

Oxleas Exchange

CONNECTING THE PEOPLE OF OXLEAS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Please take a copy today

Family's great idea inspires Oxleas

A family's idea to make life more comfortable for inpatients has so impressed the trust that we have put it into practice.

The family of Michael Custy decided to set up The Michael Custy Memorial Trust Fund in his memory to pay for toiletry packs for people being admitted to inpatient units in Bexley.

Michael, who died in April 2005 at the age of 43, lived in Sidcup and had spent time as an inpatient at Woodlands, Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup.

Oxleas began distributing the toiletry packs trust-wide in December. They contain: soap; toothbrush and toothpaste; a flannel; shampoo; conditioner and shower gel. Michael's family believes that as many people arrive at inpatient units without any toiletries, the packs will help to welcome them and protect their dignity.

Michael's sister Catherine and her husband Dr Christopher Neal raised over £1,600 for the fund donated by guests at their wedding. Catherine presented a cheque for this amount to Oxleas Chief Executive Stephen Firm on 19 December. As the trust is now distributing the packs, Catherine and her family have decided that the fund should be used to provide newspapers and magazines to Bexley inpatient units. Catherine said: "Any one of us can suffer from mental illness and people coming into an inpatient unit can feel very vulnerable. Michael's family hope that the toiletry packs, newspapers and magazines will help them to feel valued, supported

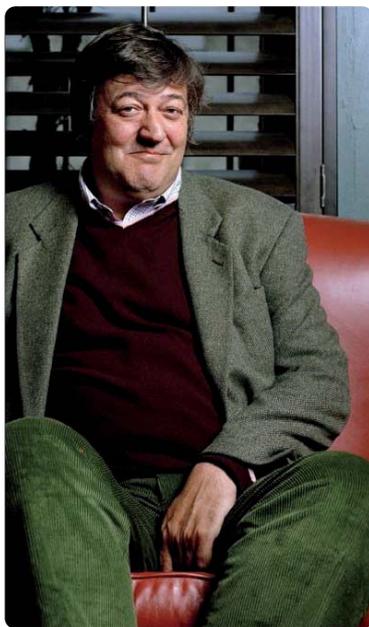


From From left, Catherine Neal, Stephen Firm, Catherine's sister Helen, mother Trudy and brother Jonathan

and less isolated." Accepting the cheque, Stephen Firm said: "On behalf of our patients and staff I would like to thank you and your family for this donation. It is rare for mental health services to receive donations and I am delighted that your generosity will help to make a positive difference to patients' experiences."

If people would like to support the work of the Michael Custy Memorial Trust Fund, they should contact Ann Rozier on 01322 625001 or Anne.Rozier@oxleas.nhs.uk

Stephen Fry thinks it's time to change



"1 in 4 people, like me, have a mental health problem."

Many more people have a problem with that."

If you have visited one of our sites recently you may have noticed posters for the new *Time to change* campaign. Fronted by TV celebrities Stephen Fry (pictured left) and Ruby Wax, this national campaign aims to combat discrimination faced by people who experience mental ill-health.

Time to change is led by Mental Health Media, Mind and Rethink. It will help to raise the profile of mental health issues and posters and promotional materials for the campaign are being sent to Oxleas sites and to local employers. The trust aims to play an active role in the campaign by encouraging our local press to run positive stories. If you have any ideas for how we might do this, or if you are a service user or carer willing to tell your story of recovery to a local journalist, please contact the Communications Team on 01322 625754 or exchange@oxleas.nhs.uk

You can find out more about the campaign on the *Time to Change* website:

www.time-to-change.org.uk



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•••▶ Chief Executive, Stephen Firn and Chair, Dave Mellish

Intrepid staff keep services open despite heavy snow



Stephen Firn, Chief Executive



Dave Mellish, Chair

We wish to begin by saying a huge thank you to all our staff and volunteers for making sure we continued to provide our services during the recent extreme weather conditions. The picture of Memorial Hospital on page 3 shows the buildings and gardens carpeted in several inches of snow and makes a very picturesque scene. It also gives some indication of the challenges people faced in getting to work.

