

Notes from Steering/Focus Group meeting – September 2024

Welcome

Attendees:

MDSC Staff: Nina Hanks and Helen Hone

Attendees: Frank Sturzaker, Neil Corfield, Kevin Thompson

Nina welcomed everyone to the meeting. She recapped the minutes of the last meeting briefly and there were no outstanding actions. Neil gave a brief update on the purpose of the Adaption to Change Group.

Nina introduced the topic and agenda:

- What is Community and Engagement
- Questions: How can we support you and everyone visiting out sites?
- Any other topics or ideas that the group would like to share/ discuss!

Discussion: Community and Engagement

Nina explained that we are trying to grow our Community Engagement, not just in fundraising but also events and volunteering.

In order to do so, she put three questions on the table to discuss:

1. In what ways can we support you?
2. How do we engage everyone visiting the charity (HQ and satellites)?
3. What are the barriers for events, volunteering and fundraising?

The group discussed.

Frank suggested creating a handbook for newly diagnosed SUs.

Neil advised the adaptability group are intending to put together an FAQs page.

Frank (and Jennie) had compiled a list of suggestions of ways to get people involved. Nina shared this with the group and we discussed. (Attached to the minutes?)

We explored reasons why the group got involved. Frank joined MDSC for therapy, wasn't looking for anything else but because he is confident and out-going was happy to get involved in volunteering/steering group etc. Neil wanted to help himself but also wanted to help others. Mark found he had some time to be able to give back and get involved, he likes to be helpful and wants to contribute. He felt invited (by us/Ruth) to take on a role.

Frank asked what do other SUs do when they are not getting therapy. What happens for them the other 4 days out of 5.

Mark – make events informal, help people feel part of something.

Neil – could link an activity to the coffee mornings to help build interest and engage more people.

Helen – suggested we could perhaps include a “spotlight on” section in our comms to introduce our volunteers and get them to share why they get involved.

Helen – we are looking at ways we can engage our new SUs even more in the charity. Perhaps create a new SUs only event where they can meet each other, perhaps hosted/led by an existing SU.

Next steps and Close

Actions before next meeting:

Neil – to create a list of possible events/topics, what might interest others not necessarily about MD but hobbies or interests. Are there other SUs with a passion they would be willing to talk about?

Frank – create a survey to ask who is available to play in the day (find out how easy is it for people to attend events, do they have work commitments, need carer support, distance to travel etc)

Frank – used to volunteer with VASA (community driving/ transport group in Stratford). He is going to reconnect with them to find out more. And also Motability.

Nina thanked all attendees for their time, participation, and ideas.

All attendees consented for their comments to be shared in meeting notes to be posted on the Charity’s website.

Nina then closed the meeting.