



For better
mental health



information and support
for east brighton residents

REVIEW OF THE MENTAL HEALTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT 2006

The Mental Health Development Project is completing its first three years of delivery.

This report contains a review of the work done to date and evaluates feedback from local residents and agencies that have used the project.

The review also aims to help steer how the project should develop in its final two years of funding >

Key Findings

- **The focus on mental health rather than mental illness has been found by the worker to be most beneficiary in getting information across and reaching a wider audience**
- The stigma associated with mental health has been a significant barrier the project has needed to address through mental health promotion. This work has required a wide range of approaches to help build trust and raise awareness
- **The local identity of the project is important with 96% of people stating it was important that the worker is based locally in the East Brighton area**
- The establishment of the Mental Health Action Group has played a valuable part in helping the project develop its work and local partnerships
- **The advice and information work provided by the project is seen as important and beneficial by residents and workers; 82% of residents said they found the advice offered by the project useful**
- The individual support and advice work offered by the project is time and resource intensive. It requires higher levels of supervision to support the worker
- **The project is reaching people who are not accessing other support for their mental health; 74% of residents stated they had not had contact with the project they would not have sought help or known where else to go**
- The project is having a direct impact in reducing levels of mental health problems; 80% of residents said the project had improved their mental health
- **Whilst the project has successfully run a number of short term activities. These have required a high level of time and resources and have been limited in the numbers reached. This has reflected the experience of other eb4U projects which have found it difficult to establish groups and activities**
- The project has established good relationships with local agencies who consider its work useful; 88% of workers who had undertaken joint work with the project stated it was beneficial and 80% of workers felt the project had increased their own or their agencies level of mental health awareness. The worker's positive approach to mental health was seen as a key part of this
- **100% of people who commented said they would contact the worker again or recommend the project to someone else**

Background to the Project

The Mental Health Development Project is part of the Health 4 All Team based in the East Brighton Healthy Living Centre. The Healthy Living Centre was set up in 2003 as a five year project to help improve health in the East Brighton estates of Bates Estates, Moulsecomb, Saunders Park and Whitehawk. The project is funded by the eb4U New Deal for Communities Regeneration Project and a final two year Lottery Grant.

The Healthy Living Centre consists of a team of development workers all specialising in different areas of health, i.e. substance misuse, exercise and sexual health. It also works to address the particular health needs of local residents such as carers, young people and families.

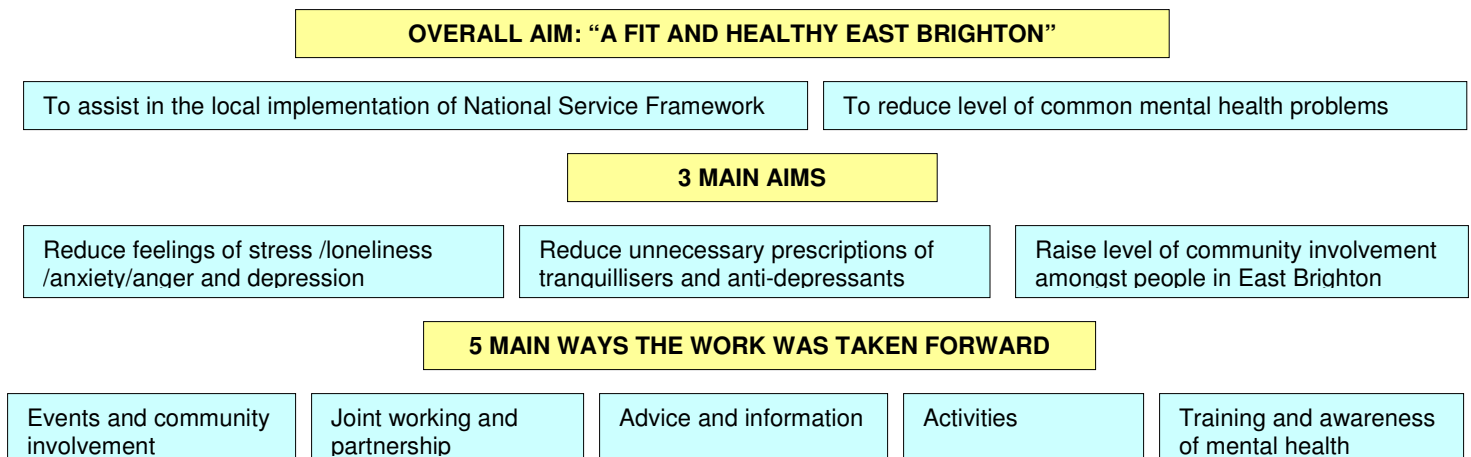
The mental health project was set up in 2003 as a response to local consultation with residents, voluntary and statutory agencies which had highlighted mental health issues, particularly the high level of common mental health problems, as a main priority in the East Brighton area. It was recognised there was a need for a locally based development worker who could act as a central point for the development of project's and mental health promotion work. Additionally the worker would establish new links between the community and local mental health and support services.

