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MEMBER COUNTER

Welcome to the latest edition of the Bridgewater members newsletter.

Our newsletter provides our public and staff governors with a vehicle to communicate with their members and provide the latest information on the work that goes on in the Trust and the difference our staff are making to people's lives.

In this edition we are delighted to share with you some of the fantastic work our apprentices do day in and day out to support some of the most vulnerable in our communities. Many of our apprentices live in the areas where they work and bring with them knowledge and understanding of their local communities.

We can never underestimate how important this knowledge is. As we move towards more integrated models of care understanding what works well in some areas and what might not work in others is vital if we are to properly support our patients and their families.



Karen Bliss
CHAIR

Introduction from the Chair

We are also seeking interest from our members in our public, staff and partner governor vacancies. Our governors play a hugely important role in the work of our Trust. They bring with them knowledge and insight of their local communities and understanding of what works well and what doesn't. Their input and advice has proven invaluable on many occasions and we are extremely grateful for the contribution they make to our work.

This year our governors have embarked upon a series of visits to some of our services and are seeing for themselves some of the fantastic work that goes on in our health centres and clinics. They have also visited our corporate colleagues to understand how vital their work is in supporting our frontline clinicians deliver the very best care they can to some of the most vulnerable in our communities.

One of the cornerstones of the Trust is its five year strategy, Communities Matter. This has recently been approved by the Board and we are really excited to be rolling it out within the communities we serve. Our strategy sets out our intention to deliver place based care, alongside our statutory and voluntary sector colleagues in ever more imaginative and innovative ways.

We are also delighted to feature the work of our Drive Ability Northwest team. Our highly skilled clinicians/technicians provide an outstanding service. There's information too about an exciting new initiative in the Oakwood area of Warrington to support individuals and families in the area with health and well-being advice /signposting.

These have been very difficult times for the NHS and hardly a day goes by when it doesn't feature in the media. Here in Bridgewater we have been far from immune to the significant challenges posed by recent events and the huge surge in demand for our services during the winter months. It is a testament to the dedication, commitment and compassion of our staff that we have been able to adapt and respond to the many challenging scenarios locally, regionally and nationally. As Chair of the Trust I would like to put on record my thanks for their tireless efforts.

We thank you for your continued support of the Trust and hope you will enjoy reading about some of the fantastic work that takes place every day.

Your round up of good news

Community Health Workers take to the streets of Oakwood

Improving health and wellbeing, supporting people, and engendering a sense of wellness within a local community lie at the heart of an exciting new initiative being led by Bridgewater in the Oakwood area of Warrington.

We have recruited a team of health and wellbeing workers to reach out to individuals and families offering help and support and signposting on to other services.

Launched in December last year, the workers are based at Spencer House, Warrington. Their work builds upon the great success of schemes in London, Yorkshire, and Brazil where it was initially launched more than 30 years ago.

The health & wellbeing workers are keen to make contact with health professionals, voluntary groups, churches, schools and support agencies who may know of people who would benefit from the work they are doing.

Our health & wellbeing workers bring with them a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience of working for and on behalf of others. Whilst their work is in its early stages, we can see how it will make a difference to people who may be struggling with aspects of everyday living.

The project lead is Sam Ollerenshaw who is keen to increase knowledge, understanding and awareness within the local community and further afield. He has already seen the difference this work can make to peoples lives and is keen to see its success replicated in Oakwood. The results of the team's work will be recorded and fed into a national database.

Whilst initial funding is for a 12 month period hopes are high it will be extended further.

For further information contact Sam at sam.ollerenshaw@nhs.net



or visit www.bit.ly/chwoakwood

National Apprenticeship Week saw Bridgewater and organisations across the country taking great pleasure in highlighting the fantastic contribution our apprentices make to our work everyday.

Our website, Twitter and Facebook accounts featured some of the individuals who are supporting our staff to deliver excellent care to patients and support to their colleagues.

Speaking with students in high schools, colleges and job seekers at local job centres, provided us with a great opportunity to guide them through the system and explain how an apprenticeship might benefit them and their career plans and aspirations.

The highlight of the week was the annual apprenticeship awards evening at Riverside College, Halton.

The college recognised Bridgewater as their "Large Apprentice Employer of the Year" in recognition of our commitment to the continued growth of our apprenticeship programme and the support we provide before, during and after completion of their respective apprenticeship programmes.

At this event we were delighted to celebrate the work of all our apprentices but especially that of Beth Johnson, an apprentice in the Warrington Children's Learning Disabilities team based at Sandy Lane Children's Centre, Orford.

Beth was awarded the title care Apprentice of the Year having recently completed her Level 3 Senior Health Care Support Worker Apprenticeship. Beth is a highly valued member of our Warrington Learning Disabilities Team and we are delighted to share with you her fantastic achievement. We caught up with Beth to discuss her achievements.

Celebrating our BCHFT apprentices

Beth Johnson

What prompted you to become an apprentice/apply for your apprenticeship?

