

our community

NEWS

Eddie's Quarterly Round-up

Family BBQ

Invitations to our BBQ at Eastry Day Centre and gardens on the afternoon of Friday 21st August (12pm - 3pm) have now gone out to the families of all of the people we support. Those looking for transition services, supported living or high acuity community living - for either now or in the future - are also most welcome. This informal event will provide the opportunity to meet with other families and staff, view the activities at the day centre, learn about new developments at Optima Care and help shape our planned family support groups. If you are interested in coming along and haven't yet received an invitation, please contact Steph on 01843 822 508 or email Stephanie.sinclair@optimacare.co.uk



Open day successes

We recently enjoyed a fabulous open afternoon, courtesy of the staff and people we support at our Deal-based Total Communication setting Seahaven. This event was timed to provide support to National Care Home Open Day and included various 'communication' focused activities. Our Day Centre in Eastry also put on a lovely open afternoon for local SEN school contacts and transition commissioners. **Please turn to pages 4 - 5 to see a selection of photos from both events.**

Breakfast Briefing

I'm delighted to report that our very first breakfast briefing, held at our Manston service centre, was well received by the commissioning leads and CCG representatives in attendance. Entitled, 'Achieving clinical outcomes in practice' it focused on some of the challenges and new initiatives around improving quality, outcomes and value for money. We enjoyed a forward-thinking presentation by our headline speaker David Roe, Senior Consultant at LaingBuisson. I'd also like to say a huge thank you and well done to the various members of Optima Care's team who provided presentations on the changes at the organisation in line with national and local Government health and social care strategy. Please go to our website or Facebook page to read our article in Healthcare Business and to find out more about the changes at Optima Care.



Optima offers TMVA training

I'm delighted to announce that Optima Care can now offer accredited training courses in Therapeutic Management of Violence and Aggression (TMVA). In a bid to provide exemplary support to individuals whose behaviour challenges, all our staff are required to complete comprehensive TMVA training and a number have gone on to become accredited trainers. We can now offer tailored training courses to other providers and staffing agencies in the South East. For more information, contact Nikki Kerry on 01843 822 508.

Eddie
Eddie Coombes, CEO

Confidential staff phone line
Please note that the number for the confidential staff phone line has changed. The new number is **07938 579 441**

Shine roll-out

Optima Care is entering a new era, with a strong service offering in line with local and national health and social care strategy, focusing on three key service strands: school & college transitions, supported living and high acuity community living.

This is underpinned by our new Shine therapeutic model of care: outcomes focused, person centred and, above all, simple to understand and implement.

All our managers received training on Shine in July and dates are now being set for the roll-out of training to all staff within each of our settings.

The training is being led by our Clinical Psychologist Dr Heleen Malherbe, who will explain to staff their vital role in helping to drive



engagement, capture progress and get involved in informed planning of specific interventions.

This will include training for families in tailored intervention techniques and also the launch of family support groups later in the year.

New staff benefits

OUR STAFF are pivotal to the success of our future plans. The launch of Shine – as mentioned above – is all about putting the individual at the centre of everything we do: in terms of staff as well as the people we support. That is why we are in the process of designing a workable engagement programme for everyone. This will start with the launch this month



of a new employee benefits scheme – 'My Advantage' - for all Optima Care staff. By using these employee benefits, staff will enjoy benefits at local stores, cafes and restaurants. You'll also be able to reduce the amount you pay on household bills and gain access to special deals and packages from travel companies. A representative from Personal Group – the benefits provider – will be visiting each setting and meeting with staff on a one-to-one basis in August.

IN FOCUS: HEALTH & WELLBEING
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Growing, designing, creating...

The staff at the day centre are currently getting all grubby with new activities for the summer months!

We recently created a new raised growing area for wheelchair users in the gardens at Eastry.

It's proving very popular amongst the people we support as evidenced by the fact that it's already in full bloom! The next project is to develop an allotment, with some support from the guys at The Chilterns.

The team are also busy leading woodcraft and cookery courses, plus clay model making and painting.

What's more, we will soon have a new classroom. The summer house has been moved from Gate House to help create the extra space required to offer ASDAN life skills and vocational training courses in addition to the usual range of popular activities at the day centre. Watch this space!



Eileen, gardening



New raised beds



Leslie, woodcrafts



Karen, cookery course



Chloe, clay model making



Leslie, gardening



Simon, cookery course



Michelle, clay model making



Michelle & Ben (right), jewellery making



Tammy gets her chance to Shine!



