



Elections for BIGSPD Executive

BIGSPD Executive Elections

Name: Keir Harding

Proposer: Rex Haigh

Seconder: Steve Pearce

Please outline your reasons for wishing to be a member of the BIGSPD Executive:

I'm very passionate about this area of work. I see BIGSPD as an organisation that can advocate strongly for those likely to receive a diagnosis of personality disorder. I'd like to help shape, develop and amplify the organisations voice and influence.

The values that are important to me as a clinician and human - equality, compassion and a desire to reduce suffering - are values that I see reflected within BIGSPD.

Personally I find that it's difficult for people from my profession (occupational therapy) to get into positions where they can contribute to conversations and decisions in this arena. By being part of the committee I'd like to both model what my profession can contribute and advocate for more skills based representation within services. This would include pressing for lived experience practitioners to be considered for roles within services.

What skills, knowledge and experience will you bring to the role?

Over the past 20 years I have worked in many areas of mental health. From special security hospitals, acute wards & PICUs, to assertive outreach, CMHTs, EIP and primary care. Over the past 10 years I've worked increasingly in the field of 'personality disorder'. This began in a day therapeutic community. I moved from there to a specialist team where I became a DBT therapist, started a Day Therapeutic Community, became a KUF trainer and began the KUF MSc. From there I moved to another NHS specialist service where I started another day TC and completed Structured Clinical Management Training. I also finished my MSc with my research looking at how a trust was able to stop the use of Out of Area Placements for people diagnosed with personality disorder.

When I became too frustrated with the NHS sending people to private placements that would have been supported in the community in my previous job, I reduced my NHS time to start a company focused on helping organisations reduce their reliance on placements. This also allowed me to work with Lived Experience Practitioners more often and reward them in a way that reflects their worth, something I felt the NHS would rarely do.

I'm told I'm someone that can make things happen. Some examples of this are arranging a number of free conferences, putting on professional training events and winning funding for things such as attending my first BIGSPD conference and my MSc place. Another example might be around having a late night conversation about the lack of challenging sessions at the BIGSPD conference, and ensuring that a coproduced abstract was submitted and a session delivered the following year.

I see external validation as a way of protecting services so I've worked hard to ensure projects I've worked on have won national awards and recognition.

I'm told I'm a decent communicator. I like using social media and I'm seen as a reliable purveyor of information and opinion in this area. I started my twitter account at the BIGSPD conference in 2016. Since then it's grown to be one of the loudest voices on this subject on twitter in the uk. I blog regularly and have sought out opportunities to raise issues in The Guardian, The Independent and Sky News amongst others. The Welsh government didn't respond to my letters outlining how the NICE guidelines didn't seem to apply in Wales. The petition I started is with the committee who have ensured all welsh trusts outline the extent to which they (don't) follow NICE guidelines and why.

I hope the above illustrates my skills, knowledge and experience. I'd like to use them to contribute to BIGSPD as an organisation to improve things for the individuals I have dedicated my career to helping.

If you could bring one innovation to the BIGSPD Executive, what would it be?

It frustrates me that many people who would see themselves as specialists do not know that BIGSPD exists. While the primary task would be to advocate for people likely to get a personality disorder diagnosis, I'd like to increase BIGSPD's ability to do this. I'd start by increasing our membership and raising our profile. To increase membership I'd suggest assertively marketing the organisation, enhancing the benefits and offering a commission system for bringing in new members. To raise the profile I'd increase our presence on social media and have us as the definitive place to come for current news, research and opinion in this field. Through putting on community of practice events (priced in a way that makes membership desirable) and ensuring they are publicised before and after, we can raise the membership and profile further.

I suspect the idea of growing the organisation is not innovative, nor the methods I've suggested. Perhaps my experience shows that I have the capacity to be both innovative & dynamic. I'd like to bring this into the (already innovative and dynamic) BIGSPD executive.