Almost 400 people attended our staff awards ceremony at the Staffordshire County Showground on Thursday 13 November. The vast majority of them were colleagues from across the Trust, with just a sprinkling of representatives from stakeholder and community organisations - who were all most impressed to learn more about the scope and breadth of our services.

The Positively Different Awards are designed to recognise exceptional contributions to service, by individuals and teams, by clinical and non clinical staff. Over 100 nominations were received for the 10 awards and following a rigorous process, supported by some of the Trust’s Governor Members, the best entries were shortlisted, only finding out if they were winners on the night.

The event is also an important opportunity for sharing good practice and helping staff to understand their role in the wider service. Colleagues from our various services - mental health, learning disability, specialist children’s services, psychological therapies; drug and alcohol services, prison services and military mental health - can learn more about each other and share ideas and good practice.

Neil Carr, Chief Executive said “One of the Trust’s core principles is that we value our staff. We know that we cannot deliver effective services without well trained and supported staff and believe that offering real recognition in the form of this awards ceremony has a real part to play in creating an enthusiastic, committed and confident workforce.”

The Award Winners;

**Chris Holley Award for Innovation**

Pine, The Redwoods Centre

Following a Rapid Improvement Process Workshop the team on this male mental health acute admission ward worked tirelessly to define and set standards for engagement with the aim of supporting the service user’s recovery and successful discharge.

**Governors’ Award for Making a Positive Difference**

Food 4 Thought

The Food 4 Thought coffee shop in Stafford provides a first class service to the general public, promoting social inclusion and positive images of mental health. It is a shining example of service users, volunteers and staff working side by side with other partners to serve the local community.

**Clinician of the Year**

Sarah Hovington

Sarah is a Senior Practitioner within Inclusion Matters Liverpool. A qualified counsellor and cognitive behavioural therapist, she has led on many new initiatives, including the establishment of a Post Natal Depression Group and development of several care pathways to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are being met.
Clinical Team of the Year
Laurel, The Redwoods Centre

The team on Laurel have pioneered a dynamic and innovative approach to inpatient care and treatment creating a model for the acute care pathway modernisation in Shropshire.

Non Clinical Team of the Year
Communications Team

The team members each have distinct functions and expertise creating a service which is greater than the sum of its parts. Often behind the scenes, they support and facilitate colleagues from across the Trust.

Support Worker of the Year
Anna Hughes

Anna is an Allied Health Professional Assistant on Laurel at The Redwoods and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to ensuring patients and carers receive an exceptionally positive and effective experience. She has had a positive impact on the ward environment, turning a dull muddy garden into a haven for all to enjoy.

Unsung Hero
Wayne Harvey

Wayne works on the Hatherton Centre at St George’s Hospital as Forensic Security coordinator. He has worked above and beyond his role for over 20 years, showing consistent enthusiasm and motivation to expand his knowledge and practice whilst working tirelessly to ensure the delivery of a safe and secure service. And of course he looks after his famous sidekick - Buster.

Partnership Award
Hoarding Group Partnership

Inclusion Matters Liverpool and Liverpool Housing Trust are working in partnership to deliver an innovative project which aims to improve the lives of those with a hoarding condition. Their shared vision has enabled them to use their combined experience, knowledge and resources to make a real difference.

Apprentice of the Year
Charlie Wanstall

Charlie is a Business Administration Apprentice in East Wrekin Community Mental Health Team. She has proven her worth by performing her day to day duties with enthusiasm and efficiency and also suggesting and implementing innovative work systems which have enabled the team to work more effectively.

Chairman’s Award
Angie Upton

Angie is the Dementia Services manager in South Staffordshire. She has demonstrated excellent leadership and partnership working with key stakeholders in the development and delivery of the Dementia Pathway in South Staffordshire. She always remains positive and inspiring to all colleagues and partners and ensures all actions are taken in the best interests of patients.

