

# S. U. News

The newsletter for Ealing Service Users

Veterans and Service Users Unite to

## SAVE OUR MAX GLATT UNIT

On the 8th of September we received CNWL's proposals for the future of the Max Glatt unit at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. As we have said in previous newsletters these proposals will have a profound effect on Ealing Service users and later in this newsletter Alan Butler makes an impassioned plea for the continuation of the unit.

The three proposals don't appear to go anyway near addressing the concerns of Service Users and are as follows:

### Option 1

Closure of the Max Glatt Unit with no additional provision for medically managed inpatient treatment for substance misusers.

### Option 2

Keep the Max Glatt Unit open with a sustainable funding strategy supported by commissioning bodies and others.

### Option 3

Closure of the Max Glatt Unit but explore with a voluntary sector independent sector agency, merging a medically managed service (using Max Glatt doctors and nurses) with an existing medically monitored unit for drug and alcohol problems with less complex needs.

Whilst option 2 would appear to be the closest to that being offered at present. The question has to be asked "why did CNWL move the Max Glatt Unit from Ealing Hospital without

establishing a sustainable funding strategy supported by commissioning bodies and others?" This point does not seem to have been lost on our Commissioners .

Liz Offor Head of Drug and Alcohol Policy for the Drug and Alcohol Action Team of the Council says *"We are supporting option 2, we however need information from Max Glatt in order to do so."*

CNWL have offered consultation, none of which is in Ealing, that will run from September 8 to the 31 October 2014. They have asked Service Users to engage with them in the following ways:

- Contact them via e-mail on [consultations.cnwl@nhs.net](mailto:consultations.cnwl@nhs.net).
- Contact them via CNWL NHS Foundation Trust website

[www.cnwl.nhs.net/consultations](http://www.cnwl.nhs.net/consultations)

- Attend one of their two public events.

These are:

◦ **Thursday 25 September, 5-8pm**, Small Hall, Kensington Town Hall, Horton Street, London W8 7NX

◦ **Wednesday 15 October, 5.15-7.45pm**, First Floor meeting room, Soho Centre for Health, 1 Frith street, London W1D 3H2

- They say they will also convene meetings with local service providers in conjunction with commissioners as requested
- The **consultation with service users** is at a special meeting on **Monday 13 October, 5-7pm**, First Floor meeting room, Soho Centre for Health, 1 Frith Street, London W1D 3H2

## Alan Butler - Service User and Max Glatt worker gives his own personal account of why the Unit means so much to him.

The story of the Max Glatt and I spans decades and is by any account an epic tale. Please stay with me as I attempt to condense and summarise. more than 25 years ago I came to London from Manchester bringing a 10 year heroin addiction problem with me. I experienced my first detoxification from heroin in the Max Glatt within months of being here. I did not stay clean that attempt - nor did I on several subsequent attempts made in following years. I would bounce in and out of prisons, hospitals, rehabs and the MAX GLATT.

I just could not solve my problem and my problem steadily got worse. I introduced cocaine to the mix and the outcomes got considerably worse. Cocaine induced psychosis became a feature and psychiatric hospitals got added to the list of consequences. As a direct result of my addiction I became hospitalised for almost a year and was weaned of drugs. After 7 months I was allowed in to a wheel chair and though I could not manage to attain drugs, I was able to take myself to an off licence across the road from the hospital. I was in hospital for a further 4 months and inside that hospitalisation I switched addictions. I put down the drugs and picked up the bottle. When I left hospital I did not pick up the drugs again - nor did I put down the bottle. I moved seamlessly from addiction to alcoholism. Now the consequences really did get worse. I had Hep C and my liver was getting a double whammy and being attacked by both the virus and my alcoholism. My condition was going downhill rapid and I still could not get it.

In 2009 in what I now see to be a spiritual awakening and psychic change I entered the MAX GLATT for what was to be my final and successful attempt at detox. I say final and

successful attempt reservedly because in truth I feel that the attempts I had made previously were in fact part of the one successful attempt. I mention them though in order to explain that I had several visits to the MAX GLATT when I was not yet ready and would end up returning back there again. On none of the returns did I ever feel that any of the staff sat in judgement of me. Nor did they cause me to feel that I had failed. They were always there ready to believe in and support me. I see today that it was I who was not ready. If I tell the whole story I have to add that there was even a time when I was asked to leave for breaking my patients agreement - and even then I felt welcomed back when I walked back through the door hanging my head, rather than the feeling of being shamed which I had expected. If I needed the understanding that the staff had always been there for me driven home. It came in my experience going through my final detox. I made this detox after my awakening and in full awareness. I saw that as much as was humanly possible the staff almost to a man had always been only too willing to listen and be helpful when and where they could. If I was to be picky it would be to say that sometimes I felt they did not fully get or understand me and my life experience. The seed was planted!