Aims of the Project

To help focus its work, three main aims were established for the project (see diagram below). These were chosen both from the findings of the consultation and by linking more broadly to existing health targets set by the Health 4 All Team and national mental health priorities i.e. the National Service Framework. A key underlying principle of the project's work has been to focus on mental health rather than mental illness, a need which was identified within the local consultation. One of the reasons for this was to try and reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues and raise awareness of mental health as an issue which affects everyone rather than just those with a diagnosis.

To help the project take forward its work around these three broad aims the Mental Health Action Group was set up consisting of local residents and representatives from local services. The group has met regularly since 2003 to review and help set a work plan for the project.

Since it started the project has undertaken a wide range of development work in the eb4U area. For the purpose of this report the key elements of this work have been summarised into five main areas. However given the nature and diversity of the development work these areas have some obvious overlaps and should be considered together along with the diagram on page 6.



SUMMARY OF FIVE MAIN AREAS OF WORK

1. Events and Community Involvement

One of the main barriers the project has faced in increasing levels of community involvement has been the stigma associated with mental health issues. A target for the project has therefore been to reduce this barrier by raising awareness of mental health issues within the local community. One key way of doing this has been holding a range of community events and information displays across East Brighton aimed at mental health promotion. For example 'The Wellbeing Day' run by the project in Moulescoomb (2004) allowed the project to provide information about mental health issues and local services, along with popular alternative strategies to healthy living and looking after yourself. ***The community events have proved successful in offering the project an informal and relaxed way to promote mental health awareness. They have also enabled the project to reach a much wider audience who may not consider attending a mental health specific event - thus increasing levels of community involvement.*** Alongside these community events the project has also run events targeting local workers' needs, particularly focusing on stress in the workplace to raise further awareness.

Many of the events have involved partnership working with other health agencies such as the Health 4 All Team, Brighton and Hove PCT and local voluntary groups, i.e. the annual event held to celebrate World Mental Health Day. This had the benefit of placing mental health alongside other health issues, i.e. healthy eating and exercise so that it becomes more mainstreamed rather than being seen as a separate issue. The purpose being to help reduce the isolation and stigma people often experience with mental health issues.

The project has also supported community involvement through direct working with residents in setting up self run projects. Key examples of this are the Carers Support Group and Fit 4 Fun Scheme. The project has provided intensive help to enable the residents to develop their ideas and skills such as help to establish a constitution or writing funding bids. An important aspect of this ongoing work is to help the groups become independent and established so they can be sustained beyond the lifetime of the project.

2. Joint and Partnership Working

From the very beginning the project has recognised the importance of building links with the wide range of community groups, voluntary and statutory agencies already working in the area, both to maximise resources and to help establish networks that could be beneficial to local residents. The setting up of the Mental Health Action Group has been a key focus of this work. The group includes local residents and representatives from key mental health agencies, i.e. the East Brighton Community Mental Health Centre and Threshold and has offered an important structure for the project to help identify mental health priorities in the area and develop responses.

