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Issue 1

Veterans First Point Scotland Development Team – who we are...

Lucy Abraham works fulltime as Consultant Clinical Psychologist / Service Lead

Background and experience

Having studied Psychology (MA) at the University of Aberdeen, I then obtained my doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClin.Psychol.) from the University of Edinburgh. My doctoral thesis derived from research at a high security forensic facility in Lanarkshire and concerned the trial of a group treatment of Compassionate Mind Training for men that hear voices. Prior to Veterans First Point, I have worked in a variety of clinical and research roles with a specialism in severe and enduring mental health conditions and post traumatic stress. I began working as Service Lead at Veterans First Point in March 2011 and am trained in a variety of treatment approaches including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Cognitive Analytic Therapy, Compassionate Mind Training and Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing Therapy.

Why V1P Scotland?

Since starting at V1P, I have been keen to look at ways to expand the model throughout Scotland. I am excited to be working in partnership with health boards and services throughout Scotland to provide a holistic peer support and mental health service to veterans. I am also looking forward to creating a comprehensive training programme to improve best practice for veteran's mental health services in Scotland.

When not working

I enjoy spending time outdoors and spend time hill walking, kayaking and cycling. I am currently on maternity leave until January 2015 and I am enjoying spending time with my new family – which also keeps me pretty busy! I'm looking forward to returning in January to build upon the work already being done by the team.

Sarah Cairns works 16 hours a week as Project Administrator

Background and experience

I began working for NHS Lothian in December 2008 organising events and training sessions as part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team. Following this I became Office Manager at Veterans First Point in December 2010. During my time at V1P, I became more interested in the clinical side of the service after listening to the experiences of both clients and staff about living with and treating mental health problems. Having considered a career in nursing previously, this prompted me to start my degree in Mental Health Nursing in September 2012. I have continued to work at V1P part time during my course and moved to the V1P Scotland team in April this year.

Why V1P Scotland?

Having watched the V1P Lothian service grow in size and experience over the past few years, and seen the effectiveness of the V1P model in supporting veterans transitioning from military life, I am looking forward to working as part of the V1P Scotland team to help establish the model throughout Scotland.

When not working

As I am going into my final year of study, my spare time is a bit limited at the moment! When I do have spare time though I enjoy running, going to the cinema and meeting up with friends to go dancing!

Dave Carson works full time as Senior Health Promotion Specialist for Veterans Mental Health and Well-being

Background and experience

Left school in '75 and worked in music industry for a number of years then through voluntary work went to train in Community Development. First job post qualification was a Detached Youth Worker working on issues such as gangs and law breaking, youth homelessness, substance use and sexual health. Moved on to become a community based Detached Drugs Worker contacting and supporting chaotic drug injectors at risk of/ or diagnosed with HIV. My first NHS job was as a needle exchange/ BBV prevention worker in late 80's. I then moved into health promotion developing my work programme to address early intervention/ harm reduction and for the last 7 years supporting recovery capacity building, service user involvement and peer support

Why V1P Scotland?

I'm involved as I'm motivated by my experience of being part of alliances between peers/ those with lived experience and professionals, and the potential of these alliances better meeting veteran's needs and breaking down barriers. I aim to support V1P to continue to reach and support veterans who experience difficulties, isolation and stigma (either real or imagined) and support the development of local partnerships to establish the V1P model in other communities in Scotland. Also, for me, V1P Scotland offers new challenges and an opportunity to work across Scotland to establish this way of working.

When not working

I enjoy listening to music and occasionally dancing, going to events/ exhibitions, sitting in my allotment, cooking food, exploring cities, putting back into my community, and, catching up with pals.

Sharon Fegan works 22.5 hours a week as Consultant Psychological Therapist

Background and experience

Prior to working in the NHS I had a variety of "life experience" jobs and enjoyed some far flung travelling. I graduated in Occupational Therapy from Aberdeen and in Cognitive-Behavior Therapy from Dundee. I have worked in forensic, acute and community mental health teams in Lanarkshire and Dundee and I have been based in NHS Lothian since 1996 mainly in community settings. My aim has always been to assist clients in their recovery from ill-health to well-being and develop lifestyles that are personally satisfying to them to maintain well-being. This has been achieved through individual and group work as well as working in

partnership with 3rd sector agencies. I have managed a range of staff over the years and see supervision, staff development and clinical governance as key factors in ensuring safe and effective service provision.

