media such as Facebook as a good avenue and resource for people to have their voice and opinion heard and to learn from each other by sharing information and raising awareness of issues and events etc...

It is therefore important that people feel safe when communicating their views without fear of prejudice or discrimination. To make this happen it is also important that views, experiences and comments are made in a respectful and inoffensive way, making sure that any criticism of services, organisations etc...are made in a constructive and appropriate way.

You may be aware that bullying can also take place online (known as cyber bullying). It is important that we all keep each other safe and VOX reserve the right to remove what we consider to be inappropriate and or damaging comments to protect us from cyber bullies.

### **What will this mean for you?**

The content or opinions presented on our social network page and discussion boards are solely those of the individuals who left the comment/post and do not represent those of Voices Of eXperience, unless otherwise stated.

While VOX provides a space for people to post their views, we will not tolerate abusive or inflammatory language and we reserve the right to remove any such comments and block the user if they persist in doing so.

It is natural that people have strong opinions based on lived experience however, it is important to remember that although everyone is entitled to their views, they need to be respectful and mindful that these views may not be shared by everyone based on their own lived experience.

## **What happens if you are not well?**

VOX don't provide a service however, we work to insure people with lived experiences are involved at a national and local level in the development of mental health policies and services throughout Scotland.

If you feel that you need help please contact your **Doctor** or **NHS 24 on: 08454 242424**

You can also get confidential support from **Breathing space or the Samaritans**, see contact information below;

**Samaritans** offer emotional support 24 hours a day on **08457 90 90 90**. More information about Samaritans is available at: <http://www.samaritans.org/>

**Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87** is a free and confidential phone line service for any individual, who is experiencing low mood or depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to. For operating times and more information please visit; <http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk>

## **What happens if I see that someone is in need of help?**

If you feel that someone is not well and in need of help on one of the social networking web pages you should where possible try to direct them to some of the support services that are mentioned in the previous section.

## **How do VOX staff and volunteers access/use social media?**

Staff can use social media and the internet for work purposes to update, manage and maintain where appropriate. Staff are also permitted to access the internet and social media for personal use within reason during breaks and lunch.

VOX staff and volunteers are not expected to accept social media befriending approaches to their own personal social media page from VOX members, board members, or any other work related contacts unless they chose to do so.

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## **The Honours of Scotland**

The "Honours of Scotland" are the crown jewels and they consist of a crown, a sword and a sceptre.

The crown was made in 1540 from gold melted down from the previous one, with additional gold mined in Upper Clydesdale. More precious stones and pearls were also added and the crown was first used by King James V at the coronation of his second queen, Mary of Guise (mother of Mary Queen of Scots).

Pope Julius II presented the sword to King James IV in 1507. It was made by an Italian craftsman, Domenico da Sutri.

The sceptre is the oldest of the crown jewels. It was made in 1494 and was presented to King James V by Pope Alexander VI.

The three Honours of Scotland were first used together at the coronation of the infant Mary Queen of Scots (daughter of King James V) in Stirling castle in 1543.

They were last used at the coronation of King Charles II at Scone on 1 January 1651. During the occupation of Scotland by Oliver Cromwell during Puritan times, the jewels were hidden first in Dunottar castle. When the castle was besieged, the local minister's wife smuggled them out and they were buried under the floor of Kinneff church.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Union in 1707, Scotland's crown jewels were retained in Edinburgh castle. Forgotten for over 100 years, they were rediscovered by Sir Walter Scott in 1818 and put on display in the castle where they have been on view to the public.

The display of the crown jewels was added to on St Andrews Day, 30th November 1996, when the Stone of Destiny was brought back to Scotland - in 1296, 700 years earlier, King Edward had stolen this precious relic on which generations of Scottish kings had been crowned since the days of the Kingdom of Dalriada in the 9th century.

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### **The Yard Adventure Centre**

The Yard Adventure Centre celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary next year. The centre is situated in the heart of Canonmills in Edinburgh and is the only purpose built indoor and outdoor adventure play facility for disabled children in the East of Scotland. The Charity offers a wide variety of sessions including services disabled children, schools, youth clubs, family and holiday sessions and training. Last year they opened their doors to over 1,500 children and had over 11,000 visits.

The Yard Adventure Centre was described in its last inspection by the Care Commission as "An exceptional service that enables children with additional support needs to experience, explore and play in ways that are not available elsewhere."

If you would like to know more about the Centre and the long term benefits of creating safe, supported play areas for disabled children across Scotland please contact Celine Sinclair on 0131 476 4506 or email: [celine@theyardscotland.org.uk](mailto:celine@theyardscotland.org.uk)

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