



Service User Focus Group meeting – February 2026

Attendees

Service users: Diana, James, Debbie, Emily, Paul, Bhavesh, Geoff, frank

MD Support Centre: Zoe Ricardson (CEO / group facilitator), Kate Torrens (SU participation Worker)

Welcome & introductions

Zoe welcomed everyone to the meeting, everyone introduced themselves.

Follow up actions from last meeting

Members to share any further feedback on the new service ideas with Zoe. - **Completed**

Zoe to poll members on the best day / time for future sessions - **Completed**

Lysa to write up notes and Zoe to share with group. – **Completed sent after last meeting**

Zoe to share Aquatic Therapies evaluation with group - **Completed sent after last meeting**

MDSC update

Zoe introduced Kate as the new SU participation Worker who started this week.

Zoe thanked Diana for her support of the work on the new website that is being created.

Zoe thanked Debbie for her support on the recruitment process for Kate's role.

Zoe updated the group on the recent events and changes at MDSC including new recruits, new partnerships including Wenman health care and Emotional respite. Zoe also explained about the new approach to wellbeing hubs – rather than having 4 a year we are aiming for double as we really see the value of providing education and support for the service users. Zoe also explained that MDSC is currently advertising for new physios at Leicester and across all satellites.

Lottery update

Zoe explained to the group that at the last meeting we went through potential additional services we could approach the lottery to fund and the group provided substantial feedback for us to work from. Since then, Zoe has received information from the neuro care advisors that also supported the ideas the group discussed. These areas were acupuncture, all things feet and mental health.

A proposal was worked up for the first stage of the process. The proposal was fully costed over a 3 year period and was submitted for a lottery funding officer to review.

Zoe met with the funding officer a few weeks ago and the feedback was not positive. The lottery have changed their focus and wants to support projects related to health inequalities.

The group discussed at length the feedback and what health inequalities are.

Zoe has paused a bid until it is right to submit.

The group agreed that pain management (acupuncture) was still important as was Mental health although the ability to work with another organisation on this was well received. The group discussed that “feet” still remains a real concern and a continued postcode lottery which is frustrating if this is something that the lottery could not see.

Zoe explained that all of these services are still on the table, but rework needs to happen to get the right funding for the right project. Zoe will continue to engage with the group as this process continues.

Open day/MD patient day

Zoe explained to the group that she recently attended the MDUK regional clinical group and will continue to be member of this group. There were discussions at the meeting regarding MD patients having a day which would be of use for them. Zoe had suggested that it could co inside with an MDSC open day which potential would happen this year. Zoe asked the group for an open discussion related to this idea.

The group shared concerned regarding the purpose and whether it would useful. The group also fed back ideas related to how it could be useful.

The idea of an open/information day was thought to be a good idea but laboursome for MDSC.

Zoe said she will feedback to the MDUK meeting and would welcome any more comments via email.

AOB: Discussion came about whether the group could look at producing information, advice or even template letters for how to navigate the NHS system. Zoe suggested that this could be a positive project for Kate to work with people in the group, Zoe will take this out of the group and discuss with Kate.

Actions:

Zoe to continue to engage with members outside of the group for support and projects.

Zoe to update the group on next steps for lottery

Zoe and Kate to look at potential project re SU led guidance for navigating the NHS