



Rethink Carers Lancashire

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Something of a theme (or two) in this newsletter...



We've just had Mental Health Awareness Week on the theme of kindness, which has always been a fundamental element of everything Rethink does, and especially noticeable within our group. I'm sure we're all heartened by the flowering of kindness in the current situation, tying in with the rainbow symbolism of solidarity, hope, staying positive and feeling connected.

Mark Rowland, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation, explained why this theme was chosen: *'We know from the research that kindness and our mental health are deeply connected. The research shows that kindness is an antidote to isolation and creates a sense of belonging. It helps reduce stress, brings a fresh perspective and deepens friendships. Kindness to ourselves can prevent shame from corroding our sense of identity and help boost our self-esteem. Kindness can even improve feelings of confidence and optimism.'* At our group Zoom meeting there was quite a consensus around the positives of being locked down, despite the ongoing anxieties – it's perhaps given time to focus on ourselves, which carers rarely do, to say nothing of cleaned out kitchen cupboards, tidy garages, blooming gardens. But of course it's easier for some than others, if you're struggling with anything and would like help or just the chance to offload, do get in touch.

One positive is that more of us are overcoming our fears of technology and trying to use online activities. It's much easier than you'd think to access a Zoom meeting, and for many much nicer to be able to see the people you're talking to. We're looking at finding funds to help those who would like equipment such as an ipad or tablet – if you're interested in this idea let us know. If we manage to provide these, we also hope to give some training.

LSCft



We made representations to Maria Nelligan, the Trust's Director of Nursing, about the importance, especially during the lockdown, of maintaining contact between families and patients; some of our families had found it impossible to establish any sort of video link. As a result, Maria thanked us for bringing this to her attention and immediately arranged for all the wards to have individual tablet devices which should now be operational.

We had also raised the issue of patient safety on the wards, and have been assured that the Trust is embarking on a number of improvement initiatives which should have a positive impact on the acute inpatient environment. These initiatives are being led by the Deputy Director of Nursing (Mental Health) and include the implementation of the 'Safe Wards' national programme, as well as improving therapeutic activities, restraint reduction, and quality standards with the introduction of a monthly safety matrix. As part of the Trust's plans for improving experience and engagement with service users and carers, Paul Jebb has just been appointed as Associate Director of Nursing, Experience and Engagement. SEE PAGE 3 for more about Paul

In our February newsletter we explained how those eligible for Section 117 aftercare can also have a PERSONAL HEALTH BUDGET (an amount of money to support your health and wellbeing needs) with the chance to spend the money on a broader range of care and support than the NHS usually offers, such as paying for gym membership if your medication causes weight gain. Although the new temporary legislation does not affect people receiving Section 117 after-care services, unfortunately it does affect NHS Continuing Healthcare, in that NHS providers can delay undertaking the assessment process for continuing healthcare until after the emergency period has ended. So for those people who are keen to take advantage of the new personal health budget initiative, it will probably have to wait until things are more back to normal.

NHS Continuing Healthcare and the new Covid-19 legislation



Do you need to be able to identify yourself as a carer?

Some of our group members have been challenged about their carer status, either when trying to go into a supermarket with the person they care for, when using the allocated shopping times for carers, or just when out and about. Hopefully this will be more or less sorted for most of us now, but as we don't quite know what the rules will be in the coming days, and if you're not called Dominic, please ask us for a supporting letter.

The crucial role social care workers play has risen up the agenda, let's make sure it stays there

Rethink's Director of Operations, Mark Yates, explains why we have to make sure that the recognition of the crucial role that social care plays in keeping people safe and well is not lost after this crisis. "It is often said (and I have heard it more than once recently!) that working at the time of a crisis brings out the best in people. I don't think that could be more true in the current environment. We have all had to adapt and change our approach and I would hope that some of the things that are now happening in practice will become more common when we move back into a more usual way of operating.

From Rethink

One of the things which we have to ensure does remain long after the crisis is over, is the recognition of the crucial role that social care – and its workforce – plays in keeping people safe and well at home and in their communities. Social care has sometimes felt like the poorer relative of the NHS – both in terms of funding, and status of the workforce. But it does feel that the last few weeks has begun to change the narrative regarding social care. The 8pm clap for the NHS on a Thursday, for example, quickly moved to a 'clap for carers' – thanking all those who work in frontline health, care and support services. In their recent [coronavirus social care action plan](#), the Department of Health and Social Care included a specific section on 'appreciation' in which they state: "We want to make clear that those working in social care are heroes on the frontline of the response too. We must ensure that social care gets the recognition and parity of esteem that it deserves. An important legacy of this crisis must be the value that we place on social care as an essential service, core to delivering the frontline response to this crisis, and to ensure everyone understands that people who work in social care are key workers, in every sense."

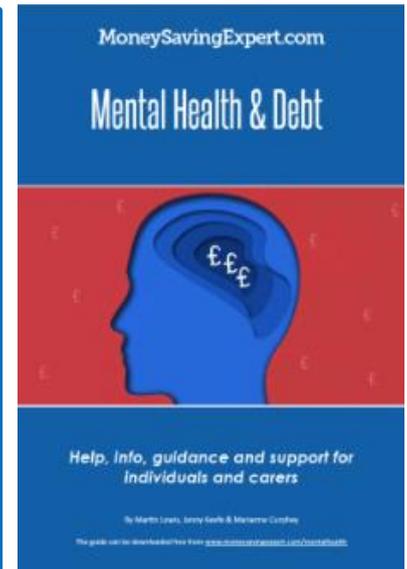
While the above clearly states what we have always known, it is good that there is now national recognition of this, and we must ensure that long after the crisis has ended, this sticks like superglue. This is a role for all of us whether that's in influencing the national conversation and policy through our campaigns work or delivering on the frontline.



