

Participation Matters



...from the People's Network

News and updates

January 2022

We hope you enjoyed the festive period and wish you all a happy and healthy New Year.

Welcome to the fourth edition of Participation Matters, a newsletter produced by the People's Network with stories from volunteers and representatives. Our patient and carer representatives have now rebranded themselves as KCHFT Participation Partners.

Watch our short film below about how our Participation Partners are supporting teams across the trust.

Hear from Ash, a member of the trans and non-binary group, Pete and Jane, members of the People's Network, and Cas, Ray and Paul, members of the learning disability Easy Read group.



<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/about-us/ways-to-get-involved/>

Meet ...

Peter Zein

Pete has been a Participation Partner with KCHFT for over 10 years. He plays an integral part in several groups and projects, including the East Kent Community Engagement Group, Carers Steering Group, Quality Review Panel and more.

The East Kent Community Engagement Group is made up of patients, carers, families, colleagues and the community, working together towards continual improvement in local areas. You do not need to be a patient to join the group, just have an interest in working together to achieve high quality care.

Pete said: "I support the community engagement group because I believe in working together to understand every person's feelings and to understand we want the same things; a good service."

Pete first got involved with the trust as he was struggling to get the support to install his communication aid on his electric wheelchair.



"Before we had technology like communication aids, they gave us a communication book which you can put anywhere. But once we had the technology, they didn't think about putting it onto the electric wheelchair."

Pete worked with the wheelchair service to create a policy that would promote the installation of communication aids on wheelchairs using a bracket or table. Pete said the policy was vital "to give disabled people the independence and respect they need, especially to access health services."

Pete is always keen to participate in more groups and projects, especially to represent people with disabilities. "I want to help staff to understand what we need, how to communicate with us and how they need to work together. It is about changing the culture and making patients feel comfortable about saying what they need. If we don't communicate about when things go right or wrong, how will services know what they need to change?"

"You have the power to change things. If I can be involved using a communication aid, anyone can be involved as a Participation Partner."

Millbrook Healthcare now provide the wheelchair service across Kent and Medway. You can find out more here:

www.millbrookhealthcare.co.uk

Volunteers

Health walks

Health walks are short, local walks designed to help you get active, get outdoors and meet new people. They are led by friendly volunteers, leaving from central locations across east Kent.

12 new volunteer health walk leaders have recently completed their training to support existing volunteers and to set up new health walks.

Andrew Swarbrick has been supporting the trust for some time now, discovering new walks to bring his groups to. Andrew said: "Volunteering makes me feel I am putting back into something I was already doing and enjoying."

"I appreciate the social side of meeting and chatting to people but I am also happy to walk alone so I risk assess all my walks by myself before bringing groups along with me so I get the best of both worlds."



If you would like to find out more about health walks or becoming a volunteer leader, please contact Sarah Gower at sarah.gower@nhs.net or phone 07760 163176.

Service of the quarter

Infant feeding team

The infant feeding team delivers breastfeeding support and advice to mothers across Kent.

With the onset of COVID-19 restrictions, the infant feeding coordinators quickly adapted and, with the support of the breastfeeding volunteers and health visiting team, started to deliver their breastfeeding groups virtually to continue supporting mothers and families.



The team and volunteers now deliver three virtual sessions every week. Now with the support of the children's centres across Kent, they are beginning to offer face to face sessions again. The volunteers are continuing to update their training before stepping back into the children's centres.

You can find out more about breastfeeding support [here](#).

Your feedback

You said, we did

Did you know, the trust receives up to 4,000 patient feedback surveys every month?

If you or someone you care for has used one of our services, we welcome your feedback. Whether it is positive or negative, it is important to us. Why not take a look at the [your feedback page on our public website?](#)

All feedback is viewed by our services, where they can identify best practice or potential improvements. Some feedback will be sent to our QI team, where they can take forward a dedicated quality improvement project.



You said:

Some of our patients staying at Tonbridge Cottage Hospital commented on the lack of activities and resources to pass the time.

We did:

The hospital has now purchased two extra tablets with user-friendly interactive activities for patients. In addition, one of the healthcare assistants is taking on a therapeutic role, managing individual and group activities on the ward.

Participation Partners are advocates for you and can take forward any issues or themes highlighted through patient feedback. Would you like to represent patients and the public? Find out how you can join our People's Network by emailing kentchft.engagement@nhs.net.

National campaign calendar

Eating disorders awareness week - Monday, 28 February to Sunday, 6 March 2022

There is a common misconception that eating disorders (EDs) are a lifestyle choice. In reality, EDs are serious and often fatal illnesses, with an estimated 1.25 million people living with an ED.

At a time when all health services are under pressure and many people have been isolated from their loved ones, the need to raise awareness and provide support has never been more acute.

Eating disorders awareness week aims to do just that. The 2021 campaign resulted in:

- 32 MPs signing an Early Day Motion, calling on the government to make sure people with EDs get the treatment they need.
- Over 370 healthcare and educational professionals attending masterclasses on EDs.

For more information, support and advice, please go to:

- [Beat Eating Disorders](#)
- [NHS website](#)
- [Mind](#)

Interested in getting involved?

Email kentchft.engagement@nhs.net or phone 01233 667810 for more information about opportunities across the trust.

Thank you



Our values Compassionate Aspirational Responsive Excellent

www.kentcht.nhs.uk