The project has also developed methods of joint working with individual workers and agencies in order to increase the support available for residents and to enable them to have easier access to local services. This has included providing advice around mental health issues for workers, establishing more informal referrals' pathways and undertaking joint visits with workers. ***This work has been successful in offering increased support and flexibility for residents and in some cases helped reduced residents' fear of contacting unknown services.***

The project worker has also been involved in shaping broader local policy and service development in the eb4U area. This has included attending planning meetings for new services, liaising with other agencies and being involved in mental health policy work which could benefit local residents i.e. establishing new good practice guidelines for GPs in prescribing psychiatric medication.

3. Advice and Information

The provision of local and accessible advice and information on mental health issues was identified early on as key way the project could help address the high levels of common mental health

problems in the area. As Mind has a well established model of outreach advice and information work in other parts of the city this model was extended to cover the eb4U area.

The project has provided advice and information sessions on a wide range of mental health issues, including conditions and treatments, local services and support, housing and benefits. Monitoring shows ***the sessions are successfully achieving their aims, as a large percentage of people accessing them are experiencing common mental health issues particularly anxiety and depression. The project provides information about alternative treatments and self help along with advice on medical treatments, this is particularly useful for people who do not meet the criteria for services from the CMHC.*** The sessions are also accessed by residents with more severe enduring mental health problems, often providing advice and support of a practical nature re housing. An important element of this work is the ongoing support offered to residents in helping them access other services and groups in the area. Whilst this 1 to 1 work has required a high time commitment from the worker it has proved successful and demand has steadily increased within the project. The work also requires a high level of supervision to be in place for the worker as this type of outreach is often stressful and difficult.

Alongside the sessions for residents the worker also provides advice and information to workers not trained in mental health with the aim to help make services more accessible and responsive to people with mental health needs. Feedback has shown the project has now established itself as a known contact point in the area for workers and agencies that require this information and support.

4. Activities


Throughout the last three years the project has run a number of short-term social activities and groups for residents in the area. As with the community events ***the focus of these activities has been to promote positive mental health along with social and physical wellbeing.*** Many of these activities originally developed from requests from local people and have included tai chi, dance, stress and relaxation sessions.

Whilst of value in their own right, an added aim of these activities has been to encourage residents to get involved in social activities in community settings to help build their confidence, reduce isolation and increase community involvement. Again ***these activities have required a large time commitment from the worker to co-ordinate and publicise and whilst partially successful, this area of work has been limited in terms of numbers reached.*** The project is not sure why this is but is aware that other projects have had similar difficulties in running mental health group activities due to the low attendance. The project has found that a more successful way of targeting people has been through providing activities as part of a larger event i.e. the taster sessions in complementary therapies and exercise as described in section one. This has raised questions for the project as to how to take forward this type of work over the next two years.

5. Training and Awareness

Alongside the mental health awareness and promotion work already described above, the project has also set up and delivered a range of mental health training for residents. Many of the sessions provided have been run at the request of residents who have identified the need as part of their involvement in local groups, activities or training, such as training delivered to local parents as part of a parenting skills training course. ***Feedback received directly from these sessions has been positive with residents commenting that it had benefits for their own mental health as well as raising their general awareness.***

The project has also provided training and talks to workers and staff teams from other agencies. The development worker has delivered many of these sessions herself, as this has an added benefit of building networks, but has also made use of other local trainers to deliver training for example arranging 1 in 4 training for staff at the Moulsecoomb Surgery. Again feedback from workers who have received training has been positive, hi-lighting the value of this work.

