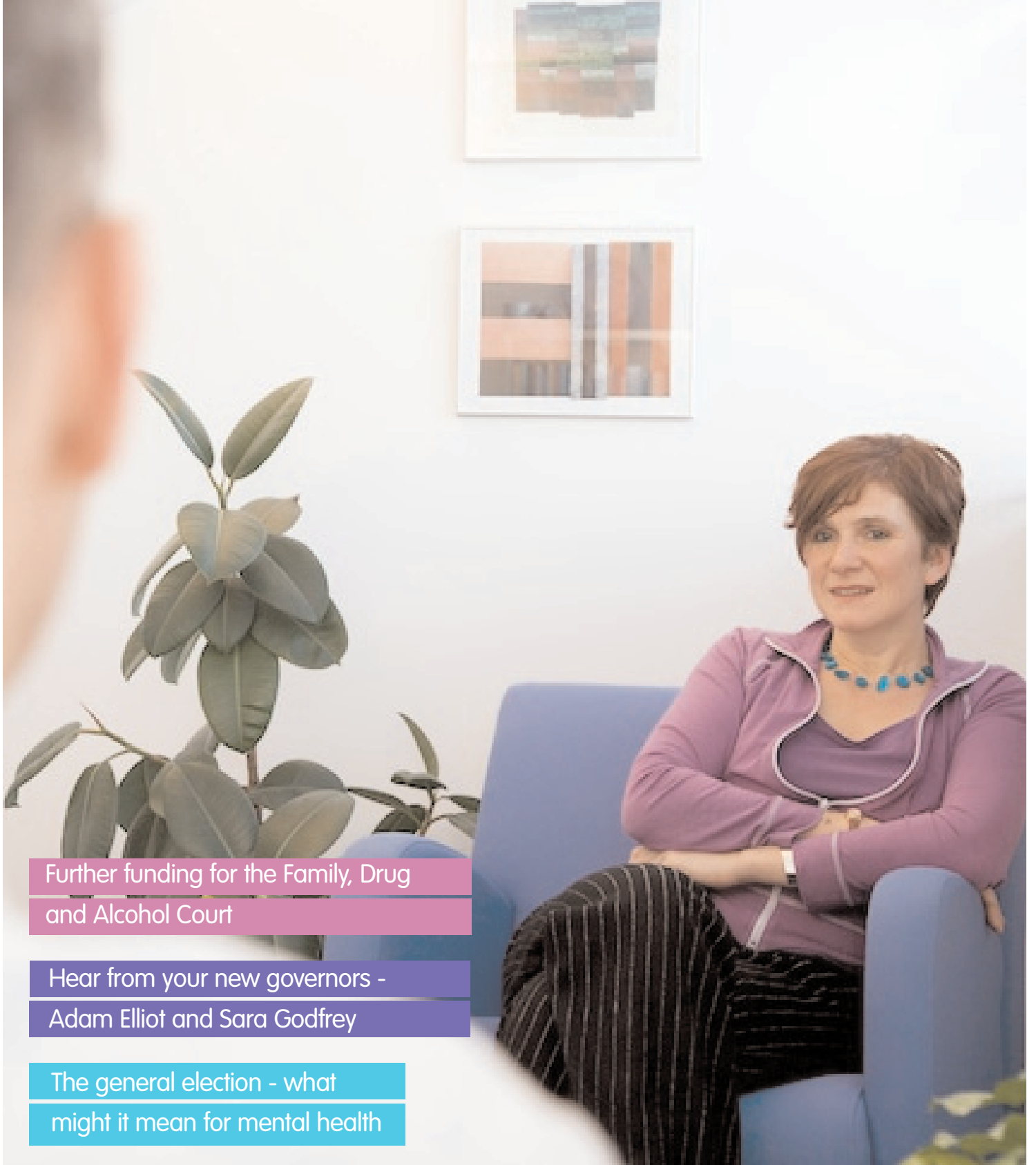


members' newsletter

Spring 2010



Further funding for the Family, Drug
and Alcohol Court

Hear from your new governors -
Adam Elliot and Sara Godfrey

The general election - what
might it mean for mental health



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Further funding for Family, Drug and Alcohol Court

Funding for our Family, Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) has been extended until 2012. FDAC is a collaboration between us and Coram and is commissioned by Camden, Islington and Westminster councils.

