

# CONNECTED

Spring 2019



## Creating a caring environment

Making a difference  
CJLDS branches out

Caring environment  
Creating space

Helping others  
Lived experience

In this issue, we explore just some of our caring environments which helped us to achieve an outstanding rating for caring in our latest Care Quality Commission inspection report. We know that it's not just the services we provide, it's also about the people who provide them – staff, volunteers, carers and those with lived experience.

Read on and you will find volunteers in abundance; service users who use their lived experience to help others, staff who are going that extra mile and those who just want to help. I'm sure that once you've had the opportunity to read some of these amazing stories, you'll want to join our fantastic team too. If you want to volunteer, take a look at page 30 to find out how. If you want to take a look at our current vacancies, go over to [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/work-for-us](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/work-for-us). Join a team who is making a real difference.

Contact us by email: [kmpt.communications@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.communications@nhs.net)

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Telephone: 116 123 Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)



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# WELCOME

Welcome to the spring edition of Connected. I am delighted that it is my turn to write the foreword for this edition, which comes out just as our latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection report is published.

The CQC made special mention of Connected in their report and rightly so. It has a way of bringing together the very essence of KMPT and the work that we do every day. Work that we are all rightly proud to be part of.

The commission, in their report, formally recognised KMPT as an outstandingly caring organisation. Their commendation and rating of us is testament to the life-changing work that is done by our staff every day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

The commission described seeing KMPT staff regularly going the extra mile to ensure that the service they are delivering, is experienced by the recipient as caring. It is absolutely right that we, and the commission, should place such a strong emphasis on the importance

of feeling cared for – in a caring environment. Throughout this issue, you will see many examples of our volunteers, staff, patients and carers doing just that.

I am lucky in my job to be able to witness first-hand the remarkable attention to detail that colleagues pay to the quality of what they do. I encourage all our staff to do a working with day. I've worked with housekeepers, estates staff, nurses, social workers and reception staff, to name but a few, since I joined KMPT nearly three years ago. Every single time I am impressed by how person-focused the colleagues I work with are.

We all know how important it is when we feel unwell to feel cared for and for the place that we are in to feel like a caring environment.

For too many years, decades in fact, mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services have been at the end of the queue for investment. Like many similar trusts nationally, we have some fabulous environments, but we know we have

some that are not fit for purpose and that is completely unacceptable.

Thank goodness the time has come when both the CQC and now the new Long Term Plan for the NHS, are clear in their assertion that to regard our caring environments as anything less than as important as those used for physical healthcare is discriminatory.

You can see some of the work we've already undertaken and the impact it's had on page 8. 2019 is going to be a busy year with improvements happening at pace. We will continue our plans to improve our care environments, making them the sort of places in which we would feel happy for our loved ones and ourselves to receive care. We will then be able to say that not only are KMPT's staff outstandingly caring, but our working environments feel truly caring too.

I hope you enjoy this edition.

**Helen Greatorex**  
Chief Executive



Kat





# CANTERBURY'S SECRET GARDEN

"Have a little try of this," beams Kat, waving a spiky leaf around. "It tastes like mustard."

"And this one reminds me of horseradish."

Kat has been proudly harvesting her salad leaves this morning and is kind enough to share her crop. She is laughing after narrowly avoiding a jumping rake that had fallen from its propped position: "I caught it in time – just like a witch's broomstick."

Welcome to Webb's Garden, a green idyll hiding behind an old lichen-laced brick wall at the St Martins site in Canterbury where, undoubtedly, magic happens.

Time for a well-earned cup of coffee and to learn more about the industrious team who take care of this safe space. It was once Colonel Webb's own personal spot of calm when his house stood alongside it and now is a place of both peas and peace that grow in equal measure for ward patients, people visiting from the community, volunteers and staff.

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**"It's a good routine, there's the sense of achievement and meaning, good friendships are made and you can see it makes a difference to people."**

Head horticulture honcho John Ironside is on kettle duty and dishes out the mince pies; they had a glut at Christmas and are being troopers, continuing the consumption.

But the gardeners need the calories. The heavy soil in the beds is not going to dig itself and it is vigorous work (you could burn off two mince pies with an hour's worth of effort).

John's ruddy complexion hints at a love of the outdoors and the fact the tomato crops are always top-notch is thanks to his unrivalled expertise; he ran a commercial nursery dedicated to the salad staple all his working life.

Finding too much spare time on his hands on retirement, he approached the trust's volunteer services for ideas on how he could fill it. There was a match of his skills with a vacancy and the 76-year-old has now seen the cycle of 15 full sets of seasons at Webb's.

He said: "I like getting my hands dirty. And people are keen to learn. You have to take care of the plants, keep an eye on them, watch them every day. It's a good routine, there's the sense of achievement and meaning, good friendships are made and you can see it makes a difference to people."

Retired support worker Bernard is his right hand man and chief ribber. The Chartham Gardeners' Society member has been passing on his passion of the pastime to the next generation. Both vegetable enthusiasts ("we don't like flowers, you can't eat them!"), they while

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Continued page 6...





away three mornings a week with soil under the fingernails and often a thump in their chests, both from exertion and witnessing the impact nature can have on the wellbeing of people living with a mental health condition.

He said: "I do call this God's garden. It is a special place. You should see the reaction when seeds they have planted start to sprout. Some have never had that experience before. That excitement really is something. Many say thank you for what we have done, they see their introduction in the garden as their turning point. It is a great healer." The third Musketeer on duty is Ron,

who also worked at the St Martins hospital as a nursing assistant and found he could not stay away, despite clocking up 37 years of service.