Events & Community Involvement	Joint Working	Advice & Information	Activities	Training and Awareness
<p>Community Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moulsecocomb Funday • Whitehawk Festival • World Mental Health Day • Winter Pride • Winterbourne Centre Open Day • Evolving Minds Film Showing • Health 4All Team Road Shows • Mental Health Workshop and Consultation <p>Advice and Support for residents setting up groups:</p> <p>Carers' Group</p> <p>Fit4Fun</p> 	<p>Links with other agencies including advice, referrals and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Community Mental Health Centre • Neighbourhood Wardens • eb4U Community Safety Team • Health visitors • Addaction • GPs • Manic Depression Fellowship • Rethink • Family Centres • Depression Alliance • Health 4 all team <p>Joint work with PCT i.e. prescription guidelines</p> <p>Healthy Living Prescriptions</p>	<p>Weekly advice and information sessions in Moulsecocomb and Whitehawk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health advice • Information on agencies • Signposting and referrals • Treatment and support options • Short term advocacy • Advice and signposting for workers and carers in East Brighton area • Promotion and Information Displays 	<p>Development and provisions of activities to promote community health living involvement and alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South East Dance sessions • Tai Chi • Yoga • Photography • Community Mental Health Centre Lunch Group <p>Stress awareness for residents and workers</p> <p>Taster sessions at local events and promotion days of alternative therapies e.g. massage</p> <p>Support for fit 4 fun carers group</p>	<p>1 in 4 Mental Health Training Moulsecocomb Surgery</p> <p>Promoting activities and mental health awareness in newsletters</p> <p>Mental Health Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Local employees and agencies • Mediation Service • Food and Mood Workshop <p>Teaching listening skills</p> <p>Outreach work talking to people on the streets</p>

FEEDBACK FROM THOSE USING THE SERVICE

Who we contacted and why

The project has been closely monitored over the first three years, through the Action Group and with the worker reporting to eb4U on a quarterly basis. A full copy of this monitoring is available on request. The focus of this evaluation has therefore been to gain qualitative feedback from those who use and potentially benefit from its work. A sample of forty five residents (response rate 42 %) who had used the project between December 04 – December 05 and a sample of 17 workers (response rate 71%) from local statutory and voluntary agencies were contacted via a questionnaire. The agencies were selected as they had used the project in a number of ways including joint working, mental health training and advice. The questionnaires asked for people's feedback about the project and their responses have been summarised below. Workers and residents were asked a number of the same questions where relevant, as well separate ones reflecting their differing use of the project. A full copy of the questions are listed in Appendix 1.

Awareness of the Project

Firstly residents and workers were asked how they had heard about the project. The aim was to assess how well the project was publicised and how many routes into the project people had followed. In fact both residents and agencies told us that they'd heard about the project in a reassuringly diverse number of ways. For residents these included GPs, eb4U publicity, and the police, through attending local classes, signposting from other agencies and through the general 'community grapevine'. Similarly, workers also heard about the project through a number of routes, including signposting from Health 4 All projects, advertising, direct from local residents and talks by the worker and finally from the training and joint working opportunities offered by the project.

An important element of the worker's role has been to promote the project and give it an identity within the eb4U area. Publicity for the project has been designed to meet with the projects' underlying focus on positive mental health rather than mental illness to ensure to it more widely accessible. The projects place within a health promotion team has also helped support this identity.

Location of the Project

As part of the East Brighton Healthy Living Centre the project is based and works predominantly within the eb4U area. We wanted to evaluate the importance of the project's location from those who were actually using it. The response was an overwhelming majority for the project being physically based within the East Brighton area, with 96% of both residents and workers agreeing. Whilst this result was not unexpected it helps underlines the importance for the service of having a local base and identity when considering its future funding.

'Everything is based in central Brighton, so locality is brilliant especially with bus journeys with my family'... 'Allowed easy access for clients'... 'One of the strengths of this project is that it is based locally and within a multi-agency team. Easier to develop joint work, refer residents and for residents to access'... 'Easier to travel to appointments, especially when feeling vulnerable'.

Only one respondent, a worker, felt that the service should not be based within the eb4U area, stating: 'targeting specific geographical areas is unfair on clients residing outside these areas'.