Many of us found ourselves with no local public transport facilities, with roads blocked by snow, and unexpected child care responsibilities as schools and nurseries remained closed. Thanks to the dedication and determination of our staff we were able to keep all our main services running. There are many individual stories of the extraordinary lengths colleagues went to

meet patients' needs. These include trekking through the snow, bringing in night clothes and sleeping on units, and staying beyond their working hours to keep services open. Thanks to each of you, patients and carers got the treatment and support they needed and the NHS set a shining example to other sectors of how it is possible to keep public services open in such challenging conditions.

The other important news is the decision to integrate adult community health services in Bexley with Oxleas. This will mean around 500 new staff joining the trust delivering a range of services such as district nursing and physiotherapy. We believe that by joining with colleagues in community services we can deliver improved treatment and care to people in Bexley. For example, there will be increased

opportunities for shared assessments and treatment for people who have both physical and mental health needs, such as older people.

This decision is a strong indication of the confidence local commissioners have in the quality of our services and our ability to effectively manage these for local people.

Over the coming months we will be working closely with colleagues in the community health services to ensure their safe and successful transfer into Oxleas. There will be a formal consultation with staff who are transferring during the summer. We will keep our governors and members fully updated on developments and be asking for your views and comments. If all goes to plan, it is expected that the services will transfer before the end of 2009.

•••▶ Trust to run privacy and dignity workshop for nurses

Privacy and dignity should underpin everything we do

"Privacy and dignity are key elements in the process of caring and should underpin everything we do."

That's the message from Essence of Care Lead Nurse, Stacy Washington, who told *Exchange* that respecting dignity is one of the trust's top priorities for 2009. She went on to say that while privacy and dignity are central to the quality of care for patients and their families and carers, concerns on this issue were raised in our last National Patient Survey.

The trust is responding with a privacy and dignity workshop for nurses run jointly by Sarah Burchell, Joint Head of Nursing and Stacy. The workshop is linked to the Royal College of Nursing's (RCN) current campaign, *Dignity at the heart of everything we do*.

Central to the campaign is the belief that everyone has the right to be treated with respect, to have their values and beliefs

maintained and to receive care that maintains their privacy and dignity. This is because when dignity is absent from care, people feel devalued, lacking control and comfort. Its purpose is to improve patients' experiences of our services and raise awareness among staff of why dignity is important.

The workshop will provide learning materials to help staff improve quality of care and also allow experiences and ideas for improving dignity in care to be shared across the trust. Success will then be measured by patient satisfaction surveys.

The campaign will help staff to consider and plan how they can improve dignity in their care setting. An example of this could be ensuring that privacy signs are available and used in all areas.

For more information contact Sarah Burchell sarah.burchell@oxleas.nhs.uk or Stacy

Washington stacy.washington@oxleas.nhs.uk
You can also find out more about the RCN campaign by visiting their website www.rcn.org.uk/dignity



Dignity

At the heart of everything we do

Look out for the RCN Dignity campaign logo on publicity materials in patient and staff areas.



Staff braved wintry conditions to get to work during the cold snap. Memorial Hospital, above, in the snow

Staff meet the Queen

Staff members Dr Janet Parrott and Patsy Fung shook hands with the Queen recently during a special reception for healthcare workers at Buckingham Palace.

The event, which coincided with the 60th anniversary of the NHS, was organised to mark the significant contribution that healthcare workers make to the UK.

Janet is Clinical Director at the Bracton Centre, our medium secure hospital, and Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist on Joydens Clinic. Patsy is the Lead Occupational Therapist for the Forensic, Prisons and Challenging Behaviour Services and is also based at the Bracton.

A spokesperson for Buckingham Palace said: "In the 60th anniversary year it was thought particularly appropriate to have a healthcare event. It also marks the Royal Family's long association with healthcare."



