

Chris Phillips – Outstanding Achievement Award – Special recommendation

Every worthwhile mission has a crucial moment which shapes the steps ahead – for the Dorset Community Pain Service, it was the day Chris Phillips agreed to become our first Patient Advisor (he hated the term ‘Service User’!) in 2010.

After Chris attended a pain management programme, he was determined to ‘put something back’, as he frequently put it, and did so initially by joining the Steering Committee for our ‘STOP! Chronic Back Pain’ project, which won the Shine Award for Innovation in Healthcare in 2011. As part of this project, Chris helped us pioneer the Pain Chain, a peer support system for people living with pain, not only by becoming our first Pain Coach himself but by spearheading the setting up of bespoke training for others who wanted to become pain coaches themselves. That he did so with care towards governance for coaches and clients, and setting up ‘contracts of communication’. He spoke not only of his foresight and vision, but also of the care he wanted to extend towards his fellow human beings; wanting other people using the system to have the best and safest service we could jointly provide. People he ‘coached’ spoke very highly of his support and have acknowledged how it helped them deal not only with pain but also with other challenges life threw their way.

Chris was responsible for setting up our patient-led Facebook site and supported the origins of the Dorset Pain website in its earliest and subsequent versions – his material is still being used today. He introduced the service to the concept of social networking, extending peer support to people long after clinics shut at 5 o’clock to ensure that people within his radar did not feel alone.

When the pain service was recommissioned in 2013, the CCG sought Chris’s opinion on developing a service specification and his balanced and reasonable point of view was greatly valued by all.

In order to share our learning with others, despite his own considerable pain and various other health conditions, Chris travelled with the clinical team to present at national and international conferences, including the Health Improvement Forum, Paris, in 2012, various Health Foundation and British Pain Society events around UK, INVOLVE, a peer specialist conference and local conferences and training events. His presentation at the first Dorset Pain Conference in 2015 was his final appearance – after a one-sided battle with cancer, which he faced with his inimitable brand of cheerfulness and valour, Chris passed away in September 2015.

Chris had a vision of setting up drop-in resource centres for pain around the county, manned by peer advisors with lived experience, to support people battling the isolation and desperation which chronic pain creates. In March 2016, with the help of our Volunteers’ Co-ordinator we are organising our first drop- in event in Bournemouth and will remember and honour Chris while we do so.

Chris was indefatigable in his determination to support people living in pain, lavishing time, effort and energy generously in equal measure. No request was too small for him to accede to and with his selflessness, his unflagging cheer and resolve to continually improve our service; he inspired the whole pain world in Dorset – people living with pain, carers, commissioners and clinicians. The Dorset Community Pain Service owes a deep debt of gratitude to him, which is beyond simple words, and we would therefore like to nominate Chris Phillips posthumously for a Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Services rendered to Chronic Pain. Thank you Chris, we salute you.

Meherzin Das
Clinical Lead, Dorset Community Pain Service

Chris Phillips – Nomination for Outstanding Achievement Award

The day Chris Phillips agreed to become our first Patient Advisor (he hated the term ‘Service User’!) in 2010 changed our service forever. Chris joined the steering group of the STOP! Chronic Back Pain project in 2011, helped establish the Pain Chain – our peer support network—represented our work at local, national, international conferences, collaborated with commissioners to improve understanding of chronic pain and until his death in September 2015, was indefatigable in his mission to improve services for people living with pain. To honour his memory and express our gratitude, we would like to nominate Chris posthumously for this Award.