



Suggest a name for this magazine

Win a DVD player

See inside for more details

Wolverhampton's Drug Users Lifestyle Magazine

Issue No 1 May - July 07

FREE

Hep C Vaccination Special

**Heroin Related
Deaths Warning**

Drug Related News

Competition

Questions and Answers

Harm Reduction

WARNING - WARNING - WARNING - WARNING

At the time of going to print, news reached us of some Heroin related deaths locally. Please be aware there may be some contaminated gear circulating in the area.

Editor's Notes - Welcome

Welcome to the first issue.

As you can see there is no name as yet and this gives you the chance to think of one for your magazine.

The best name chosen will win a DVD player. (see page 10 more for details)

This magazine is dedicated to all issues surrounding drugs and there effects, as any drug user will know the list is endless.



From left to right, Mark Bromierski (Editor), Andy Corfield (Project Manager) and Rob Jones (Volunteer)

What we need is a magazine which will bring the drug community in Wolverhampton closer together sharing experiences, knowledge, news and views.

This will hope to make users more aware of the dangers and consequences of drug use, it will also allow people to express there view and opinions in a way that has never been done before.

Obviously the magazine is nothing without your input so any articles, stories, news or questions are vital. Without you there is no us.

As a drug user you can feel very alone with no one to listen or help, but it's all about to change. We want to help build on the existing services in Wolverhampton and help them to help us all. You will find a list of these services in the Local Service Directory section towards the end of each edition. Here you can find links to services whom are dedicated to helping you on your way and provide support in whatever form you require.

So if you have something on your mind or have a question please contact us for further information about the Service User Involvement Team, also have a read of the article on page 4.

Mark Bromierski - Editor (Service User Involvement Team)

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this work, no responsibility for loss or damage occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of any statement in it, can be accepted by the editor or by Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council Service User Involvement Team, as publishers. We would also like to thank all those that have contributed to this edition of the magazine.

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View from the top

by Tony Mercer (Commissioning Manager, Substance Misuse)

March 2008 marks the end of the National Drug Strategy for England. Its overall success is debateable with more people than ever before using cheaper, better quality drugs and continued under-funding of young people's drugs services. There have been considerable improvements, however, in the availability and effectiveness of adult treatment services in some parts of the country.

This national picture is reflected in Wolverhampton, where the last four years have seen a dramatic increase in the number of adults receiving effective drugs treatment and Wolverhampton Drugs Services are amongst the best in the West Midlands. At the same time, however, we also have the highest overall prevalence rates for problematic drug use in the region, including the highest rates for 15-24 year olds and females, a disproportionately high number of Black and Asian drug users dropping out of treatment immediately after assessment and we are the official "crack capital" of the West Midlands. Currently less than half of Wolverhampton's problematic drug users are in treatment.

Work has already begun on a 3-5 year local plan to meet these challenges beyond March 2008. The biggest challenge will be dramatic budget cuts after March 2008 (more dramatic than the 12.5% cuts to this year's criminal justice and young peoples' drugs services budgets?). I believe we can only meet these challenges with the active involvement of service users planning, designing, evaluating and monitoring local open access and treatment services. Good luck to the Wolverhampton Drugs Services User Involvement Project—we're all depending on you!

News - News - News - News -

New Service User Involvement Team arrives in Wolverhampton

The main aim of our team is to help and support people who have or are still using any of the Drug Treatment Services in Wolverhampton.

The term Drug Treatment Service includes Horizon House, YMCA Bridge, Needle Exchange, Base 25, NA etc and in terms of support, what we offer is the ability to have your say in how those treatment services are run. (This may be through attending group discussions or becoming a service user rep on a management meeting, the choice is yours.)

We also provide support for you to create your own projects, for example the allotment project or this magazine, in fact anything you think will be of benefit to yourself, your mates or others.

What we don't do is individual advocacy work. This is where you may have a specific problem with your treatment. Unfortunately at present we are unable to get involved with individual issues however, we can put you in touch with those that can help you and would then encourage you to come to a group to discuss your problem so we can make sure it doesn't happen to others in the future.

You can benefit too, as not only will you find being part of our team gives you a good sense of putting something back, we can offer various training courses that can build on your experiences and knowledge to help you in the future.

