

Specialist Personality Disorder and Complex Needs Service User Network

Who we are

The Specialist Personality Disorder and Complex Needs Service User Network (SUN) is open to adults who have been diagnosed with, or are awaiting diagnosis for, personality disorder and/or have complex emotional needs. We also welcome carers and families. You must live in Essex and be registered with an Essex GP.

We offer support groups where you can meet other people in a similar position, increase your understanding of personality disorder and complex emotional needs, and learn ways to look after yourself.

You can also get involved in developing and improving services if you wish to.

Membership is voluntary and you can get involved as much or as little as you like.

Our groups are not clinical or therapy groups. They run alongside any care and treatment you are already receiving.



Our groups

Personality Disorder and Complex Needs Awareness & Support Group (21+)

Young Adult Complex Emotional Needs Awareness & Support Group (18+)

These groups meet online every two weeks. Guest speakers deliver talks on different topics, which are usually suggested by members. Topics can include: services available within the community, benefits and employment, emotions, advocacy, sleep hygiene, and practical advice. Members are encouraged to share their own experience and knowledge.

Note: Members of the young adult group can stay until they are 25, depending on individual circumstances.

How to join: A health and care professional must complete an expression of interest form, and send it to: epunft.pd.cnsun@nhs.net

Peer Support Group (18+)

This group meets online once a week. It is led by members, who are invited to share how they are feeling and support each other using their experiences. There is a limit of 12 people, who will meet for a maximum of 12 months. This means there may be a waiting list.

How to join: Complete an expression of interest form and send it to:
epunft.pd.cnsun@nhs.net

Personality Disorder and Complex Needs Service Development Collaborative (SDC) (18+)

The SDC offers you the opportunity to work alongside staff and be more actively involved in shaping and developing services to make positive change. This could include contributing thoughts and ideas to a specific project, interviewing for new staff, co-delivering training, and being a Peer Support Worker.

How to join: You or a health and care professional involved in your care should email
epunft.pd.cnsun@nhs.net

I Care: Supporting adult carers of loved ones living with Personality Disorder and Complex Emotional Needs

The group is for carers and loved ones to meet other people in a similar situation and offer support to each other through sharing their experiences and resources, and by simply listening. Members meet weekly online. It is open to people who are aged 18+ and registered with a GP in Essex.

How to join: Complete an expression of interest form and send it to:
epunft.pd.cnsuncarers@nhs.net

Skills for Carers

This 6-week training programme helps carers to learn more about Personality Disorder and skills to support themselves and their loved ones. Sessions are face-to-face.

How to join: Complete an expression of interest form and send it to:
epunft.pd.cnsuncarers@nhs.net

Coffee and Connect social group

You need to be a member of another SUN group to attend. Coffee and Connect offers a welcoming space for informal, supportive conversations with others who share similar diagnoses and experiences. It aims to reduce isolation and foster a sense of community and support. Groups are held face-to-face in Colchester, Epping and Southend. We plan to hold more at other locations across Essex.

Is the SUN right for me?

Our groups may benefit people who:

- Have had a recent Personality Disorder diagnosis, or are exploring or awaiting a potential diagnosis.
- Are receiving 1:1 therapy and/or are under the care of community-based mental health services.
- No longer require community-based mental health services but would benefit from light touch support, in addition to what is offered by their GP or nurse.

Unfortunately our groups are not suitable for people who:

- Do not meet the criteria for a diagnosis of Personality Disorder.
- Are experiencing psychosis and/or another psychotic disorder.
- Are currently receiving inpatient care.
- Are employed by EPUT.

If you are not sure if the SUN is right for you, please speak to a healthcare professional involved in your care, or contact us directly at epunft.pd.cnsun@nhs.net for advice.

What happens after we receive your expression of interest form?

If we accept you onto a group, we will email you an invitation. You will need to opt-in to join and be added to our mailing list. You will also be asked to sign an agreement form.

We will hold your information on a database. If you miss 3 sessions in a row, we will get in touch to check if you want to stay involved and if you need any support. If you don't want to stay involved, or we don't hear from you after 2 weeks, we will remove your data. You can opt back in at any point.

