

volunteer voices

Your news bulletin from KMPT Voluntary services

Welcome to Volunteer Voices...

Can you believe it's December?

2020 has been without a doubt a challenging and difficult year. We are so lucky at KMPT to have amazing people like YOU who have made 2020 so much more bearable for so many people. From our volunteer drivers who have taken food packages to people self isolating, to our phone buddies who have kept in contact with some of our most vulnerable patients in our community, you have all stepped up and helped us to continue to serve and support people across the county.

With Kent now part of Tier 4, we know that many of your plans for the festive period will have had to change. We hope that you all still manage to have a well deserved rest and make the most of what we can do on the day, it's definitely well earned.

With a new year approaching, we are busy recruiting for some volunteer roles at the moment (see more below) which are all based around the new world we find ourselves in and the need for technical support to keep people connected. If you're interested in taking on another or a new role, then please let us know.

We would also like to send a big thank you to everyone for keeping us entertained with your hobbies, arts and crafts and messages of encouragement. We want to see more of all your amazing talents next year, so keep in touch and let us know what you've been up to away from KMPT.

We cannot wait to see what 2021 has to bring us and hope to see (in person) as many of your lovely faces as possible when we're able to again.

For now though - keep safe, have a lovely break, and we will see you in the new year!



The KMPT Awards 2020 - the results are in!

Last week we celebrated the KMPT Awards with our Communications team travelling around the county surprising our winners and highly commended. Each day the winners of four categories were announced and the week ended with a special broadcast from Chief Executive, Helen Greatorex on Friday 18 December with the final four award winners broadcast during a Livestream event.

The Volunteer of the Year Award is dedicated to you, our amazing volunteers and this year there was quite the shortlist for the judges to pick from;

Louis Coelho

Louis volunteers as a carer representative for many KMPT committees and panels, including the recruitment and selection stakeholder panel. He always gives 200% to his extremely active role with so much passion, energy and vast knowledge, along with a friendly and kind approach.

Norman Phillips

Norman is one of our amazing volunteers. He is reliable, dependable and committed and nothing is too much trouble. He has made a tremendous difference in assisting boosting morale amongst staff during a very challenging time as well as helping our services users in the community.

Julia Seath

Julia has been a dedicated and committed supporter of and contributor to KMPT mental health services for older people for many years. She is always very professional and supportive and has a kind and considerate manner. She is highly committed to helping other carers seeking constructive strategies for those living with dementia.

Jess Shaw

Jess has been involved with several projects for our dementia groups and this year created and ran a five week project herself for the Forget-me-nots and Sunshiners. She shows true dedication to our services, and has thought of unique and interesting ways to engage with our service users.

Our winners!

We are delighted to announce that our Highly Commended volunteer is Louis Coelho, and the Winner this year was Julia Seath! Huge congratulations to both of them (you can see some pictures below of them with their awards) and well done again to everyone who was nominated and shortlisted - you are all winners in our eyes!

We were also delighted that two of our amazing colleagues (and Voluntary services coordinators) Zoe Young and Clare Streeter, were both shortlisted for the Outstanding Support Service Award. They are incredible in their roles and we are very fortunate to have them as part of the team.

It's with great pleasure that we can announce Zoe was awarded Highly Commended in this category - so a huge well done to her!

It's so wonderful to see our teams' work acknowledged and celebrated. Well done again every one and here's hoping next year we'll be able to celebrate in person!



Find out more about the KMPT Awards 2020

Become a virtual volunteer

Voluntary services have been looking at ways we can continue to offer and expand our volunteering provision whilst under the pressures of COVID-19.

We know a good many of you have managed to return to your roles, but many still have not for various reasons. That's why we are developing what's known as virtual volunteering so more of you are able to get involved.

Virtual volunteering is when a person volunteers over the internet by joining a site via video-chat software (we use one called Lifesize, but it's very similar to other ones you might have used). The idea is that if a ward is running a music session then you can join online and still take part in the activity. These kinds of activities are being very well received by ward staff, because it keeps people involved and they can bring their unique talents to patients.

We've had requests for virtual volunteers who could run creative writing, arts and crafts, no-bake cookery, line dancing, and tai chi sessions already - and we're looking for more! So, if you have an interest that you think you could share online PLEASE let us know.

You will also need access to a device that is internet enabled with audio and visual and a knowledge of how to use video-chat applications.

You will not be responsible for setting up the meeting, that will be done by staff, but we just need to make sure you have a good camera angle and can run the session as successfully as possible without being with the participants in person. We're sure there will be teething problems and a few hiccups, so don't worry too much about it, but the more diverse a range of activities we can offer the better!

If you would like to be a virtual volunteer or if you would like to know more and chat to someone about it then please contact [Voluntary services](#).

Twiddle muffs

One of our incredible volunteers has made these exceptional twiddle muffs, which are used by people living with dementia. We are currently sending them out to those in need, and very much appreciate the effort and dedication that has gone into creating these. We know that many of our community will benefit hugely from these, so thank you.



We're looking for IT Buddies

The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly stressful for many of our service users.

For those who have to stay at home it can be a very isolating experience being away from family and friends and this can increase stress and anxiety.

What we need are people who have good IT knowledge to help our community service users learn how to use IT to keep in touch with family and friends.

You will be volunteering from home, using your phone to call service users to help them install, run, and use video-chat software such as Zoom, Lifesize, etc.

This will help them keep in contact with family and friends so they feel less isolated.

If you think this is something you could help with then please contact Voluntary services on 01622 723210 or kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net

The Great Escape

'The Great Escape' is our new feature where we ask you to submit a piece on a special place in Kent that you like to go to recharge your batteries and enjoy a little piece of Eden, whatever that may be for you. This week, Stephen Tucker, our Voluntary services coordinator, is going to kick us off...

"As you may have seen in the last edition of Volunteer Voices I recently accompanied the FOLS team on a falconry course. Wildlife has always been a passion for me and I do some volunteering in my spare time – with the RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust, and other conservation charities. This means I've been lucky enough to find lots of little hidden gems, where human feet seldom tread.

"One of those is on the Isle of Sheppey, on the Elmley marshes. This is a place I like to go to feel the bones beneath my skin. After a week at work it can take a while to tune in to the world. It's like tuning a radio - you get lots of static and then occasionally pick up a clear signal. The marshes may not be a pretty place, but they are beautiful. You need to be at ease, to soak and seep into the environment, and then you become part of it. There, can you hear that? That's the pewing of a pair of buzzards giddy on the eddys and currents, soaring soaring hunting. That hover there, that's a kestrel looking for something to eat. The rabbits (hit hard by myxomatosis this year – humans aren't the only ones taken by disease) run for it. Was it me? Was it the buzzards?

"I like that this part of the Swale still has that industrial feel to it. On the south side are the factories, but on the north is the Elmley marshes. So many things have made their way along the Swale – trade, language, loves, swearing, raiders, poetry, friends, life, and existence. It's still a living place to be.

"Though it can be quiet and solitary and my luxury is to find a hidden spot where I can put up a shelter from the wind, light a small fire, watch the wildlife, and let the world pass by."

Thank you to Stephen, and if you would like to submit your 'Great Escape' then please email: kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net.



And finally we wish you all a wonderful festive break!

Our team Clare, James, Stephen, Louise, Zoe and Helen, would like to wish you all a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a wonderful new year. We hope you all have a relaxing break and eat lots of delicious treats. Thank you again for all of your support, patience and amazing work this year - we can't wait to see you all in 2021.

With love from your Voluntary services team. x



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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

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