

Changing Lives: Involved as a Young Carer

Well I initially became involved in March of last year and at the time my Mum was quite ill with depression. The person who was coming to see her every now and then - a kind of befriender figure - said to me that there was this centre at Rosewood, in Ollerton. I had no idea what it was going to be like, but when I walked through the door for the first time I was made so welcome that I thought 'you know, I'll stick around and see what this is like'.

I have been involved in Involvement Interview Training (IIT) which I've been up with Carol and others to Rampton (Hospital) to interview some posts and I was also present in a non deciding capacity for the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) interview presentations at the end of last year so that was very interesting. It gave me a real sense of experience. Public speaking; I've been at the ELC (Executive Leadership Council). I went to deliver my part of the presentation about patient safety among vulnerable groups on the margins of society such as the homeless, asylum seekers, refugees, young carers and the travelling community.

We have gardening group, music group; we have meetings about the work that we've done in the week or in the weeks ahead that are coming up. You know if we can get the concept of involvement out there to a wider community I think it would have benefits for society

On a personal level it has been incredible for me. It has really helped me build up my confidence, increased my knowledge base getting involved with an area of work which has become a real passion and get involved on a lifetime basis I think, because now I work with special needs children. A lot of that sort of ties in as well and to have this sort of ethos enthused in me by Nottinghamshire Healthcare has been really fantastic. It's something I'd like to take further in the future by being more of an advocate especially for young carers and people on the side-lines who are often not deliberately but simply by force of their marginal status left out of the discussion.

There is a sense of involvement in meeting other people like themselves and that in itself builds community. With that you get a sense that your can voice be heard and you can work together to change the system from within and getting yourself involved and working to change things is one of the most powerful things any individual can do. There can often be a sense of hopelessness and a sense of 'why bother? What can I do to change things about myself or about the services I receive?' It's not always easy because nothing that's worth doing ever is, but the more people that get involved the more connections that there are between them the more that can be achieved and a better outcome for those that come after us.