February 2019

 Dear Rural Colleagues

 Early Intervention in Psychosis in Rural Areas

Support in Mind Scotland is part of a Working Group convened by the Scottish Government and Healthcare Improvement Scotland with the following aims:

 ·        To highlight the importance of improving early intervention in psychosis.

 ·        To describe a Scottish vision of service change to deliver this.

 ·        To propose and action plan to achieve the vision

This has been a huge priority for our organisation for many years and in 2014 we completed a report that we called grandly the Scottish Schizophrenia Survey, which was aimed at following up the progress 10 years on from the first major review of services for people affected by schizophrenia in 2004.  We found, rather disappointingly, that none of the recommendations had been progressed.

Therefore this opportunity to work with the Government on highlighting the critical importance of improving access to genuine EI support, treatment and care and to be part of recommending actions to address the significant gaps that we know exist across Scotland is very welcome.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is tasked with developing an Improvement Programme to help Boards engage with the changes.  However, as well as this, the Working Group is recommending that we develop a national network of stakeholders who have an interest in this work to ensure that work is sustained to bring about long term change.

 Lived Experience Involvement

We are really keen to involve as many people as possible across the whole of Scotland and we also know that people in rural areas often miss out on such opportunities and so I would welcome your help to reach and consult with people in rural Scotland on:

 ·   The lived experience of people of people who live with or have experienced  psychoses and their families/supporters and how they **currently** experience services and treatment

 ·   The availability of good care and treatment – focusing on early intervention and good follow through in different areas of Scotland

 ·   The gaps and solutions for very rural areas where services are sparse or a long way away

 Can you help/get involved?

The Scottish Government is now seeing this as a priority which is welcome and there is a strong commitment to achieve real change – with a fast pace for delivery attached.  A pace we are becoming familiar with now as the new Minister settles into her role.

**Please let me know if you can help and how; and ask for any help you need to do this.  I am keen to make a strong statement to Government about people's experience and their expertise in working in partnership to develop new services.**  I don't have a formal survey or questions at this stage as I am just seeking a sense of who can help with this development. Once I have responses we can work together on how we reach people and how we gather their views.  We also know that there is already some evidence available that we can draw on; but aim is not just to seek views with a one-off survey, but to work with a range of organisations and individuals to develop a longer term, meaningful way of ensuring that the voices of people who experience services are heard loud and clear throughout this process.