Proud Patsy holds her invitation to the palace

Andrew takes retirement on the chin

Andrew Chin, Ward Manager of Somerset Villa at Goldie Leigh, officially retired in January after 40 years of service, first at Bexley Hospital and then with Oxleas.

Andrew began his training as a student nurse at Bexley Hospital in 1969. He said: "I first started work at Bexley Hospital straight from Malaysia. I knew nobody here but soon made friends and met my wife here. We have been married for 34 years. She is now a staff nurse at Oakwood House."

Andrew, who lives in Dartford, took the lead in helping to set up Somerset Villa, an assessment and short stay rehabilitation home for people from the borough of Bexley. He told Exchange: "During the reorganising of Bexley services I was involved in planning for a sub-acute unit. Now it [Somerset Villa] has changed to a structured rehabilitation unit. We assess clients from acute settings that

can be placed back in the community."

He went on: "Over the years I have seen many changes in the NHS. One thing I am sure of is that if I were to become mentally ill the treatment I would receive is far superior today than it was 40 years ago."



Andrew Chin, hands on after 40 years

Bromley help for Bipolar

Jenny Kay, service user carer governor for Bromley, is spreading the word about the Crystal Palace and Anerley Manic Depression Fellowship self help group. Established over 20 years ago, the user run and led group supports people with bipolar affective disorder and manic depression. It is part of MDF The Bipolar Organisation, a national charity for people affected by manic depression. Jenny says: "At our monthly meetings, members have the chance to talk together in a safe and friendly environment and are able to provide support for each other when times are hard. Being able to meet up together can really help to prevent someone feeling isolated and alone."

The group meets from 7pm to 10pm at the Beckenham Centre in Hayne Road, Beckenham. The people who come to the group are mainly users of mental health services, but carers are always welcome too. It is very mixed in terms of ages and ethnic backgrounds, and Jenny says that it can really help people to cope with stigma and stress: "Knowing that there is a safe, friendly place to go each month can really help people to learn how to grow and gain more self confidence."

For more information, contact Jenny on 020 8653 8497 or visit MDF The Bipolar Organisation at www.mdf.org.uk

Camdenella comes to Woodlands

Patients, families and carers joined in the festive fun as the staff of Camden Ward at the Woodlands unit in Sidcup entertained the crowd with Camdenella, their own version of Cinderella.

Written by Senior Occupational Therapist, Pauline Boyd, it had all the ingredients of a fun-packed panto, boasting creative backdrops, lavish costumes and cleverly designed props.

This was followed by Harmony - a two piece band that entertained the audience with Christmas and old time songs, which got the patients up and dancing. A good time was had by all.

Camden Ward is an assessment ward for people aged over 65 with dementia.



Staff from Camden Ward formed the cast of Camdenella

●●●▶ Inpatient areas

Focus on inpatient areas across the trust

When patients are admitted to our inpatient units they are often acutely unwell. This can be very challenging for them and for staff. This special feature focuses on some of the many innovative projects in our inpatient areas. We will return to this topic in future editions of *Exchange*.

Inpatient units in each of our three boroughs provide mental health services for adults and older adults. The main sites are Green Parks House in Bromley, Oxleas House and Memorial Hospital in Greenwich and Woodlands in Bexley. The Bracton Centre is our medium secure hospital and Atlas House at Goldie Leigh Hospital provides inpatient services for people with learning disabilities.

A common theme running through inpatient practice is recovery. Francis Adzinku, Acute, Crisis and Assessment and Shared Care Team Service Manager for Greenwich, is in no doubt about the importance of recovery orientated practice: *"We are not here to take over people's lives, but rather to support them from ill health to recovery. Key factors in good care are early treatment, and*

supporting people to get better as soon as possible without losing their skills and routines."

To ensure that improvements are being made and maintained, inpatient areas are being visited by members of the User Carer Council. *Exchange* will be reporting on this important work in a future edition.