It's so easy to get involved, you don't need to be referred by a key worker or be drug free, just pop along to one of our user group meetings. We hope to run these from our building in Temple Street (opposite the casino) and will hold various groups, for those that access Horizon House, those in Shared Care, Women's groups or general free for all groups.

Don't forget this is your project, we are under your instructions whether you want to create your own football team, discuss bus fares for picking up scripts or to find out what others think of the treatment services, its up to you. One thing you can be assured of is we will do our best to help and support you.

For further information, complete and return one of our flyers, alternatively call us on 07748 598892 or pop along to a user group (more info will follow, look out for the poster).



Warning over unreliable oral swab results

Oral swabs used extensively throughout Wolverhampton have been giving false results.

The swabs, made by a company called Altrix, have proved unreliable at detecting Subutex if you are on 8mg or less.

This has resulted in people being discharged from treatment as their key worker believed they were not taking their medication.

Horizon House however are fully aware of the situation and the company Altrix are also working on the issue and hope to correct things soon.

But in the meantime if you have concerns over this speak to your key worker.

- News - News - News - News

Scientists slate UK drug system.

Top scientists have told the government that the current system of drug classification in the UK is not “fit for purpose” and have come up with an alternative that ranks Alcohol higher than some class A’s such as ecstasy.

The group of scientists was led by Professor David Nutt, from the University of Bristol and Professor Colin Blakemore, chief executive of the Medical Research Council.

They looked at the current system of classifying drugs into Class A, Class B and Class C and said that it failed to give specific information about the relative risks of each drug.

“We should have a much more considered debate about how we deal with dangerous drugs” said Professor Nutt.

A graph showing the new scale has been produced and was created by the team asking a panel of experts to rate 20 drugs to produce a league table style list showing an overall estimate of harm.

Professor Leslie Iversen, a member of the group considering the drug policy said, “It is a real step towards evidence-based classification of drugs.”

He added that the fact 500,000 young people took ecstasy every weekend proved that the current policy was in need of change.

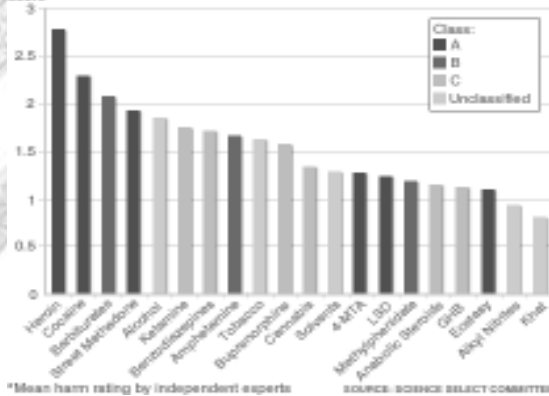
However the Home Office who are responsible for the UK’s Drug Policy have said they are not looking at changing the current system.

“We have no intention of reviewing the drug classification system” said Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker. “Our priority is harm reduction and to achieve this we focus on enforcement, education and treatment.”

He added that since 1998 the government have invested £7.5 billion which had contributed to a 21% reduction in drug misuse over nine years and a 20% reduction in drug related crime since 2004.

He added “The government is not complacent and will continue to work with all of our partners to build on this progress.”

What do you think of the new chart? Have your say and let us know.



Ground being prepared for Allotment Project

Volunteers at the new Service User Involvement Team and looking into the possibility of taking on their own allotment.

The idea being that members of the various user groups will be able to use the allotment as a social team building project and also be able to grow their own vegetables (just vegetables mind you) See page 9 for more details.

Health Issues - This edition we

We start by producing our own guide to Hepatitis C

What is Hep C

Hep C is an issue which needs to be taken into consideration as the disease effects an estimated 250,000 – 600,000 people in the UK alone, the figures world wide stand at an estimated 200 million!

Hepatitis C is a blood bourn virus which attacks the cells of the liver, causing inflammation and occasionally significant damage to the liver, which in turn affects its ability to perform the many different tasks within the body. The causes of the disease can come from taking drugs, chemicals, drinking excessively and having other viruses. Research into Hep C shows that it also can effect other parts of the body, thus including the immune system, the digestive system, the lymphatic system and the brain.

