



## **Challenging ideas in mental health**

*Roundhay Wing - service providers' reactions*

### **Patricia Robson**

I thought it was frightening but funny as well. It seemed to me that the people in there were sort of helping themselves, more than they were getting help from other people that should have been helping them. They all had the same issues and worries but it was like “us and them”. They sort of helped themselves, which I suppose you do if you’re in a group of people similar, you tend to sort of maybe have laugh, make it funny, help yourself and it’s like “us and them”, and it shouldn’t be that way.

### **Jane Evans**

The first half I was quite surprised by my reaction actually, very surprised. I just felt this really strong sense of “stop moaning and stop being so black and white about everything”. That, kind of evaporated over the course of the film but I just felt really irritated at one point in the first half.

### **Ian Holliday**

It’s obviously giving a view about how hospital care, hasn’t been very good for people with mental health problems and how the suggestion the overuse of medication and the lack of care from the medical profession in particular. I do believe that there have been quite a lot of new developments which have actually meant that people spend less time in hospital, especially locally. We can demonstrate that we use hospital beds half as much as we used to do. I do think that we do support and maintain a lot more people at home or in the community than we ever used to do. That’s not saying it’s perfect.

### **Jane Evans**

I feel myself getting into “oh well our chairs are better than that (laughing) “I can laugh at this day centre, our day service is better than that.” (laughing) and yet that wouldn’t be the sort of things about it (laughing) and the endless coffee bubbling away (laughing).

### **Woman**

The emotion I got from the video just echoed what Jane was saying “our day service is better than that. Even though you come in here and it’s all friendly and nice and you’re free to come and go I think what that video evoked is not freedom in a sense, mountains of ash and the physical sense of it as well, wasn’t a nice...

### **Ian Holliday**

It all comes down to you know as a commissioner of services how we’re actually allowed to spend money with commissioned services and historically there was a power given to local authorities to establish day centres, day services for people with a disability. I suppose it’s now saying right I’ve got this x hundred thousand pounds to spend on day services in this area. It’s how you can actually change that around and actually perhaps buy something different with it maybe. So it doesn’t have to be the traditional day service. Why are day services separate from employment services when it’s about, I would suggest, giving people meaningful occupation?

### **Jane Evans**

Hmm...

**Ian Holliday**

Why does it have to be discreet mental health care day service, why can't it be sort of more socially inclusive and expand into the community?

**Jane Evans**

Yes

**Ian Holliday**

The things that hamper that happening tend to be the way we get money to spend. You will spend this on mental health services, so it would be very difficult to give it, for example, to the employment agency and say "Well, with that spend it but include people with mental health problems in there", because it wouldn't happen. You must get possessive when you want to ring fence it for mental health, so that in a way excludes people and contradicts a sort of agenda for inclusion.

**Patricia Robson**

I think it's the people who run it as well isn't it, its not just putting money into a day service you've got to get people in who do care, so that people do feel safe and comfortable and know that they've come to somewhere, you know get away from it all.

**Jane Evans**

It's quite difficult too, because we, for example, we have got quite a lot of people coming from institutions where they're not encouraged to do anything more than just kind of sit and watch the telly and they bring that culture with them into the day service and its like trying to engage people and to support them to express their choices and to be more active and vocal because that's what we want them to be (laughing) but in actual fact they're bringing with them a particular sort of mind set. Maybe, maybe that's how they feel safest and most comfortable, I don't know.

**Woman**

I think it also highlighted the issue that many service users do not know who is part of their care package, the CPA. I think that's what the video highlighted quite well.

**Jane Evans**

From what people say to me I don't think that people have very much information about their medication. It's one of the things that people seem to talk about most at the drop-ins. They talk a lot about the medication and about not understanding about it what the options are. At often, medication does have such awful side-effects. It just takes one or two people to be saying negative things about it and immediately this great whoosh of comments of, sort of negative thoughts, worries, concerns that comes up and of course that can be quite damaging for people who really need to take medication and are very put off.

**Ian Holliday**

Clearly there are movements around empowering service users. I think it started off as just a bit of decoration for a service to say that we had service users involved in decision making from their own decisions around their own care plans through to being involved in planning services. I think there has been some movement on there. We use this word "meaningful" involvement and I think in perhaps one or two instances we have achieved some meaningful involvement. There's often a contradiction between local meaningful involvement which is then contradicted greatly by central government who don't seem to understand what its about at all and you can see that in the implementation of the national service framework locally. There's a contradiction when that at local level people say "we want this to be developed, please", take it to the commissioners who then turn round and say "well that's all very well, however, we are told very clearly by central government, by the national service framework that we have to prioritise these areas of development so that's what you're going get". I think there's a contradiction in saying "Yes, set your local priorities, get service users involved". At the core of it there's this very clear prescription from the centre telling you what you will have and what you will measured on.

**Jane Evans**

When I think about it and when I'm honest, there are so many times when people might put forward suggestions, and we then take it back to our workers meeting and we look at those suggestions and they so often will say "Well, this can't happen because of such and such" and we think they're very good reasons for the whole service and meeting the wider sort of needs of service users, but so often the experience for service users must be, using the day service, "Oh, you know, they're blocking it again, you know, we've asked for lots and lots of day trips and why aren't we having them?", you know, (laughing) and that we may think perceive as very good reasons, resource reasons and all sorts of other reasons why that isn't possible but watching something like that, it makes me think what it must be like all the time for service users who are feeling blocked, just day to day with little suggestions that are very important to them.

**Pat Robson**

I think it starts when you first go to your GP, though. I mean they are too eager, "Take this", they don't go into what's causing your maybe symptoms. People might be having, relationship/debt problems and that's not gone into when you first go to your GP.

**Jane Evans**

There's something too, about people responding, professional people responding and being a human being in that that came across very strongly to me in the video and like when the mask was taken off the remo, I find that quite moving actually there was something, you know, we've got human beings suddenly (laugh) and it happened later on when there was that connection at the end with Rosemary. You know, us not being perceived as people and there are lots of difficulties around that. There are so many parts of myself, my personal self, my private life, that I would feel it was appropriate not to take into the drop-in into the service for all sorts of reasons. What do I take of myself that people can see as just a person?

**Patricia Robson**

It was a bit like the Wizard of Oz, wasn't it, they were all going for something for this Wizard or whoever he was...

**Jane Evans**

Yeah

**Patricia Robson**

...and when they got there he was just an ordinary person like they were...

**Jane Evans**

Yeah

**Patricia Robson**

...with the same problems that they had.

**Jane Evans**

Yeah

**Patricia Robson**

I think people maybe think GP's are miracle workers and they're not.

**Jane Evans**

Yeah

**Patricia Robson**

They haven't got all the answers.