A new way in which the trust is collecting feedback on the wards is the Patient Experience Tracker (PET). This hand held electronic device is used twice a day to record patients' answers to five questions based around their daily experiences. This does not replace discharge questionnaires which are continuing and this year for the first time the National Patient Survey will be sent to people who have used our inpatient services.

Improving care planning

In response to feedback from the National Patient Survey, teams in inpatient units across the trust have been concentrating on delivering improvements in care planning.

Lawrence Yong, Acute Inpatient Manager at Woodlands, tells *Exchange*: *"Evidence from the patient survey showed that in the past, patients did not always feel that they had been told about – or sufficiently consulted on – their care plans. Now nurses take time to discuss and agree care plans with patients on admission and weekly thereafter. Patients now sign their care plans and this is documented in their notes so we have evidence of practice improvement."*

Developments in care planning include a pilot currently underway on Leyton Ward in Woodlands. *Releasing Time to Care - The Productive Ward* is run by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement and focuses on improving ward processes and environments so that staff can spend more time on patient care. It is being led by Essence of Care Lead Nurse Stacy Washington and the plan is to introduce it trust wide.

Jamie Komeh, Clinical Charge Nurse

on Avery Ward in Oxleas House, says that particular attention was paid to improving care planning as part of AIMS accreditation. (AIMS stands for the Acute Inpatient Mental Health Services scheme run by the Royal College of Psychiatrist's Centre for Quality Improvement.) Attention is also given to orientating patients on the wards and a welcome pack with details of ward routines, activities and staff is given to patients with the care plans. Care plans are reviewed every week in the primary nurse review in the ward round. Discussions with patients, their carers and care coordinators all take place regularly and are detailed in patient records held on RiO, the trust's electronic patient information system. Jamie emphasises the importance of this approach: *"We look at every aspect of a patient's care and by keeping records on RiO ensure that everything we do is evidence based."*

In Goddington Ward in Green Parks House, Staff Nurse Olu Ogunbadejo tells *Exchange* how a two day Psychosis Revisited workshop has helped the planning process: *"It identified personal strengths and qualities within the team and facilitated setting meaningful goals with patients."* This has led to positive changes to ward action plans and care plans. In addition, patients can also sign a Contract of Care – a voluntary personal care plan with objectives around daily routines which they agree with staff. Staff Nurse Caroline Costin says this is very empowering for patients and the use of these plans has increased following the workshop.



Caroline Costin, left and Olu Ogunbadejo from Goddington Ward

Understanding voices

A group set up in Green Parks House is exploring new ways of understanding and coping with hearing voices.

Clinical Psychologist Kate Butt says that the team wanted to engage more effectively with service users who hear voices by providing a supportive environment where they could share experiences with each other.

The team forged links with the community based Voice Hearers Group in Bromley and the result was a new group supported and supervised by mental health charity MIND. Since August 2008 co-facilitators Graham White, Angela Harris and Stewart Tight have taken it in turn to chair the weekly group. They are supported by a nurse and an assistant psychologist from the inpatient team.

Kate says the group's basic principle is that: *"The experience of hearing voices is not merely a symptom of an illness that must be cured, but has an important underlying meaning to the individual that can be understood. Another key point is that hearing voices can be a positive experience, and not necessarily one that people wish to eliminate."*

There were some anxieties about whether the ward environment would be conducive to this novel approach and whether the experience would be helpful or counter productive. Kate is happy to report that concerns about a less medically focused approach appear to have been unnecessary: *"The group is very well attended and we receive lots of positive feedback. We have had few, if any, difficulties."* Assistant Psychologist Gosia Brown agrees: *"It has been useful to hear service-users debating what it means to be ill and whether simply hearing voices is an illness and not hearing voices a sign of health."*



Clinical Psychologist Kate Butt

Home treatment for inpatients?

It may sound like a contradiction in terms, but home treatment teams are part of our inpatient services.