How to avoid Hep C

Hep C is transmitted by means of blood, it only takes a microscopic particle to cause infection which is why you have to be extremely vigilant when injecting drugs especially when with others. Obvious ways of transmission are sharing needles and crack pipes; the less obvious ways are sharing injecting equipment such as the cooking pot, filters, water, lighters, which may be contaminated with the virus. If you do inject try to keep your hands washed and clean before and after injecting, which in theory can be easy to put off but in the long run you can prevent your self from the virus, as blood can remain active outside the body for some time.



An American poster advertising the dangers of Hep C

How do I know I'm infected

Hepatitis C effect people in different ways, there is usually an incubation period from as little as two weeks to as much as six months. Once the Hepatitis develops it will damage the liver resulting in the following symptoms:

- Tiredness and fatigue
- Headaches
- Jaundice
- Vagueness
- Depression
- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Abdominal pain
- Itches and rashes
- Nausea and vomiting loss of appetite
- Ankles and/or stomach swelling
- Red blotches around the upper body
- Easy bruising

Most of the symptoms you have probably already had but if you notice something unusual then the best bet is to see your GP or the BBV Nurse at Horizon House.

dip into the world of Hepatitis

Introducing Horizon House's very own BBV Nurse

Hello service users.

My name is Jacqueline Wilkinson and I am the blood bourn virus (BBV) nurse at Horizon House.

The BBV clinic opened its doors on June 1st 2006 and the response from the service users was overwhelming and encouraging. However, I was struck by the lack of knowledge service users had regarding Hepatitis and its mode of transmission. There are several different forms of viral Hepatitis, which can affect the liver. The main ones are A, B, C, D, E and G. The virus differ from each other in how they spread, the way they cause liver damage and the effects they have on your health.

Hepatitis A and E can be found in the stools (faeces) of infected persons, where hygiene and sanitation is poor and men having sex with other men. Hepatitis B, C and G is blood borne and can be found in body fluids and is sexually transmitted. Therefore, should you share IV equipment such as needles, syringes, spoons, water and filter or crack pipes, cigarettes, spiffs you can become infected.



The Hepatitis virus can be described as being resilient in the sense that it is able to live in the slightest blood drop that is invisible to the naked eye outside the human body for up to 3 months. Therefore, you can see why it is crucial for you all to protect yourselves and your loved ones from this virus.

The accelerated vaccination schedule on offer is for the combined Hepatitis A and B and consists of three vaccines given 7 and 14 days with a booster one year later. There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C however research is still ongoing. It is important to complete the course in order for the body to build immunity against Hepatitis A and B.

The clinic also offers Hepatitis B and C screening. This includes a pre-test discussion so service users can be informed on what they are letting themselves in for and a blood test. The results usually take two weeks to return and all information given within the clinic is confidential.

The clinic days for vaccination are Monday 9-4 Tuesday 9-12 and Thursday 9-4. For Hepatitis screening days are Mondays 9-3:30 and Tuesday 9-12. You can talk to your key worker regarding an appointment if you are in treatment or just pop in and ask of the BBV nurse. A warm welcome is always guaranteed.

Bach Flower Remedies - What are they?

By Lesley Axinte, Complementary Therapist, YMCA Bridge

Bach Flower Remedies are a form of complementary medicine supported by both extensive clinical and lay use over seventy years and several modern clinical studies. They are an emotional management system, sharing similarities with homeopathy, as both require a holistic approach by the healthcare practitioner in respect of diagnosis and choice of treatment.



The remedies are selected by, or for, a patient with the intent of addressing issues associated with that person's psyche, then through resultant changes in attitude and awareness, help to achieve emotional balance and a more positive outcome.

The system of Bach Flower Remedies was discovered in the 1930's by Dr Edward Bach, a Harley Street physician. He became increasingly dissatisfied with the limitations of orthodox medicine and its focus on curing symptoms. He believed that effective treatment involves addressing the causes of illness and he knew, as many doctors do today, that attitude of mind plays a vital role in maintaining health and recovering from illness. He treated the individual, rather than the disease or its symptoms.

The remedies he developed, 38 in total, cover the whole spectrum of human emotion, one for each specific emotional or mental state. They are shown to be effective in a range of conditions including anxiety, depression, trauma, fears, panic attacks and lack of confidence, helping the patient to see a different perspective and find his/her own personal coping strategy.

Rescue Remedy is the most well known of the remedies, (and the only pre-mixed combination) used by millions to help when there are feelings of panic, shock or emergency situations. Exam or interview nerves, the anxiety of flying, receiving sudden bad news or any stressful event, Rescue Remedy will enable the user to face the situation in a better frame of mind.