I knew throughout my final detox that if I survived through it, things would be different. I knew that this was going to be so because if I survived it -.I was going to do different. It was seriously touch and go at times as I had taken myself to the wire but with the hand of God and great nursing I pulled through.

I spent my first year of recovery on a journey of self discovery where I re-evaluated who I think I am. Inside a spiritual program I was able to move from an earthly, egoic idea of self - to that of a spiritual self having a physical experience.

This movement in belief of self allowed the fears and anxieties that were always the cause of my life problems and were attached to and associated with the old egoic idea of self - to dissolve and dissipate. This brought a move from drunk to sober, from dark to light, and from untruth to truth.

I spent my second year in recovery training and volunteering. By my third year I was voluntarily facilitating peer led support groups inside the structure of a day program. I loved this role as it gave the continuity of working with people in their first 12 weeks of recovery.



However the seed that was sown in the MAX GLATT began to germinate and I turned to think of what could have improved a great experience for me when I finally presented as a patient who was recovery ready. It was in my conclusion - that it would have been massively helpful if they would have had someone on the team like myself and who had recovered from similar life experience. That would have been the cherry for sure. I developed this theory when I gave it deeper thought. It became my confirmed belief that during detox there is a window of opportunity that reveals itself around the half way mark where the fog starts to lift and some clarity of thought returns. I believed if someone such as I was around to engage a person inside that window, then there would at least be the potential for saying words, placing thoughts, and giving

considerations that might resonate and affect decisions that may soon shape people's reality. I thought that these words of wisdom might best be received and considered if they were given by a peer. With this belief in mind I set out to follow my vision and began making constant job application to CNWL.

In my fourth year of recovery my insistent efforts paid off and I was taken on as a peer support worker on the Max Glatt with the remit of bringing lived experience to the patients and to the team mix. Perfect - inside the practice of this remit I would discover, firstly if there was truth to my belief that for most people there does exist a window of opportunity. And secondly if the presence of a peer such as myself inside that window would be of benefit and provide a lifeline that does not already exist.

Today I am two years in to my role and working inside the window, two years in to nurturing the seed that was planted in the MG, germinated in the community, and tended lovingly since.

It is with absolute sincerity and delight that I tell you - the seed is now a very BEAUTIFUL tree that flourishes and bears life giving fruit.

You need not take my word for the measure of the success of my role. It is possible for you to read the words of those who have been in receipt and benefit. I have kept written testimony made from those who reached out to the lifeline, grabbed hold of the branch, brought themselves to within reach of its fruit. Then ate!!

Their words tell the "happy ending" to this story far better than I - maybe in the epic version?

A. Butler.

## What next?

CNWL say that they will analyse all consultation responses and write a report by mid November 2014. They will consider the results of the consultation and discuss them with the Max Glatt Unit commissioners at the end of November. They will then write a report with a summary of the consultation and their conclusions by the end of December 2014 this will be made available on the CNWL Trust website.

So if you haven't already . Please sign the Petition via [www.savemaxglattunit.com](http://www.savemaxglattunit.com)

## New Opening Times at The Social Café

The Social Café at 131 Uxbridge Road, W13 has two new part time managers to assist Linda Chan. Eddie and Barry's help have enabled the café to open on Thursdays as well as Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Monday and very soon they will be opening the doors to SU's 7 days per week.

The activities are varied and provide the chance for SU's to enjoy music, art, photography and a range of pampering services. A full time table is available at the Café so pop down to pick one up and say hello to volunteers and other SU's. If you just fancy some safe quiet time then the café can offer that too. Hope to see you there soon.

## New Rise Centre to open 30<sup>th</sup> Sept

The new drug and alcohol treatment centre at 101 The Broadway West Ealing will open for business on Tuesday the 30th of September. The new centre will replace all services currently provided from Lancaster House and

many from Featherstone Terrace. Phone 0800 195 8100 or check details with your key worker.



## Service User Voice

The monthly Service User meeting for all Ealing RISE Service Users is held at the Social Café on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month 2-30pm to 3-30pm (£5 voucher for attendees).

The next three dates for your diaries are:

- 14<sup>th</sup> October
- 11<sup>th</sup> November
- 9<sup>th</sup> December

## Free Social Activities

**16th October July - 3:30 pm**  
**Rock Climbing Westway**

Call Sean Kelly on 07858400543 for more details, to book a place and to get confirmation of dates and times.

### About Your Newsletter

If you would like to provide articles on what's happening to drug and alcohol services in Ealing or help edit the newsletter please let us know, contact details below.

If you wish to be included on our e-mail mailing list, please e-mail "newsletter" to the e-mail address below, conversely if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, e-mail "stop" and we will remove you from our list.

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## Ealing Service Users Newsletter

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