



Subject	Chair's Report Q4 2023/24
Date of meeting	29 th April 2024
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Purpose	For discussion - and agreement re appointment of new Chair

The last quarter has been a time of considerable change for The SUN Network – both internally and in terms of our wider roles.

The organisation continues to grow, which is a reflection of our high profile locally and our positive reputation. People's Postcode Lottery non-recurrent funding has enabled us to further strengthen our co-production work, whilst new funding is also being used for us to work with Voiceability to strengthen the voices of people with learning disabilities and autism. On behalf of people with lived experience we are having input to a wide range of service developments around very important areas such as older people's access to treatments for anxiety and depression, making crisis mental health care simpler and safer, and implementing the suicide prevention strategy.

We are always working to develop a pool of people with lived experience who we can support to engage as effectively as possible with "the powers that be." Fresh thinking is sometimes required to progress what we do in this area and our latest aim is to create volunteer roles for people to speak up, where they will be well supported and entitled to claim payments according to a closely defined policy.

Jo and Kate joined the team this summer and this month Vickie has begun her maternity leave. As mentioned at the last Board meeting, I am standing down after two 3-year terms as chair. I am delighted to confirm that as of today, Kev Clift is ready to take over. The formalities require that members have the chance to agree this appointment and I confirm today that they do. Thus, the handover date is today.

Lois and I have followed due process in recruiting the new chair and I am delighted that Kev is taking over the baton from me. He brings considerable experience of working at a senior level in the public sector as well as very strong values around the importance of people with lived experience being heard as we battle for better mental health services locally.

Finally, I would just like to make a final set of statements about what I see as our mission, crystallizing what we say in our strategy:



Our core task is to engage well with people with lived experience so that their voices are heard, and services are improved through co-producing solutions with NHS social care and other partners.

This process can be seen as in 3 stages:

- Hearing from significant numbers of people with relevant experience from the whole population by whatever means are most useful
- Sharing their experiences with partners in whichever way is most appropriate - from speaking up at meetings, to written reports, personal stories and video
- Following through to the final stage so that the impact of people's voices is felt and reflected in the creation of better services

Alongside this core task, we are well placed to help people with lived experience have an impact in other ways, including co-training of staff, contributing fully in interviewing staff for roles in local organisations, helping design information for service users, promoting what we do and encouraging others to speak up

The work is about listening well to people and giving them a chance if they want it to benefit others and feel better about themselves. So, our conversations are likely be therapeutic, whilst providing care or support is not what we set out to do.

It's rewarding and crucial work and I'm proud to have been part of it for the past six years.