He has taken service user David under his wing and is making him a master with the spade and fork, the pair dutifully turning in the manure.

There is light in David's eyes when he talks about the garden. He said: "I was in a bad way, but I have turned it around. It is relaxing here." Walking down the path past the rhubarb then the brassica, which has to be covered because of pesky

pigeons helping themselves, John says gate-hopping rabbits are also not welcome and nor are foxes as they enjoy vandalising the poly-tunnels and leaving delightful fragrant deposits as presents.

There are a few special areas named after past gardeners; Maggie's Greenhouse, Charlie's Health Garden and Dudley's Spot – where the recluse spent many a happy time fiddling with water pipes. Nick shows off his gardening gloves and lists the benefits of Webb's to him: "Structure to the week, company and garden advice. I'm off to my driving lesson now and have my Spanish lesson later."





Mark said: "It is nice and peaceful and stops me dwelling on problems. It is exercise and fresh air. It is good for me."

The team joke about his lack of green fingers, but there is no doubt Bailey is the sales supremo. Between March and September, a fruit and veg stall does bumper business in the restaurant atrium on site, the delicious produce earning between £3,000 and £4,000 that is ploughed back into the enterprise, run by the dedicated volunteer committee Friends for Mental Health (east).

Kat is looking forward to some good radishes this year as well.

She has some leaves to sweep now, accompanied by the glorious melody from a robin perched above her on a branch.

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**“You should see the reaction when seeds they have planted start to sprout. Some have never had that experience before.”**

The team is always looking for new volunteers. They are particularly keen to recruit a flower fan who could bring life and colour to a corner of the garden set aside for such a transformation. For more information, contact volunteer coordinator Zoe Young [zoe.young4@nhs.net](mailto:zoe.young4@nhs.net) or see page 31 on how to get involved.





## CREATING SPACE

Aziz is taking a lot of time and trouble over his ashtray.

Occupational therapy assistant Michele Muggridge is running a pottery session in Boughton ward at Priority House in Maidstone and this is a masterpiece taking shape.

Meanwhile, next door, the chords of Bob Marley's Three Little Birds strike up again from the karaoke machine on Chartwell ward.

These sing-alongs prove really popular now there is room in the open-plan communal space for patients and staff to come together and there are a few favourite tracks always on repeat.

Both wards have undergone a transformation in the past 18 months.

Chartwell's manager, Amy Berry, said: "The mood has really lifted. All credit to our occupational therapist Eddy Lewis, who makes the most of the new layout. Even the quieter patients get involved in the activities. Karaoke can go on for three hours and it's a joyful time!"

Amy has come across from Upnor to 18-bed female Chartwell and has been settling in over the past few weeks. Its new-look is mirrored in brother ward Boughton.

There are obvious improvements when comparing the old facilities to post-upgrade; an en-suite bedroom for each patient, safer windows with integrated blinds, air conditioning, generous-sized lounge, quiet rooms and comfortable dining area and

laundry now both within the confines of the ward. The space is also ligature proof. Safety is paramount.

Amy said: "When someone is struggling with their mental health, a dark and oppressive environment is not conducive. That was my experience of both Chartwell and Boughton and now everything is clean, light and bright."

The walls are still bare and that creates an echo, so Amy is organising artworks to reduce the clinical feel, which will also decorate the pillars. It had been hoped these could have been removed as part of the works, but structurally that was an impossibility. Instead they will be adorned with creative pieces designed by patients during occupational therapy sessions.



West Kent's Acute Care Group Matron Sojan Joseph said: "It is not a new build, it is a refurbishment and we therefore have the infrastructure shell that might still throw up some problems, but working with the estates team, we get around them."

Amy continued: "What I like the most is we think of Priority House as a site, not individual wards. We are dealing with challenging patients, people with such difficult back stories and life situations who need the right support. This helps us to do that."

The upgrades are part of a multi-million pound investment by the trust across its estates. A total investment in upgrades since 2012 is fast approaching £7m with at least a further £20m identified for investment in further upgrades over the next seven years.

David Cousins is an expert by experience and was central to the redevelopment plans.

Having stayed in a ward, he was perfectly placed to offer valuable advice to the design team when the time came to transform these spaces.

His research background and analytical mind saw him gathering data, running focus groups with existing patients to get a sense of what a good ward should look like.

He said: "It is so important to involve patients. There is a big difference between being in the space and living in the space, which is what it effectively is when you are an inpatient. This is about offering choice, independence and freedom, which is limited enough as it is. They are there to get well and the space around them can have such an impact on their wellbeing.

"It was pretty cool to be asked to start the meeting with the stakeholders and architects. And so the extensive discussion process began."

The top three requests were separate bedrooms, ensuite bathrooms and then one that side-swiped the team but seemed to David obvious: the issue of noise.

He said: "This is the general noise reverberating around the ward. It can be so intense. My suggestion was soft furnishings and sound-absorbing ceiling tiles. Plus the addition of quiet spaces, so someone can be out of their bedroom and they might wish to speak with someone, but open plan is not always appropriate. This is important."

Comfortable beds and useful furniture were also on the wish list. A wardrobe offers a homely feel so they were included.

David added: "I was really proud when the building was finished. Quite emotional actually.

"My passion is to try to improve things for patients. There were some challenging decisions to make and we spent a lot of time discussing every single point. I think we did a really good job!"

