



# Manchester Community & Mental Health Branch

## Information for Members in MMHSCT July 2015

The Branch needs your support in taking action about the future of Mental Health Services in Manchester, about our jobs, and about our pay and conditions. Unless we resist, government and management decisions will affect not just us, but our families, service users and the public.

### Immediate Cuts

#### Public Health Funded Services via Manchester City Council

As part of a £90 million cuts package, MCC has passed on the government's cut in public health money—instead of finding ways to protect these services (such as a small rise in council tax or business rates, or using their substantial reserves).

**Recovery & Connect and Supporting People (Community Support)** - both services are being closed, with a minimal replacement service being set up. 27 out of 36 staff are losing their jobs. MCC said they wanted to 'move away from high-cost services for a small number of people with high-level mental health needs'. They said that need would be reduced in future by improving service users' health and wellbeing in the long term—but are also cutting the Health & Wellbeing Service. They claimed that Recovery & Connect was running at only 40% capacity. It is actually running at 100% capacity and has produced effective outcomes for its service users. The closure of these services will leave vulnerable people lonely and isolated. Many who need support to pay bills and maintain a tenancy will face eviction and homelessness. It will put massive pressure on families and carers, mainly women, increase suicides which are already alarmingly high, and cost more money because of increased emergencies and crises.

#### The Health & Wellbeing Service is being cut by 66%.

Within this, the Physical Activity Referral Service is being put out to tender. Three posts covering alcohol and drugs harm and risk reduction may be included in the citywide alcohol and drugs service tender—staff still don't know whether their work will stay in H&W or not. About 25 staff are seeking voluntary redundancy. From a total of about 90 staff, there will only be about 35 jobs in a redesigned service.

#### Inadequate NHS Funding—closures and attacks on jobs and conditions

- Cedar Ward closure with a loss of Later Life beds threatens 10 staff.
- A decision has been made to merge the specialist Homeless Team into Assertive Outreach, with the danger of reduced access to mental health services for the growing street homeless population.
- Wards are below safe qualified staffing levels, and often rely on agency and bank staff. Numerous safety incidents and injuries to staff.
- The system of e-rostering and new shift patterns are causing havoc for staff. The branch has submitted a formal grievance about this, and needs the support of staff affected to pursue this.
- **Manchester Users Network**, who oppose cuts to services, are being threatened with restriction on their activities within Trust premises and expulsion from their office in Park House. Management have said the Lampard Report (into Jimmy Savile) requires them to control access. MUN are holding a meeting on **7th July, 6.30pm, at Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street**, to discuss the Trust's actions. The meeting will be chaired by Karen Reissmann. (see [www.manchesterusersnetwork.org.uk](http://www.manchesterusersnetwork.org.uk))

## Further Cuts and Future Threats

The Trust Board is now debating cuts to all services they say are 'non essential';

It is likely that activity and services not directly related to treatment of mental health conditions will come under threat.

The Branch Committee does not agree with the division of services into 'essential' and 'non-essential'. All services are essential for some service users.

- Benchmark has been threatened with closure.
- Later Life services are under review and fear cuts and mergers.
- Some posts have already been downgraded—yet staff are taking on more and more work.
- The Review Team, Assertive Outreach Teams and Home Treatment Teams are under increasing pressure and staff work beyond their working hours because of their concern for their clients.
- Community Mental Health Teams have long waiting lists, and struggle to cope with demands, even though staff work extra hours.

## Threats to everyone

MMHSCT is trying to renegotiate the **pay protection policy**. They want to make it easier to downband posts with less compensation for the staff in those posts. Your branch negotiators are resisting this, but will need your continued support to do so.

Nationally, the government is trying to cut **unsocial hours payments** in preparation for forcing more staff to provide 7 day, 24 hours services.

**Devo Manc**—the deal that leaders (mostly Labour) of Greater Manchester councils have done with George Osborne means that NHS and social care funding will be controlled by GM councils from 2016. The slashing of funding they already control and no overall increase in the budget to be devolved, suggests that councils will have an illusion of local power, but will really just become responsible for making more cuts. (see branch website for more information)

## WHY NOW IS THE TIME TO FIGHT

- If we don't fight now and MMHSCT closes threatened services, then it will be easier for them to close others. We are stronger together.
- The future of the Trust continues to be uncertain. After years of underfunding, different management strategies, efficiency cuts/savings, and (often pointless) reorganisations, we continue to struggle to deliver properly funded, properly staffed services, which can address the overwhelming and increasing demand. Staff must stand up to fight for safe, properly funded, fully staffed services.
- Other Greater Manchester Mental Health UNISON Branches are taking action. In a neighbouring trust there was a vote of 100% to take action up to and including strike action against cuts in community mental health services.
- We have fought and won before to protect services. We can—and must—do it again.
- There will be a national campaign and action against the threat to cut unsocial hours pay. Our branch will play an active part in that campaign.

## Members' Meetings and gathering more information

- We will be organising meeting for members across the city. Please attend and ensure your service is represented.
- We are sending a short questionnaire about the impact of cuts to teams. Please help to fill them in and send information about what is happening in your team or ward.
- Please pass this information sheet to any colleagues in UNISON who have not received it, and ask them to check we have the right email address for them by sending an email to Ben Jackson.
- If your colleagues are not in a union—encourage them to join UNISON (contact your steward or Ben Jackson for application forms, or [www.joinunison.org](http://www.joinunison.org))

*Yours in Solidarity, Ben Jackson, Branch Secretary on behalf of the Branch Committee*

*Branch website: [www.mcmh.org.uk](http://www.mcmh.org.uk)*

*new Branch Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/unisonmcmh](http://www.facebook.com/unisonmcmh)*