



# members' newsletter



Fingers crossed for Family Drug  
and Alcohol Court

Trials and tribulations of an  
urban gardener

What did children and families  
say about our services?



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## what's new

### Fingers crossed for Family, Drug and Alcohol Court

Our Family, Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) has been shortlisted for the MJ 2009 Local Government Achievement Awards in the 'Best Achievement of the Year in Children's Services' category.

When shortlisting, the judges picked innovative and committed children's services, teams, who have worked efficiently and effectively to develop the best children's services for 0-19 year olds in their local area. The judges are looking for services that have developed partnerships, have an integrated and joined up

approach and have responded to and included all children, especially those who are in most need of support.

FDAC is a collaboration between us and Coram and is commissioned by Camden, Islington and Westminster councils. It is a service that provides support to families trying to break the cycle of substance addiction. The court uses specialist judges, a specialist team that works intensively with the families and uses parent mentors - people who have been in similar experiences themselves. We are all crossing our fingers



for FDAC. The winner from each category will be announced at a gala awards night hosted by TV presenter, political pundit and former cabinet minister Michael Portillo.

**FROM YOUR GOVERNERS:**

Jan McHugh, public governor, rest of England and Wales

### **Why did you become a Governor?**

My wish to serve as a governor expresses principally my respect for and gratitude toward an organisation to which I owe a great deal in an association lasting 30 years. From joining what felt to me then a shockingly "unstructured" study group in 1979, to seeking a referral for my own further psychotherapy in the 80's, through 12 years' membership of Anton Obholzer's weekly "Consulting to Institutions workshop" and finally, by teaching on the MA programme "Consultation and the Organisation: Psychoanalytic Approaches" (D10) and providing consultancy services within the organisation, my association with the Tavistock -- its clinical and educational services, its intellectual orientation, its staff and associates -- has formed the bedrock foundation and heart of my personal and professional development. Becoming a governor provides a means of extending my appreciation of

the "Tavi", whilst hoping to make a contribution to its development and robust survival within a taxing socio-economic context. I hope to prove a good critical friend: unflinching in challenge as well as support, where I am able.

### **Which areas of the Trust's work would you like to become involved in and why?**

Because I am one of two governors for the public constituency "rest of England and Wales" I inevitably have a keen interest in how the Trust extends the liveliness of its relationship and relevance to members -- including potential service-users and customers -- at some considerable distance to NW3. I felt that my involvement in the Communications Committee would provide one means of my learning about and addressing that task. I also have considerable experience of leadership consultancy in organisations, so felt I might be in a good position to contribute by opting to join the Trust Chair Appraisal Committee.



However, my interest in governance is wholly underpinned by my commitment to strengthening and supporting critical clinical, research and educational work which forms the core of what IS the Trust, I therefore am very keen indeed as a governor to ensure I continue to deepen my understanding of these core practices as directly as proves feasible and appropriate. I welcome opportunities to consider how this might best be achieved.

### What skills and knowledge do you feel you can bring to the Trust?

- 23 years' experience of systems-psychodynamic consulting over 300 health, public service, charitable and business organisations on strategic development, leadership and governance, clinical and educational service development, supporting front-line teams and practitioners as well as cultivating multi-disciplinary and inter-agency communication and partnership.
- A background in equalities and social action work.
- A direct understanding of mental health issues.
- An appreciation of the scope of administrative processes and management to promote and protect the core work.
- A capacity for critical thinking, enthusiasm and a sense of humour!

### FROM YOUR GOVERNORS:

Carole Stone, public governor for rest of London

#### Why did you become a governor?

My late brother suffered from paranoid schizophrenia and I have long had an interest in mental health. I want to play a part in the work of the Trust and raise awareness of its work in mental health care.

#### Which area of the Trust's work would you like to become involved in and why?

I would like to learn more about patients' experience of the Trust. I think knowing how those suffering from mental

## Important Notice

The members' newsletter will now only be available in an electronic format to reduce the impact of our activity on the environment. We hope you agree that this is a positive move by us as part of our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint. Those without access to computers can still request to have a hard copy sent in the post.