Lifetime Achievement Awards
David Elliott and Chris Murphy

Two exceptional clinicians also received Lifetime Achievement Awards. Dr Chris Murphy was recognised for his outstanding commitment to medical, and especially psychiatric education in the region; and specialist learning disability nurse, David Elliott for his impact on learning disability care, locally, regionally and nationally. His compassion and sensitivity in handling the difficult subject of bereavement has been immense.
Jacob Praised by Carer

I am emailing to praise and thank a HCA Jacob Dominy who works on Baswich ward St George’s Hospital. My husband is a patient on the ward with early onset Alzheimer’s and Jacob has cared for him to the highest standard taking Dave on walks and trips treating him with respect and keeping him safe and excellent company. He is a delightful person and his professionalism is a credit to Baswich ward and the hospital. I hope you can pass on my thanks for all the kindness he has shown Dave during his stay on Baswich.

Kindest Regards, Sue

Prof Sumathiapala Honoured in Sri Lanka

Professor Athula Sumathipala is the Professor of Psychiatry and Honorary Consultant in Psychiatry at South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. His post was established in conjunction with Keele University.

This new position was designed to develop, promote and conduct high quality, clinically based research in community and primary care mental health and Professor Sumathipala joined the Trust on 1 September 2014.

Professor Sumathipala was recently honoured to be awarded the 54th Sir Marcus Fernando Oration of the Sri Lanka Medical Association for 2014. The Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) brings together medical practitioners of all grades and all branches of medicine and is the oldest professional medical association in Asia and Australasia, with a proud history dating from 1887.

Professor Sumathipala’s oration ‘Depression: Addressing the Local Burden in the Context of Global Mental Health’, was based mainly on the first ever national mental health survey (2007) commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka.

Jennie is Top Innovator

Jennie Collier, who is Head of the Specialist and Family Services Directorate, has been named as one of the most innovative people in healthcare by the Health Service Journal (HSJ).

Jennie was nominated in partnership with Charlotte Bailey from Staffordshire County Council for their joint work across Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and targeted services.

Only 50 people are named on the HSJ Innovators List which celebrates those working in the NHS and the wider healthcare sector who have taken innovative approaches that make a tangible difference to patients, their colleagues or wider society.

The judges said that their work with CAMHS and Local Support Teams "took the opportunity to find new ways for their organisations to work together". The result was that services in both the council and the Trust have stepped away from their traditional ways of operating, creating a more integrated service for young people. The judges added "these are people who are not directly involved in clinical care but who are tackling some really difficult clinical areas. They are challenging traditional ways of delivering services; integrating services and bringing together organisations. Those are very difficult things to do, but they are keeping everything focused on the recipient of care."

Neil Carr, Chief Executive of South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare said "We are delighted that Jennie has been recognised on this prestigious list. She embodies out Trust commitment to putting the patient at the centre of everything we do and we applaud her dedication and commitment."

Dennis Firmstone Retires

Many of you will be aware of the invaluable contribution made by Dennis Firmstone as a volunteer and service user representative, to improving the experience of service users on our wards over many years. Through his ward support initiative and other projects, Dennis has taught us to focus on the small things, to see things from the perspective of the service user and to listen to feedback and act on it.

Colleagues gathered to wish Dennis well on his retirement and to thank him for his commitment and dedication to improving mental health inpatient care over the years.
Carol Services and Sip ‘n Snack

The Redwoods Centre
16 December 2014
2.30pm
The Learning Centre, St George’s Hospital
17 December 2014
2.30pm

Join us for traditional carols and readings, with special guests from local schools - Oxon Primary and John Wheeldon and musicians.

The service will be followed by a festive buffet and an opportunity to exchange Christmas greetings with colleagues.

For more details, contact Keith Shaw on 01743 210001 keith.shaw@sssft.nhs.uk

Christmas Lunch?
Both George’s and The Redwoods Centre Bistros will be serving a special festive menu - including traditional Turkey roast.
Booking essential, see intranet for full details.

December Pay Day
Just a little reminder that pay day in December will fall on Tuesday 23rd December 2014.

All claims due for payment in December need to be with Payroll Services by our cut-off date which is Wednesday 3rd December 2014. Unfortunately, the Payroll team can’t guarantee payment on 23rd December against anything received after our cut-off date.

Pay day in January 2015 will revert to the usual date of 28th of the month.