FDAC provides support to families trying to break the cycle of substance addiction. The court uses specialist judges who encourage and motivate parents as they progress through the programme. This is backed up by a specialist team that works intensively with the families.

We know that over 70% of cases of children who enter care are from families with substance misuse, domestic violence and/or mental illness. The families that the FDAC specialist team work with have incredibly difficult and complex backgrounds – which is why working together with each of the agencies has been central to the success of the court.

Since 2008, the specialist team has worked with over 70 families. Parents who may have otherwise had their



children removed from their care, have been given the support networks to give them a chance to change their lives and be with their families. This commitment by government to continue funding the court means that we can give even more parents the chance to turn their lives around and remain with their children. Or if this is not possible to work with us to secure the best possible future for their children.

what's new



Substance misuse services for young people in Barnet

We are delighted that we were recently given the go ahead to run the young peoples' drug and alcohol services in Barnet.

We have experience of contributing to similar services through Camden and we also run, in partnership with Coram, the UK's first

Family, Drug and Alcohol Court (see left).

We are pleased to be given the opportunity to grow and develop the service, and to ensure that the young people who use this service have access to high quality psychological therapies where ever needed.

FROM YOUR GOVERNORS: Adam Elliot, public governor for Camden

I have a background in medicine and in law. I qualified last year as a Barrister, having studied part-time, whilst working as part of the Fitness to Practise directorate for a medical regulator. My connection with the trust goes back many years as I have known a number of different service users who have been either friends, family, or friends of my family. As a result I am very passionate about the lack of government and public recognition and acknowledgement of mental health issues and the challenges they pose both to patients but also to family, friends and

colleagues.

Having completed my studies, I was left with a great deal of free time and I wanted to ensure that I used some of it to benefit the community and public as a whole. All this coincided with the governor election cycle, and so it seemed a perfect opportunity to undertake work in an area that I have a passion for and commitment to. With the help of the trust secretary, I stood for election, and was surprised, honoured, and humbled, to be elected by the trust's public members who live in Camden.

As I am still finding my feet

as a governor I do not have any specific plans as to how to make a difference as a governor - the task is quite daunting! However, I am up to the challenge and am very keen to ensure that the constituency, namely Camden, has the opportunity to raise issues with me and that I have the chance to meet and discuss issues with the members that I represent.

I know that we are a young foundation trust and that there are areas relating to our organisation, communication and general administration which could be improved. Accordingly, I am keen to bring my skills and experience to the trust

and hopefully make a difference by facilitating improvements and development where I can. I hope that I have already made a difference, in particular, having been able to provide advice regarding the drafting of important and public trust documents and statements.

Additionally, I was recently elected by my fellow governors to be on the Board of Governors' Performance Committee. In standing for this

Committee, I wanted to ensure that as governors, both new and experienced, we had clear, achievable, and measureable goals, and that we were accountable both to ourselves, and to the people we represent.

I want to ensure that members and the public in general, have a voice and an opportunity, both to raise issues, and to gain a better understanding and insight into the workings of the trust. I am also keen that we have the

opportunity to hear their ideas and gain a better understanding through the insights, experience, and knowledge of the members.

Accordingly, I would like to hear from members and am looking into, along with colleagues, the possibility of organising some sort of event/roadshow, which will both allow constituents to meet with governors and for genuine dialogue to take place.

FROM YOUR GOVERNORS: Sara Godfrey, public governor for the rest of London

A young woman leaves a house in South London before dawn in late summer. She walks into a park throws her shoes up into the air and begins a barefooted journey into psychosis. At 2pm she posts the contents of her handbag into a letter-box. At 4pm she believes she's Dante Alighieri, and at 10pm she is laying naked in front of a parked car waiting for God to take her away. At midnight she is picked up by the police and taken to the Maudsley mental health hospital in South London.