Manager of the Greenwich Home Treatment Team Jackie Waghorn says that the basic principle is, wherever possible, to treat people who are in crisis at home rather than admit them to hospital: *"All the surveys on home treatment versus admission show that people prefer to stay in their own homes. Hospital admission can be very disruptive to people's home, work and social life, whereas supporting them in a familiar environment can help them to recover more quickly. People can continue working while being treated at home, and if they are on benefits, these will not be affected. In addition to improving patient satisfaction, there are also benefits to the trust. Beds are freed up for those who need them most and money saved can be re-allocated."*

A key role for the team is to act as gatekeepers for admissions to hospital, assessing whether patients can be treated at home or need to be admitted. Assessment is based on four questions. The answer to each must be yes before home treatment can be considered:

- Does the person require admission?
- Do they have a home?
- Is it safe to treat them at home?
- Do they agree to be treated at home?

The environment is fast moving and the team works with patients for an average of three weeks. Jackie says: *"A team approach is essential, as is excellent communications with our patients. We listen to their feedback and act upon it."*

Last year, the team won the staff recognition award for 'Being responsive' (see issue 14, Exchange) for their initiative to improve the health of service users and staff. Looking to the future, there are plans for a 24 hour service which will include A&E assessment at night. Jackie is going on nights for three months to see how the out of hours assessment process and the relationship with A&E can be improved. But she doesn't intend to stop there: *"The holy grail is empty beds and the challenge is how we get there."*



Greenwich Home Treatment Team Manager Jackie Waghorn

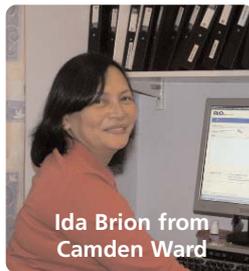
Treating dementia with dignity, care and respect

Camden Ward in Woodlands treats older adults with dementia. Following a successful pilot, it is now using the evidence based dementia care mapping (DCM) tool to improve care.

Deputy Ward Manager Patricia Conlin explained that the aim of DCM is to see the quality of care from the point of view of the patient. This is done by continuously observing patients over at least eight hours in communal areas. Observations on how patients respond to stimulation such as games, TV or conversation are recorded every five minutes. Patricia said: *"We can see now what a difference it makes to patients when we do meaningful activities with them, and I go home knowing I've done something worthwhile."*

As a result of DCM, which is carried out every six months, patients now enjoy more activities like games or watching old movies on the new wide screen TV. There is also a 'shop' where they can choose sweets they were familiar with as children.

Staff Nurse Ida Brion told Exchange about the challenges and rewards of working with people with dementia. *"People come to us when they – or their carers – can no longer cope with them being at home. They may stay with us for up to eight weeks and will either return home*



Ida Brion from Camden Ward

or move into a residential or nursing home. We take careful note of things like dietary requirements and respect cultural backgrounds. There is also a carers' group that meets in the ward every month where carers can raise issues and receive support. We treat patients as our own – as we would want to be treated – with dignity, respect and privacy. If they are able, we encourage them to feed, dress and clean themselves as it is important to maintain even a little independence. They are all different, with their own personalities and needs, and a different approach may be needed to communicate with each of them. It can be challenging, but the rewards are great when people respond and interact with you."

Service user led group is building bridges on Betts Ward

Betts Ward in Green Parks House has started an exciting joint project, working with Horizon House members who visit the ward each week to talk about how the clubhouse can help the recovery process. Patients learn how to join Horizon House and find out about the employment opportunities it offers. They also benefit from an environment which fosters social interaction and confidence building.

The project is unique in that it is

entirely user led and run. Staff attend the meetings, but in a supportive role. Susan Clark, a Horizon House member and former patient at Betts Ward, says that the meetings can be very rewarding: *"Recently a patient we met on Betts Ward came to Horizon House following discharge and within a few weeks was back on the ward leading one of our meetings."*

Staff Nurse Lamin Jabble says that members also talk about their journey to recovery which

can act as an inspiration to patients: *"It's a bridge building process, where patients are supported to regain social skills and the confidence to return to a normal routine in the community."*

Ward Manager Atherley Gilgeous explains that being an inpatient on a psychiatric ward can be a very socially isolating experience: *"Many service users feel that they are cut off from the outside world during their stay. We are hoping to reduce*

this sense of isolation, and generate and maintain links with the wider community."