Feedback on the Advice and Information work

As a key part of the project's work is providing 1 to 1 advice and information, we asked residents for their feedback about it. The vast majority of residents (82%) said they had found the advice and information very or partially useful. Only three people felt it had not been, citing reasons that they thought they would be receiving ongoing specialist counselling from the worker. This has identified the importance of ensuring the role of development worker is clearly understood when offering advice and information.

Other feedback from residents included:

‘The worker...helped me get my life back on track’...I actually feel I’m slowly getting stronger. To talk to someone you trust is so helpful’... ‘It was explained very clearly and was easy to understand’... ‘Just to talk to someone who listens and does not judge’... ‘Has helped and supported me while helping me work out a different way of coping. I wasn’t before’.

Though not specifically asked about the advice work offered to residents some workers also identified its value within their feedback stating:

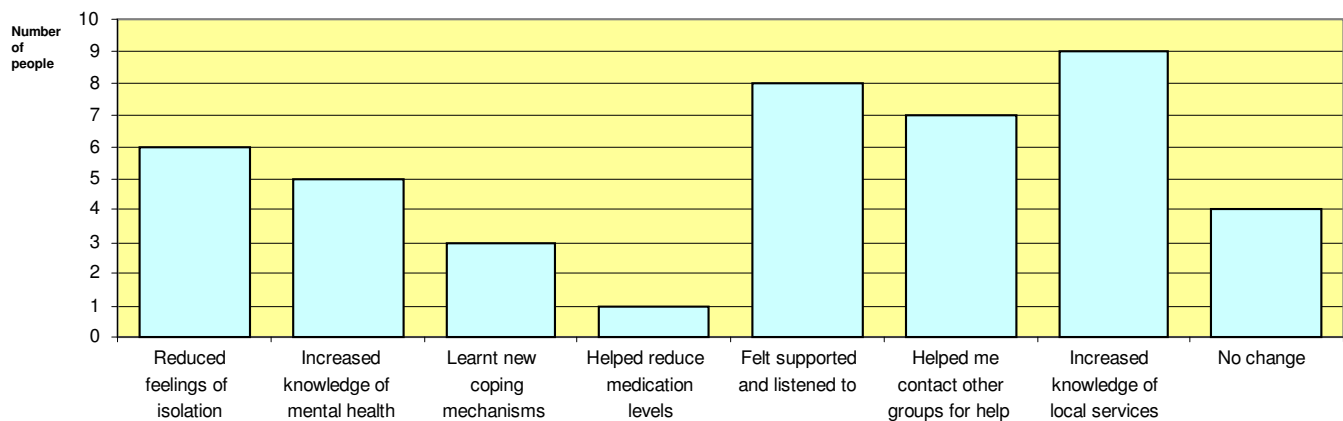
‘It’s so supportive and offers something, other choices than pills’.... ‘it’s supported them to access other services in the area’.... ‘The low key support on offer is unavailable to clients with non serious mental illness within the CMHT’... ‘It has helped stop them coming to crisis point and needing other interventions’.

Impact the Project had on people’s mental health

We asked residents if they felt the contact they had received from the project had helped to improve their mental health and if so, if they could tell us how. An encouraging 80% of residents, who responded, stated they felt the contact had helped improve their mental health. The benefits they identified are outlined below.

Whilst this is only a small sample, it is satisfying to know that the work of the project is having a positive impact and that the project is reaching one of its primary aims in improving peoples’ mental health. Many of the benefits identified by residents include an increased knowledge about mental health or local services. Perhaps the most satisfying benefit was that it helped to reduce people’s isolation and help them contact other groups, which is likely to have sustainable benefits.

Do you feel your contact with the worker has helped improve your mental health?



In order to further evaluate the importance of the project’s work we also asked residents what they would have done if they had not been able to use the project. We were concerned that:

“74% of those respondents said they either would have “not sought help” or “not known where to go”.

