

ISSUE 2 WINTER 2008

# time together

Art and Conflict  
opens at Our Space

**A new direction  
for Together**

Mental Health Act  
update

**Paul O'Grady show  
helps Together  
battle stigma**

**Wellbeing Week**

9th March to  
15th March 2009

**together**  
WORKING FOR WELLBEING



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# A new direction

CHIEF EXECUTIVE - LIZ FELTON

**W**e are facing the most significant series of changes we have seen in mental health since the closure of the large psychiatric hospitals in the 1980's and 90's.

- 2009 sees the end of the ten year strategy (National Service Framework for mental health). We await the next policy framework from the Department of Health that will shape the future of services. There is talk of moving the focus from services to quality of life outcomes, changing the relationship between service users and professionals, giving more control and self-determination to people who use services. Together is involved in these conversations with other mental health organisations and the Department of Health
- Government policy is about personalisation in health and social care – where each individual has a budget for their support and greater control over how it is spent. This has been piloted in social care and local authorities told they must implement the approach for everyone in receipt of social care services. Pilots in healthcare settings are due to start in summer 2009
- There is increasing pressure to reduce public spending which will lead to cuts in NHS and local authority funding
- Our growing population of older people and people with obesity will create added pressure on health and social care budgets

Providers of Health and Social Care services like Together will need to be:

- Efficient
- Able to demonstrate quality of life outcomes
- Able to manage relationships with 'customers' who have choice and control over the money
- Able to deal with a drop in demand for traditional services in favour of

more flexible alternatives

- Able to develop the systems to manage individual payments and the collection of these
- Able to do what customers want and balance that with organisational values.

Despite investment and improvements in our mental health services over recent years, there is a way to go to ensure that people are offered support with dignity, respect and choice. Our values of working in partnership, the right to an ordinary life, participation and individual choice, have been a fundamental part of Together's philosophy and the way that we work with people since our charity was founded. In charting our new direction in today's world they are as important as ever and if these values were applied in all aspects of mental health support, many people would have a very different story to tell.

Whilst Together's values and principles remain, we expect the types of services we provide to change very much over the next few years and we are working now to ensure we have the capacity and knowledge to operate in a different environment. Together is in a very good position to respond to and to influence the changing external agenda. We are working now on a number of ideas that will explore and test new approaches to supporting individuals. We have appointed, for example a lead person to co-ordinate our activities in the area of self-directed support and over the coming months will be making further investment in practical pilot activities and in developing new support services.

We intend that service users and staff at Together will be able to participate fully in the changes that lie ahead and look forward to continued success as we enter our 130th anniversary year.



Front cover image © Channel 4

## FEEDBACK

We always welcome feedback about time together from our readers. So if you'd like to contact the team to get your point across or would like to contribute an article, photo or letter, you can contact the team at:  
[timetogether@together-uk.org](mailto:timetogether@together-uk.org)

### Editor:

Claire Monger  
 Together: Working for Wellbeing  
 12 Old Street, London, EC1V 9BE  
 0207 780 7366  
[claire-monger@together-uk.org](mailto:claire-monger@together-uk.org)

### Advertising Sales:

If you are an external group or organisation and would like to advertise in time together, please see the costs below or contact Vicky Kingston, Communications & Fundraising Manager on 020 7780 7444 or  
[victoria-kington@together-uk.org](mailto:victoria-kington@together-uk.org)

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**Design and Production:** John Myers  
[john@belongcreative.co.uk](mailto:john@belongcreative.co.uk)



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





## Advice on getting the best energy deal

Energy regulator Ofgem launched Energy Best Deal in October 2008. The campaign aims to empower low income customers with the right information to help them make the most of the energy market.

Energy Best Deal is training local front line workers from Citizens Advice, Housing Associations, Credit Unions and other organisations so they can advise low-income customers about how to get the best deal for their energy.

Angela Newton at Together, who runs the Money Matters Project, has secured £750 of funding from the initiative to deliver three sessions at the following Together services: St. Helens, Rochdale, and Lancashire. They are open to Together service users and staff, as well as other local agencies.

For more information about each session please email: [angela-newton@together-uk.org](mailto:angela-newton@together-uk.org) or call: 07739 506 583.



Lorraine Reeves, Together Area Manager, with the boys from Swindon FC

## Celebrations kicked off in style

The official opening of Willow Tree House, Swindon, a block of independent purpose built flats that are now home to 16 individuals with enduring mental health needs took place in October.