One for the kids (or big kids) in the family:
NORAD Santa tracker (Free)
http://www.noradsanta.org/
Developed by the North American Aerospace Defence Command this lets you watch Santa’s progress as he makes his annual trip around the globe. This also offers a recreation of Santa’s Village, a new game every day, festive music and opportunities to get live updates on Santa’s location.
Festive Health and Wellbeing

Tis the season to be jolly…. but eating and drinking to excess over the Christmas period can affect your health and well being, leaving you feeling sluggish, and the stress of organising family and friends can also take its toll. Here are some tips to help you have a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas time.

- Try to drink a litre of water before you go out and try not to drink alcohol on an empty stomach. Continue drinking a glass of water between each alcoholic drink whilst you are out, this will help prevent dehydration and reduce the impact of a hangover the following day.
- Be aware of how long it takes for alcohol to pass through the body and be especially mindful when it comes to driving the following day. It takes a lot longer for the body to process alcohol than most people realise. As a general rule it takes around an hour for each unit of alcohol to be processed - this is only a rough guide, and even a small amount of alcohol can affect your reaction speeds and ability to drive safely. The best advice is not to drink at all if you are driving, and to avoid heavy drinking if you are driving the following day.

It is very tempting to over indulge at Christmas. But there are ways to reduce the impact on your waistline;
- If you are faced with an enormous buffet, try just picking a couple of dishes
- Alcohol stimulates the appetite and weakens resolve, so try drinking spritzers if you like wine or shandy if you are a lager drinker.
- Try low fat options where you can. Replacing double cream with Greek yoghurt saves around 200 calories. Eat turkey without the skin and make sauces with skimmed milk.

After weeks of planning the last thing you want is to ruin all your hard work with bad food hygiene;
- Keep raw poultry away from other foods and use a separate chopping board for raw meats and poultry.
- Ensure frozen turkeys are properly defrosted before cooking.
- Don’t wash the turkey (or other poultry) as this increases the risk of bacteria splashing onto other surfaces or foods.
- Use a meat thermometer to ensure the turkey is properly cooked. None of the meat should remain pink and the juices should run clear when pierced.
- Make sure you use all leftovers within 2 days, and reheat them until they are steaming hot. Never reheat poultry more than once.

Christmas should be a fun and relaxing time for you to enjoy with family and friends, but many of us put ourselves under pressure with last minute shopping and generally trying to please everyone. Try and be organised - shop for presents throughout the year, or over the months leading up to Christmas, this will not only give you more time, but will also spread the financial burden which can cause additional stress. If money is a concern, why not discuss with your family about agreeing a budget per present, or perhaps buying for just one family member each. Be choosy about the parties and events you want to attend. Don’t feel you have to go to everything you are invited to as you will leave yourself no time to relax. Consider arranging to see some of your friends in the New Year once the busy Christmas period has calmed down, this will also give you something to look forward to in January.

With the dark winter months, many people find themselves feeling a little low. A great way to combat this is to try and get outside for some exercise. Exercise boosts the endorphins in the body making you feel instantly brighter. If you can get outside to exercise it is even better, try to get out in daylight hours if possible, even if it is for a brisk walk at lunchtime. You can also boost your mood by eating tryptophan rich foods such as turkey, chicken, fresh tuna, soya, potatoes and dairy. Tryptophan boosts the production of the happy hormone serotonin.

Above all, remember to relax and have fun. We wish you all a healthy, happy and safe Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

There’s an app for it …

Drink Aware; Track and Calculate Units App
Is it time to change the way you drink? Get the new iOS app from Drinkaware, which enables you to track your alcohol consumption, calculate units and calories and set goals to help you moderate your drinking.

Good Food Festive Recipes (£1.99)
Hopeless in the kitchen? The BBC’s Festive Recipes app features a collection of over 180 tried-and-tested recipes to get you through Christmas and New Year. There’s something for every course, plus drinks and canapés and a diverse selection of vegetarian options. All recipes have clear instructions and a photograph to help you get the best results. There is also a selection of videos to help you improve basic skills, like chopping an onion and making mayonnaise.
In Brief ...

Team on the Move

The Community Mental Health Team Tamworth has moved from Cherry Orchard House and is now based at the Sir Robert Peel hospital.
CMHT Tamworth
Andrew Ward
Sir Robert Peel Hospital
Plantation Lane
Tamworth  B78 3NG
01827 308820.