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**“They are there to get well and the space around them can have such an impact on their wellbeing.”**



David Cousins



# A HELPING HAND

**Work is good for mental health. It promotes recovery, social inclusion and overall wellbeing. KMPT's vocational rehabilitation team supports people to gain and sustain employment. Wayne Hoadley is now one of its greatest cheerleaders.**

Wayne's backstory really could belong to anyone.

But his life today is testament to his resilience and a few key people who gave him both a hand and a push when he most needed it.

In August last year, he started work as a pharmacy assistant at the Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham, a dream realised and one that 12 months earlier was perhaps impossible to imagine.

After school, Wayne left his close-knit family in Gravesend to head off to university in Brighton and upon graduation, he embarked on a student technician pharmacy role in the city.

He then found himself caring for his partner and that and his work became too much; one had to give.

Next, he moved up the country after his girlfriend was offered a job. He could not bring himself to tell his parents he had as good as given up on his pharmacy ambitions and took the choice to mislead them.

Wayne was in the consulting room when his father was given his aggressive mesothelioma diagnosis. Just three short months later, Wayne was with him as he took his last breath. He said goodbye on that day and decided he could not face the funeral.

If enough factors stack up, chances are they will be enough to take their toll. Add the easily-available coping mechanisms of alcohol

mixed with anger and withdrawal, and Wayne found the world somewhere he no longer wanted to be. Wayne's partner found him after the overdose, rushed him to a Lincolnshire A&E and he accepted help from mental health services from there on in.

He returned home to his Mum, brother and sister and a little while later, a 'superhero' landed in his life; Lorraine Looker. One of KMPT's vocational specialists, she gave him a new lens through which to see his skills and abilities.

Wayne said: "Lorraine helped me break out from a bad pattern of thinking. My memory is distorted about that time, I was a different person then – it was like a dream. I had no purpose, felt I had let everyone down, I was small and insignificant and there was no point to me. I was angry this had happened to us, to my Dad. I was not prepared for it.

"I hadn't worked for five years, but Lorraine looked at my CV and did not seem to think my situation was too bad. She lit a spark under me and showed me how to sell myself."

He got his first break in the stock room at Clarks shoe shop at Bluewater where he crucially tasted what would go on to be game-changing routine, friendly colleagues, a sense of belonging and structure. Confidence buoyed, he set his sights once more on pharmacy.

He added: "I was trapped in a depressive bubble and determined

to burst it. I thought there is a big world out there and life is not just pain and sadness. Lorraine taught me I could do it, that I needed to persevere."

He got an interview with Medway NHS Foundation Trust and then got the call to say he was their newest recruit.

Commenting on Wayne's achievements, Lorraine said: "To his absolute credit, he has been able to gradually adopt a 'can do' attitude that has seen him win through in the end. Only very recently, he received a commendation in a team meeting regarding his positive attitude at work. It has been an honour to go on this journey with Wayne and see his resilience and confidence grow. I am sure he will achieve even greater things in the future."

Lorraine has clearly made a difference: "Lorraine has been in contact with my new bosses, worked through and agreed my WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan), which shows my trigger points and where I might need some more support and understanding.

"For me, work is so much more than money. Now I have a social circle and a new identity.

"Throughout this my partner and my family, have all been there for me. To also have Lorraine's support has made me a little more brave and I've taken chances I never thought I'd have the opportunity to grasp."





Welcome to  
**Medway**  
Maritime Hospital



**Emergency  
Treatment**

Deliveries via  
High Road East



Gemma McSweeney





# MAKING A DIFFERENCE - CRIMINAL JUSTICE LIAISON AND DIVERSION SERVICE

Everyone has a story and when a person is stood at the custody desk being booked in following their arrest, it is often a sequence of experiences, misfortunes and choices that have led them to that point.

It can be a frightening and confusing time, especially when you are navigating the world with a vulnerability.

This is where the Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Service (CJLDS) comes into its own. The new-look service officially launches on 1 April and has been directly shaped by the needs the team are seeing across the county and the best-case outcomes they strive to achieve.

It is clear to those working in the criminal justice system there are a multitude of reasons that drive criminal behaviour. Intervene here and follow through with consistent steps, signposting and ongoing support and the cycle of offending might just be broken.

Before the transition to the new model, community psychiatric nurses (CPNs) in custody were stretched and the levels of paperwork required as registered practitioners was time-consuming. It was time for a rethink if the team was to engage with some of the 30,000 people coming through the county's seven custody suites each year to look at all the vulnerabilities that could be affecting them and where they could effect change.

As a result, a new role has been created – the Liaison and Diversion Practitioners (LDPs). These are the first contact and use their relationship building skills, empathy

and an approved screening algorithm during the initial meeting to see how they can help. One of them is Sam Banfield. She said: "Some people have no one when they come into custody and will have no one waiting for them when they leave custody.

"We might support them to engage with counselling services to talk through their problems so they find a release and maybe get back into contact with family and friends. If they have been sleeping rough and have just been kicked off a park bench, we will help them fill out the housing forms, take them to the council offices if need be and put them in touch with the right people."

The team deals with children from the age of 10 and for them and adults, as well as mental health and learning disabilities, they are looking at the range of vulnerabilities including substance misuse, acquired brain injury, housing issues, speech, language and communication difficulties.

If more specialist help and assessment is required, the LDPs can call in their colleagues (Specialist LDPs), otherwise they will reach out to the expansive network of partnership agencies and organisations and engage with the person within 72 hours of release from custody with a plan of action.

