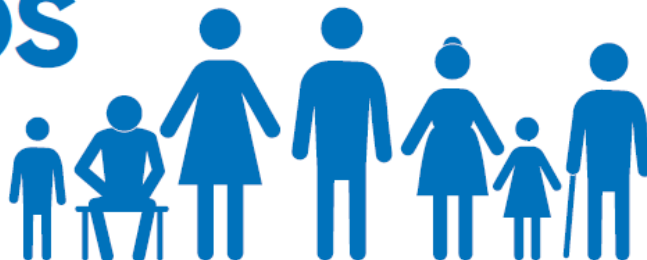


# FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CARERS NEWSLETTER

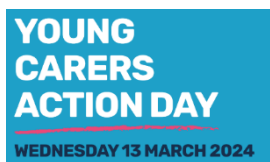


Welcome to the April 2024 edition of the Forensic Inpatient services Family, Friends and Carers Newsletter

## What's new?

As we continue to spring into 2024, let's take a look back over the last 3 months, and think together about how we can push forward, and really put carers on the map within our services...

## Young Carers Action Day



This year's Young Carers Action Day took place on Wednesday 13 March. The aim of the day was to create action, influence and raise awareness for young carers and young adult carers.

**“There are over 10,000 Young Carers in Kent and according to BBC research there could be another 30,000 hidden Young Carers!”** - <https://www.imago.community/Children-and-Young-People/Kent-Young-Carers>



We know that we can do more across our services to recognise and support this group, so this year we shared some resources from Kent Young Carers and The Children's Society, to help our teams improve their understanding.

Young Carers are those aged under 18 years old who take on caring responsibilities for a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse issue. Young Adult Carers are aged 16-25 years old.

If you know of any young carers, or young adult carers, or want to find out more about whether this might apply to a young person in your life, please do not hesitate to reach out and talk to our teams.

---

## Carers Leave Act



### Carer's Leave Act 2023

As mentioned in our last edition, a significant new Act came in to force on 6 April 2024 – The Carer's Leave Act.

As noted on the Carers UK website, The Carer's Leave Act has opened up many more possibilities for carers who are employed, including the following:

- The Carer's Leave Act covers employees in England, Wales and Scotland.
- Employees are entitled to one week's unpaid leave per year if providing or arranging care for someone with a long-term care need.
- This leave can be taken flexibly (in half or full days) for planned and foreseen caring commitments.
- It is available from the first day of employment.
- It provides the same employment protections to employees as other forms of family-related leave, including protection from dismissal.

If you are a working carer and would like to find out more about The Act and how it may benefit you, you can find out more here:

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/work-and-career/the-carers-leave-act-2023/>

---

## National Carers Conferences



It's not just KMPT who have been busy over the last 3 months. **NHS England hosted their 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Commitment to Carers Conference** in Bristol on 6 March 2024. The conference was attended by NHS Trusts and partner organisations with the aim of working together to improve carer experience. The theme for the day was '*Leading locally with carers*' and there was much discussion, sharing of best practice and an overwhelming sense of commitment to continuing to try and make meaningful changes for carers and their loved ones.

You can find out more about NHS England's Commitment to Carers here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commitment-to-carers/>



**Carers UK also held their Annual Members Conference** on 19 March 2024, with a theme of '*Connecting Carers, Improving Support*'. This event was open to members of Carers UK and was a great opportunity for those accessing their support to find out more about developments, and to be actively involved in shaping the future of the carer-led organisation.

You can find out more about Carers UK and what being a member means here: <https://www.carersuk.org/get-involved/join-us/become-a-free-member/>

Carers UK also promoted their **Carers Active April** campaign – which is all about supporting unpaid carers to be physically active, and raising awareness of the benefits of physical activity for carers, and the barriers they may face.

Whilst April may have come to a close, there are many great resources still available in their online Carers Active Hub (<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/carers-active-hub/>) including physical activity and wellbeing videos, and advice from experts.

## Updates on local projects



As mentioned in the last edition, there have been a number of projects taking place across our sites over recent months.

We are pleased to say that work is well underway at our Dartford site to support the work around patient property and storage. Thank you to our patients and loved ones who have been involved in this.