Please note that service users visiting the team do not have to pay for parking, they should give their car registration details to reception staff on arrival.

There is no change to the referral process - referrals still need to go via the East Single Point of Access at East SPA, David Perry Suite St Michael's Court Trent Valley Road Lichfield  WS13 6 EF
Tel 0300 55 55 001
FAX 01543 418901

Carers Association Southern Staffordshire (CASS)
Mental Health Carers Roadshow
‘BE INVOLVED’

CASS, in partnership with our Trust, will be hosting 3 roadshows around Southern Staffordshire. Carers supporting anyone with a mental health difficulty, this might be a friend, relative or partner, are invited to come along and gain more information about how they can become engaged in the care planning and support of that person. Please note the roadshows are not relevant for carers of someone with dementia.
So to ‘BE INVOLVED’ book a place at one of the roadshows by calling CASS on 01785 222365.
• Wednesday 3rd December St Georges Learning Centre Stafford
• Friday 6th March 2015 Wolsey Bridge Wildlife Centre
• Monday 16th March Tamworth Wiggin Centre, Robert Peel Hospital

ALL 10:00am – 15:00
Lunch Provided Free of charge
For more details about CASS visit www.carersinformation.org.uk

Consultation on Mental Health Services in Telford and Wrekin Launched

South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Telford and Wrekin CCG are launching a public consultation on the future intentions for Castle Lodge, Atwood Terrace, Dawley, Telford.

Between 1 December 2014 and 6 February 2015 we will be consulting and seeking views from service users, carers, staff, partners and members of the public in Telford and Wrekin about the future of Castle Lodge and our broader modernisation plans.

There will be three public meetings at Meeting Point House, Telford. These will be on:
• 9 December 2014 at 1700
• 16 December 2014 at 1700
• 5 January 2015 at 1700
And two meetings at Castle Lodge itself on
• 12 January 2015 at 1730
• 26 January 2015 at 1730

A consultation document has been produced describing the development and modernisation of adult mental health services since the last formal consultation on service change in 2010, which resulted in the build of the Redwoods Centre and highlighting proposed further changes. It also specifically covers options for the future use of the Castle Lodge unit in Telford. Most importantly the document asks for views, ideas and support from local people.

More details about the meetings and the consultation, including a copy of the full consultation document and questionnaire can be found at http://consultations.sssft.nhs.uk/
Transport Help Available for Care Workers

If you are a care worker struggling with your transport to work or are recruiting for care roles, a new package of support from Wheels 2 Work – a scheme run by charity Shropshire RCC – will be of interest. Wheels 2 Work are offering the following help:

• Free vehicle ‘health checks’
• Grant covering 80% of the cost of a vehicle repair, up to £250
• Moped & electric bike rental scheme, with training and equipment
• Good value pedal bikes

For more information visit www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk/transport or call 01743 237885 / 237883

E-book of the Month from the Library Service
December 2014: A Different Kettle of Fish

• A day trip to London with a difference!
• An illustrated account of a world of confusing signs and nonsensical clichés and idioms seen from the perspective of a physics student with autism.
• Provides an insight into the world of someone on the autistic spectrum, but will also make you think about how you use everyday language!
• A short, very readable, amusing and thought-provoking book

How to read ‘A different kettle of fish’

• Visit goo.gl/txgYtq or scan the QR code and log in using your NHS ATHENS password
• Read online or download to your PC/laptop or Apple or Android phone or tablet for use offline

The small print:
• NHS ATHENS password available from www.athens.nhs.uk
• To download you need either Adobe Digital Editions (PC or laptop) or Bluefire Reader (Apple or Android) – both are free (if you’re using a Trust PC or laptop, contact the HIS to get Adobe Digital Editions installed)
• Downloads ‘disappear’ from your PC or tablet after the end of the ‘loan’ period, but you can always ‘borrow’ the item again later

To see the full range of e-books available, visit the library catalogue or the ebook website

More Help
For help with e-books or ATHENS logins, contact the library: library@sssft.nhs

Did you read it?

The hole in the sidewalk/pavement poem published in e pod in November is often given to service users by clinical psychologists/therapists using the Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) approach to explain how CAT works.