An individual can be followed through the entire criminal justice process and into court, if applicable, where once they may have had to tell their tale many times. This service offers consistency to the person and timely reports for the

criminal justice staff, detailing not just their background, but also how they are engaging with recommended services. This has power – it informs decisions available to the bench. It can change the story.

That is why it is so rewarding, says Gemma McSweeney, the service lead, and why the entire team wholeheartedly believes in it: "A lot of people are unable to find their way through very complex health and social systems. Some of the areas of need we identify can appear to be so small and yet with us linking in, there can be some really quick wins and the outcome and value added is huge. It can change their life and those of their family, stopping the reoffending behaviour and reducing inequalities in society."

This is not about ignoring the fact a criminal investigation must follow its due process. The service runs in parallel.

Chief Inspector Roscoe Walford is in charge of custody for Kent Police. He argues the partnership is second-to-none. He said: "The most serious step a police officer can make is taking someone's liberty and place them under arrest. Our job is to prove or disprove an allegation and the victims and witnesses at the end of that need the best service we can give them. If part of that is to make sure the individuals get the help they need because they are vulnerable, and break the cycle of offending, there will be less victims, less witnesses and it can only be better for Kent's communities as a whole."

**For more information visit [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/cjlds](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/cjlds)**



## SHARING EXPRESSION THROUGH ART

There is a holy trinity for Penny Newlyn when it comes to her own recovery.

Firstly there is the enduring presence of her grandmother Olive Giles. Next is the ginger wonder that is her rescue cat, full name Oliver Maximus George Dali Bonjangles (Ollie for short). And finally, there is art.

Not only does she find joy and escape in the cartoons and doodles she so proficiently creates, the 51-year-old now attends the Brenchley Unit in Maidstone as an expert by experience, helping to guide art therapy sessions and proving there is an artist in us all.

She said: "When the patient sits down next to me, they often do not know what to draw or paint or mould with clay. But there is always something there in the back of the mind and can be revealed even in just the colours used.

"Someone will say 'I am alright', but I can look and what they are creating makes so much sense about where they are emotionally and that tells me they are not. Even a stick man can have meaning."

Penny staged her first show at the Lakeside Lounge café at the Maidstone site last year and it was nothing but memorable.

The Lounge's manager, Bob St Clair-Baker said: "It was certainly one of the most inventive and engaging exhibitions we have had here."

Penny included a look at self-harming, which has been a reality for her since she was seven years old, when she started scratching and pinching herself. This then developed and was combined with drugs and alcohol in an attempt to numb the pain from her childhood before her journey to wellness began. This started five years ago as an inpatient and then through community support to where she is now with fortnightly counselling





Penny Newlyn

sessions. She fully accepts it is an ongoing, lifelong commitment.

She said: "Yes, it is a very dark subject, but it needs to be highlighted. It is an irrational, unhealthy response to not dealing with your feelings. You take it out on yourself with this destructive behaviour. But when you have found a way to feel better like this, it takes something to change that mindset.

"The road to recovery has been life-changing for me. Cognitive behaviour therapy helped me unpack and now I check in with myself as a daily self-care practice, a daily inventory: What did I do that was nice for myself? What did I not handle so well? What did I do to help others?"

Penny knows she is emotionally unstable and has been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Her voluntary sessions help her as much as they do the service users and her knowledge and experience help build trust and reciprocal relationships at the unit.

She added: "I find it so rewarding. It is a real privilege to self-explore what is on the paper and reach some self-awareness. I am so passionate about the Brenchley Unit and this is my way of giving something back and saying thank you. I am honoured to be a part of it."

Penny's own artwork is inspired by the illustrations which bring the band Gorillaz to life, the brainchild of artist Jamie Hewlett. She is now working

on more pieces in the run up to the Lounge's summer exhibition, which will have a new twist. Visitors will be able to create their own postcards to send to loved ones. Penny's might feature a ladybird or two, which remind her of Olive, who passed away last year. Their bond had been strong since Penny was a baby. She often sought solace with her grandmother, who always had a hot water bottle, a Trebor Extra Strong Mint and a kind word to offer.

"My Nan is the woman I aspire to be."

Look out for more information in the run up to the summer exhibition on our website [www.kmpt.nhs.uk](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk)

In memory of Olive Giles –  
4 October 1918 – 19 March 2018

# YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME

"Being a Gemini, I'm a bit of talker," giggles Shelley as she sits down to talk to us about her role as a volunteer befriender on Orchards ward.

Blessed with an easy manner and an infectious smile, it is clear to see why Shelley has taken to her volunteering role effortlessly and is eager to explain how she came to volunteer for the trust, and why she loves spending time chatting to service users each week.

Having previously worked for Kent County Council in the facilities department for over 20 years, her employment came to an end when she was made redundant. After two years of having the freedom and time for more leisurely activities, Shelley found she wanted to return to doing something that gave her a little more structure and focus to her day.

"I was a volunteer with Involve Kent for quite a long time, working as their receptionist, and I enjoyed the work. However, when they moved from the town hall in Maidstone, I stopped volunteering and took another short break."

During Shelley's time with Involve, she had met Stephen Tucker, KMPT's west Kent voluntary services coordinator, who contacted her to ask whether she would be interested in volunteering again, this time as a befriender.

Smiling, Shelley remembers her very first thoughts upon hearing about the opportunity that has since brought her so much personal pleasure: "I was a little bit worried initially. I was unsure about whether

I could do it, as well as being a little apprehensive about the environment – I really didn't know what to expect.