#### Does my carbon footprint look big in this?

The NHS in England has a carbon footprint of 18 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year. This is the equivalent of over 3 and a half million elephants!



illness respond to the care offered and talking to them about it is something that as a governor I could usefully do.

### What skills and knowledge do you feel you can bring to the Trust?

I am a patron of the mental health charities SANE, and TOP UK, which runs self-help groups all over the country for those suffering from a

phobia or from ocd. I have covered stories about mental health issues for BBC Radio 4 programmes as a producer and I now run an opinion leader think tank. I would like to offer my media skills and my experience in bringing people together to help publicise the work that the Trust does.



# A growing obsession

By Rachel Surtees

Last month I threw a barbecue for my nearest and dearest with the express purpose of showing off the garden.

"And to see your friends" The Fiancé helpfully interjected a couple of days later during the weekly report back to The Grandmother on life-beyond-Surrey. I decided to let that one go under the headings "pick your battles" and "he'll learn".

It wasn't to see my friends; I can see them any time. It was unequivocally, unashamedly, for them to see the fruits of my three year labour - literally. Well not quite literally as the tumbling tomatoes are still building their frame from which



This article has been created from a blog chronicling the trials and tribulations of an urban gardener, written by one of our staff members. To follow the blog please visit <http://agrowingobsession.blogspot.com>

they'll tumble, and the kiwi has at least another year before it'll be ready to produce. Still, you get the drift.

My friends understood the drill. It's outlined in the terms and conditions somewhere between "Quirks" and "Irritations". The newer of the other halves were less understanding as became abundantly clear when the skies opened yet the tour continued.

Of course I haven't always been this way. When we moved into the flat the roof terrace was simply a decked space with a pretty view of London's leafier

side... and I, in hindsight, was a fairly balanced individual.

No, this growing obsession has been something of an evolution. I struggled through a full season of potted pansies until a well-timed intervention from The Mother brought an abrupt end to my colour coordinating days. The next season fared slightly better, though the matching terracotta pots persisted

until Woolworths' failed

business plan cut me off at the source. The next day I found myself hauling an abandoned bath up onto the roof terrace and began planting into it - a moment of inspired lunacy that proved to be the making of my garden - every cloud.

By season three the rule book was well and truly on the compost heap. Every skip was an opportunity and every old shoe or broken teapot recycled and rehoused amongst the lobelia. All of a sudden I understood that a seasonal diet isn't a fashion statement; it's common sense.

And so we arrive back at the motivation behind the now epic bbq. Four seasons (three years) and the unimaginable has at last happened. My wonderful, if bizarre, little roof terrace has finally become an established garden. The bath no longer looks like a feature, the ivy is curling around the bamboo railings without "encouragement", the rosemary has been flowering for two months - in short the garden has found its own heart, with a little help from the bees.

This is a first for me but I'm assured by more experienced gardeners that the moment it happens never ceases to be a) a surprise and b) a delight. My friends will be pleased to learn that you quickly develop the ability to control the instinct to share the delight.

If all of that isn't enough to persuade you to up tools and jump aboard the gardening bandwagon, here's something to get you going.

#### **For those with little space**

Three medium sized tubs: two tomato plants; three basil; one rosemary. Job done.

#### **For those with little patience:**

There will inevitably have to be a trade off between a slow yielding / low maintenance garden, or a fast yielding / high maintenance one. The faster something grows the less established its root system will be so it will need more frequent watering and is less likely to survive unpredictable weather patterns. Then again, a tray of trailing mixed lobelia will give you a beautiful garden in near enough a fortnight.

#### **For those just starting out:**

Have fun and don't worry too much about how you're supposed to do things. A garden can be built with as much or as little resources as you have to play with, but however much you allocate, understand that in reality you will at least double it so there's simply no point if you're not going to enjoy it.

#### **For those with too much room and too little time:**

Focus on one area at a time and accept that you're in it for the long haul. Personally I'd start with my favourite place in the garden and then move to the section furthest away from it and work backwards.

#### **For those who know what they're doing:**

Donations of cuttings, advice and pruning tips will always be welcome... please.