This general way of trying to increase recognition of what we do and changing long held patterns is of course by no means exclusive to CAT. For example, Cognitive behavioural therapies (CBT) believe that it is helpful to understand and recognise why one’s automatic thoughts and beliefs are triggered in certain situations to be able to look at them from a different perspective. Those offering psychodynamic therapies help service users to develop insight, both at an emotional and intellectual level - to understand and recognise coping or defensive procedures against emotionally difficult issues. Approaching things from a Mindfulness angle, involves helping people attend to their emotional state and finding other ways of being with their emotions (as opposed to running away from them or being overwhelmed.) (N.B. The above is a woefully inadequate explanation of those approaches as there are many different psychological approaches.)

However, this poem also applies to people who take a spiritual stance on matters as well as those who seek help from a philosopher and others.

The above is a long winded way of saying the ideas espoused in the poem applies to us all! And some of us finding reading the poem more helpful than others.

The poem shows the importance of the three Rs used in CAT as guiding principles when working collaboratively with service users.

• Reformulation (understanding where you are in life with the help of the therapist),
• Recognition (of any unhelpful patterns) and
• Revision (let’s try a new path)

Maybe those trying New Year Resolutions can think about the three Rs – good luck!

Dr Jurai Darongkamas
Trust lead for Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT)
Creative Ward Activities

Textiles artist Maggie Hollinshead has been working with service users on both Brockington, Mother and Baby Unit and Kinver. The ladies on the mother and baby unit have been making mother and baby books personalising with exquisite stitching, images of babies and a variety of buttons and colourful fabric. Kinver have been creating scarves and brooches.

Other creative ward activities include the garden fence project at Redwoods - a collaborative project which is nearly completed. The service users have been using a variety of techniques including collage, silk painting, doodles, and pastels.

November Recitals:

At St George’s, we had a wonderful recital with the divine Kit Henson and Amazing Grace who sang on Baswich and Bromley followed by Brocton and Chebsey. An eclectic mix of jazz, pop and ballad...from Lady Gaga to Bruno Mars, the girls sang elegantly, sweetly and in an ethereally beautiful way. Arts for Health, staff and service users had tears in their eyes.

At Redwoods we have had a mix of Jazz from Jazzanova; blues and folk from Sam Cooper on guitar and vocals; lovely harmonies and guitar from Daylevel, contemporary duo and finally a festive concert from our regular pianist Steve Roberts.

Staff singers are also practising their two special items that they will be singing at the Christmas Carol Service on Tuesday 16th December. One of the carols will be sung together with the children from Oxon Primary.

December Recitals:

At St George’s we will be having the lovely Hannah Littlehales on Wednesday 3rd December - 2pm at Baswich and Bromley. Hannah will be performing some wonderful showtunes and warm and cosy Christmas tunes to warm up those Christmas cockles.

At Redwoods we will have a treat on the 2nd December as Vijay James, one of our consultants will be playing guitar and singing for us – not to be missed!

On the 9th December we have Ed Moseley and friends on Accordion - this will be a concert around the wards with some lovely festive tunes; on the 18th December in the evening Tooty Flooty (flute quartet) will be also visiting the wards from 6pm; on the 23rd December at 2.30pm in the Bistro, Tooty Flooty will appear again to play some festive tunes. So, a packed programme of music to look forward to in December.

Manchester Camerata Quest and Brocton and Chebsey

Strengthening our partnership yet again Arts for Health has facilitated a marvellous opportunity for service users on Brocton and Chebsey at St George’s and at Quest Day Centre, Stafford to participate in creative sessions with Manchester Camerata, the nationally known chamber orchestra from Manchester.

The sessions delivered to our service users is worth £1500 in financial terms.

The chamber orchestra have worked with Quest twice previously on their Learning & Participation programme using music to promote positive change and personal social development and improve health and well being in the community.

Service users who may play instruments are encouraged to bring along their instruments.

Facebook reminder

Just to encourage anyone out there in Facebook land that Arts for Health would love you to like our page and any of the projects we place on the fb wall?

www.facebook.com/ArtsForHealthSSSFT.
children from John Wheeldon School delighting us with their Christmas songs.

