

# Engaging with Our Communities

## Members Discussion Forum: Event Summary

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Membership Office took part in a live virtual drop-in session with Trust Governors and members as part of [Worthing Metal Health Awareness Week 2020](#).

The session was hosted by the organisers of Worthing Mental Health Week and focused on our recently launched [Membership Strategy for 2020-2025](#), with the topic being 'Engaging with Our Communities'.

We were pleased to welcome a number of members and public to the session, including colleagues from partner organisations such as West Sussex County Council. The session was live-streamed to Facebook and guests were able to ask questions of the Governors and Corporate Governance Team as well as network with other attendees.

Carer Governor Mark Hughes and Public Governor Gillian Bowden began the session with a [presentation](#) on membership and why it is important in ensuring members experiences and voices are acknowledged in a meaningful way, as well as highlighting the responsibilities we have to our members as a Foundation Trust which include engaging with our members and ensuring the membership is representative of the communities we serve.

Following this the Governors explained the levels of membership involvement available and how they link in with the objectives of the Membership Strategy. This Strategy was created throughout the early part of 2020 in consultation with members to understand what they would like to see from membership over the next five years. This was done by way of a consultation and survey with existing members.

After a round up of how to become a Trust member it was over to the floor for some lively and enthusiastic discussion. A number of key topics were discussed including:

- The NHS Discount Scheme for [Foundation Trust Members](#)
- How volunteering plays a part within membership and the Trust
- The need for more local support services in our counties
- The challenges facing those who require access to services
- Funding for support groups and networks
- Information available to students or others in education
- Engagement within our younger constituency and how this could be improved

- How [Membership](#) can be promoted to a wider audience
- How Sussex Partnership staff can play an active role in our community engagement

The discussion recognised that there are many networks, groups and organisations that offer support for people with mental health problems, however not everyone knows who they are and where to find the information. We have therefore compiled a list of the networks, groups and organisations discussed during the session which we hope you will find helpful:

- [Sussex Partnership Working Together Groups](#) - visit the Working Together Group Twitter page for how to join and be part of your local network
- [People Participation Team PADLET Page](#) - the PADLET page is very helpful for any Sussex Partnership member, Expert by Experience and just about everyone else! Find out all about drop-in sessions, events, financial support and up to the minute news.
- [Student Voice](#) - The regular newsletter from Students Union which includes guidance for positive wellbeing and updates on latest campaigns. This website is beneficial to anybody in University education
- [Next Door](#) - A website and app specifically for your local area. Designed for people who are interested in their local community and its events or would like contact with others to share advice, support and ideas
- [Sussex Recovery College](#) - Check out the latest courses and workshops from Sussex Recovery College; you can sign up to be a Buddy or Volunteer. The College offers courses and methods to guide and support people through recovery and mental health concerns
- [Experts By Experience](#) - Sussex Partnership prides itself on being able to improve services based on the experiences of people who have used them. This is an opportunity to give your feedback and be part of a panel of experts dedicated to improving services
- [Capital Project - Pathfinder](#) - Part of the PathFinder network for West Sussex; here you will find many options for support for mental wellbeing, physical health advice and guidance and opportunities for involvement in services.
- [Side By Side](#) - An online social community run by the mental health charity Mind, offering supportive methods of coping and connections with others in a similar situation

We would like to sincerely thank the organisers of Worthing Mental Health Awareness Week, our members, colleagues, partners and governors for their ongoing support.

 #WMHAW20 #spftmembership