We also hope that visitors to the Dartford site find the new off-ward visiting room, which was co-developed with patients from the service, much more welcoming:



As part of the TGU upgrades to reception, we are now pleased to have a searching room available. This is part of a wider Quality Improvement project around searching at TGU. The visitor's policy is being updated to include searches for those of you coming to visit your loved ones to ensure security is maintained across the unit.

**We are inviting you to be involved in this process with a meeting to discuss the policy and protocols on the 15<sup>th</sup> May at 12pm.** Please contact either the Family engagement and liaison lead, or Amy-Louise Berry ([amy.berry@nhs.net](mailto:amy.berry@nhs.net)) for details of this meeting. Thank you.

In the meantime, we hope visitors to the TGU enjoy the newly refreshed reception area:



## Local events



Our services have also been busy with a range of events and activities for our patients and staff, including hosting a Caribbean Cultural evening at The Tarentfort Centre, and celebrations for Easter and Eid-Al-Fitr (Holiday of the breaking of the fast) at the TGU.

We are pleased to say that we also have some events coming up that will be open to families, friends and carers at each of our sites.

Please **Save the Dates!**

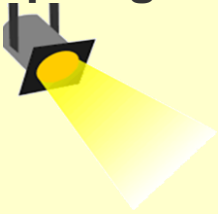


**Thursday 23 May** – BBQ for The Allington Centre, The Tarentfort Centre and The Brookfield Centre



**Tuesday 3 September** – Willow Gardens relaunch and afternoon tea at The Trevor Gibbens Unit

## Spotlight on...



### Willow Gardens at TGU

Speaking of Willow Gardens\*, there have been lots of changes over the last year, with even more to come in the next couple of months.

All of the old sheds, chicken and guinea pig houses have been demolished and we now have some lovely new sheds for the guinea pigs and a new coop for the chickens, as well as a new tea shed for patients to use for a rest and a drink after they have been working in the gardens.

We have some new raised allotment beds that the patients will be assisting staff to build over the next month, so they can grow more vegetables to use either on the wards, or in the Lakeside Lounge Café.

The goats will be shortly moving into Willow Gardens as they have a new stable and fencing that is due to be delivered in the next month.

We will have a new summer house coming in the next couple of months as well, which will allow patients and staff a lovely place to hold groups, or 1-1 sessions away from the wards.

We have some new picnic tables and benches that will be placed around the gardens, as well as a table tennis table that will go into the old goat enclosure, and seating for people to use. *For those with loved ones at The Trevor Gibbens Unit, you will be receiving further invite information for the September relaunch celebration in due course.*

\* Willow Gardens is the Trevor Gibben's Unit (TGU) animal and horticulture project. The therapeutic garden space provides a variety of active and passive opportunities for patients to engage with nature, including; taking care of the animals, engaging with gardening tasks or utilising the calming environment as a space to facilitate a sense of choice and autonomy.

At Willow Gardens we aim to promote patient's recovery, wellbeing and mental health through providing connections with nature. Providing valuable opportunities to develop positive roles, responsibilities and new knowledge and skills which patients can utilise during their recovery journey. As well as promoting choice, autonomy and independence through engagement and making connections within the natural world.



## Forums and Feedback



All families, friends and carers with loved ones accessing inpatient services at The Allington Centre, The Brookfield Centre, The Tarentfort Centre, and The Trevor Gibbens Unit are invited to attend our monthly.

These forums provide an informal opportunity to get together with each other and our services, to share feedback, ideas and support. The forums are held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, and they alternate between our sites and online.



The next forum is on **Wednesday 15 May from 10-11am (at Dartford)**

We know that forums and groups aren't for everyone and that there can be time, travel and financial barriers to coming along too, but if you would like to find out more, please contact the Family engagement and liaison lead.

If you cannot make it along to a forum there are still lots of different ways that you can share your views, including: becoming a representative for local governance meetings, getting involved in local projects, sharing your views as part of service reviews, speaking to the Family engagement and liaison lead, joining the KMPT Engagement Pool, and completing a Family, friends and carers survey.