Horizon House members with staff and patients on Betts Ward

Our values in practice

Volunteering changed Liam's life

Volunteering is one of the ways that we put our values into practice. It has a particular user focus because volunteers work directly to improve service users' lives and service users often take part in voluntary work as part of their recovery.

Perhaps the most visible volunteers are those that work in our snack shops. The snack shop in Oxleas House, Greenwich, has come a long way thanks to the efforts of Memorial Hospital based Voluntary Services Development Manager, Lin Sanders. She told Exchange that it was originally run by Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but was held back by erratic opening hours. When QEH stopped trading there in September 2006 Oxleas took up the challenge a month later. It reopened with the help of Lin and Cathy Rayner, Head Occupational Therapist. Trained volunteers were recruited – including Liam Turner, who was appointed Shop Manager.



The shop has been moved in a bid to attract

more custom and is now much nearer the reception area. Since then the takings have increased. All profits from the shop are used to benefit Oxleas House inpatients. And there are plans to extend the present opening times. The shop sells a variety of goods including: fresh fruit; healthy snacks and sandwiches; juices; nuts, dried fruit; confectionery; crisps; toiletries, greeting cards and quiz books.

Shop Manager Liam, 44, has been a volunteer at Oxleas for two years and was formerly a volunteer at the Memorial Hospital snack shop. He said: "Volunteering has changed my life. I first got involved through my wife, who is a nursing assistant at Barefoot Lodge, Goldie Leigh. She put me on to volunteering for Oxleas.

"I was looking for something to occupy my time. I am retired from my job as an engineering storeman on physical health grounds. However, I still felt I could contribute. Since becoming manager of the Oxleas House snack shop, I and the other volunteers have seen profits soar from zero to a healthy £1,500 last year.

"This has been achieved in a number of ways. Moving the shop nearer reception so more people have to walk by it has been a big plus. It is used by patients, visitors and staff. While we do stock healthy food the

shop also supplies items that are popular with patients, like chocolate and fizzy drinks. If we didn't stock these goods then people would simply use the shop down the road. This way Oxleas House patients get the benefit of any profits we make."

Together with Volunteer Coordinator Ann Lacey, Lin Sanders has recently completed an Excellence in Volunteer Management course. They are the first NHS employees in the country to do so. The course was organised by Volunteering England and is linked with the Institute of Leadership and Management. It is the first nationally recognised qualification for people who work with volunteers.

If you'd like to find out about opportunities to volunteer in Greenwich, call Lin Sanders on 020 8836 8510 or 020 8836 8511.



Liam in the snack shop

Trust acts to tackle infection on the wards

Clean your hands!

The trust has recently launched *Clean your hands*, a national campaign run by the NHS National Patient Safety Agency. The campaign aims to improve the hand hygiene of healthcare workers on wards and help trusts to tackle and reduce healthcare associated infections (HCAI). This will safeguard the patients who use our services as well as their families, friends and carers who visit them.

Hand hygiene is one of the most critical factors in preventing the spread of infections. There is evidence that poor hand hygiene can spread micro organisms which can cause infections including Meticillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Clostridium difficile (C.diff).

The campaign is trying to make it as easy as possible for healthcare workers to clean their hands at the right time and for the right task. It aims to:

- Improve the behaviour and personal responsibility of healthcare workers in observing hygiene standards

- Improve compliance with trust hand hygiene guidelines
- Share and learn best practice.

Our members can also play a role in reducing infection. People visiting relatives or friends on the ward must clean their hands using the alcohol gel dispensers (pictured below right) and should not be surprised to be challenged by staff if they forget to do so.

Service users can take part in the Clean your hands campaign by washing their hands when necessary and asking staff if they have cleaned their hands before they start a procedure.