Tammy Stephens, Support Worker at The Chilterns, has designed and launched a cookery school, which includes tailored programmes according to the level of support required by individuals.

The programmes include bespoke lesson plans, recipe sheets and step-by-step processes: starting with making snacks, for those who require a high level of support, to budgeting, planning, shopping and cooking with minimum or no support for more able individuals.

In addition, other staff and support workers at The Chilterns are encouraged to get involved and ensure consistency by logging updates in individuals' progress books.

The Cookery School was designed by Tammy to complement The Chilterns' Healthy Eating Group, which works in partnership with local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups to promote healthy choices and lifestyles.

Tammy added: "Being given the opportunity to run with my ideas to design and launch the cookery school is not only a very positive thing for all of the people we support at The Chilterns, but it's also a big thing for me. It really does mean a lot that my manager has the belief and trust in me to do this, and I'm so happy that I finally get my time to Shine!"



Paul & John I



Eddie



David & John C



Essie

A step back in time

1 2th century English Heritage property Dover Castle represented the venue for a fascinating day out with a number of the people we support at The Chilterns.



The Chilterns crew – L-R: Michael, Nathan, John I, Dennis, Essie, John C



The group spent a whole day touring the castle – described by some commentators as the largest in the UK – and particularly enjoyed the views across Dover from the Great Tower and also the mystery of the Medieval Tunnels: winding tunnels burrowed beneath the castle to protect the most vulnerable side of the castle from attack. Everyone had great fun and felt that they'd learnt much from the day.

The Chilterns news: In brief

■ A hat-trick!

Ray recently scored a hat-trick during a football tournament, playing for his team Thanet Galaxy. It was an excellent achievement of which he's rightly proud. Ray is a regular on the football pitch, training with his team-mates on a weekly basis.



■ Running success

Another one of our keen sportsmen John Ireland took part in the annual 5k event Man on the run, organised by Thanet Roadrunners Athletics Club. Running with him was The Chilterns' Activities Co-Ordinator Jake Reading. The Thanet Coastal 10k next?!



■ Green fingers

Some of our more green-fingered guys at The Chilterns have been working hard to improve the allotment area and start growing their own fruit and vegetables. The photo below also shows the pond area that they've worked hard to create. Well done to Eddie Hills, John Bowles and John Ireland.



■ Sign language

A group at The Chilterns enjoyed learning the basics of sign language thanks to the help and expertise of two Social Work Students. The group is keen to learn more so we're hoping to put some more sessions in place in due course.



Seahaven's staff, friends and family enjoy a sensory soirée!

The staff at Seahaven organised a fantastic afternoon full of sensory activities such as massage, arts and crafts, cake decorating, face painting and outdoor games.

In addition to providing support for National Care Home Open Day, the event was organised to help celebrate Seahaven's move to become a specialist 'Total Communication' setting, helping people with learning disabilities and complex sensory needs learn independent living skills, with a view to moving on to Supported Living wherever possible.



Seahaven's Manager Sharon Head said: "We wanted to remind people that care homes in every community are filled with unique, intelligent and charming characters, and run by special people that really do care."

"We enjoyed a really good turnout on the day with families of the people we support, care managers, commissioners, our local speech & language therapist and dual sensory team representative, plus our friends and neighbours. Everyone had a lovely afternoon."



■ Eastry Day Centre opens its doors to local schools

Eastry Day Centre recently hosted an open afternoon for transition representatives from local SEN schools and commissioning teams, to help showcase the many and varied life skills and vocational training activities that are offered there.

The Day Centre recently became an ASDAN registered centre and, in addition to its regular programme of activities, will soon be offering tailored training to the school and college leavers who are about to join us at neighbouring Gate House. We'll also be looking at extending this new programme of training support to individuals of all ages across Optima Care's other settings.

ASDAN is a British charity organisation which helps young people, post school age, to further develop their life and vocational skills.



My Healthcare Passport

It's somewhat surprising that the 'My Healthcare Passport' isn't more widely known about and used as it is a great communications initiative and one that we're planning to roll-out across all our settings.

Designed by a community of hospital staff, people with learning disabilities, carers, care workers and community health and social care professionals, the passport is intended to be handed out when individuals with learning disabilities are admitted to hospital.