The story above has a happy ending. The woman became a patient at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust where she was "cured" for want of a better word. She went on to receive a Doctorate in Philosophy. She became a writer and cultural policy advisor in Whitehall. Her life expanded as she formed what might be termed as "normal" relationships with peers and developed an intimate relationship with a significant other. Without the right treatment, she would have survived, like

she always had, but it would never have been a life that was ever really lived.

I can say all this with such certainty because the woman in question is me. And yet like many people who have suffered from any form of mental illness (1:4 of the population) I found myself writing about it in the third person, as if it never really happened to me.

There is a strange dissociation in the psychotic experience between the

character who is acting out his/her madness on centre stage and the "normal" person who silently observes from the wings. And since being "cured" I have noticed this phenomenon at work in society at large through our dissociation from the communities we live in, especially when it concerns services that really matter to us. How many of us allow the "usual suspects" to go onto the boards and committees that end up shaping our lives? It was in response to this question that I decided to stand for governor.

I was extremely surprised and delighted when I was elected in that order. I do think that my experience of the trust as a patient will be invaluable, as well as my experience in policy development. What's even more interesting is that there is so much more to contribute than I'd imagined. I've just been voted onto the Sustainability, Health and Environment Development Unit, or the SHED Unit for short, which is concerned with carbon reduction/environmental issues, and the Design Group which examines the

patient experience in relation to the building. There are exciting areas that are possibly opening up too, such as in the emerging technologies where there are debates over the use of digital technology to deliver services versus the quality of the authentic experience.

All in all I really enjoy the new challenges that are opening up as a governor and would recommend this new journey to any member.

Access to the sign-in area on our website

Well you've heard from some of your governors. How do you contact them? What do you do if you have issues you'd like to share with them?

In the next month or so you should start receiving usernames and passwords sent through the post. These will allow you to access your very own sign-in area on our website.

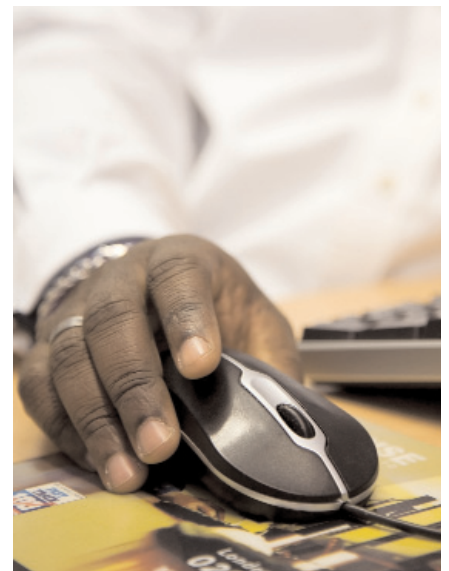
You'll be able to contact your governors, leave feedback, take part in discussion forums

on subjects of interest or start your own discussion forum.

Any issues or concerns you have can be fed to your governors but also senior staff at the trust.

Unfortunately, you will not be able to change your password to one that is easy to remember. This is because it would be difficult for us to register these changes on file in case you do forget at some point. So keep your details somewhere safe. But because we'll have them stored in a

secure place if you do forget you can contact us for a reminder.



The general election: What might it mean for mental health?

At the time of writing, there is still no firm date set for the general election. Most commentators think it will be on Thursday, 6 May, the same date as local elections.

Certainly this will be easier for voters, and save tax-payers money to do both on the same day. But there are still rumours of an earlier election in April, after Easter. It is the government in power who decide the date, and they have to give at least three weeks' notice. At that time, the politicians

leave Westminster and spend the next three weeks campaigning!

Results of a general election can have a major effect on the NHS overall, and also on our trust. We've had a lot of questions from our staff and members, and we've been discussing this with our board of governors. So here is our current thinking about how the election might affect us and mental health services more generally.