In addition we have Gillie Nicholls with a few service users who attend Songs for You, sessions delivered out in the community for those suffering with dementia and their carers. They will be performing various Christmas songs. Followed by Sip and Snack, a small buffet for those attending.

At Redwoods
The Christmas Celebration will be on Tuesday 16th December at 2.30pm in the bistro with the children from Oxon Primary, staff singers plus Harriet on harp and Steve on piano.....followed by Sip and Snack for all.

Also, the Trust have commissioned artists and service users to create two spirituality banners for the trust inpatient sites – Redwoods and St George’s. Banners that will set the scene for Christmas and the concerts.

The banners have been designed by children from Oxon Primary in Shrewsbury plus The Project Group, Oswestry and service users at Redwoods; in Stafford the children from John Wheeldon primary have worked with artists Mark Uttley and Helen Wilson plus service users from wards at St George’s.

The banners are coming along and will be in situ by mid – December!

Art Competition Tour 2015
Excellent work from this year’s Art Competition currently adorning the walls of St Chad’s will be rolling out on tour as of January 2015.

The ten works selected for touring will be showcased at Stafford Library from 8th January 2015 until March 2015 and will then move on to various, so far unconfirmed, locations, more in later issues of e-PoD. A couple of libraries who do not have the capacity to showcase actual works have requested we send images so they can at least print off images to showcase in the smaller libraries across the Trust’s geographical area.

Christmas Card Competition
As ever we have had a deluge of work submitted for our annual Christmas card Competition.

The judges Martin Gower, Chairman and Neil Carr, Chief Executive, deliberated for some time before making a decision. Finally they selected the winning card designed and submitted by service user Paul Booth of Ellesmere for it’s creative content. The card has now gone off to print and will be available for the Chief Executive to send out to colleagues and Trust members

Welcome Donation
The fantastic band Kitten Pyramid who toured through the Trust earlier on in the year promoting their CD and raising awareness about mental health have raised over £600 for Arts for Health which is fantastic...so we can look forward to some interesting projects thanks to Scott and the boys!! If anyone knows of anyone else who would like to donate please see link - http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1007325

Also we have a lovely member of staff who has been donating a number of quality artworks to us over the last year: Lynne Sterry who works for the Clinical Audit team. She has this month given us a further limited edition print which is beautifully framed called The Dog Handler. It is a lovely fresh and expressive image which we hope to install on one of the wards at Redwoods. We are very grateful to Lynne and her generosity. (she wasn’t keen to have her photo taken but here you can see an image of the print!). Thank you Lynn!!
Diwali Celebrations

An event to celebrate Diwali was held in the Learning Centre on Friday 24th October. Over 60 staff attended and joined in with prayers and really good food. Information leaflets where given out regarding the Hindu and Sikh faith and many questions were asked to the representatives of these faith communities Telford Hindu community and Stafford Sikh community had representatives there on the day to answer questions. The success of this day has encouraged us to develop other events for special occasions, more details to follow when these are arranged.

Rved. Capt. Keith Shaw CA.
Hospital Chaplain
Mobile: 0781 466 1043
E-mail: keith.shaw@ssstt.nhs.uk

Emotional Wellbeing

Telford and Wrekin Community Development Worker continues to work together with other community based organisations to find ways of engaging people to better their emotional wellbeing. Black Minority and Ethnic Communities attend activities with Wyldwoods. This entails overcoming barriers to access, reducing stigma and encouraging engagement.

People from local communities are able to take part in activities including; candle making, sewing, soap making, cooking, walks, wood work amongst others. Here’s Joan’s (pictured above) story:

“Sometimes you can live in the same community but never talk to your neighbour, I felt very isolated and low in mood. I was encouraged to attend after hearing about the different activities available at Wyldwoods.

I’m glad I did, I am able to talk to others, make new friends, learn new things and share what I know. It has helped me with my confidence, it’s nice to be away, I feel free and feel good. It allows me to gather my thoughts, very therapeutic. As a result of attending I am putting myself forward to volunteer to help others, it’s good I like it and would recommend it to others.”

For further information or to attend further groups please contact Community Development Worker: atiyah.ali@nhs.net / 07870990205.