You can also **Speak to Sheila** (KMPT's Chief Executive). Sheila can be contacted via an online form (accessible here: <https://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/speaktosheila>).

Whether it's to share a story about the outstanding care that you've received, seek answers to your questions about the trust, or you want to learn more about our trust's exciting plans for the upcoming year – write a message and Sheila will get back to you directly.

Your feedback on how we can make things better is always welcome.

*Please remember, if you have a complaint, you must complete the correct complaints procedure, which can be accessed here: <https://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/feedback/compliments-and-complaints/> or via speaking to our PALS and Complaints team on 0800 587 6757 (West Kent, North Kent and Medway).*

As per previous editions, we would like to keep you updated on some of the suggestions that have been made by families, friends and carers, as well as our patients themselves, and some of the actions that we have been able to take as a result:

Topic:	Update:
For hot and cold drinks to be accessible for patients on all wards (TFC)	<b>Completed:</b> Unfortunately, it is not possible to install the intended hot water taps at TFC, however alternative measures are in place to ensure that hot (and cold drinks) are readily accessible to patients on both wards.
For patients to have easier access to fresh air via the ward courtyards / gardens (Dartford)	<b>In progress:</b> All patients have access to fresh air via the ward courtyards and gardens. A trial of unrestricted access to this area is going well on Marle ward, and the plan is still to move onto The Allington Centre in due course. Patients at The Brookfield Centre continue to have access to the gardens without supervision when they have the relevant leave in place.

<p>For TGU to hold an event for families, friends and carers to come along, spend time with their loved one and meet some of the team</p>	<p><b>In progress:</b> As mentioned above, we are pleased to announce that TGU will be holding an event in September for patients and their families, friends and carers. The event will celebrate all of the wonderful work that has been taking place to upgrade Willow Gardens, and will provide a relaxed opportunity to meet with some of the team and enjoy a range of activities and afternoon tea. <i>More information will follow.</i></p>
<p>For the canteen to be open longer hours (Dartford)</p>	<p><b>Completed:</b> As part of the ongoing work around the Trust to improve spaces and experience, the canteen at Dartford has been refreshed, with redecoration, new furniture and a designated 'coffee-lounge' area being put in place. The canteen has been re-named 'The Restaurant' and opening hours have been extended during the week (Monday to Friday from 8am to 2pm the canteen is fully open with hot food available, and from 2-4pm you can still enjoy drinks and pre-packaged food items). We hope that everyone gets to enjoy the new-look canteen soon!</p>



**Your voice is important and it does make a difference so please keep talking to us!**  
And please encourage your loved one to attend their local Patient Experience/Patient Council meeting too. **Together we really can improve services and experiences.**

## What's coming up?



### International Day of Families - 15/05/2024

The International Day of Families was established in 1993 by the United Nations and is observed globally on May 15th as a way to raise awareness on the different kinds of struggles that may impact the basic family structure anywhere in the world. The theme this year is: **Families and New Technologies.**

The UN uses the International Day of Families to highlight important issues that may affect the family structure in the near future, and to address different social, economical or demographic factors currently impacting it.

You can find out more about the International Day of Families here: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-of-families>



### Carers Week - 10/06/2024 to 16/06/2024

According to the Carers Week webpage (<https://www.carersweek.org/>) millions of people across the UK care, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health condition or addiction cannot cope without their support.

It is estimated that they save the economy £162 million a year – the equivalent of a second NHS. Yet, many carers feel their role is forgotten and invisible.

Carers Week, taking place from 10–16 June 2024, is a UK-wide awareness campaign seeking to increase visibility for carers with decision makers, services, employers, communities, and businesses.



This year the theme is '**Putting Carers on the Map**' highlighting the invaluable contributions of carers across the UK and ensuring their voices are heard loud and clear.

As such, KMPT will be hosting a range of events throughout the week to ensure that families, friends and carers are firmly put on the map. *More information will be shared as we approach June.*



### **Thank You Day - 07/07/2024**

Every year, Thank You Day brings together millions of people across the UK to celebrate and give thanks to those that go above and beyond for us.