Central to Bach's philosophy was the principle that the body should be encouraged to heal itself, using the remedies merely aids the process. They can be used singly or in individually selected combinations for a specific patient, up to a maximum of 7 at once. The remedies are completely safe and non-addictive, they do not interfere with any other treatment. They are suitable for all ages, are safe during pregnancy and can be used with babies and children.

Not only are the remedies used extensively in the community, there is also quite wide use in secondary (hospital) patient care, particularly in pre-operative patients to control anxiety, mid-wifery, palliative care and in psychotherapy practice. A number of GPs in the UK are also known to use the remedies as part of a complementary and integrated approach to patient care. They are currently in use at YMCA Bridge, Wolverhampton, as part of the complementary therapy service offered to clients to support issues related to addiction.

Dr Bach believed that this simple system of healing would be the medicine of the future. As time goes on, the widespread satisfaction and growing use show that the remedies are to prove their usefulness in twenty-first century healthcare.

Word Search

W	F	M	W	I	O	B	D	M	L	J	M
D	U	H	E	X	M	R	E	H	A	B	H
X	X	E	V	T	Y	M	Z	D	W	J	O
E	L	P	S	G	H	D	P	Y	V	E	V
T	A	A	U	N	Y	A	E	H	Q	M	E
U	T	T	B	I	S	E	D	T	D	D	R
B	I	I	S	T	Z	B	L	O	O	M	D
U	C	T	T	C	X	N	J	T	N	X	O
S	I	U	A	E	H	S	Y	X	T	E	S
M	L	S	N	J	E	Q	S	P	I	A	E
Y	L	V	C	N	M	E	D	L	J	R	R
O	I	O	E	I	Z	A	A	V	H	Z	M

Can you find the ten drug related words hidden in this grid?



Calling all green fingers

By Rob Jones (Service User Involvement Team, Volunteer)

In the new service user group, many new projects are being set up including, of course, this magazine which with your help will be a great success. Good luck to Mark, the editor and all the industrious effort he is putting in to get things off the ground I'm sure it will all be worth it.

It was while we were visiting Hi's and Lows, a similar project over in Walsall that's been running for a little while. The group supervisor Vicky explained to me the tremendous success they were having with their allotment project. The idea struck a cord with me and here I am today.

I know the idea of working on an allotment will raise a smile with a few of you. Let's face it, for most of us working on an allotment is the kind of thing their granddads used to do and I am no different, but at the same time I have to admit I quite enjoy gardening, but more than that it has those therapeutic, sense of achievement, values that cannot be bought.

At the time of going to print things are very much in their infancy stage, there are various allotment sites throughout the city and as we are based in the city it makes sense to rent one close to the centre. I've spoken to the man from the council who deals with allotments and as far as I can tell the main issue we have to deal with is waiting lists. I'm sure in the weeks to come things will become a lot clearer, hopefully it will be good news.

When we do get things up and running anyone who can spare an hour or two and fancy's doing some physical work out in the fresh air, your contribution would be appreciated. In the meantime, if you have any helpful suggestions please get in touch.

Competition Time

This is where we need you!

All you have to do is come up with a unique and catchy title for your magazine and the winner will receive a free DVD player. If several people come up with the same name then one winner will be picked out of a hat to make things fair.

You can send in your titles by post / email / text or phone, it's your choice.

Please make sure you include your name for the magazine, your full name, address and contact details.

You can phone or text us on 07748 598892.

Write to us at c/o WVSC, 16 Temple Street, Wolverhampton, WV2 4AN

Email acorfield@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk or mbromierski@hotmail.com - Please type the word Name in the subject line.



Turning Point progress2work Comes to Wolverhampton!!

What is progress2work?

Following the success of the Turning Point's **progress2work** Team in Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall we are now happy to be delivering the service in **Wolverhampton!**

A voluntary scheme specifically designed to

- Help people get over a drug problem and gain jobs or training
- Support people through treatment and into work, and offer drug users employment advice and full access to Jobcentreplus services
- Offer support for up to a year if you need it

Your project worker Clare together with Kate and the rest of the Team will help you prepare for work and provide support and practical advice. They will meet with you and create a personal action plan to help you move towards work and lead a more stable life.

How do I find out more?

