



**Kent and Medway**  
NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust



Your news bulletin from KMPT Voluntary services

## Welcome to Volunteer Voices...

We hope that you all had a relaxing festive break with your family, friends and loved ones. The last year really did fly by, and it's hard to believe that we are in a new year, but we are eager to get started with new and exciting projects - which of course you are a vital part of.

Unfortunately, 2022 hasn't started quite as we would have hoped and it is with deep regret that, due to the worsening COVID-19 situation, KMPT has decided to temporarily suspend all volunteering at any in-patient site. This covers not only volunteers but all external visitors and external patient leave. This is effective immediately. If you have any questions, please get in contact with the team.

For those of you who are volunteer drivers this will mean the number of journeys will decrease. If you

have journeys already in your diary please contact Louise Blackwood about the status of them.

This measure will be reviewed on 17 January 2022 and we will let be in contact as soon as we know more. We are deeply sorry that we've had to return to this state of affairs and we can assure you it's not a decision that's been taken lightly. Everyone at the Trust has so much gratitude to all our volunteers but we have to keep in mind the health and wellbeing of our patients.

With this in mind, we wanted our first edition of the newsletter to reflect some highlights from the last year, as thanks to your support we managed to maintain our garden spaces and create new safe places for our staff and patients to enjoy. We also started a host of new volunteering roles and projects which we look forward to continuing with and growing this year, when the environment allows.

A huge thank you from everyone at KMPT for your support, help and care - our volunteers really are brilliant!

---

## Bernard's Corner

On Wednesday 15 September 2021, we held an official opening of Bernard's Corner in Webb's Garden.

Bernard was a longstanding volunteer who sadly passed away in 2020. We developed a space in the garden to remember him and his love of Webb's, as well as providing a space where patients and staff can sit for quiet contemplation, relaxation, sit with nature and enjoy the peace and quiet. We invited Bernard's wife, Jenny, to officially open the corner and she gladly accepted. We had many visitors join us for the opening ceremony: Bernard's family, volunteers, members of Friends for Mental Health, and staff at St Martin's and well as Max Webb and his wife Carol.

We are #KMPTProud of our volunteers who have spent months working in this area to create this wonderful space. We hope you have enjoyed the experience and are also proud of your achievements.

We would also like to express our thanks to Friends for Mental Health who kindly donated funds for Webb's to purchase Bernard's bench and the birdbath that sit in pride of place in the corner.



---

## Thank you message from Ruby Ward

A special thank you was sent to us from Angela for you, our volunteers...

"My name is Angela and I am the Senior occupational therapist on Ruby Ward. Ruby Ward is an all female, older adult inpatient ward. We have had volunteers working with us on the ward for around 2 years, helping with everything from music, to dramatherapy to arts and crafts. It was a real blow when the first wave of Covid hit and we were no longer able to have volunteers helping us. We had come to rely on their support and in the case of our super volunteer Yasmine, she had been leading activities, which took the pressure off ward staff.

"As the COVID-19 restrictions lessened and our volunteers were allowed to return, we found that a couple did not wish to return and we have had only one come back. We are so grateful for her support on the ward and the fabulous ideas that she brings to life with our patients. We are hoping that more people will come and join us in the future, and we've certainly been busy interviewing and meeting lots of potential volunteers who want to help with befriending, music and life story work to name a few. We are very excited to start life story projects and think that this will be a great way of supporting our patients to have the best experience and care when they move on from the ward into new placements. We want to help them to recall and reminisce about good times for family, friends and carers to share."

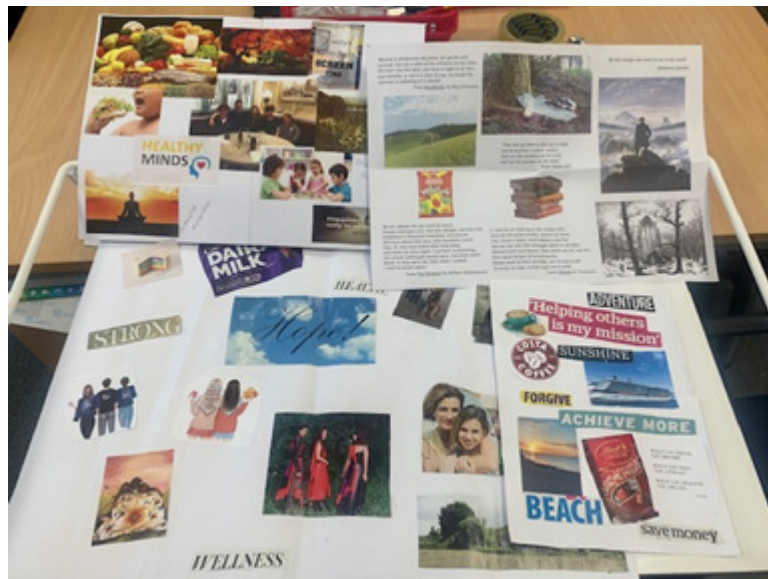
Thank you volunteers, for everything you do to help us deliver great care.

---

## Life Story vision boards

Following a recent staff training on Life Story projects we discovered that vision and mood boards have been used to find out a bit more about an individual, specifically in the case of dementia patients. The boards would include things like your favourite things, hopes and dreams and this would be a creative activity whilst getting to know the person. We wanted to trial this on ourselves and we each created our own vision board to bring to our team meeting.

The conversations we had from this activity was entertaining and it was fun to learn things we didn't know about each other, for example, Clare's strong views on healthy eating and the importance of being present spending less time on mobile phones and watching TV. It definitely opened up conversations around the meanings behind the pictures and it was great to see everyone's creative flare. This is an activity that we hope to open up to volunteers who do Life Story work with our patients in the future.