However, during a District Partnership Group meeting in Canterbury – which Optima Care



attended – it became clear that usage is hit and miss.

The passport is readily available so we're keen to ensure that everyone has a completed copy to hand to ensure that hospital staff can provide the best possible care if and when the need should arise. This is

achieved through:

- improved communication
- enabling choice making
- knowing who to collaborate with
- co-ordinating care effectively

DON'T FORGET!
Kent Libraries offer free reminiscence boxes on 3-month loan a popular and fun activity for all ages.

NHS health trainers – at your service!

Kent Community Health Team is offering free support services from NHS Health Trainers. They are able to come to our settings and provide support to individuals on how to have a happy, healthy

lifestyle. This can include anything from quitting smoking and losing weight to taking control of your sexual health or just generally feeling better about life. For more information,



call 0300 123 1220 (option 3) or go to www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk

Support for school leavers

Kent Learning Disability Partnership created a couple of great booklets for school leavers and their families / carers, which are designed to help support an individual's transition to being an adult.

The first is entitled *Becoming an adult*, which can be downloaded from KCC's website and personalised. It includes sections on 'Looking after yourself / becoming independent'; 'how to be at the centre of planning your life'; and 'making the most of opportunities after school'.

The booklet is designed to be handed out at school and it is something that Optima Care will be utilising as part of our new schools transition service.

The second booklet is entitled *Getting a job*. It offers valuable information to help families think about what they can do to support their family member with regards to getting paid work and includes sections on: aspirations, steps to employment and getting started, working with professionals and taking the lead, stopping work.

To find out more, go to www.kent.gov.uk/transitiontoadulthood



NEW GROUP!
KCC is running special groups at local libraries called 'Books Beyond Words': a great communication activity.



On the buses!

Kent Partnership Board's 'Keeping Safe' Group is promoting the use of special communication cards for people with learning disabilities and communications difficulties to use when travelling on buses. Free supplies are available from Mike Cronin, Community Liaison Officer, Kent Police. He can be contacted on 01303 289 268 or email michael.cronin@kent.pnn.police.uk

Volunteering opportunities for the people we support

Optima Care is currently liaising with KCC's Supported Employment, Skills and Employability Service to try to identify person-centred volunteering opportunities for some of the people we support. More information will be provided in due course but, in the meantime, if any Managers or Staff have identified individuals as being suitable for such opportunities, please call Nikki on 01843 822 508 or email nikki.kerry@optimacare.co.uk

A model for good practice

By Dr Mo Eyeoyibo, Consultant Psychiatrist at Optima Care

Optima Care's high-acuity community living setting The Chilterns is helping to drive change in the low secure sector by shifting the focus of traditional risk management strategy in favour of improving individual lives as opposed to cost management and protecting an organisation's reputation.

Traditionally, when assessing individual needs and goals, providers would design a rehabilitation pathway focused on the risk an individual posed to both themselves and to society.

Denise Banks, Clinical Services Manager at The Chilterns, wants to shift the balance in favour of a much more person-centred approach that focuses on improving lives whilst being mindful of the risks.

"It's fair to say that the health and care industry has struggled to achieve this balance due to the associated costs of providing the level of staffing support required in the community to ensure safety, not to mention the potential reputational cost if things go wrong," adds Denise.

Denise and I are working together to devise a way around this issue with a view to deliberately introducing our new approach into the care pathway at The Chilterns.

A team effort

So how exactly will it work? A MDT approach will be applied to all pathways which involves an Occupational Therapist (OT) first identifying an individual's interests and then investigating what facilities are available locally to help meet those needs.

Together with the team's clinicians, the OT will then identify the aspects that might prevent that individual from achieving.

The end result is a risk management strategy focused on helping individuals achieve their goals: effectively allowing them to get involved in community-based activities that, under traditional risk management strategy, would not be possible.

Befrienders with benefits

A key aspect of this model is the introduction of a 'personal assistant' or 'befriender' type role – someone assigned to an individual, alongside their support worker. Befrienders tend to be volunteers, whereas Personal Assistants might be paid out of an individual's personal budget – just for a few hours a week – whilst having their main employment elsewhere. Either option obviously allows for more cost effective 2:1 in the community.

Coaching a personal assistant or befriender is a more affordable option than relying solely on trained professionals to provide the level of intensity required to support certain individuals in the community. It is also a much more workable solution insofar as it doesn't take away that level of trained support from the other people we support in our settings.