I had attempted the BSC Occupational Therapy degree at the age of 18, due to personal circumstances I was unable to complete the course. Since then, I have worked in various teams as a Therapy Assistant under the direction and supervision of Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists. I have always regretted not completing my degree, I love working within therapy, but I never had the confidence or finances available to try again. It was only when I started with Bridgewater Community trust that I got the support I needed. I had an amazing manager who believed in me and prompted me to make the decision to go back to university, her support in finding a course that fitted in with a full-time job is the reason I am an apprentice.

Tell us about your role, what does a typical day look like?

As a Therapy Assistant, we have our own caseload of patients to visit and ensure equipment that has been ordered by the Therapist is appropriate. Working within a crisis team means we are not always able to work through our caseload as we are needed as a second person to respond to crisis calls. As an apprentice, I am learning to take more of a lead role with supervision and guidance, when attending visits with the Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists. This allows me to develop my knowledge and understanding of my future role and set myself realistic learning targets with my mentor.

What is the best thing about your apprenticeship?

The apprenticeship allows me to study for my degree alongside working full-time hours, meaning I can still earn a living and not have financial stress. It also means I am not alone, working within a team with Occupational Therapists doing the same job I am studying for, provides me with so much support and guidance which is very encouraging.

What would you say to others thinking about an apprenticeship?

Take the opportunity while you have it.

To read more about our fabulous apprentices and the team that supports them [click here](#).



Get to know Drive Ability

Being able to use a car as a driver or passenger is invaluable – especially for people with restricted mobility or a disability. At Drive Ability North West, our Occupational Therapists and Approved Driving Instructors support people with medical conditions, disabilities, and those affected by old age, to drive safely and maintain or regain their independence as drivers or passengers.

We also advise on other mobility options to help people live a good and independent life, such as mobility scooters and car seats and harnesses for children with disabilities or challenging behaviour.

Help us reach as many people as possible with our service – we know it changes lives.

How do we help people?

People use our service for lots of reasons, because of a disability, becoming less able following a stroke for example, after diagnosis of a condition such as dementia, or for reassurance as they get older and their reactions may slow.

We support people to stay mobile and independent for as long as possible, with tailored support, advice and assessments on:

- Their ability to drive safely for longer
- Adaptations to overcome physical problems with vehicle control
- Passenger / driver access to vehicles, seating and posture
- Wheelchair and scooter loading and transportation
- Children's car seats and harnesses
- Mobility scooters
- Alternatives to driving, including public transport

We also offer driving assessments for people with disabilities, Police Fit to Drive assessments, plus a range of tuition and training.

We're asking you to help promote our service, so that we can support many more people.

You can do this by:

- Easily referring people to our service
- Letting more people know about our service, using the resources in this, our Communications Toolkit.

This Communications Toolkit can be found online within our professional resources area. You can access this by clicking the link at the bottom of the page or by scanning the QR code with your smart phone camera.



To visit the Drive Ability website [click here](#) or scan the QR code to find out more.

The Trust has become accredited as Veteran Aware. This means it is committed to providing the best standards of care for the armed forces community in the area.

The Trust has been formally recognised by the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA), which has awarded it the Veteran Aware status.

The VCHA is a group of NHS healthcare providers in England who are committed to providing the best standards of care for the armed forces community in England based on the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve, or who have served, in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

The evidence suggested that members of the armed forces received variable levels of care once the military was no longer responsible for them.



Bridgewater is accredited Veteran Aware status

The VCHA aim is to develop, share and drive the implementation of best practice that will improve armed forces veterans' care, while at the same time raising standards for everyone.

The accreditation of Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust means that 131 NHS providers across England are now Veteran Aware accredited, and the alliance aims to have all Trusts accredited by next year [2024].

Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is a leading provider of community health services in the north west of England.

It provides community and specialist services to people living in Halton, St Helens and Warrington as well as a Community Dental Network across those areas as well as in Bolton, Bury, Heywood, Middleton, Rochdale, Tameside, Trafford, Glossop, Stockport, Wigan and east and west Cheshire. Most of its services are delivered in patients' homes or in locations close to where they live.

VCHA Regional Lead Mandy Stokes said: "Well done to Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. It's been an absolute pleasure working with you on this journey and I am so pleased that the commitment of the Trust with the Armed Forces agenda has been recognised in this way.

"According to the latest census report from the Office for National Statistics, nearly 90,000 people living within this area have some connection to the UK's armed forces. This is quite a sizable number so the scale of the need is clear. I look forward to working with the Trust to support the local veteran and armed forces community in the future."

The VCHA programme is also now piloting the Veteran Aware accreditation of both the independent sector and hospices.



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We are proud and privileged to receive this award. Our staff are committed to providing all our patients with the highest quality of care and take pride in supporting our veterans.

Our Council of Governors was elected in July 2022. Together our public, staff and partner governors bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience into the organisation. Their experience of working the public and private sectors will be fully utilised by the organisation as it works to further develop and enhance the care and services it provides in the communities of Halton, Warrington and those parts of Cheshire & Merseyside and Greater Manchester where we provide specialist community dental services.