---

## Don't be blue this January

You may or may not know that the third Monday of January is referred to as "Blue Monday" and no it's not the anniversary of the release of New Order's hit single, but the name given to what is thought by some to be the saddest day of the year.

There is some controversy over this day as mental illness is obviously not something to be trivialised or suffered for just one day per year.

However, with the ongoing pandemic, which has temporarily affected volunteering within the Trust, there is a risk that many of us could be feeling a little lost or indeed blue (and not just on 17 January). What we'd like you to do is focus on the positives as a way of resisting the temptation to give into any negative thoughts you might be having. So instead of thinking of all the downbeat things that are going on around us, we urge you all to take the time to think of all the good things that are happening in your lives. Even better, we'd really like you to tell us about them!

It doesn't matter how big or small they are – it could be the birth of a grandchild, or just as humble as that stranger on the street you passed who gave you a friendly smile. If you could send us your "anti-blue" stories, or maybe a picture, we'd love to see them.

We may include them on the Trust's social media so please only send what you are happy to make public (we won't include names or specific locations to protect privacy). Please, send them to [kmp.t.voluntaryservices@nhs.net](mailto:kmp.t.voluntaryservices@nhs.net)

---

## Zoe's volunteering experience

Zoe, Voluntary services coordinator east Kent, has started volunteering at her local animal rescue centre on Sunday mornings. She is part of the horse and donkey team and duties include mucking out stables, poo picking yards and fields, general health checks and grooming. Some horses and donkeys are elderly and need that extra bit of care, such as being brought in from the fields for the winter and additional feeds to help them maintain their weight over winter. Zoe is really enjoying being outdoors in all weathers and helping care for animals who have been neglected, abused or had to be handed over for a variety of reasons. Being in the countryside surrounded by animals of all kinds: pigs, goats, chickens, ducks, turkeys, cows is a huge privilege and great for her physical and mental health.

The Chestnut with Zoe is called Lovebug, who has to come in for the winter and needs extra feeds otherwise he will lose weight. It is such a joy watching him come trotting over for his breakfast. The little Falabella is called Pip. Pip joined the rescue centre with his fellow Falabella, Peppercorn and they go everywhere together.



---

## The St Martin's art group is back

We are really pleased to see the return of our voluntary art group who visit Fern Ward to provide a variety of art activities to inpatients. Judith, Abi and Jodie come along every Wednesday morning and prepare all the materials for the activity planned for that day. They then walk down to the ward and encourage patients to get involved in the various art projects.

Their commitment and dedication is incredible and we are extremely grateful to them. Please see some examples of the art activities they have been working on below.



---

## Book trolley

We are happy to announce that we have restarted the book trolley service across the three main sites – Maidstone, Dartford and Canterbury.

Priority House in Maidstone welcomed volunteers Chloe and Janet and St Martin's Hospital in Canterbury welcomed back Muriel and Sandra who go onto the wards once a week with the book trolley. They support the wards by making the books available for patients to borrow. They ensure a good selection is available and engage with patients to encourage reading or have little chats. Muriel and Sandra are also joined by a new volunteer, Kirsty. We are pleased to welcome Kirsty to our volunteer team and happy to provide this service to our patients as it provides additional activity and interest to the daily ward life.

We are still looking for volunteers in the Dartford area to take the book trolley around inpatient wards, please email [kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net) if you are interested in this role.

---

## A beautiful new addition to the Mother and Baby Unit

The Rosewood Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) at our Dartford site, were the well deserved winners of RHS' Chelsea Flower Show competition but had a long wait for its arrival due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MBU garden named 'the Garden of Hope' has been designed by Arit Anderson, garden designer, writer and presenter of BBC's Two's Gardeners' World.

This is what Sara Garraway, Occupational therapist at the Mother and Baby Unit, had to say about the new addition: "The new Garden of Hope at Rosewood is such a fabulous addition. It's a relaxing and calming space for mums, babies and staff to be in. It's a great place for mums to get some quiet alone and also for groups of mums together to socialise with their babies. It is also a lovely environment to run group activities in, including relaxation, mindfulness, exercise, sensory, messy play, arts and crafts and picnics and BBQ's. It will also be a fantastic space for families to spend time with their loved ones and the swing is great for older siblings."

If you know anyone who is interested in volunteering to help with the maintenance of the garden, please contact voluntary services [kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net)



---

## Community befriender role

Voluntary services are working alongside our social work and community teams to recruit volunteers who will pay social visits to our community patients.

This could include helping them with shopping trips, doctors appointments, meeting for a tea or coffee in a local coffee shop, etc. These kinds of activities will help decrease isolation as this is an important stage in recovery for our patients. The volunteers will help provide useful support to improve their lives and independence.

Full training and support will be provided. Volunteers will be able to provide a listening ear and support on managing their mental health.

If interested in this role, please contact [kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.voluntaryservices@nhs.net)

---

## And finally...your festive creations!

We asked volunteers to send in their festive creations and here are some pictures of some of the amazing work that was submitted... enjoy!







[Share this newsletter »](#)

---

**Sign up to other newsletters from KMPT and other partner organisations we work alongside to deliver our mental health services.**

---

Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, Farm Villa, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 9PH

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](mailto:kmpt.communications@nhs.net)

To update your details or change your subscription preferences, please click [here](#)

---

[kmpt.nhs.uk](http://kmpt.nhs.uk)



This message originated from outside of NHSmail. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.