The campaign will encourage a consistent approach to hand hygiene across the trust by promoting hand hygiene at the point of care so that staff are constantly reminded of the importance of hand hygiene. This will also reassure service users, their families, friends and carers that everything possible, starting with this basic but essential procedure is being done to protect them from infection.

The campaign is being coordinated in the

trust by Infection Control Nurse Helen Nicholls who will welcome any comments or suggestions about the campaign.

For more information, contact Helen on 01322 625872 or helen.nicholls@oxleas.nhs.uk





Complaints system to be reformed

New legislation coming into effect on 1 April will reform the NHS complaints system. *Exchange* visited Chrissie Strickland, the trust's Head of Complaints and Patient and Public Involvement to find out more.

How would you describe your role?

In a nutshell, to ensure the trust has systems in place to gather feedback from service users, carers and relatives. This feedback is then used to improve the services we provide.

Who can complain?

Anyone who is affected by the actions or decisions of the trust. This could be patients, their carers or relatives or members of the public.

Why should people complain?

Everyone has a right to be heard and if people are happy or unhappy with our services we want to know about it. We will then do everything we can to put matters right for the complainant and to improve services for everybody. Complaints are a vital source of feedback and provide us with the opportunity to learn from mistakes.

What happens when people complain?

People can complain through a member of staff or write directly to the Chief Executive, Stephen Firn, or the Complaints Department. We will send an acknowledgement letter within three working days of receiving the complaint. We will also aim to speak directly with the complainant to discuss the concerns and how the complaint will be handled. When mistakes have been found to have been made, we will ensure there is a thorough investigation and action taken.

What are the main features of the reform?

There will be a single system for all health and adult social care services and a more user centred approach to complaints. For example, at the moment if someone is not happy with how we have dealt with a complaint they can take it to a second stage review conducted by the Healthcare Commission. From April, this stage will be removed and people will be able to go directly to the Health Service Ombudsman. There will be an emphasis on dialogue and continuing contact with complainants together with greater flexibility in responding to complaints. The legislation will require trusts to show they have complied with a set of principles laid down by the Ombudsman for responding to complaints and they will also have to meet guidelines set by the Care Quality Commission.

Why is the reform being introduced?

The Department of Health was concerned that the complaints procedure concentrated on process rather than outcome, and failed to ensure learning from complaints. In practice at some trusts this meant that complaints were often responded to in a superficial and defensive way.

How will the reform affect the trust?

One of the ways the trust is responding to the reform is by looking into setting up an

independent appeals panel. Complainants will of course retain the right to take their complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman if they are unhappy with the way their complaint has been handled.

We've made great progress over the last 18 months focusing on improving our complaints process by looking at standards of investigation and learning from complaints. The National Audit Office reported in 2008 that Oxleas has performed extremely well in comparison to other trusts in dealing with complaints, however we know that we need to get even better at learning from mistakes.

What will this mean in practice?

We will revise the complaints policy, guidance and publicity materials by April and will arrange for support and training for staff in dealing with complaints. We will ensure improved dialogue with complainants and work with them to sort out the complaint as quickly as possible. To ensure learning from complaints, investigation reports will include action plans to address upheld complaints and we will monitor and report service improvements that result from complaints.

For more information about complaints, contact the Complaints Office on **01322 625751**. To find out more about the new legislation, visit the website: www.dh.gov.uk

Governors hear about vital safety checks

At the first staff governors meeting of 2009 concerns were raised about the length of time taken to recruit new staff. The meeting heard that a vital part of the recruitment process - and one which cannot be hurried - involves carrying out Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

Whenever someone uses Oxleas' services they have a right to expect that their safety will be protected. Equally, the trust has a duty to ensure their safety. To make sure this happens, the Healthcare Commission has set standards that trusts must comply with. These include CRB checks which are pre-employment checks carried out on people appointed to positions in the trust.

Anyone who will have access to patients or be involved with patient care will be CRB checked. This includes people joining from other organisations, even if they have been checked by their previous employers.