Recalling The Rowans

Staff past and present gathered on November 7th to say farewell to Shropshire’s Young People with Dementia Ward. Holly (previously The Rowans) had provided a service for 19 years but developments in Dementia Services has meant that dedicated in-patient beds for this group of patients are no longer needed as the focus towards home treatment has developed and grown in Shropshire.

Holly (The Rowans) had been one of the major forerunners in its day attracting professionals from as far away as Australia and Sweden. As one of the few dedicated services in the country, staff were often called upon for advice. Staff took the opportunity to reminisce as well as look at what they have achieved over the years. The services that they developed such as Als Café, a dedicated Carers Group, Male Group and Ladies who Lunch continue to provide support in the community.
Non Clinical Support Staff Governor, elected September 2014

Tell us about yourself

I have been married to Nigel, my husband, for 24yrs and we are looking forward to celebrating our Silver Wedding Anniversary next year. We have 2 sons aged 21 and nearly 18, another forthcoming celebration in December. I have lived in Stafford for the last 24 years and previously in Walsall where I was born and bred.

I have worked for the NHS for over 18 years. My key roles within the NHS have included; Secretary, PALS Facilitator, PALS Co-ordinator and my current role Service Relations Officer, where I co-ordinate the formal complaints process.

I currently work full-time at Trust Headquarters, Stafford with a team of very dedicated staff in the PALS and Service Relations department.

What made you decide to become a Governor member?

My experience of working in the non-clinical sector has given me the knowledge and experience to represent this staff group and ensure that their voice is heard and represented to make a difference.

What do you hope to achieve as a Governor member?

I would like to enhance existing skills and knowledge to enable me to have a better understanding of the strategic direction of the organisation and communicating with staff in an effective way.

I recognise that due to my work commitments I will be limited to the amount of time I will be able to allocate, however, hope to do my best.

If you would like more information or wish to speak with me I am contactable through the Membership Office on: membership@sssft.nhs.uk or 01785 783069

Meeting Your Governor Members - Mrs Sunita Roberts

Over the next few weeks, many staff in the 1995 Section of the NHS Pension Scheme will receive a letter from NHS Pensions. Under what is known as the Pensions Choice 2 exercise, the NHS Pensions letter will ask staff to make a choice about the benefits that they have accrued in the scheme. The letter will ask staff to decide if they want to leave their benefits in the 1995 Section, or transfer them into the 2008 Section of the scheme. Staff have until 16th March 2015 to make their decision.

Please remember that your choice will be determined by your own unique circumstances. Your letter will contain some personal details along with a fact sheet. Please read everything you are sent carefully.

The Trust is unable to provide you with any advice about your choice. We can however point you to the NHS Pension Scheme’s website at http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Pensions.aspx where you will find more useful information. The Trust will also be hosting a series of Pension Roadshows throughout January and February next year to explain the basics of the 1995, 2008 section and the new 2015 section. If you would like to attend one of these Roadshows, please e-mail the “Pensions Mailbox” before 24th December 2014 with details of your name, base, normal working hours and working days. We will collate all requests with an aim to tailoring the times and venues of our Roadshows to meet staff needs. We will then e-mail you back in the second week in January with Roadshow details.

Claiming mileage when your journey starts or ends at home – Agenda for Change staff

The Trust has become aware that staff are not always claiming their mileage in accordance with their Terms and Conditions (T&Cs), and this is leading to staff being overpaid. To ensure that you and your team members claim correctly, please could you read the information below and share it with your colleagues.

Our Agenda for Change (AfC) Terms and Conditions of Service (T&Cs) relating to the reimbursement of expenses were revised in July 2013.