Footballers Barry Corr and Ady Williams of Swindon FC joined staff, residents, families and friends to celebrate the opening which marked many years of hard work

undertaken by all to make this long hoped for project a reality.

BBC Radio Swindon interviewed staff and residents for a special radio feature on the project - well done to everybody who took part and got such a positive message across to their local community about living independently with mental health needs.

## Sheffield Success

**Two Senior Social Care workers at Norfolk Road in Sheffield, a residential service, which is home to 11 people, have qualified as trainers in Safeguarding Adults Training.**

Pam Wells and Melanie Ledger put in large amounts of their own time attending training, workshops and

completing coursework in order to qualify.

Norfolk Road Project Manager Rachel Sleney says: "I'm pleased to report that Pam and Melanie are putting their training to good use and have already delivered multiple training sessions to Together staff members in the North, as well as

delivering external training to other local social care providers. All the team at Norfolk Road are very proud of their achievements."

Pam and Melanie are not the only people at Norfolk Road to have qualified as trainers. Deputy Project Manager, Jo Gibson, is a recognised Together Trainer

for the Recovery Approach to Care Planning.

For free training that will give you the skills to improve your career prospects and the service you deliver please email: [david-cankett@together-uk.org](mailto:david-cankett@together-uk.org)

# Do you have easy access to the internet?

**Access to a computer, the internet, and e-mail makes it easier for people to look for work and to learn new things, as well as being a great way to stay in touch with others.**

That's why a project that aims to improve the access Together service users have to computers and the internet is being organised by Mandy Chainey, Operational Admin Manager in the Service User Involvement Directorate (SUID), and Gemma Campbell, Together's Central Support Manager.

Mandy and Gemma broadly consulted Together's service users via a questionnaire to discover what obstacles might be preventing people from accessing computers and the internet easily. Following the initial consultation a steering group is being formed to discuss how this project can be carried out effectively and is looking for eight service

users to take part and help shape future plans.

Information gained from the questionnaires and steering group will be used to inform how Together improves access to IT at its services. If you would like to join the IT steering group please email: [mandy-chainey@together-uk.org](mailto:mandy-chainey@together-uk.org) or call: **020 7780 7372**



## **WINNER ANNOUNCED:**

**The people who completed the IT questionnaire were entered into a prize draw for £20 of Marks and Spencer vouchers. Congratulations to Michael Farley from Together's Chapel Hill service, Kent, whose name was picked out by Liz Felton, Chief Executive of Together.**

## Royal Parks Half Marathon

This 13.1 mile run on Sunday 12th October saw our brave supporters struggle through Hyde Park's gruelling course in the bright autumn sunshine to raise much needed funds for Together.

Claire Haslam, Fundraising Co-ordinator, attended the race to support our runners says "It was really inspiring to stand near the finish line and see our runners complete the course. A huge thank you to all who took part for their hard work, dedication and training! So far we have raised £1,305.67 from the half marathon and with more sponsorship money coming in daily we are delighted!"

## Second successful bid for Darlington

**The Advocacy Together service in Darlington has won a second successful bid from Darlington Borough Council's Adult Social Services and Darlington Primary Care Trust.**

The success means that the project, which has been supporting the local community for the past three years, will continue providing its invaluable assistance to individuals who use, or need to use, local services for another three years.

As well as supporting adults who need to access mental health services the project also supports local people with learning disabilities, older people, those with physical disabilities and their carers. The project works by assisting each group to get the best deal they can from social care or health services by acting as advocates who advise individuals on the options open to them, and ensuring their wishes are listened to.

Paul Harrison, Area Manager says: "We are delighted to have won the tender to run this important advocacy service for three more years. In the three years of our last contract we have built excellent working relationships with voluntary and statutory services in Darlington and we look forward to continuing this on behalf of the people who use our service."



## Wellbeing Week 2009 Together we can make a difference

**Together: Working for Wellbeing is inviting mental health service users, service user / survivor led groups and the people who care about them, to plan and lead events during Wellbeing Week 2009 (9 – 15 March), that will help change misconceptions around mental health.**

Together believes that awareness raising events based on the knowledge and experience of mental health service users / survivors will inspire others to look after their own mental wellbeing and help to change negative attitudes in the process.

A pack with full details about the week, which will include ideas about what you could do, and details about support available from Together, will be sent to each Together service in December 2008, and will be available as either a downloadable PDF or Word document on our website too.

