

Bridgend County Borough Mental Health Network

Terms of Reference

Bridgend County Borough Mental Health Network is a forum of voluntary groups and agencies, which are involved or concerned with work on mental health issues. The Network encourages active participation in its activities by all voluntary sector groups, whether funded or unfunded, constituted or unconstituted, in order to provide a focus for mental health related work. The Network has the Bridgend and district locality as its focus and derives its membership from both local voluntary organisations and regional or national voluntary organisations that are active, or hoping to be active in the Bridgend County Borough area.

The Network defines mental health in its broadest sense, as a continuum of emotional well-being that is dependent upon a combination environmental, social, biological and psychological factors.

Aims of the Network

- **To develop a collective framework for responding to government, national assembly, local and health authority mental health initiatives and consultations.**
- **To be the recognised focal point for any formal consultation with the voluntary sector from local joint planning teams and structures, about mental health issues.**
- **To negotiate on behalf of community groups and voluntary agencies with other organisations, authorities and legislators on policy and strategy concerned with mental health.**
- **To campaign actively with and for those groups and individuals who experience mental health problems and the related unfair discrimination, and those who are affected by others' experiences of mental health problems.**
- **To encourage the active involvement and participation of users of community groups and voluntary agencies in the issues which affect them in their daily lives, and encourage new, more equal relationships between users and providers of services.**
- **To take a lead in confronting and challenging attitudes and practices which discriminate unfairly against *all* people who experience mental health problems. This includes, for example, black people and members of minority ethnic communities, women, people with different mental or physical abilities, younger and older people, lesbians, gay men and bisexual people, working class people, un-**

waged people, people who have problems with alcohol and substance misuse.

The values of the Network

The following set of statements is intended to be a framework of principles that exist to guide the Network in its decision-making and work activities.

The Network will:

- **Work in particular with sections of the community which are deprived of access to support and resources.**
- **Work in ways that actively promotes user involvement and participation at the level of service delivery and strategic planning.**
- **Challenge attitudes and practices that exclude this from happening.**
- **Work in ways that actively promotes the value of alternatives to established service provision, including user-led services.**
- **Support and develop anti-discriminatory values and practice – in particular with reference to mental health – within all local groups and agencies.**
- **Hold the individual as central to the decision-making process around their mental health needs, whilst recognising the need to ensure that this is not at the cost of others' emotional well-being or happiness.**