In May we shall be holding elections for public governors to represent the interests of their members in Halton and those parts of the North west where we deliver specialist community dental services.

We are also seeking staff governors to represent clinical support staff, dentists/medical practitioners and partner governor to represent the statutory sector in Warrington and the voluntary sector.

Governor Elections

Our public governors live in the communities they represent. Many are members of local groups/organisations and understand the needs of their neighbours and communities.

Our staff are members of the professional working groups they represent and are a conduit between the trust's management and its employees. They interpret issues on both sides and from each other's perspective. They offer the Council of Governors a view into frontline workings of the NHS, reporting directly to staff.

The overriding role of the Council of governors is to hold the Non-executive Directors individually and collectively to account for the performance of the board of directors and to represent the interests of NHS Foundation Trust members. The role is NOT about the operational management of the Trust.

Foundation trusts are required by law to appoint a lead governor. Our Lead Governor is Ms Christine Stankus who represents members in our Rest of England constituency. This constituency covers areas in the North West where we provide specialist community dental services.

Lead Governor Christine Stankus

"Our role is to ensure the organisation follows the principles that support the delivery of high quality, patient-focused care."

"We are often called upon to advice and support our Executive and Non-Executive colleagues. We each bring with us knowledge, skills and experience from a wide range of professions. I myself worked in estates and facilities team, of an extremely busy mental health trust that covered larger parts of the North West".

"We are different here because we don't operate from one site, we haven't a recognisable building that people associate us with, rather different things to different people, and that what drives us on and spurs on our existing Council of Governors.

To find out more about our governors, current vacancies and how to apply you can visit the Membership and Governor's portal by clicking on the button below.



Christine Stankus, Lead Governor

Visit the
GOVERNORS
PORTAL



A tribute to Paul Mendeika

Paul was a Public Governor on the Bridgewater Council of Governors, serving the constituency of Warrington for seven years. As a tireless campaigner for and on behalf of the public voice, Paul wrote a short but powerful article just before his death. His words were in full support of the Council of Governors and its' importance. It encouraged members of the public, and Bridgewater staff, to be a voice for their communities and colleagues.

Paul's funeral will take place on Thursday 8 June at 11.30am. It will be held at St Thomas Church, London Road, Stockton Heath.

As a fitting tribute, it is an honour that we share this article in recognition of Paul's passion and commitment.

Our thoughts and sympathies are with Paul's family and friends at this sad time. We shall be forever indebted for the many hours of work he did for, and on behalf of the organisation. Thank you Paul.



People are experts in their own healthcare, and it is vital they are actively engaged in all aspects of health service designing and delivery.

There is a growing body of evidence that public and community engagement is vital if the best healthcare is going to be delivered to meet people's needs. If they are actively engaged in their own care and in contributing to help improve services, the benefits are clear:

- people's health improves
- health outcomes are better
- they feel more in control
- more public engagement means better services more suited to people's needs
- people use less health services saving the system valuable resources

My appeal to you is to get involved in some way to give your views, ideas and input about services. This doesn't have to be in a formal type of role like a Public Governor, it could be as a volunteer or just giving feedback on services you or your family have received.

I am thoroughly enjoying being a Public Governor at Bridgewater and it is a great local organisation to get involved with.

If you fancy finding out more about getting engaged locally then please contact Angela Green the Trust's Head of Membership: angela.green30@nhs.net.

Hi, I'm Paul Mendeika and I've been involved as a Public Governor for Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust, patient representative, or volunteer in Warrington for the past 10 years. You don't need any special qualifications or experience.

I am absolutely passionate in making sure that patient and public voices are heard and are the essential input when planning, designing and delivering health services.

On average an adult in the UK sees a health professional for about 12 hours in total per year (unless they have specific health needs).

All the thousands of hours making up the rest of the year they, along with their families/ carers manage their health conditions and disabilities.

Patient Compliments

Each month we receive hundreds of texts, emails, cards and messages from our patients, their parents and carers thanking us for the care and support we provide and highlighting just some of the fantastic work that goes on every day in our health centres and clinics.

Everyday our staff work hard to make sure the care and support they provide is the very best it can be. Thank you to everybody who takes the time to contact us. It is important to us that your experience of using our services is a good one.

Our nurse was amazing. Talked us through everything. explained so well. Very kind and pleasant too. What a lady.

Urgent Treatment Centre, Widnes.

The doctor I spoke to was brilliant and made me feel very relaxed and he really listened to me and explained everything to me. Nothing could have been done any better.

Dermatology Service, Warrington

Excellent staff, really child friendly and explained every step, start to finish. Put both us as parents and ... (child's name withheld) at ease.

Dental services, Bolton.

The ladies were incredible with my son. They showed him so much care and kept me informed of each step. Can't thank you enough...thank you for the Pokémon pictures.

Dental services, Stockport.