"I shared my concerns with Stephen and he reassured me there was no pressure and, if it wasn't for me, I could just stop. I've always been one for a challenge and just thought to myself, why not!"

Now celebrating her second year of volunteering, it's safe to say that Shelley absolutely loves being a befriender and hasn't looked back since she started.

"I can honestly say it is the best thing I have ever done; I only wish that I had done it sooner. I volunteer once a week on Orchards ward, an inpatient unit in Maidstone for older people. I use the time to chat with the ladies. Sometimes we play scrabble or I read to them; sometimes I just sit quietly and I'm just there as company – a friendly face and reminder they are not alone."

Whether it's reading or talking about books, looking at fashion magazines, playing board games or gossiping about the latest celebrity news, Shelley doesn't mind, and loves selecting things that provide points for discussion – remarking it's important for her ladies to stay 'connected' and overcome some of the things that can make staying in hospital a frightening and isolating experience.

Her natural warmth and compassion are undoubtedly aspects of Shelley's character from a very long list of positive attributes that have resulted in her being nominated for

Volunteer of the Year through the Unsung Hero Awards.

Shelley remains quietly modest about the contribution she makes to the trust by volunteering each week, however, it is clear to see what this nomination means to her.

"I really don't think I do anything remarkable, I just talk and anyone can do that! Just to be nominated is a real honour and I have been really touched by it – absolutely made my day! Whether I win or not, it doesn't matter to me – the feeling of contributing and being valued is reward enough."

Volunteering is a firm part of who Shelley is and also what helps to keep her motivated.

"I have cerebral palsy so there are days when I do find it difficult, but by having something to get up for, and knowing that I am helping in a small way, gives me a purpose. I am so pleased I grasped the opportunity, it has filled my life with a lot of joy.

"I would wholeheartedly say to anyone who is thinking about volunteering, don't think about it – just do it!"

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**"I can honestly say it is the best thing I have ever done; I only wish that I had done it sooner."**







Mark Holmes





# A NEW BEGINNING

The feeling of moving towards a brighter future filled with positive challenges and aspirations has never been more important than in the case of Mark, who openly admits he has much to be grateful for following his 10 year struggle with alcoholism.

A former professional dancer in the West End, having trained with the Royal Academy of Dance from the age of nine, he has performed at the London Palladium, toured the world, taught at the Royal Ballet and has even met Her Majesty the Queen. However, his life quickly fell apart when he turned to alcohol to help numb the underlying problems he was unable to confront.

Mark explained: "For much of my life I was very happily employed and was lucky enough to be performing at the highest level for a large part of my career – I was simply in love with dance right from when I started training at the age of six."

Having appeared in musicals and dance shows including the Lion King, Smokey Joe's Café and the tour of Riverdance, he had fulfilled many of his lifetime ambitions and was enjoying the latter stages of his dance career when he was forced to take six months out through injury.

"People tell you that the life of a dancer is short, but you don't really think about that aspect when you are 17 and experiencing the exhilarating rush of performing. Planning for your future after dance seems a lifetime away. I injured my hip and everything just stopped and I was faced with lots of time on my hands.

"Looking back, I suppose this is where the drinking started. Apart from on my 21st birthday, I hadn't really drunk before, but I started to drink more and more and rapidly became immersed in a self-destructive lifestyle. Work started to dry up and relationships became harder to sustain. I eventually lost my flat as I couldn't pay for my rent and had to move back home to live with my mum. I just remember feeling I wasn't able to function at the level I had been used to. I knew deep down I had a problem, but I became used to finding a way to justify my behaviour – there was always someone or something to blame."

Mark took a job as a dancer in Scotland after deciding it was the change he needed to help him get back on track.

"I was really just deluding myself that I could deal with my dependency in this way – I even took a bottle of Vodka on the train with me. Having got to Scotland, I decided to just stop drinking. The next thing I remember is regaining consciousness. My partner explained I had been in and out of consciousness for two days and had started having a number of seizures. An ambulance was on its way."

**“I knew deep down that I had a problem, but I became used to finding a way to justify my behaviour.”**

Mark ended up engaging with detox services while in Scotland but, without the support he needed, relapsed several times and returned home to the support of his mum once again.

Like so many people who are living with dependency, Mark reached a juncture in his life when it was clear he needed sustained, professional support to help him make significant changes in his life.

"I got in touch with Turning Point in Medway and was fortunate enough to secure the funding for a residential place at Bridge House, followed by a programme of supported recovery with Kenward Trust."

Bridge House is a nine-bed inpatient detoxification unit in Kent offering specialist care for clients who have problems with substance misuse. It was this placement that was to signal the change in Mark's life and his relationship with alcohol.

"From the moment I stepped into the reception area, I knew it was different to anywhere I had been before. I immediately felt I was already in recovery – that I had made a start. The environment felt supportive and I was greeted in a way that reassured me I was in the hands of experts who understood me and what I was experiencing.

"Although my particular journey was difficult and I relapsed on a number of occasions, when I finally

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Continued page 20...



committed to the programme at Bridge House for the second time, and really listened to what was being asked of me, I began to change mentally. I stopped filtering the things that I thought didn't apply to me and reached a new level of honesty about myself and what my future could be."

Now, over two and half years later, his life couldn't be more different.