Contact Clare and the p2w Team on **01384 250824** or you can ask your Key Worker, New Deal Advisor or Probation Officer to contact them on your behalf.

Your questions answered

Each issue we will dedicate a page for your questions.

This can be anything which may be on your mind. We will then seek out the answers from either a GP, Manager, Drug Worker or other specialist and print them in the next issue. As they say a problem shared is a problem halved. From all the questions / poems / stories and jokes we receive we will choose our favourite and that person will receive a £5 voucher of your choice.

Q - How long do I need to wait for treatment? Jamie - Tipton

A - It depends on what treatment precisely we are talking about, however, we have targets for each area that monitors the amount of people we get into each area within a certain number of weeks. For the following treatments we try to aim to see people within 3 weeks Specialist Prescribing and Structured Day Programmes. For the following treatments we like to see people within 2 weeks Inpatient Drug Treatment, Primary Care/Shared Care Prescribing and Structured Psychosocial Interventions.

- At the end of September 2006, Wolverhampton Drug Services met 96% of our target overall which means only 4 out of every 100 people entering a treatment area would have had to wait longer than 3 weeks.

Mohammed Khan (Substance Misuse Data Management Officer)

Q - Who is informed if I get registered for treatment? Anonymous - Wolverhampton

A - The only person who is definitely informed is the GP. However if you come through the Criminal Justice System it is the GP and if any kind of probation order is attached it will then be probation. If you come via the Required Assessment route or ROB (Restriction on Bail) if you don't attend the police are informed. If you do attend a progress sheet is sent to the courts for the Magistrates. The Courts are also informed if you are on a community order and Social Services may also be informed if there are known child protection issues.

Allison Stuchfield (Head Nurse - Addiction Services)

Q - What other services are available other than a script?

Anna - Pennfields

A - Here at the YMCA Bridge we offer, Group Work, Counselling, Housing / Benefit / Debt advice, Relaxation and Complimentary Therapies whilst Horizon House also offer Harm Reduction Advice, Family Therapy, BBV Screening and immunisation and many others. The best advice we could give is ask us, if we don't do it we will know somebody that does.

Annmaire Smyth (Drug Service Manager YMCA Bridge)

If you have a question you would like answered send it to Editor, Service User Involvement Team, c/o WVSC, 16 Temple Street,, Wolverhampton, WV2 4AN or call /txt 07748 598892 Email mbromierski@hotmail.com Or acorfield@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk

Your Stories - A Place to share

Slippery Slope - Part 1

Drugs have played a big part in my life since the age of 14 then came the long slippery slope down into a place called hell. It all started with the occasional spliff of skunk with friends at school, which got to the point where I was going to school stoned and leaving slightly stoned as not to arouse any suspicion with my parents. I was amazed as I went 4 years with out even a hint of suspicion from them, but I don't blame them for not noticing my drug habit, I'am sure they would have done something about it then if they knew.

I hit my teenage years and I rebelled against every one, mainly my parents, this lead to arguments and heated fights when I didn't get my own way.

Before long the police were knocking at my door complaining about my behaviour around the area. This went on to me getting arrested over petty crimes such as vandalism. My parents couldn't take it any more and decided it was time for me to leave home and find my own way in life.



I was still a child at 16 but my pride forced me to go without a thought. I had to live in a hostel as I was too young to get my own place. It was great I got my independence and I was free, free to do what I wanted when I wanted. This is when I was introduced into harsher drugs such as ecstasy and glue sniffing.

Two years went by and my life seemed ok. I started a job and eventually got my own flat, and my best mate lived below me, it all seemed perfect. The summer was round the corner and a few of my mates had a new drug to try HEROIN.

I had never herd of it so naturally I wanted to see what it was like, I still remember the first time we brought a bag for £10. We went halves and made a spliff my mate went first then I had a go. Several seconds later I started feeling sick and I was all over the place he was too yet we carried on!!! Looking back I think what was it that made me carry on?? No one likes being sick and each time I smoked it I was sick. It got to the point where the sickness went away and the buzz kicked in. the warm feeling that took away all my worries and troubles away for that short while. It wasn't long before I was hooked.

your experiences and your lives



That's when the problems started. Each day I woke up early sweating and shaking slowly going into withdrawal which forced me to go out and raise some money no matter how hard it was nothing would stop me until had my fix.