If someone applies for a post in child and adolescent mental health services (CAHMS) an additional Protection of Children Act (POCA) check is required. This extra check identifies if someone is on a list of people who are banned from working with children.

In October 2009 a further check will be introduced. Everyone who works with children or vulnerable adults in both paid or unpaid work will have to register with the

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). This check will therefore apply to some of our volunteers.

ISA checks will be carried out in addition to CRB checks and over the next five years staff will need to register with the ISA. All new staff joining the trust from 12 October 2009 will also need to be ISA registered.

Advice and guidance for anyone affected by the new ISA checks will be provided over the coming months.

If you want to find out more now you can visit the ISA website www.isa-gov.org.uk or contact Head of Workforce Development Janna Maxfield at Janna.Maxfield@oxleas.nhs.uk

More news

Big step forward for therapies at the Bracton

December saw the joint launch at the Bracton Centre, our medium secure hospital, of the refurbished Bracton therapies area and the new Occupational Therapy (OT) strategy 2008 - 2010.

The newly refurbished facilities include: a state of the art gymnasium (pictured right) with 'chill-out' room; an information technology suite; pottery room; picture framing workshop; sports hall; multi-faith room; group room and activities of daily living kitchen.

Guest speaker at the event was Mary O'Hagan, who initiated the

service user movement in New Zealand and contributed to the development of the new OT strategy. Trust Lead Occupational Therapist Catriona Toms, said: *"We benefited from the inspirational input of key speaker Mary O'Hagan and local service user Danny Hughes who both told stories of recovery. It is this philosophy of recovery and social inclusion which underpins the delivery of our strategy."*

The 2008-2010 strategy aims to ensure that our occupational therapy services promote social inclusion, in particular service user engagement and recovery orientated practice.



The new state of the art gym at the Bracton Centre

Members' views key to planning

In January over 100 members came to focus groups held in Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich.

People attending the meetings were taken through the trust's outline annual plan for 2009 to 2010 and our continuing commitment to our four 'must do' priorities which address concerns raised in the National Patient Survey. These are:

- increase support to carers and families
- better information on treatment, especially medication
- better involvement in care planning
- better relationships with professionals.

The meetings also heard details about our

'critical work streams'. Some of these, like 'Accessing psychological therapies', resulted directly from feedback gathered at the last borough focus groups.

This was followed by group discussions and round table workshops where people were asked to give their views on our priorities and critical work streams. We will share the feedback with details of our plans for 2009 to 2010 in the next edition of *Exchange*.



Members share their thoughts in Bexley

Football club needs to net new players

A Bromley based seven-a-side football team urgently needs fresh talent. Bromley R and Bs has been running for some time now and needs new recruits to play and help to run the team which meets on Friday afternoons for two hours.

Last year the side joined the Positive Mental Attitude League (a London wide project), playing their home matches at Bromley FC. Bromley ACT Team Manager Mark McManus told *Exchange*: *"The team played recently against a very organised side that are coached by Fulham FC and narrowly lost 6-5. The opponents had a squad of 12 so I think they did fantastically well. I am impressed at how people within the team have progressed and I don't just mean their football skills."*

So if you fancy your chances of playing for the R and Bs or would like to help out on the organisational side please email Mark at Mark.McManus@oxleas.nhs.uk or Julian at Julian.Palmisciano@oxleas.nhs.uk or telephone either of them on 020 8676 8250.



The Bromley R and Bs squad

Win a CD competition!

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To enter, just answer the following questions:

1. How much money was raised for the Michael Custy Memorial Fund?
2. Who is the manager of the Oxleas House snack shop?

The answers can be found in this issue of *Exchange*. Please send or email your entries to Communications at the address below.

Congratulations to Jess Emerson who won the last competition.

Please send us your letters and news stories. You can contact the Communications Team at: exchange@oxleas.nhs.uk or call 01322 625754 or write to us at Communications, Pinewood House, Pinewood Place, Dartford, Kent DA2 7WG.

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