First, there's a lot in common between the two main political parties, Labour and Conservative. The biggest problem now is the state of the nation's finances. This includes the credit crunch, and the amount of money government has borrowed to support the banking crisis and investment to encourage growth coming out of the recession. Both main parties promise to maintain spending on the NHS. The trouble is, that inflation in healthcare is always much higher than inflation in the country overall. Healthcare inflation is usually thought to be about three times the rate of inflation overall. This is due to three main reasons:

- 'Demographic change'. This means that we are living longer in an aging society, and older people need more healthcare.
- 'Technological change'. This means that scientists are continuing to find new ways of treating people, including operations and new cancer drugs. Our grandparents would never have dreamed of heart and lung transplants, or that many cancers can now be treated!
- 'Rising consumer expectations'. This means, rightly, that patients now expect to be treated with the best available options. And this is especially important for us. It's now known that about a quarter of us will have a mental health need during our lives, but many of these cases used to be ignored, or brushed under the carpet.

So the first big problem faced by all the parties is the need to be careful with spending. All the parties have promised to keep up spending on the NHS, but this won't be enough to cover the rising costs. The NHS usually sets its budget for three years at a time. The NHS Confederation - the group which represents NHS managers and many trusts - estimates that the NHS will have to SAVE between £15 -20 billion pounds over the first three years of any new government. These are not actually cuts. It's just that inflation will outstrip the money available.

The main political parties have other things in common. In fact, they've had a lot in common on the subject of healthcare for nearly twenty years.

- BOTH Labour and the Conservatives will continue with the so-called purchaser-provider split. This means that commissioners and representatives of GPs decide what their populations and patients need. They hold the budget, and they 'buy' what's needed from hospitals and trusts like us. In relation to training and education the Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and workforce confederations also hold budgets and commission training. So we will continue to be dependent on contracts we get from these NHS purchasers. For Labour, this is likely to be from the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and SHAs as now. For the Conservatives, they are considering giving the budget directly to groups of GPs instead of managers.
- BOTH Labour and the Conservatives will continue to encourage competition between NHS trusts, so the money goes to the trusts that deliver the best results for patients and students. This means that both parties want more evidence of what is cost-effective, and what the 'outcomes' are for patients: That is, what worked best for patients. BOTH Labour and the Conservatives plan to continue inviting private companies to offer services to the NHS. This includes allowing private healthcare companies to compete with NHS Trusts for patient care.
- And BOTH Labour and the Conservatives say they are committed to mental health services.

So what does all this mean for us? We are a committed member of the NHS family as an NHS foundation trust. Certainly, the financial climate will continue to be tough and we must work hard to get the most 'bangs for the buck' for our patients, students and other users of our services. What we need to do for the future seems quite clear, because there is so much agreement between the parties:

- We must continue to show that investing in good mental health for all is an important priority for NHS spending
- Our research must continue to show the positive results that come from intervention and services in mental health, both for patient outcomes, the quality of the NHS workforce and for cost-effectiveness for the nation.
- We must show that our results are at least as good as results from private sector suppliers.
- And we now have the opportunity to take some contracts from private companies, under strictly controlled conditions which have been approved by our board of directors and our governors.

Would we advise you how to vote? Never! You have your own mind, and your own decision. For us, we will continue with what we do best.

younger members

You may or may not know that we were given funding by Camden PCT to develop an emotional health website for children age 7-10 who live in Camden.

The site will help children in Camden to learn about feelings, how they can cope with their own negative feelings and how to feel better. The site will also help them to be aware of how their feelings impact on other people. As well as this the site will help them to understand that talking about their feelings and problems can help them, particularly talking to helpful adults, their parents, other family members or teachers.

We have designed a number of puppets to help deliver the messages. The main puppet guide, Cam, steers the children through the site and helps them learn. He is helped by his crew, six characters that reflect a number of different emotions.

Some content will be delivered through interactive stories where children can read about other children's experiences and decide on different outcomes or give advice. Where appropriate

this will be delivered using fun content such as videos and animations.

The site is for all children in Camden who fall into the age range. As well as delivering content aimed at all children the site will also deliver content that helps children who may be accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). There is a section where children and their parents can visit a clinic to find out what it is like, who they are likely to meet and in this section they can look at photos of Cam's journey through a clinic. They can also watch a video of Cam talking to some clinicians about what happens. This section will de-mystify the process of accessing CAMHS services and will help reduce the stigma that children and families accessing these services may face.

The site will be launched next term. We're very excited about this project and hope you are too.

In the next issue we'll give you details of how to access the site.