It is an opportunity to thank the people on your street, in your block of flats and all those (unsung heroes/local legends); the volunteers, teachers, carers who go the extra mile for us. There isn't a strict plan for the day (the idea is to say thank you however you want!)

You can find out more here: <https://thankyouday.org.uk/>

## **Caring is sharing**

**Do you have any tips, ideas, suggestions or information that you would like to share with other families, friends and carers?** Perhaps you have come across some information about carers rights, or a local support group or organisation who you have found really helpful and you would like to let other people know? If so, we would like to give you the opportunity to share these via our newsletter...just let your Family engagement and liaison lead know and we can add to our next edition.

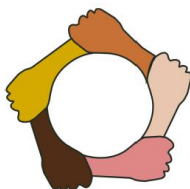
### **NEW 111 SERVICE FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

#### **New 111 Service for Mental Health**

It is now easier for anyone in Kent and Medway experiencing an urgent mental health crisis to access specialist help. All you need to do is **call 111, and select option 2 for mental health** when prompted.

This replaces the previous Kent and Medway Mental Health Crisis Line number, which no longer operates. Please only call 111 and select option 2 if you think you, or your loved one are experiencing an urgent crisis and the KMPT team caring for you or them is not available.

If you are concerned that your, or someone else's, life is at risk please immediately dial 999. Please know that NHS 111 option 2 is accessible across England, not just in Kent and Medway.



#### **Ethnic Mental Health carer forum**

For those from diverse ethnic groups caring for someone with a mental illness (Health professionals are welcome).

This forum takes place on the last Friday of the month from 10.30am to 12noon via Zoom. Hear all the latest news and updates on mental health and the impact on ethnic minority carers.

This forum is chaired by Matthew McKenzie FRSA BEM, Carers' advocate (Contact Matthew McKenzie on [mmckenz11@hotmail.com](mailto:mmckenz11@hotmail.com) for the zoom link, or find out more at Matthew's website: [caringmindblog.com/mental-health-events/](http://caringmindblog.com/mental-health-events/))



### **Connect with Laughter**

Laughter is scientifically proven to lift our mood, decrease stress, boost our immune system and help us manage pain.

To laugh your way to better health and well-being come and join us for these unique online interactive, fun, uplifting sessions.

Want more details regarding our Laughter Yoga events? Have questions about our laughter sessions? Then just get in touch with Be Naturally via <https://benaturally.co.uk/connect-with-laughter/>

Other Laughter Yoga providers can also be found online.

There are many more sources of information online too, but if you are not able to, or would simply prefer not to access information online, please just let us know which conditions, treatments, medications or support you might like to find out more about and we will see what we can find to send to you as a paper copy. This applies to any of the topics covered in this newsletter too.

## **Your questions answered...**



**Is there something you have been meaning to ask but you weren't sure who to go to? Or do you think other families, friends or carers might also be interested in the answer?**

If so, just let us know – any questions can be submitted to your Family engagement and liaison lead and we will do our best to include the answers in the next edition.

### **Question –**

**I know you can sometimes help with volunteer drivers, but is there any financial support available for travelling by train to visits and meetings?**

### **Answer –**

For anyone who isn't aware, KMPT have a volunteer service which includes a team of volunteer drivers. If you need support to attend a visit or meeting with your loved one, please speak to their team about whether a volunteer driver may be able to help.

If a volunteer driver is not available, or you prefer to travel by train, then unfortunately we are not able to provide any financial support with the costs involved.

However, we are aware of a number of Railcards that can be accessed via National Rail, which may help with travel costs for you. There are 9 main National Railcards, which give savings of 1/3 off train fares. Most are available to buy online or at stations.

A standard Network Railcard can be purchased by anyone aged 16 years and over, and the discount applies to up to 3 adults who can travel with you. These cards cost £30 per year. For those receiving PIP or other benefits in relation to a disability, you may be eligible for a Disabled Persons Railcard which costs £20 per year and also offers 1/3 of journeys for you and an adult companion.

This information has been taken from: <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/railcards/national-railcards/> where you can also find out more about other railcards that maybe appropriate for you, and check your eligibility.