"After my detox programme, I took around 18 months out, just to adjust to everything and re-evaluate things. My career as a dancer had come to an end already and I wanted to be involved in something I felt equally passionate about. I had remained in close contact with Joe O'Rourke, who manages Bridge House, and spoke to him about my desire to give something back and get involved. Joe mentioned about possibly volunteering and I jumped at the chance.

"I volunteered twice a week and worked alongside the team for over eight months – shadowing support workers as they worked with service users to gain their trust and work collaboratively to facilitate in their recovery."

Mark knew only too well that during detox people are often at their most vulnerable, facing powerful and often frightening emotions. This lived experience was invaluable to the team's work and Mark could see his future career within reach.

"Encouraged by the team, I applied for a role as a peer support worker with Bridge House – being part of

the team had taught me so much and I loved spending time speaking with others going through their own journey. I found there was a connection through a shared experience that enabled me to strike up a rapport – a shorthand that needed no explanation. I was proud to be part of their important first steps in recovery."

It was this lived experience, coupled with his insatiable enthusiasm, that made Mark the ideal appointment for the role, Joe O'Rourke, detoxification manager added: "We are all pleased to welcome Mark as a permanent member of the team. He possesses a special ability to work with service users, using his own experiences to reassure people they can regain control of their lives with a lot of support, work and determination – he is living proof!"

Change has been so positive for Mark and the calm, confident and fun-loving man we see today is clearly embracing his new life – so what next?

Laughing, he shrugs his shoulders: "So much is different for me now. I am looking forward to getting married in September, I'm loving my job, time with family and friends – the world is my oyster!"

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**“Joe mentioned about possibly volunteering and I jumped at the chance.”**







Mark and Joe O'Rourke



# COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS



Claire Garrard and  
Jess Gutierrez-Cooper



# RECOVERY COLLEGE

## HELPING THANET - INSIDE AND OUT

The Kent Recovery and Wellbeing College pilot is now running in its second term. Working with Adult Education, KMPT's Pam Wooding has started seeing the results first-hand.

She's the first person to ensure credit is given where it's due and cannot speak too highly about her growing team.

"Right from the beginning it's been important to ensure we've had people with lived experience involved in developing and shaping the courses. We were so lucky to have had the opportunity to work with Claire Garrard from the outset, who joined us as part of the job taster programme."

Claire has been battling with her mental health from a young age. Now, ready to enter her 57th year, she believes she has finally started living again.

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**"I'm so very proud to be a NHS volunteer."**

She said "I firmly believe that thanks to the Beacon community mental health team, I've been given a second chance. They've been amazing. After all this time, I felt ready to do something more. Jess Gutierrez-Cooper from the vocational rehabilitation team spoke with me about taking part in the job taster programme. She looked at my

past experience and spoke with Pam about what I could do to help get the college off the ground.

"At first, I didn't really know what to expect. I thought I would be typing letters, filing etc. I was absolutely thrilled at the level of trust they put in me. My first job was to start compiling the prospectus. I researched some of the courses and found information on most but some of them I had to start from scratch. I was really nervous and thought Pam wouldn't like it. She was so supportive and loved my work. It did wonders for my self-esteem. It was the first time I had used my initiative for such a long time because I had always been told no before. Pam's reaction was like a weight off my shoulders. Working with the team was just amazing."

Claire loved working with the college so much she didn't want to leave so, at the end of the job taster programme, she took the opportunity to volunteer her time there. She has continued to help with administration and as a class room assistant. She's pushing herself one day at a time. Now Claire is using her past experience within teaching to help her develop a course along with fellow college and peer support worker, Will Cartwright.

"The course is called Dealing with Loneliness, something I have had to deal with myself for some years. I've felt like I've had a 50 year life sentence. It has been the Beacon

which enabled me to find the key to my release, which to me is nothing short of a miracle. Using my own experience, I hope we can get this course just right to pass that help to others," she added.

Claire continues to volunteer and alongside producing her course, she has the enviable task of sifting through the comments the college has received from its students. Working with new locality coordinator for the recovery college Julie Fuller, they have both been bowled over by the strength of the feedback.

"It's wonderful to see how much of a difference it's made to people. 'it's what I've been looking for' and 'it's what we've been missing' are common reactions."

The recovery college will continue its work across Thanet, but Claire hopes she will still be working with the team as its fantastic impact spreads across the county.

"I have a personal goal to be back into full-time work by 2020. I'd very much like to work within the NHS, to give something back to those who have helped me. Ideally, I'd still like to be working with the college as it's rolled out across Kent and Medway. There are so many others who will benefit from this fabulous resource. I've absolutely loved working with them.

"I'm so very proud to be a NHS volunteer."



# CANTERBURY DEMENTIA ALLIES

## KNOW THERE'S LIFE AFTER DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of dementia can often be seen as frightening, confusing and isolating for someone hearing those words and for families supporting them.

Knowing exactly where to turn, what to ask and who to approach for best advice can be overwhelming in the first few weeks.

It is precisely this desire to help people navigate the challenging path towards adjustment and acceptance that has led KMPT, the Alzheimer's Society and east Kent Forget-Me-Nots to develop a pilot scheme that offers short-term peer support to anyone recently diagnosed.

The idea for a Canterbury based service was sparked by Chris Norris, a member of the Forget-Me-Nots – a group of people living with dementia who come together to help make the world a more dementia-friendly place.

"While going around the country as part of the Memory Services National Accreditation Programme review team, I had come across services that worked closely with the Alzheimer's Society and Age UK.