The days went by and raising money for my habit became more intense. A so called friend (dealer) noticed this and took advantage of the situation; he told me that if he could deal from my flat then he would sort me out which I didn't have to think about for very long. So several days later he came to mine.

He would have two 8 balls one of heroin and the other crack. His phone would ring constantly throughout the day and the amount of people coming and going each day began to stress me out but the drugs kept coming my way and didn't cost me a penny, it was great.

Several months went by and he started to leave the gear at mine as he said he couldn't take it home. The amount of times I wanted to dip the bags, the urge became too much at times. I told him this and he decided to give me more drugs which was fine by me.

Things eventually started to get out of hand too many people were coming and going, it made me think is it all really worth the stress and the risk of going to prison ?

But there was no way I could afford to pay for the drugs as my tolerance was sky high. I had no where to turn and had to continue the madness.



It was a Saturday morning and I heard the down stairs door being smashed down, it was about 7am, I jumped out of bed, before I could do anything my door was next 3 bangs and down it came.

To be continued.....

If you would like your story published on these pages send it in to us, remember the best contribution each issue wins a prize.

Harm Reduction - How much Citric?

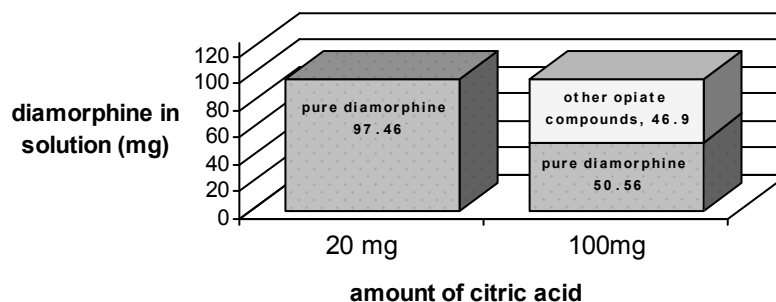


An experiment was carried out to see what effects Citric Acid had when mixed with Heroin. The question was how much citric acid is needed to break down the heroin when being cooked up. As too much acid is a major cause of vein damage and injecting relating problems.

The Heroin was placed in the pot along with 80mg of water. A small amount of citric was taken from the pack and added. The mixture was then heated up until the substance had completely dissolved into a light brown clear liquid. This was then repeated adding very small amounts of citric at a time.

Remember – The more Citric you add to the pot the more acidic the solution becomes, which means the more damage it can do to your veins. Also the higher the acidity the lower the strength of the heroin, so getting the right amount of citric will protect your veins from too much damage and the amount of heroin will remain at a high level as shown in the graph.

Results



The graph shows when using just 20mg of citric 97.46% of the heroin is left, but when 100mg is added this only leaves 50.56%. So using too much citric acid breaks down the amount of heroin you use.

Sometime after the cooking process you may see traces of materials left behind which will not dissolve, this will usually be some kind of bulking agent which is used to increase the amount of heroin. Bulking agents can be anything from brick dust to paracetamol.

If you have any topics you think we should be covering in this section please let us know.

Local Service Directory

To include your service on this page please contact us

Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust

Full Address: Wolverhampton PCT Tel No:01902 444030
Addiction Services
Horizon House
Pitt Street
Wolverhampton
WV3 0NF

Alcohol Drop-In Monday to Thursday, 9.00am to 12.00pm
Drug Drop-In Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday –
 2.00pm to 3.30pm

Service is shut on a Tuesday afternoon and the afternoon of every third
Thursday in the month



Full Address:
29/31 Temple
Street
Wolverhampton
WV2 4AN

Telephone Number: 01902 371582
Open Monday to Friday 9 till 5
Closed daily between 12.30 and 1pm

Offers: Group Programme,
Counselling, Housing / Benefit advice
Complimentary Therapies, Relaxation
and the REWIND Service.



Service User
Involvement
Team

Full Address:
c/o WVSC
16 Temple Street
Wolverhampton
WV2 4AN

Tel No:07748 598892
Open Monday to Friday

See page 4 for more info.



Service User Involvement Team

'bringing the pieces together'



We want your experiences, views and knowledge of
Wolverhampton's Drug Treatment Services

You can complete the puzzle

**HELP
WANTED**

To find out more information, or to
get involved pick up a flyer or
call / text us on **07748 598892**

Service User Involvement Team is run by
Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council