

National day to promote the role of the Approved Mental Health Professional- 29th June 2017.

The Adults Principle Social Work (PSN) Network is promoting the role of the AMHP with a **National AMHP Day on the 29th June 2017.**

The PSW Network is encouraging local services to take part in promoting and heightening awareness of the AMHP role nationally.

Approved Mental Health Professionals are central to the decision making in the use of the Mental Health Act (MHA) and in consideration of the least restrictive alternative to detention and compulsion. They hold many legal duties in the MHA including to consider the views of relatives, the nearest relative and the range of social issues affecting people at the receiving end of services.

As the PSW network have said “ the AMHP is such a key and vital role...AMHPs should be the guardians of appropriate person centred mental health act assessments; ensuring that law and the person’s rights as well as wellbeing and care are at the forefront of all that they do. It is a tough role that requires significant training and regular on-going CPD not to mention resilience and skill’.

As a national provider of AMHP refresher training, we are aware of the current complexities and difficulties in the role as expressed by AMHPs (and others) during our training courses. Several authors have summed up the AMHP and its predecessor role (ASW) over the years as follows:

‘the ASW role is complex; it contains tensions inherent in following social control and empowerment objectives and meeting service user and carer perspectives that may conflict. Regard has to be made to complex case law while simultaneously operating as advocate and assessor’ (1)

There is also a requirement for AMHPs to have a ‘...good grasp of and commitment to, the European Convention on Human Rights...’ (2)

AMHP Competencies in England and Wales (as set out in the relevant Regulations) require the application of values to the role that reflects human rights and equality principles. The AMHP role forms part of the legal safeguards against arbitrary detention and the necessary balance to the medical models of understanding mental health. AMHPs can positively contribute towards preventative work and the recovery agenda. However, with an increasing shortage in AMHP numbers and increasing MHA detention rates nationally, it would appear that as a resource they are one of several that are in decline. We hope that a National AMHP day may raise awareness of the importance of the role of the AMHP in upholding peoples’ rights.

We would like to wish everyone involved good wishes for a successful National AMHP day.

(1) (Manthorpe, J and Rapaport, J., 2008. Family Matters: developments concerning the role of the Nearest Relative and social workers under mental health law in England and Wales. *BJSW* 38. pp 1115-1131.)

(2) (Brown, R- AMHP guide to mental health law 3rd ed- Sage)