"Following a diagnosis of dementia the person and family could go into another room and be allowed time to discuss the situation while being given information to help them all start to look towards the road ahead in a supported and positive way.

"I felt there was a need for something similar, or better, in Kent."

Following a signed commitment to the initiative from Helen Greatorex, chief executive of KMPT, the hard

work began in earnest to create and launch the 12 month Dementia Allies scheme.

Dr Joana Vidal, clinical psychologist and facilitator of the project for KMPT, explained: "We wanted to create a true peer support scheme and quickly realised it needed the full support of key partners. We approached local organisations, and the Dementia Allies became a co-production between the Alzheimer's Society, Forget-Me-Nots and our own voluntary services team.

"We now have 10 Dementia Allies, who have all been diagnosed for quite some time and continue to live well with dementia. Each ally is able to offer the benefit of their own lived experience to those who have just received a dementia diagnosis – as a one-off meeting or over a short period of time. Meetings can be arranged at the person's home or in a community location of their choice."

The Dementia Allies service is different in so far as it offers one-to-one support from people who share the same diagnosis. All allies have undergone a thorough recruitment, interview and training process and are supported at each meeting by a member of the Alzheimer's Society.

Elizabeth Taylor, services manager and London and south east region employee forum facilitator for the Alzheimer's Society, said: "We are really pleased to be involved with this project as a joint partner. Our role has been to help shape the scheme operationally.

"We organise referrals, arrange appointments with the allies, provide transport if required

and help to facilitate the meeting itself. We can accept referrals from a broad area including Canterbury, Herne Bay, Faversham, Sandwich and Whitstable."

Importantly, the Dementia Allies are 'matched' to the person very carefully to ensure the meetings are as productive as possible and help create a good rapport so that both are able to converse easily.

Joana explains: "We have worked hard to get the framework right. It has been a real evolutionary process, exploring all options to make sure the scheme offers the best support possible and we achieve what we set out to achieve.

"The project has taken just over 18 months to develop – from concept to delivery – and we are proud to say we finally launched the pilot in January of this year."

Anne-Marie, who is delighted to call herself an ally, says: "Speaking with someone who has lived experience of that diagnosis is invaluable in my opinion. I want to be able to offer something completely honest – a unique insight that professionals and carers would find more difficult to voice but, more importantly, hope and reassurance."

**If you have recently been diagnosed, or know someone who has, and would like to arrange to meet a Dementia Ally, please, contact Elizabeth Taylor on 01303 260674 or [elizabeth.taylor@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth.taylor@alzheimers.org.uk)**









Marion Lakeland



# INTRODUCING YOUR FRIENDS OF MENTAL HEALTH - CARING FOR LIFE

Marion trained as a nurse in 1963. She retired in 2009, having given 46 years to the profession whilst also raising two children. She could be forgiven for hanging up the uniform and enjoying retirement with husband Jim and her family, including now three grandchildren – but that’s not Marion. Talking to her, it’s clear that caring has always been her nature and it doesn’t look like that’s going to change anytime soon.

At the delightful age of 74, Marion has had a caring role for most of her life. These days, she spends her time volunteering with the Friends of Mental Health (west), based at Priority House in Maidstone and for Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

It all started four years ago, when she bumped into an old friend – John Sweetman. John was looking for someone trustworthy who wanted to help make a difference.

“John suggested I take up the position of vice-chair with the ‘Friends’ along with another lady so we could share the responsibility. Unfortunately she left, but I’ve been there ever since!”

Marion and her colleagues raise money for the charity and then

go through requests for funding particular projects, equipment or even just some basic items like socks, toothbrushes, even food.

“People don’t realise that some people are discharged from hospital with nothing – no clean clothes, food or anything. Friends of Mental Health are here to support them. Most requests are for food, white goods, a fridge or a washing machine. Things we take for granted.

“We do get involved in some larger projects, for example we supplied some garden benches, improved gardens for patients etc. We supplied a mural in the Trevor Gibbens Unit to brighten the walls, table tennis, snooker tables – you name it, we’ve supplied it!

“Staff often put in requests on behalf of patients. For example, the communications team put in a request for a patient who was taking part in the job taster programme with vocational rehabilitation. He lived quite some distance away but wanted some work experience with the team to boost his confidence and get him out into the community. We bought him a train ticket.

“One of my favourite things is around Christmas when we buy

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**“One of my favourite things is around Christmas when we buy pantomime tickets for the patients. Something so simple can make all the difference.”**

pantomime tickets for the patients. Something so simple can make all the difference.”

The team includes former KMPT staff as well as volunteers who just want to help. Led by John Sweetman, president, they are making a difference to lives. If you’d like to take the opportunity to join them, contact Helen Collins, voluntary services manager and she’ll talk you through the process.

Marion would love to see you at the next meeting, so why not bring your fundraising ideas together with all your enthusiasm to the table. Give us a call.

Take a look at page 30 for more information.



# INTRODUCING YOUR FRIENDS OF MENTAL HEALTH - SOMEONE SPECIAL

For those who have worked within KMPT for sometime, just hearing the name John Sweetman will bring a smile to your face. At 83 years young, John has been volunteering his precious time for more than 30 years. He will shy away from any accolades of his commitment and obvious dedication to helping others, but it's clear John is a remarkable man who still has so much to give.

John was initially invited to join the Friends of Oakwood Hospital by Sir John Best-Shaw in 1988. The Friends group ran the canteen within the hospital and John took on the role of looking after the finances. This was two years before he retired from his position of administrative director /chief executive of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. Retired and aged a spritely 55 years, John was delighted to be able to spend more time volunteering.