# Get involved



Would you like to get more involved in projects and programmes aimed at service development and improvement in your loved one's service, KMPT and/or the wider community?

If so, why not speak to Ade Philips (Engagement Lead) on: 01227 538668 or [kmpt.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.engagement@nhs.net). Ade can tell you more about the Engagement Pool and how to get involved. You can also find out more here: [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/participation-and-involvement/](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/participation-and-involvement/)

If you sign up to the Engagement Pool, you will be invited to get involved in various projects. You can get involved on a voluntary basis, or, depending on the project and level of involvement, you may be able to receive expenses and/or payment for your work.

There are opportunities to be involved on a more local level too, for example:

	Service	Opportunity
	TGU	<b>Create / donate artwork</b> for display in our family visiting room(s)
	TGU	Provide feedback for the upcoming <b>Quality Network Peer Review</b> taking place on Wednesday 29 May by speaking to the Review team on the day.
	Dartford	Get involved in the Green Spaces Initiative to help us <b>improve the environment of the Allington courtyard</b>
	Both	Support your loved one's team with their <b>Triangle of Care self-assessment review</b> by answering some questions about how well they meet the 6 key standards

Please speak to your Family engagement and liaison lead if you would like to find out more about any of these local opportunities.



You are also invited to provide feedback about your experience of services for the **Kent, Surrey and Sussex Provider Collaborative Consultation** in order to inform the development of their next 5-10year strategy for low and medium secure services in the region.

The main areas that they will be exploring are detailed below:

1. Accessibility to units (are these in the right place and are they offering a good standard of visiting arrangements)?
2. What could be improved about the service and the links with carers in particular?
3. What are some good examples about the service that you have observed?
4. Where you have had interactions with multiple services across Kent Surrey and Sussex, what are the observable differences, gaps and opportunities to learn from the best services?

The aim is to work together to influence change, and your thoughts on the above would be most valuable to the consultation process and the development of the strategy moving forwards.

If you would like to be involved, you are welcome to share your thoughts with the Family engagement and liaison lead and/or Nicola (from the consultation team).

This is an ongoing process and there will also be opportunities to comment on the draft strategy once developed. Please let us know if you would like to be involved and we can agree a best way forward.

## Future editions

We hope you enjoyed this latest newsletter and would love to hear your feedback and/or ideas for future content. The **next edition will be coming out in July 2024**, so please get in touch between now and then if you would like to get involved...

## Contact us if you have any questions



Your Family engagement and liaison lead is Hayley Mason  
You can contact Hayley by calling **07880 473366** or emailing  
[kmpt.forensiccarersupport@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.forensiccarersupport@nhs.net)

## Remember you can...



... find out more about the **Kent and Medway Recovery and Wellbeing College** by joining a virtual introduction session.

Details can be found online: <https://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/about-us/recovery-and-wellbeing-college/introduction-to-the-recovery-college/>

Courses are available in Ashford, Canterbury, Dover and Folkestone, Maidstone, Medway and Swale, Thanet and online. You can find a copy of the current prospectus online too.

### Family, friends and carers survey



... let us know about your experience of our service by completing our **Family, friends and carers survey**.

Copies of the survey are available at each of our sites and online, using the QR code or here: <https://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/feedback/family-friends-and-carers-survey/>



**Recent Trustwide feedback shows that families, friends and carers rate their overall experience within KMPT as 'Very Good'.**

### GET INVOLVED IN OUR RESEARCH COMMUNITY



... scan the QR code with your smart phone or visit <https://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/research/join-our-research-community/> to access our **research** community page, where you can sign up to hear more about open and upcoming studies.



Charity Number:  
1202262

... donate to the new **trust charity – Health, heart hope** via the below details:

Account number No: 10032711      Sort Code: 607080  
Account name: KENT AND MEDWAY NHS SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP TRUST  
CHARITABLE FUND

You can find out more about the charity and how to get involved here:  
<https://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/get-involved/kmpt-charity/>



... request more **general information about the groups and activities** that are available to your loved one on their ward, for the therapeutic timetable and/or information about psychology programmes.

Please speak to the Family engagement and liaison lead who can support you with this.

## Thank you for reading

