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CENTRE NEWS

The clocks have been turned back and the dark nights are here. But take heart, the shortest day is just around the corner and then the days start getting longer again!



Transition Funding

The transition fund has provided us with a great opportunity to develop Relate Bedfordshire and Luton as a stronger and more financially sustainable organisation into the future. We continue to work hard to make the most of this funding.

To date we have/are:

Business Development

- A first draft of our new Business Plan
- Consultation with young people completed and a final report being drafted
- Become members of Bedfordshire Chambers of Commerce to develop new opportunities within the private sector
- Increased networking

Marketing

- A first draft of our new Marketing Plan
- Started to market our new Employee Assist Service to the business sector
- Commissioned a local PR company and have already had Heart to Heart, Employee Assist Service and 60th wedding anniversary press releases

- A Twitter account is to be set up and managed by the PR company to raise our profile
- Commissioned a company to produce a short promotional video for us. This should be launched in the New Year
- With the help of WK360 and our Trustee Director Richard Holland, we have redesigned all our marketing material.
- With the help of Chris and Ruth Smyth (Trustee Director) we are redesigning our website. If you haven't looked at our current site recently, take a few minutes to log on. We still have a lot to do but we have made it much more interesting with a number of video's to watch!!
- We are in discussions with a local bus provider and an outdoor media company to develop marketing opportunities out doors.

Fundraising

- Fundraising and action plan developed
- Professional fundraiser and Yasmin are working really hard to secure new funds
- Successful bid to Steel Charitable Trust that is enabling us to deliver Parenting skill workshops across the county
- Funding bids submitted have included Children In Need and Comic Relief and we are through the first round of the Children In Need application, so fingers crossed!!

Cohesion & Diversity Worker

Janice has attended a number of community events and is under taking research to analyse the needs of minority ethnic and hard to reach communities. A report with recommendations will be produced in the New Year.

IT infrastructure

We have commissioned an IT company to install and improve our IT infrastructure and provide professional ongoing IT support/maintenance.

The proposed improvements will result in us becoming fully networked, will allow remote access to files and emails and will provide automatic off site back up's.

These changes will improve our data security and resilience as an organisation.

There is still much to do and I will keep you informed as we progress with this funding.

Leadership Programme

The work with the Cranfield Trust and their management consultancy volunteer's, continues to progress well.

We have held four 'Discovery Workshops' with 31 attendees, including staff, counsellors, trainers, volunteers and trustees.

We have had a number of trustee sessions to build and strengthen our Board.

And we have undertaken a full team analysis of the Management Team. This involved each of us completing a questionnaire for ourselves and one for each member of the management team. It was with great relief that we achieved some really positive results!

Counsellors

Welcome to Trinder Jaspal who will soon be starting the Relate Conversion course and from February 2012 she will be counselling on a Saturday morning at the Medici Medical Practice in Luton.

We are welcoming back a counsellor, Desbina Antoniou who will join our team based in Dunstable. Desbina worked with us for a short time whilst she was in training as a PST Therapist in 2008. Since then she has completed a post graduate diploma in CBT, her PST Diploma and works 30 hours per week for the IAPT team in Leighton Buzzard. As most of her daytime work centres on individuals, she is looking forward to working with couples as a contrasting environment.

In previous newsletters we have announced that Paul Donohoe will be leaving us at the end of March, then that he was staying but now I have to sadly announce that he is leaving at the end of November. We wish him well.

We are also sad to announce that Jill Ringrose will be leaving us at the end of November. Jill is emigrating to Australia so we wish her well for her future down under.

Trustees

At our recent AGM the following Trustees were appointed:

- Terry Allen – Acting Chair
- Rob Bates – Treasurer
- Caroline Boyd
- Alison Chamberlain
- Sonia Greaves
- Richard Holland
- Nisar Hyder
- Ruth Smyth
- Fay Trodd



Angela Foll – Chief Executive Officer

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

We have been working with the Cranfield Trust since June and we have done some really interesting work on what makes our organisation tick, who we truly are and where are we going in the future.

From this work we identified our core values to include words such as;

“Confidential, trust, safe, respect, empowering, non judgemental, hope, welcome, friendly, great team, choices and options, people matter, learning, compassion”.

We have developed a vision for Relate Bedfordshire and Luton where people see us as a professional and welcoming organisation that they can access through out the transitions of their life; from a young age, through to their teenage years, becoming a couple, a parent, a grandparent and retiring in to old age.

RELATE BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON

Autumn 2011

From this vision and aspiration we have developed our business plan and set strategic objectives for the organisation.

We will be consulting on the plan and have arranged a number of workshops to share the plan and get as many views as possible to support the way forward.

The Plan looks at the services we currently provide, how we can build on these and has plans for new service developments and new ways of working. We are sure that, with further creative input from staff, counsellors, trainers, trustees and volunteers, we can face the future together with enthusiasm and excitement.

Sue Reed – Business Development Manager



FAMILIES & COUPLES

Waiting lists are manageable in all areas at present, with slightly longer waits in Luton. Self funded family counselling has shown a marked increase over the past few months.

From October we started offering counselling sessions Friday evenings in the Bedford office and they are proving to be very popular. With Trinder being available for counselling on a Saturday in Luton from February 2012, this will be a new venture for us, but we feel that there are clients in Luton who will appreciate attending at the weekend.

Big changes are ahead for us all in December when we will be changing our appointment system from Appointments Pro to the national system, Penelope.

Penelope is a web based system where the data is stored and backed up to the RCO server in Doncaster.