**More than nine in ten people taking part in "green" exercise programmes believe the activities benefited their mental health, according to a study published in 2007 by charity Mind. The report argued that "ecotherapy", which includes gardening projects is highly beneficial for emotional well-being. In fact Mind state that it is a "clinically valid treatment option for mental distress" and should be considered as a referral option by GPs. So grab some gardening gloves and get going. If you don't have any outside space at all find out if you can volunteer at your local community gardens.**

## Vulnerable young people given opportunities for growth - literally!

Our Annual General Meeting this year will focus on the work of Paula Conway. Paula is taking a sabbatical from her role as a Clinical Psychologist at the Trust to take part in an exciting project, Grow2Grow. Grow2Grow offers supported placements for vulnerable or disadvantaged young people seeking opportunity aged 16-25 on a beautiful organic farm in Kent. Project members are trained and

accredited in multiple skills - organic horticulture, animal care, farm equipment management, dairy skills, cooking, baking and basic project management. It's a genuine social enterprise; they grow fruit and vegetables to supply the farm conference centre and farm educational and community events. Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, in particular refugees & asylum seekers, are

supported to grow, cook and celebrate familiar food from their countries of origin.

All members are invited to attend this event to find out about this fantastic work. Refreshments will be served. The event will take place on Thursday 14 October. Visit our website to find out more.

## Write for our newsletter

As a foundation trust we are always keen to hear from our members. We welcome all feedback from members about our work. One way of getting your point across is to write something for the members' newsletter.

Here are a few ideas - we are sure you have lots more to tell and look forward to hearing from you.

Please email our E-Communications Officer, Kate Bermingham, at [kbermingham@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:kbermingham@tavi-port.nhs.uk) with a quick summary (200 words max) of your idea for an article. Or send submissions to:

Communications Department  
Tavistock Centre, 120 Belsize Lane  
London NW3 5BA

Write an article about any aspect of mental health that interests you, from a personal or professional point of view.

Be interviewed by a member of our communications team about your experience of mental health care (this can be on an anonymous basis if you prefer).

Write about a mental health campaign or group that you have been involved with or admire: e.g. Time to Change, Young Minds.

Write a review of a book, TV programme, film, play or piece of music that addresses mental health issues.

Write about the current government's approach to mental health - have they got it right? What should they be doing differently?

We also welcome art, photography, poetry and short story submissions that have a mental health link.



# younger members

This year we repeated our very popular children's survey in our Child and Family Department. We placed a questionnaire in our waiting room for 3 weeks to find out what children coming here for treatment thought about us. 39 questionnaires were filled in by children between 5 and 12 years old and this is what they told us.

Around a half of our children liked the building, the therapy rooms and the waiting room.

8 in 10 of our children felt that our staff listened to them and looked after them well. 50% of our children felt coming here had helped them and half of them felt it had helped their family and/or carer.

Our children also had some not so great things to say, about the decoration of the building.

We have done a great deal of redecorating since the survey was filled in. We've painted bright colours on the walls of the corridors for example. So we are hoping children will feel we have made it better.

Our children also wanted more toys to play with for older children in the waiting room.

When invited to give advice to people who work here our children said that they wanted to see an improvement in the way staff talk to them.

Our children were also asked to tell us what advice they would give for a child who might be coming here for the first time. They gave very nice advice for the children so they wouldn't feel so worried about coming. They said that children didn't need to be so scared or worried as it was actually ok!

We have nearly finished a children's website that aims to give a friendly introduction to services such as ours. We hope that once we launch the website children will feel less anxious about coming for help. There will be videos on the site showing what it's like to come here with some of our staff answering questions.



*"I like it because I like the people"*

*"Good staff - fun and they listen"*

*"I like coming here because I get to express my feelings and somebody listening to me is great"*

*"I like the inside of the building but it needs more pink"*

*"Needs more decorating and more toys"*

*"The waiting room needs more toys for bigger kids"*

*"When you're walking in to a room, ask how they are"*

*"Don't worry its not as scary as it looks"*

*"Don't feel scared or embarrassed. Just speak what's on your mind"*

*"Give it a chance you might like it"*