

# Participation Matters

July 2021



...from the People's Network

News and updates

Welcome to the second edition of Participation Matters, a newsletter produced by the People's Network with stories from volunteers and representatives and information about what we do across the trust.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. If you'd like to get involved in:

- Staff interview panels
- designing projects, staff training and patient leaflets
- patient-led assessments of the care environment (PLACE)
- We Care reviews
- governance and engagement groups and meetings
- volunteering
- and much more ...

Please email [kentchft.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.engagement@nhs.net) or phone 01233 667810 for more information.

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## How I learned to live with my chronic illness - Esther's story

"I was fortunate to have been referred to participate in an interactive six week expert patient programme (EPP) course in 2019 and found the course to be invaluable. The facilitators, who themselves have experience in living with long-term health conditions, provided me with reassuring and positive guidance throughout the course.

"The course helped me to build my self-confidence back up again and it also provided me with the knowledge, tools and understanding of how I can better live with my long-term health condition.

"In the module there was a variety of topics in self-management to deal with problems such as stress, pain and fatigue, the appropriate use of medication, better breathing, relaxation techniques and healthy eating habits.



"I was so impressed by the course that I have since trained to become a volunteer facilitator to deliver this life-changing course to other people in the community that live with long-term health conditions. I want to be able to empower others in the same way the facilitators on my course empowered me.

"To be able to provide support to those that need it most and to see the benefits of the changes within others throughout the six weeks is truly rewarding. I really cannot recommend this course enough, as it really does help people to regain control of their life and to live it to the best of their ability."

The expert patients programme is a free six-week course run by a team of volunteer facilitators.

If you're living with a long-term condition, we know exactly how you feel. Managing a long-term condition doesn't have to be hard. Our expert patients programme can help you to regain your independence, manage everyday situations and boost your mental health and wellbeing.

To find out more email [kcht.epp@nhs.net](mailto:kcht.epp@nhs.net) or phone 0300 123 1220.

## Community

### Working with service-users to improve accessibility

KCHFT has been working with East Kent Mencap for more than five years, having regular focus groups with its members to create and test EasyRead patient information. EasyRead is used by the trust to support communication with service users and their families who have learning disabilities or sensory impairments.

With COVID-19 restrictions putting a stop to the EasyRead focus group in person since April 2020, East Kent Mencap supported their members to set up video calling and the group re-joined virtually in September 2020.

Since then, the group have tested and helped to redesign 15 patient information documents.

We asked the group members: What does being in the group mean to you?

- “It makes EasyRead information clearer and more understanding. I love it because there’s no jargon or big words.” **Cas**
- “We can meet new and old friends. We are looking after hospitals to make it better for people like me.” **Julie**
- “Theresa from KMPT came to our group - she sat and listened and wanted to get some ideas to make EasyRead too.” **Ray**
- “Having a voice. We link in with other people like the learning disability nurse from EKHUFT and the people who work in primary care.” **Dawn**
- “It helps with reading and I can talk to friends.” **Marc**
- “I love to help other people with the group and it means a lot because it gives other people the chance at understanding EasyRead.” **Christina**
- “You can make new friends. I feel like I’m doing something important for other people and to help people understand the forms.” **Paul**



## Volunteers

### Volunteering at the COVID-19 vaccination centres

Chris Leech started volunteering at our vaccination centre in Ramsgate and is proud to be able to support the NHS and help support the vaccine roll-out.

Chris said: "Having completed a couple of shifts at the vaccine centre, I was really surprised at how well organised the operation is, given the number of people coming through the doors.

"What was really inspiring to see were the number of volunteers giving their time to the cause, both within the NHS and community. At a time when the NHS is already under immense pressure, the staff that are giving more of their own time to help with the vaccine drive is truly incredible.

"I am happy that I have been able to contribute in some small way and what's more felt completely safe in doing so, and got to meet some wonderful people along the way."

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### Interested in volunteering?

You can find out more about volunteering with KCHFT [here](#) or contact the Patient and Carer Partnership Team at [kentchft.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.engagement@nhs.net) or phone 01233 667810.

### Upcoming events

#### Talk to us 2021: This July

Samaritans are challenging the UK to become better listeners by sharing expert tips on how to be a better listener.

Throughout July, Samaritans branches will be holding events across the UK and Ireland to raise awareness of the services they offer in their local communities. Visit your local branch website to see what they're doing during the month.



#### World breastfeeding week 2021: 1 August to 6 August

World breastfeeding week aims to highlight the huge benefits that breastfeeding can bring to both the health and welfare of babies, as well as a wider push for maternal health, focusing on good nutrition, poverty reduction and food security.

#### Medway Pride Festival: Saturday, 21 August 2021

A colourful fun filled event, for all the family to celebrate diversity and support equality.

It is through pride events that we can reach out to individuals who may feel isolated, to let them know it is ok to be who they are and to love who they love. It is an opportunity to celebrate everyone who is different and raise them up to fight for the equality and human rights we all seek and deserve.

"Looking up Pride in the dictionary... pride is:

- A feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired ..."

Read Shea's full blog on [Medway Pride Radio](#).

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## Thank you



Our values Compassionate Aspirational Responsive Excellent