Lorraine, Kim, Kymberley, Sue Walker and myself will be attending a three day training course from 22.11.11 to 24.11.11.

Rebecca Silliker, our evening receptionist and Carole Terrall, a former evening receptionist, will be covering the desk during the day on these dates.

Lorraine, Kim and Kymberley will endeavour to get all schedules out early for that week and it is hoped that one member of the appointments team will be available in the office after 5.00 pm to deal with any queries from the day.

Data has to be transferred manually to Penelope so please be patient with the team during the period following the training and the date we go live when data will be input into Penelope manually.

We are aiming to 'Go Live' week commencing 12th December. We will keep you up to date as implementation progresses.



Tina Miller – Family and Couples Manager

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE (TalkTime)

We started the new academic year with eleven TalkTime counselling contracts in schools across Bedfordshire and Luton. This is very positive as schools are now using their own budgets to pay for the service it is a real recognition of the impact counselling has within the school environment.

We are actively working with schools in the hope that we can increase the take up of TalkTime counselling in schools.

The devolving of budgets from the Local Authorities into schools, the increasing numbers of Academy Schools and the developing Federation/Clusters of schools could provide new opportunities to increase the service.

Throughout the autumn we have been running a consultation with young people across Bedfordshire and Luton, talking with them about what sort of services they would want to access if they needed to talk about emotional difficulties.

We now have nearly a thousand responses and these will be collated and analysed with a full report being published in the New Year. Watch this space!

As part of this research work, we are planning to train a group of young researchers, aged 16-19, using the National Youth Agency Young Researchers training pack. The young people will then be able to work within their schools and communities to engage with their peers on research and information on a range of issues.

Sue Reed – Business Development Manager

EDUCATION & LEARNING

The Education and Learning trainers have started delivering the Counselling Skills for Non-Counsellors and some modules of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) to delegates. This work will continue in the coming months. We are also expecting to deliver Team Building to young people as part of a partnership with Develop EPB.

We have also been successful in securing funding for 2 Parenting Skills courses which will be held in Bedford and Luton in 2012.

Our partnership work with Relate Cambridge has resulted in offering a joint one-day workshop, 'Moving Forward', on Saturday, 14th January 2012, 10am to 4.30pm at The Priory Centre, St Neots. The cost of the day is £85 per person. All staff should have received a flyer advertising this course.

Our partnership work with MK Relate has recently resulted in us being commissioned to deliver 'From Emotions to Solutions' to council staff.

We are hopeful that working together with other Relate centres will raise the profile of the Education and Learning service.

Finally, the team are continuously forging new partnerships with other charities and other sectors of industry which will broaden our client base to access our courses.

To give you a better idea of the range of courses we offer, why not take a look at our web-site. You will be surprised what we can do!

Yasmin Ali – Education and Learning Manager

PRACTICE ISSUES

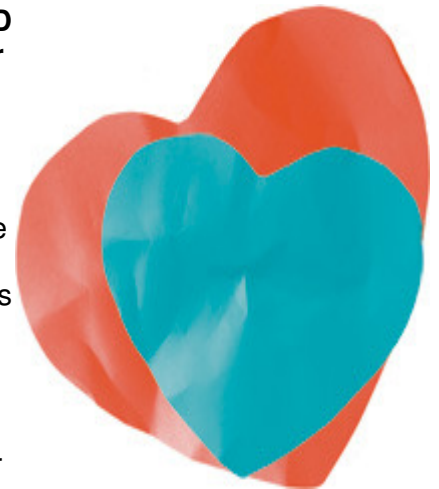
I'd like to draw attention to the Loop article on Proposed Changes to CPD requirements and say that this might be a topic of discussion for group or individual supervision.

Proposed changes to CPD requirement for Practitioners

For many years now Relate counsellors have been required to undertake 2 days [12 hours] continuous professional development [CPD] each year in the form of

training courses or workshops. However in order for Relate to meet the professional standards for counsellors laid down by the BACP, and which are expected to be the standard set as a pre-requisite for the new Voluntary Register being introduced by the Government the amount and definition of CPD will need to change.

The Services and Practice Committee have discussed the proposal to set the new level for CPD for all Relate counsellors at 30 hours per annum, in line with the BACP requirement. We anticipate that this will be introduced from April 2012 and become part of the re-registration process for the practitioner directory after that date.



In line with the new Learning and Development policy which applies to all Relate staff, not just those who are practitioners, the definition of CPD will be much broader and will include any activity that develops reflective practice and builds professional competence.

The activities which a practitioner might include to demonstrate how they have developed their professional competence include, attending conferences or discussion groups, delivering training, contributing to service development, membership of committees, research or counselling related reading [this list is not exhaustive].

It is proposed that of the minimum 30 hours which will be required, at least 12 hours will be in the form of a course, a seminar or a workshop. In order to prepare for this change and to help counsellors establish a recording mechanism to keep track of their various methods of learning, a template 'Record of Continuous Professional Development' has been developed.

Diane Whitmore - Counselling Supervisor

PST

We are still hopeful of recruiting a new therapist in the centre and will have an update soon. At present I am seeing couples on Saturdays and Wednesdays in order to meet demand and offer some flexibility.

As I am newly recruited on a Systemic Foundation course this year, I anticipate that some of my ideas and approaches will be challenged, enlarged, refuted, replaced, revisitedwatch this space!

Diane Whitmore - Counselling Supervisor



Thank you for taking the time to read our centre newsletter. I hope you found it informative and worthwhile.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the management team, if you have any questions or comments.