Get the new revised free **Mental Health & Debt guide** This is a free 44-page PDF booklet supported by Mind, Rethink, CAPUK and others, for people with mental health problems and those caring for them. It covers how to handle debts when unwell, work with banks, free debt counselling, specific tips for bipolar disorder or depression sufferers, whether to declare a condition and more. You can download a copy at

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/content/dam/mentalhealthguide-May2020.pdf> or we can print one off for you.

Also on this website the Money Saving Expert has a [Coronavirus Finance and Bills Help](#) for those with concerns about bills during the pandemic, and their [Coronavirus Universal Credit & Benefits](#) guide looks at what benefits can be claimed by people who have lost their job. Again, we can print off a copy if you can't access this online.



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Paul Jebb - a very useful person to know!

Paul is our Trust's new **Associate Director of Nursing, Experience and Engagement**. This post has been created to drive forward a culture which values and learns from the experiences of patients and carers, and Paul has a very wide remit, to include preventative strategies, learning from and analysis of the themes from feedback, a person-centred care strategy, employment of peer support workers, co-production such as our group's training in information-sharing with carers (which Paul will be implementing as soon as the lockdown allows), the Recovery College, Triangle of Care – and that's just for starters. Paul (Paul Jebb, OSTJ/ MA /BSc (Hons)/ DipHE /RN) qualified as a nurse in 1996 and worked in numerous posts within nursing, as well as a period in operational management, Paul undertook a role within the National Patient Experience team at NHS England as Experience of Care Professional Lead. Paul has been involved in and led on numerous quality improvement initiatives throughout his career, and has gained the Extra Mile award by the Motor Neurone Disease Association. In 2012 Paul was winner of a national Patient Safety Award, and in 2014 Paul and his team won a national healthcare communications award for best engagement. As well as positions at the universities of Canterbury Christchurch and Central Lancashire, Paul has further qualifications too numerous to mention here, and has had influential roles within the Royal College of Nursing and the Nursing and Midwifery Council. He judges several national nursing and health care awards and has also been the Assistant Chief Nurse (Head of Workforce) for St John Ambulance (England & the Islands), and has held other voluntary roles. In 2012 he was honoured with the award of 'Officer of the Order of St John'.



Paul has only been in post for six weeks, but we've already seen a difference in the Trust's responsiveness. Some serious complaints have been picked up very quickly, and we've been consulted about a range of draft questionnaires for all the Trust stakeholder groups (although we did suggest separate questionnaires for carers). Paul lost no time in making contact to find out about our group, and has promised to come to our group meeting as soon as we can hold one. (Although this is contingent upon there being **cake!** But I'm sure we can manage that)



Cuttings



Child mental health was in crisis before Covid-19. Vulnerable children will be even more at risk after the lockdown. Coronavirus doesn't affect everybody equally; mental health problems disproportionately affect children who have suffered adverse childhood experiences, compounded by poverty, poor education and hopelessness. When the coronavirus curve starts to flatten, what will become of the mental health curve that was snowballing pre-Covid 19 as a consequence of psychosocial upheaval and austerity? (Guardian)

The NEON (Narrative Experiences Online) team based at the University of Nottingham have created a self-guided intervention built from hundreds of mental health recovery stories, covering a broad range of mental health experiences donated from around the world. Like Rethink, NEON seeks to demonstrate that people are not alone, whatever our experiences, and that there is hope for thriving as well as surviving along the recovery journey. The website is: recoverystories.uk. More details about participating soon

39 percent of men have had a disappointing reaction when they've shared things about their mental health, according to new research by Time To Change. The charity surveyed 3,000 men and found that only a quarter would tell their male friends if they were struggling with their mental health. Time To Change has released five tips for constructive conversations. Don't make it awkward, just let them know they are supported. "All they want to hear is that you're there for them and your feelings won't change.

Overwhelming majority of people living with mental illness say the coronavirus pandemic has caused a deterioration in their mental health. Eighty percent (80%) of people living with mental illness who responded to a survey by Rethink said that coronavirus and the lockdown have made their mental health worse, with 28% stating it's "much worse". In response to this, Mental Health UK, of which Rethink is one of the founding charities, launched Clic, a free support community, monitored 24/7. See www.clic-uk.org

Scientists are asking the public for help to assess the mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim to inform and improve future policies concerning pandemics. The RAMP study from King's College London aims to measure mental health and wellbeing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and examine what factors influence any changes. It's UK wide, & open to anyone over the age of 16 with access to the internet. Sign up via the RAMP study website - <https://rampstudy.co.uk/>

In times of crisis, help is available

If you need urgent help with mental health distress, then there is always someone you can call.

Lancashire & South Cumbria's newly launched Mental Health Urgent Response Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling **0800 953 0110**. It is staffed by trained mental health professionals who are able to provide assessment and referrals to appropriate services – ring it if you need to access services or for advice about someone who needs treatment/support.

For those needing to contact the Trust services they already use, please use the numbers below.

Blackburn **01254 226430** **01254 226074**
 Blackpool **01253 951225** **01253 956280**
 Chorley & South Ribble **01772 676173** **01772 773525**
 Hyndburn, Rossendale & Ribble Valley **01254 226006** **01254 612640**
 Lancaster & Morecambe **01524 550550** **01524 550198** **01524 550199**
 Pendle & Burnley **01282 628455** **01282 657222**
 Preston **01772 647024** **01772 773433**
 South Cumbria **0300 024 7247** **0300 024 7247**
 West Lancashire **01695 684161** **01695 684356**

**9am-
5pm**

**5pm-
9am**