Only one person identified an alternative source of help, saying they would have rung their GP or another service. Whilst the project is clearly reaching people who are finding it difficult, for whatever reason, to access other support, this high figure indicates the continuing need for the project’s work. Its role in providing support and information along with its awareness work is directly aimed at reducing the barriers, which prevent people seeking help.

Feedback from workers about the project

Workers were asked for their feedback on the overall work of the project and whether they felt it was useful. All the workers (100%) responded positively saying they felt the project's work was useful - identifying a number of reasons. These included the project workers' positive approach to mental health, the provision of advice and information and awareness training and the activities run. In particular, workers highlighted the individual support offered to residents by the project worker.

'The worker ..' is very approachable and her relaxed and positive approach to her client group and contacts complemented our own informal community development approach'...
'The workshop was useful to all staff as it gave an insight to mental illness and an understanding not always explained'... 'It has proved a useful point of advice.'

Feedback on Partnership Working

Agencies who had undertaken a specific piece of joint work with the project were asked for feedback on how useful it this had been and why. Again the response was positive with 88% stating that it had been useful with workers identifying the joint work with individual clients and the training as particular examples. As above, the level of support the project offers individual residents was strongly identified as a benefit.

Workers were asked if the joint working had increased their own or agencies awareness of mental health issues. Of those who responded 80% replied positively saying they felt it had been beneficial. Those who felt it had not cited the reason that they already worked extensively within the field of mental health.

'The worker gave an insight into mental illness and an understanding which isn't always explained'... 'Has offered more scope to my work and is good at ensuring that mental health is considered in fun and interesting ways'... 'Presence promotes mental health awareness by developing new work'... 'It illustrated that organisations could be encouraged to adopt more positive roles and attitudes in promoting mental health initiatives.'

Conclusions and Planning for the Future

When the project was established in 2003 it was set three main targets: to raise the level of community involvement amongst people in East Brighton; to reduce feelings of stress, isolation anxiety and depression and to reduce unnecessary prescriptions of medication for common mental health problems. As can be seen from this report the project has successfully undertaken significant development work aimed at meeting these targets. The project has used a community development model of working in utilising a wide range of different approaches. This model has proved important in allowing the project the flexibility of piloting different types of work and enabling it to be more responsive to what local residents were identifying as their mental health needs and actual priorities.

Whilst this model has proved successful it has been a challenge to fully evaluate the project as it has been impossible to include all the work the project has undertaken and to get feedback on some areas of work. However it is clear from the feedback received from residents and workers that the mental health development project has made a positive impact during the past three years.

One of the most significant barriers the project faced was how to overcome the stigma and lack of information surrounding mental health to enable people to talk about their mental health and contact the project and other local mental health services. This barrier has been clearly illustrated by the high number of residents who reported as part of the evaluation that they would not have sought help elsewhere. To address this, the project has made mental health promotion a high priority during the last three years. Whilst it is difficult to measure the success of

this type of work, the steadily increasing numbers of people who are contacting the project indicate it is making positive progress.

The projects establishment as a central point of mental health advice and information for residents and local workers has also been of key success for the project. The positive evaluation from both residents and workers has clearly demonstrated the need and value of this work. The evaluation also identified the importance of the high level of individual support the project provides to peoples, particularly for those who do not meet the criteria for statutory services or find it difficult to access services.

The project will continue to provide an advice and information role throughout its last two years and will also look to how this work can be sustained beyond the current lifetime of the project. This will involve linking in with other services such as the newly established primary care workers along with other advice projects run by Mind and the voluntary sector.

The projects work to build partnerships with other agencies has proven to be a major element of its work over the three years. Again the positive feedback received illustrates this work is having a successful impact and is valued by the agencies involved. The project considers this partnership work as vital in supporting services to work together to ensure people with mental health issues are given as the best opportunity to access support and services.

In planning for the next two years the project intends to build on the success of the work already undertaken. It is planned that the Mental Health Action Group will continue to play a key role in directing the projects work and priorities. The project hopes to further build the group to replace members who have moved on and to increase the levels of resident involvement in the future. One area of future development is to consider if the action group could be sustained beyond the lifetime of the project to continue to provide a central point where the mental health needs of the area could be discussed.