"I always wanted to ensure I had something to keep me active. I was a lay reader at St Andrews Church in Barming Heath, but wanted to do more. Back then, mental health was very much the poor relation. I just wanted to help."

Oakwood Hospital gradually closed and West Kent NHS and Social Care Trust was formed. Pat Levison was the voluntary services manager at the time and was keen to ensure

this new trust had a similar Friends group to help their patients and staff when needed.

John continued: "Chief executive John Wilks and his team were supportive of what we were hoping to do. Our first project was to set up a shop in the foyer of Priority House. To this day, we have always been given incredible amounts of support. We have always worked in collaboration with the voluntary services manager and we are delighted we have always had a supportive and good relationship with staff. We've been very fortunate."

With such a long career as a volunteer, there will always be those requests for help that stay with you. For John, it's the patients who want help to set themselves up in business or employment, but he also has a fondness for helping people look after their physical health as well as their mental health.

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**"... we have always had a supportive and good relationship with staff. We've been very fortunate"**

"I'm a sports addict! I love cricket and snooker and still play snooker occasionally. Providing equipment for patients to be able to keep themselves active is really important. It can help their physical and mental wellbeing. Help them take their mind off things for a while. Music therapy is also really important and the newly formed choir at the Trevor Gibbens Unit has helped patients enormously. If they do not get joy from singing, they are uplifted simply by listening."

Friends of Mental Health (west), as they are now known, have developed and evolved along with the trust from the day it was formed. They have helped hundreds of people and thanks to donations and fundraising, they will continue to do so. Throughout John's time with the Friends, he has held various positions including the treasurer, secretary, chairman and has now been given the honorary title of president.

"I can't do as much as I want to, but I still want to be able to contribute. It was an honour to be given the title of president, but I'm not in it for the honours."

For the rest of the Friends group, it's clear John is a vital cog in the machine and, complete with his new title, he'll continue to be around to make sure our patients receive that extra help when it's truly needed.









# GET INVOLVED!

## Work for us!

There are so many ways to get involved in helping people across KMPT. If you've always wanted to work in a caring environment, take a look at our latest vacancies [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/work-for-us](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/work-for-us) We can offer you flexible working, training, research opportunities and so much more. Of course you'll be working with an already outstanding team, but we know you have something extra to give – why not tell us about yourself? Apply for your new job now.

## Use your lived experience

We are super #KMPTProud to be a leading trust in employing peer support workers (PSW), those with lived experience of mental ill health. Our chief executive Helen Greatorex has pledged to increase the number of PSW we have across the county. Why not talk to our PSW lead Natalie Livesey to find out more?

[www.kmpt.nhs.uk/about-us/peer-support-workers](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/about-us/peer-support-workers)



Peer Support at the Rosewood Mother and Baby Unit





## Spare time? Why not volunteer?

Did you know absolutely anyone can volunteer? You see it on social media all the time: requests for knitted blankets for older people's wards, donations for mothers who will have to spend Mother's Day in hospital, tiny clothes for premature babies, someone to drive people to their hospital appointment or even to take time to pray. It's incredible what we are able to do to help someone and to show we care. Take a look at the list of roles available within KMPT. Nothing there for you? Give them a call anyway – the list is always growing. I'm sure they'll find something just for you.

Perhaps like Shelley (page 16), you'd like to be a befriender? Or like Marion and John (page 26 and 28), you'd like to help fundraise

and help others through the Friends of Mental Health? Or perhaps you'd like to do something a little different – be a complementary therapy volunteer, work at our café in Maidstone or join some of our music groups? Maybe you'd like to join our amazing chaplaincy team who support staff and patients across the county? It seems like the options are endless – what's stopping you?

Contact voluntary services manager Helen Collins and her team for more details on 01622 723212 or [helen.collins9@nhs.net](mailto:helen.collins9@nhs.net). Alternatively, take a look at our website for more details.

[www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/volunteering](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/volunteering)



Volunteer Mick Vernon

## Experts by experience

The experts by experience research group is a group of service users who are regularly involved in many aspects of trust activity as well as in their own communities. They meet monthly and are filled with enthusiasm and dedication, championing an end to stigma and raising awareness of mental ill health. David Cousins (page 9) has been a member for sometime and has got involved in many trust initiatives. It's no surprise he's won awards for his work!

[www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/service-user-and-carer/experts-by-experience](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/service-user-and-carer/experts-by-experience)



## Want to help change the way we do things?

If you're a service user or a carer of someone using our services, there are events for you too. Join a co-production network to collaborate on KMPT service developments or join a patient or carer consultative committee to let us know your experience of using our services, find out what projects

and initiatives the trust is involved in and be a part of any change we consider to improve our services. We want to hear your experiences, so join a meeting near you.

[www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/service-user-and-carer](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/service-user-and-carer)



David Cousins





# Are you ready to return?



**If you or someone you know is considering coming back to nursing after time away, KMPT wants to hear from you.**

Find out more at the next Return to Practice open day on Wednesday 24 April 2019 between 10am and 12pm at Canterbury Christ Church University Campus, North Holmes Road, Canterbury CT1 1QU.

**Search 'Return to Practice Christ Church' online to book a place or call the recruitment team for a chat on**

**01227 812351**

Recommend a friend incentive applies.

*Creating an equal opportunities environment, where we can all be ourselves*



*Brilliant care through brilliant people*