

I am a service user in the community and have been a service user for some time now. I was in and out of psychiatric units for a couple of years, mostly due to non-compliance with treatment and was given so many different diagnoses, which resulted in a lot of confusion with regards to what treatment I should receive. All of this came to a head when I was admitted to the State Hospital where I was placed under Compulsory Measures to be treated. With hindsight I believe that this was the best thing that could have happened to me and see the whole experience as a positive one, being that the State Hospital has all the time and resources needed to treat its clients effectively. Had these services been available at a local level, and I'd been treated to the same standard many years ago, I may never have been placed into a maximum security environment.

My admission to the State Hospital is where my road to recovery began and also where I met my co-presenter, a Social Worker, actually not a bad bloke after all, in fact as my MHO from the start of my journey has given me a lot of stability and has provided a lot of support through many issues I have encountered. He has had his ear bent on many occasions above and beyond the call of duty, for sometimes around 2 hours at a time. On reflection I see the MHO's role amongst other things as one of support and encouragement, and he has supported the majority of decisions I have made and has included me in decisions surrounding my care and treatment, as much as is possible which is the way it should be for service users.

My personal road has been one of health and fitness, both mental and physical, the mental side coming from various therapies I underwent through the State Hospital and physical side from my own choice as I needed positive structures in my life to focus on. Which has led to my realisation of how important physical health is to mental health and I try to encourage as many as my peers to follow in my footsteps as possible, in fact to the extent that I have sought education within the realms of fitness and exercise, on the pretence that eventually I'll be able to use these skills in some form of re-hab, helping people with mental health issues to further them on their own personal journey of recovery.

As my personal journey continues and now find myself dealing with the everyday pressures of life and I always know after being in the State Hospital that I would come up against discrimination in one way, shape or form, from maybe prospective employers or educational bodies. The last place I expected it from was people that are directly involved with my care, which is where I have experienced the worst, as I feel that I am still being judged to a certain extent on how I was when I was unwell, and quite probably because of the fact that I have been in the State Hospital, to the extent that it's interfering in my personal life.

Being of the understanding that Fife doesn't have a countywide action group to give service users a voice to be able to effect change, we are left to the mercy of sometimes stuffy attitudes of health professionals and this needs to change. I myself am hoping to remain well and in the community for the future and will be able to do this, providing the right support is in place which, being under compulsory treatment, I am more than confident will be possible. It just seems a shame that someone would have to undergo a journey such as mine to be given the support that a strained health service should have provided much sooner.