Some areas of the projects work, as already discussed, will continue but the project will aim to develop them to the next stage. For example, the project will continue to develop mental health promotion work but look at reaching a different audience such as local employers or young people. The project would also like to develop more focused work around depression and anxiety aimed at reducing levels of prescriptions, to build on the advice and information work already offered. The project will also look to respond to new needs identified by the local community. Residents and workers taking part in the evaluation have already identified some ideas and these will be taken forward by the project (see appendix 2).

In conclusion, the project has had a busy and productive first three years and is looking forward to its next two years with confidence. The results of the evaluation have shown it is making significant progress in meeting its aims - but perhaps more importantly the feedback shows that local residents using the project feel it is having a positive impact on their mental health.

Report Produced by
Shirley Gray – Mind in Brighton and Hove
Louise Boucherat – Mental Health Development Worker
Emma Glynn – Project Support Worker
01273 294530

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Copy of Questions Asked

A) Questions to Workers

What contact have you had with the mental health development project? (i.e. partnership work, referral point for residents, training, mental health awareness work).

How did you find out about the worker / project? Please specify:

Did you find the work /help offered by the project worker useful?

If you did joint work with the worker, did you find this work useful and why?

Did it enable you to increase your / your agency's awareness of mental health issues? If so, how?

Was there anything else the project could have offered you / your organisation?

If the work involved service users within your organisation, how useful was this to them?

Have you got any feedback from them you could give us?

Do you feel it had a beneficial impact on their mental health or awareness of local services?
If so, in what way?

Do you feel the project work being based locally in the eb4U is important?

What do you think the mental health development project should be focusing on in the local area in the next 2 years?

B) Questions to Clients

What contact have you had with the mental health development worker?
attended advice/ info appointment support to attending meeting i.e. GP appointment
support went to group / activity i.e. carers / tai chi telephone contact Training

How did you hear about the service / worker?

How useful was the advice, information and support you received from the worker?

Do you feel your contact with the worker has helped improve your mental health?
reduced feelings of isolation felt supported / listened too
increased knowledge of mental health issues no change
learnt new coping mechanisms helped me contact other groups to get help
increased confidence increased knowledge of local services
helped reduce medication levels other

Do you feel it's important the mental health worker is based locally in the East Brighton area?

If you had not been able to use the service, what would you have done? (i.e. used another service, not sought help).
Please say what:

Would you contact the worker again or recommend us to someone else?

What work do you think the mental health development project should be doing in the East Brighton area? How else could they help you?

Appendix 2: Resident and Worker Feedback on what the Mental Health Project should do in the Future

Residents

- 2 residents said to carry on
- Be a contact point for those who feel isolated and without support
- Bring back the groups that were there are a lot of people left in limbo and isolated
- Improve access to low cost counselling
- Groups such as those run at Mill view: arts, crafts, cooking. Particularly art therapy as it helps to talk
- More support, experience and understanding for those with bereavement issues
- Obtain lottery funding as mental health is on everyone's doorstep and sweeping under the carpet only creates problems later

Workers / Agencies

- Supporting informal networks and link to community facilities that are currently receiving support through the eb4U programme e.g. Manor Road Gym
- Much the same continue to build, develop and grow.
- Continue joint partnership to cover a wider area of East Brighton, especially those who tend to have no contact with Community Services.
- Ensuring sustainability of information and support and funding.
- Continue to take referrals and facilitate Mental Health services in the eb4U area.
- Further linking with the Children's centres and supporting mums with postnatal depression.
- Looking at services in place and continue helping with the large number of referrals (GPs).
- A similar service to the Bridge Project perhaps groups in Whitehawk
- That mental health is nothing to be ashamed of as everyone goes through it in various degrees at some point in their lifetime
- The project has so far been underused by the East Brighton CMHT.

