

Hearing Voices Report

The Hearing Voices conference was held on Thursday 2 July 2009 at The Business Centre in Green Park, Reading.

The day, chaired by Mr Andrew Taylor, began with a welcome by Michael Ssurunkuma (Chaplain of Royal Berkshire Hospital). Three speakers followed, Dr Qulsoom Inayaat (a specialist psychologist) spoke on 'Working with faith communities in the NHS'. A service user spoke bravely on his own experience with schizophrenia and his faith and finally Ken Blanton (former Chaplain to Prospect Park hospital) spoke on 'East meets West'.

For nearly an hour following the speakers questions were offered to a panel.

After lunch there were three workshops, designed to see where the gaps were, find out what the faith communities are doing and what can be improved.

The Act workshop was led by Ken Blanton and Adanna Nwanguma (Community Development Worker). Key issues from this workshop were: More information made available for faith leaders to support service users. The Mental Health handbook/directory needs to be updated and given out which could raise awareness and communication between faith leaders and statutory agencies.

The Support workshop was led by Linda Clifford-Hayes (Pastor with Africa Christian Fellowship) and Sarah Mayhew (Manager of CommuniCare). Key issues from the workshop were: To know who to access is vital information (directory) and use LINK. Cultural lead assessment needed and more flexible out of hour services.

Speak workshop was led by Dr Qulsoom Inayaat and Michael Sserunkuma. Key issues from the workshop were: conduct workshops between carers, users and service providers, faith leaders to have knowledge to engage with services and develop critical voice. Service users need to be heard.

89 delegates attended the conference and in each workshop there were around 25 attending.

Outcomes:

- To hear more service users life accounts
- Organise training in the community
- Update the Directory of Mental Health provision for faith leaders
- Greater interaction of faith leaders with healthcare providers