

volunteer voices

Your news bulletin from KMPT Voluntary services

Welcome to Volunteer Voices...

This is your August edition, coming to you from KMPT's Voluntary services team.

As lockdown rules continue to ease, our volunteers are increasingly able to return to their roles. For those who can't, virtual support is continuing to be much appreciated by many of our services and patients.

Despite lockdown, our dementia groups are continuing to grow - we have five support groups active across Kent and we have also developed a friends and family group (read more below). If you are interested in taking part in any of our programmes dedicated to those living with dementia, please get in touch.

Exciting news! We are about to launch our KMPT Awards 2020 and would love as many of you as possible to nominate members of our Voluntary services team, your fellow volunteers, your KMPT colleagues, patients and carers for their hard work and dedication over the last year. Keep your eyes peeled on our [website](#) or follow us on social media, to see when nominations open!

We love hearing all of your stories and finding out what you've been up to during lockdown, so please continue to share your hobbies, talents and the creative ways you have been spending your time.

Thank you again for your continuing support - we hope to be back running as normal as soon as possible, but until then remember how much we appreciate each and every one of you. You're all awesome!

A big welcome to Louise!

Louise Blackwood is the newest member of our Voluntary services team! We caught up with her to discuss her new ventures at KMPT...

“Hello, my name is Louise and I have just joined KMPT as the new Voluntary services administrator.

“I have been working on cruise ships for the past six years and before that I was in the hospitality sector. I have travelled to 49 countries including Alaska, the Caribbean islands, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the Pacific islands on eight ships, crossed the equator and I've even lived the same day twice!

“I am in my second year of university studying Psychology and Counselling and I am also volunteering for Brightside, an educational charity, as a mentor for young people to help them enter education and career pathways.

“I am looking forward to developing volunteering opportunities and I can't wait to meet all of you.”

Welcome Louise, we are delighted to have you join the team!



Find out more about the volunteering opportunities we have at KMPT

Friendship during the pandemic

Linda, one of our volunteers, decided to become a Community dementia friend as part of a pilot programme where volunteers are matched with one of our patients living with dementia. The idea of the programme is that patients are able to enjoy days out with

their new friend on hand to support them and to help them feel less isolated, particularly if they live alone. We spoke to Linda about taking part in the pilot programme and how COVID-19 has affected her work with Julie the person she has been buddied up with and who is living with dementia...

"It was my first attendance at a Forget Me Not meeting in March and my first meeting with Julie. I sat next to her and we chatted quite a bit and seemed to hit it off straight away. I was looking forward to accompanying her if she wanted to go out or just visiting her and having a chat. Sadly at this time the news of Coronavirus in the UK was spreading and sure enough just later that month we had lockdown. I was so disappointed as it meant that Julie would be shielding and I could only travel for essentials. Not a good start, but I didn't want to wait until things changed as who knew when that might be!

"The idea of having some telephone or email communication seemed like a good start and so that's what happened. I emailed Julie and introduced myself and we then progressed to a phone call and intermittent emails. I always included a photo of myself, on any email, so that she would recognise me once we were able to meet.

"With some restrictions lifted in lockdown, I approached Julie about meeting with her in her garden. We were both quite excited about this and so it was arranged. Julie doesn't like too much heat so when the weather cooled down a bit, we arranged to meet on what I hoped was going to be a cool, dry Wednesday afternoon.

"I phoned Julie on the morning of the visit to check that it was still ok and checked the weather to make sure that no rain was due and all looked fine. I arranged to meet Julie at 2.30pm, in her communal garden as she lives alone. Armed with my own chair, sanitiser and wipes, I drove to her home.

"I wasn't sure how long the visit would be and how we would get along face to face but I needn't have worried! Julie and I sat in her garden for 90 minutes just chatting about her family, her past career and how she lives alone with support from others. We also talked about her dear dog who was put to sleep at the ripe age of twenty three.

"I am going to visit Julie again in the next couple of weeks when its hoped that even more restrictions will be lifted, but in the meantime, we'll continue to email and speak on the phone."

Linda has been thoroughly enjoying her time with Julie. If you are interested in taking part in a similar programme, please contact our Voluntary services team.

Welcome baskets for new mums

The West Kent Friends for Mental Health is currently funding welcome baskets for new mums as they arrive at the Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) in Dartford to help make their experience less stressful. Coming to an MBU can be quite a daunting and an upsetting time for new mums. The hope is that the welcome baskets will help them to settle in.

The baskets will help to encourage mums to relax and take some time to pamper and care for themselves. They include things like face masks, body creams, chocolate, stress balls, herbal teas, cuddly toys, puzzles and slippers.

The feedback has been really positive with Tynisa Nixon, one of our Peer support workers, saying: "They have brought comfort to mums in a time of crisis, as they help them to feel truly cared for. Thank you so much for supporting this amazing initiative."



Becoming a volunteer driver

We are always looking for new volunteer drivers across the county.

Our drivers use their own vehicles to transport patients, family, and carers. Journeys can be short or long, depending on your preference.

This service is dearly valued by our service users because it helps keep families together whilst they are under our care.

You could be taking a patient home, bringing a family member in to visit their loved

one, or taking a patient to an appointment.

Where possible, we like to use the same driver for regular journeys because this helps build relationships between driver and passenger with both getting a great deal of satisfaction and peace of mind from working with the same person.

Being a volunteer driver is a great way of meeting new people, making new friends and really making a difference to people's lives.

In return we pay your mileage at 45p per mile, so it can be a good way of supplementing your income.

You are not obliged to take any transport request – you are free to do only those you want to.

You will have peace of mind by knowing that we do have safety protocols in place for COVID-19.

If you would like to become a volunteer driver then contact Voluntary services: kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net or 01622 723210

Friends and family group

Before COVID-19 struck, our friends and family group for those living with dementia had secured funding from the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons Charity (£700) to be able to meet for another year - with the money supporting their safe space to meet and discuss their feelings, emotions and just have a chat to people who understand their journey. The money will also support a creative day at Christmas when they can all meet and celebrate together as well as the opportunity to have two speakers attend their meetings to talk about dementia.

During the pandemic the group have continued to meet virtually and are really looking forward to having face to face meetings again soon.

[Find out more about our dementia groups](#)

NHS Volunteer responders

NHS Volunteer responders offer help to people in need of support or who are avoiding public places during the COVID-19 pandemic. The scheme is run by NHS England and supported by Royal Voluntary Service. Its aim is to help those self-isolating, including people with long term health conditions or who have been advised to shield at any point and supplement existing voluntary support within communities by helping people to stay well and reduce the avoidable demand on NHS services.

NHS Volunteer responders have been supporting tens of thousands of people across England during COVID-19, with tasks including; collecting shopping, delivering prescribed medicines, taking patients to appointments and making 'check in and chat'

calls.

If you're interested in registering to support, then please take a look at [here](#).



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Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, Farm Villa, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 9PH

We'd love to hear what you think.

If you have any feedback about econnect that you would like to share, please contact the communications team at kmpt.communications@nhs.net

To update your details or change your subscription preferences, please click [here](#)

kmpt.nhs.uk

