

*Campaign to Save Mental Health
Services in Norfolk & Suffolk*



**INVITATION TO OUR ANNIVERSARY OPEN MEETING on THURSDAY
27TH NOVEMBER, 7.30-9.30 PM VAUXHALL CENTRE, NORWICH NR2 2SA**

Dear all,

Our Campaign started a year ago this month when mental health services in Norfolk and Suffolk first reached crisis point. The 'Nicholson Challenge' imposed £20 billion cost savings on all NHS Trusts. As a result, Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) set about its disastrous "Radical Redesign" of services: cuts of £40 million over four years which have led to severe problems in almost all its services and to unnecessary, indeed unsafe, staff redundancies. This has resulted in access to help becoming dangerously difficult and essential community care being reduced for some of the most severely mentally ill. Inpatient beds have been cut, leading to the forced transportation of patients in crisis from Norfolk and Suffolk to hospitals as far as Darlington in the North, Surrey in the South and Weston-Super-Mare in the West of the country. Most tragic of all were the deaths of so many patients known to local mental health services.

The Campaign has succeeded in uniting clinicians, service-users and carers in a powerful protest, highlighting not only the deep cuts but also the Trust's incompetence and the duplicitous roles of Norman Lamb and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

Our Campaign has made some important gains. We forced the Trust finally to admit that there was a crisis of funding and that the Radical Redesign has been a failure. The Trust made several important changes at senior management level, including the Chief Executive, the Director of Operations (Norfolk) and the Medical Director. NSFT began to talk to our Campaign directly instead of dismissing our proposals in the media. NSFT has begun to make some positive changes such as announcing the reopening Thurne Ward at Hellesdon Hospital and reviewing the Access and Assessment teams. NSFT has begun to acknowledge the need for a service for those previously under the care of the abolished Assertive Outreach teams, again with a view to improving provision for those patients. The CCGs also gave an undertaking to eliminate the use of out of area beds. These are all positive, though limited, changes for which our Campaign can justifiably claim some credit.

However, huge challenges remain. This weekend, there are 48 people in out of area beds at an unsustainable cost of around £25,000 per night not to mention heartbreak, inhumane delay and distress incurred for patients, their family and friends: these shocking numbers indicate mental health services in meltdown, with NSFT trapped in a vicious circle, lacking both the community resources to prevent people getting into crisis and the beds to accommodate them once they do. Despite this, Carlton Court's adult acute beds are being closed. The numbers above do not include the young people sent out of Norfolk and Suffolk, with CAMHS services at NSFT having suffered the deepest cuts in England.

Join Campaign to Save Mental Health Services in Norfolk & Suffolk:

On the web: <http://norfolksuffolkmentalhealthcrisis.org.uk/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Defendmentalhealthservices>

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NSFT is becoming increasingly financially distressed. The Trust has just gone through an intensive inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). NHS England has announced a further five years of cost-saving, imposing a discriminatory 1.8% 'deflator' on mental health trusts. According to NSFT's own 5 year strategic plan prepared for Monitor, there will be further cuts of £44 million to services over the next five years in Norfolk and Suffolk, with a further 400 plus staff redundancies and probable further cuts in the number of inpatient beds. All this is against a background of greatly increased demand for mental health services. Nick Clegg's and Norman Lamb's pre-election announcement of an additional £120 million for mental health trusts in England will go nowhere near meeting the need, especially when set against a background of a £22 billion 'cost-saving' for the NHS over the next five years.

In our view, mental health services can only be saved by vigorous grassroots campaigns which refuse to accept that the most vulnerable in society should disproportionately suffer the cost and consequences of austerity. More than ever we need to unite as mental health workers, service-users, carers, trade unions, voluntary organisations and community groups. We are therefore holding our anniversary meeting to examine the current situation facing mental health services, learn lessons from our own experience and the experience of other campaigns across the country, and to plan our strategy for the period approaching the General Election. This is an open meeting. Please bring friends and pass the word on. Speakers will include:

- **The Lifeworks Campaign in Cambridge, where service-users occupied their own mental health day centre to prevent the local NHS Trust from closing it**
- **Peter Beresford, Professor of Social Policy, Brunel University, London, mental health academic and service-user**
- **Emma Corlett, Community Mental Health Nurse, Norfolk County Council Mental Health Champion and Unison media spokesperson**
- **Daniel Taggart, University of Essex, on the impact of austerity on mental health**
- **Irene Lampert, Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, on the impact of the radical redesign on services for children**
- **Mark Harrison from Equal Lives, a service-user led advocacy organisation, on the problems his family have had accessing services**

Most important of all we hope to have a cross section of patients, carers, mental health professionals and other interested groups so that we can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of our Campaign and renew our future strategy to fight the coming cutbacks.

If you have any queries, please contact Terry Skyrme or Sally Whitman on 01263 825967 or email norfolksuffolkcrisis@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you on the 27th.

Yours faithfully,

Sally Whitman and Terry Skyrme

(On behalf of the Campaign to Save Mental Health Services in Norfolk and Suffolk) 7/11/14

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