Why V1P Scotland?

I was motivated to join the team because of the diverse approaches used to engage with and support veterans and their families and the emphasis on peer support and shared experiences. I believe that by working together on social and health barriers to well-being all clients have a greater chance of recovery. On a personal level I was ready for the challenges and opportunities that rolling out this model across Scotland will bring.

When not working

I love swimming (less so the gym) to empty my mind and exercise, and reading and socializing with family and friends to undo the benefits previously mentioned! I enjoy planning trips and travelling to new places as well as time at home – relaxing.

Anne Gioko works fulltime as Secretary – V1P Scotland

Background and experience

I did my internship for six months as a human resource assistant at a children's hospital in Kenya after I graduated from university with a Bachelors Degree in Human Resource Management. I later moved on to a permanent job as a personnel assistant to the Chief Executive & Personnel Officer at Kenya Armed Forces Canteen Organisation (AFCO). During this time I developed skills in administrative work as well as identifying training needs for staff. I had the opportunity to work with soldiers mainly in the administrative side.

Why V1P Scotland?

I relocated to Scotland in 2011 where I worked as a support worker at a temporary accommodation housing agency. My role involved supporting homeless people who were referred to us by Midlothian council. I would then identify their needs through needs assessment, draw up a support plan and help establish how best to achieve their goals within the 16 week period that they are housed by the organisation.

When I saw the secretarial role at V1P advertised I felt that my work experience to date and my time spent as an army wife would make me a strong candidate for the role. I was fortunate enough to be offered the position.

When not working

I enjoy cooking, I love singing and song writing, I sing in the church choir. I volunteer for a mission community called Centurion that reaches out to military families by organising social events like get together's and barbeques. I enjoy swimming and making new friends.

Linda Irvine works half a day a week as Strategic Lead

Background and experience

After studying for a BA in Communication and working in the Netherlands for a number of years, I Studied and returned to Edinburgh to join the NHS in 1995 .I have held various development and managerial roles including a further period of study to gain my MSc in Health Promotion I've employed in my current role as Strategic Programme Manager for Mental Health and Wellbeing since December 2004 with responsibility for developing and

implementing Lothian's Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing. I also lead a number of regional and national developments, including the establishment of V1P Scotland.

In 2007, with Professor Kirsty Forsyth, I established an academic/practice partnership called the 'Transformation Station' to underpin service redesign with robust evidence which has driven significant change programs to improve outcomes for people with mental health problems. In June 2013 I was appointed as an Honorary Senior Research Fellow by the Senate of Queen Margaret University and am currently studying for my Professional Doctorate in Health and Social Sciences.

Why V1P Scotland?

Having been involved in working with veterans and Dr Claire Fyvie to write the original development plan for what became V1P Lothian I'm delighted to use that experience to lead the developments across Scotland. I've met so many committed and dedicated people amongst the veterans' community over the last few years and I really look forward to maximising the potential we collectively have to improve the lives for veterans and their loved ones across Scotland.

When not working

I love lots of arts related activities especially film and literature. Holidays and exploring new places is something I cherish, to relax I practice yoga and walking fast!

John Wills works 22.5 hours a week as Consultant Psychological Therapist

Background and experience

After I left university in the 1990s I spent a couple of years travelling overseas. I returned to the UK and joined the TA, a Field Ambulance unit, giving me a brief taste of military life. After this I went to work with children in residential care, doing outdoor activities. I completed my Masters in Psychological Therapy in 2006 and have been working in Adult Mental Health ever since.

Why V1P Scotland?

I was very pleased to be offered the opportunity to join Veterans First Point Scotland and make a contribution to mental health services for the military community.

When not working

I enjoy swimming, cycling and running (but not very far or fast). I've taken part in a triathlon every year since I turned forty and hope to continue this as long as I am fit and well enough. I like golf, motorcycles and watching films and TV as well as spending time with friends and family.

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