Normally, the miles eligible for reimbursement are those travelled from the agreed work base and back. The revision relates to what an employee is entitled to claim when their journey starts or ends at a location other than the agreed work base, for example home. In this instance the mileage eligible for reimbursement is set out in Section 17.15, table 8 of the AfC handbook and is as follows –

![Mileage Table](http://www.nhsemployers.org/~media/Employers/Documents/Pay%20and%20reward/AfC_tc_of_service_handbook_fb.pdf)


Expense Claims

Payroll Services have recently been receiving increasing numbers of receipts for travel expenses in unmarked envelopes; this makes it really difficult to determine which expense claims the receipts relate to. Please could staff clearly mark the envelopes containing their receipts with their first and last name and also their assignment number. These details need to appear in the top right hand corner of the envelope. The Payroll team will then be able to reimburse staff appropriately for the expenses they have incurred.
**My experience with ACT**

For those who may not be aware, ACT is Acceptance Commitment Therapy, which falls broadly under the overall remit of CBT or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. I would like to share my recent experience of ACT, in the hope that it may be of interest, or of use to others.

I have suffered from Fibromyalgia for the past 26 years, although it was only formally diagnosed in 2000. Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition characterised by episodes of muscular pain and extreme fatigue—often to the extent of the sufferer being confined to bed for periods of time. It is a frustrating and debilitating condition, whose cause is not clear, and for which there is no specific ‘treatment’. During the time I have had episodes of fibromyalgia it has significantly impacted on the quality of my life, as well as the lives of my family.

I have seen my GP regularly, consultants occasionally, and tried all sorts of therapies to reduce the severity and frequency of episodes—hydrotherapy, acupuncture, massage, aromatherapy, relaxation, graduated exercise to name a few, as well as various combinations of prescribed medication. There have been improvements with some of these, but never significant or long lasting.

As a health professional myself, I have kept up to date about new ‘treatments’, and during a consultation with my GP in 2012 I asked if I could try CBT. (My GP also suggested I try ‘Mindfulness techniques’—specifically via a website called Headspace [https://www.headspace.com/](https://www.headspace.com/).) Accordingly I went on the CBT waiting list, and in due course saw a therapist at Ludlow. After an initial session she suggested that as I had already done a lot of the recommended behavioural techniques myself, she thought that ACT might be of more benefit to me. After another period on a waiting list, I was at the point of taking my name off the list, as I continued to manage my symptoms with variable results, but with an increasing certainty that there was not much that could be done to help. Fortunately before I took such a step my first appointment came through. I had done some reading about ACT, but had little idea of how the sessions would be structured, or of course whether they would help. I understood that it could be used to help manage a number of chronic conditions, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, chronic pain, and anxiety, as well as fibromyalgia.

The therapist I saw—Fleur—was clearly an experienced and empathetic professional, and I quickly felt comfortable with her, and confident in her abilities. I had 10 sessions, spaced over 3-4 months. It is difficult to describe exactly what we did, but I can summarise it best by saying that Fleur helped me to consider events in my life which may have contributed to the occurrence of symptoms I experienced, and also to review whether in fact I was still behaving in ways that might predispose me to more of the symptoms. We explored ways to manage the symptoms when they occurred, and to develop an attitude which did not give undue attention to the illness, instead focussing on my personal values in life, and how I could still achieve those. I was encouraged to practice various techniques which would promote these positive attitudes and behaviours, and was also given suggestions for further reading.

At the same time I used the Headspace website—learning and practising techniques which in fact complemented the ‘work’ I was doing with Fleur. I also took Fleur’s advice on reading material, and have now read 5 books related to various aspects of ACT.

So now, some 5 months after starting, I have completed my sessions, as Fleur and I agreed that I had learnt the necessary ‘skills’ to manage my fibromyalgia better, and I was in fact having far fewer, and less severe symptoms that I have had in the past. From a position of experiencing symptoms for 26 years, and feeling pretty much ‘out of control’, I now feel much more positive about managing symptoms when they arise, and living my life in a way that is likely to minimise episodes of fibromyalgia. I understand that I am not cured, but am confident that my symptoms will not deteriorate, (and should I experience difficulties which I cannot manage it would be possible to be re-referred for ACT) and I can look forward to living my life to its full potential.

The vast ‘machine’ which is the NHS is constantly under pressure and scrutiny and often the target of negative feedback. I hope this short story of my experience of a service which is quietly helping people with chronic health problems will be of interest and encouragement to some patients, perhaps to health professionals, and to those who have responsibility for commissioning and planning services.

Jane Edwards

*for more information, contact Fleur Joyce, IAPT Cognitive Behaviour Therapist, fleur.joyce@sssf.nhs.uk*