The personal assistant or befriender would be coached to the stage where they become an important part of an individual's life, working alongside the MDT, their family and also part of the reflective / emotive outcomes processes led by Optima Care's Clinical Psychologist.



Dr Mo Eyeoyibo

To provide a practical example of the benefits of this approach, under traditional risk management strategy we would have perhaps avoided permitting someone with a forensic / sex offending history to attend college. However, the model we are proposing would allow such an individual to have the required contact with this environment, whilst managing the risk. It's all about positive risk taking in the community in a managed manner.

Denise and I are currently looking at the model empirically and plan to share our methodology later in the year with a view to introducing it fully within The Chilterns' care pathway, in addition to liaising with other provider partners – in the secure sector as well as in the community – to ensure continuity of experience for the individual.

The Chilterns hosts a cross-industry working group

The Chilterns is hosting an event on 24th September entitled *From confinement to community: helping to ensure a smoother journey for all individuals on the secure pathway*. This will represent the inaugural meeting of a cross-industry working group, bringing together providers and also community, crisis and forensic teams across the South East with a view to ensuring improved partnership working and a consistency in framework support. The first discussion topic will focus on putting in place the ability to facilitate swift admission and treatment support to individuals in crisis (low secure to secure).

If you would like to attend, or to find out more, please contact Suzanne Clarkson on 07799 873 586.



VILLAS GOT ★TALENT!

Who'd have thought that we had such a talented artist in our midst! Please make room on centre stage for our



Talented Keith!

very own Keith Comer, Senior Support Worker at Eastry Villas. Keith designed and painted a superb mural on the wall of the sensory room at Villas, which is very much appreciated by all. He also took the initiative to design and create a



paining on the bedroom wall of one of the people we support who wanted to brighten up her room but struggles with having things hanging on the wall. A fantastic job. Curtain call please...

Peter Pan fun

After being treated to tickets to a dress rehearsal by Eastry Amateur Dramatic Society for staff and the people we support, the team at Eastry wanted to say a big thank you with a fundraiser.

Staff decided to host a fun day with a Peter Pan theme and everyone made an excellent effort with the costumes. Thanks to a tombola, cake sale, raffle and other activities, the team managed to raise £154.56, which they presented to the AmDram Society when they paid Eastry House a visit recently.



Members of the Dramatic Society visited Eastry House



Staff in full Peter Pan mode!

Eastry House news: In brief

■ A fitting tribute

In remembrance of Janet Frewer of Eastry House, who recently passed away, staff made a donation so they could wear pink (Janet's favourite colour) to work instead of their usual polo shirts on the day of her funeral. The team raised £43.40 for the Alzheimers Society. Janet was much loved and will be sadly missed.

■ Well done Angela!

Eastry House Support Worker Angela Sunley recently completed her NVQ 3. A huge well done from all the team!



■ If you go down to the wood's today...

...you might see some of the staff and people we support at Eastry House enjoying a Teddy Bear's picnic! Good food with good friends and teddy's - a recipe for success! Everyone had lots of fun.

Not a lot of people know that...

Cheryll:
"When I'm not managing Eastry Villas, Gate and the Day Centre, plus setting up a new Supported Living business I'm... a black belt in Karate and a burlesque dancer!"



I have one girly hobby and one that is not girly at all! I took up Kyokushinkai Karate almost 16 years ago after I had my youngest son. I had always fancied it and got talked into trying.

My friends and family, however, thought I would last around 2 weeks as exercise had never been my strong point. I quickly got hooked and within 2 years I was competing in national full contact tournaments and winning trophies.

I gained my first black belt in 2003 and opened my own little club, which is still going strong. My proudest achievements were winning the Dutch Open Tournament and grading 6 black belts of my own including my youngest son.

Then there's burlesque! Before I had my kids, I always performed in shows and bands. After having kids, I gave up my rock 'n' roll lifestyle. About 2 years ago I began talking to a woman who taught burlesque. I've always enjoyed watching it due to the humour involved, plus the fact that it celebrates all women - not just those that appear on the pages of magazines. I also quite like getting dressed up - putting on the false lashes, make-up and the much loved heels - and entertaining.

I've done a few workshops and a couple of shows and can honestly say that no-one leaves burlesque without a smile on their face! I've always been a woman of contrasts so I guess my hobbies sum that up well!