However, the point of this week is that people decide what they'd like to organise an event about themselves. Start

thinking about what you could do now. For example, if the main problem you've encountered is discrimination, how might you organise an event that would challenge people's negative stereotypes?

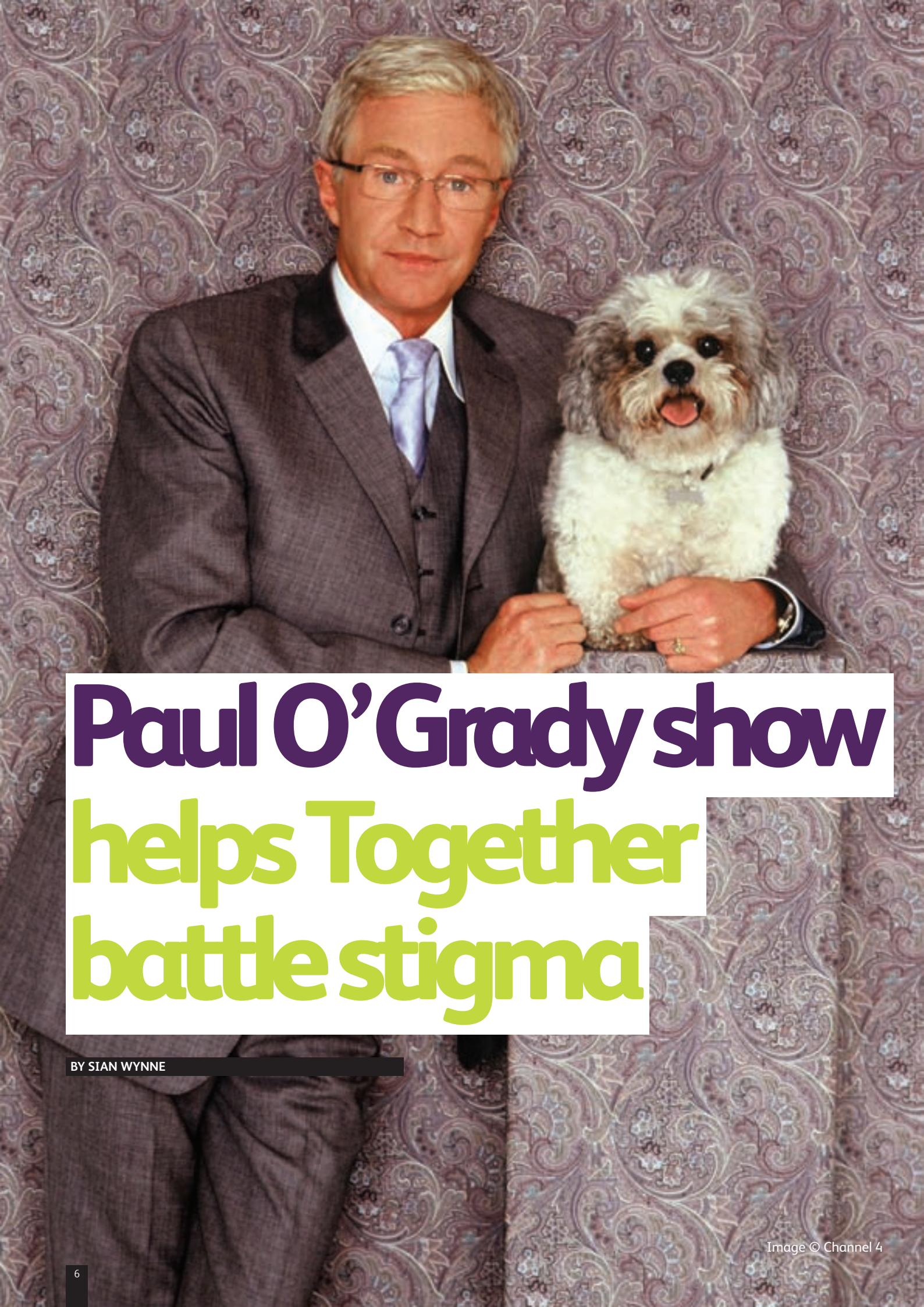
It is hoped that a co-ordinated approach to service users / survivors organising their own awareness events during Wellbeing Week 2009 will focus public attention on the many and varied voices of experience within this group that can help change things for the better.

### **More about Wellbeing Week....**

Wellbeing Week 2009 is being planned and organised by the 'Roll out Wellbeing Group', a group of Together service users and staff that meet regularly to discuss how to increase awareness of wellbeing and the Wellbeing Approach to Involvement across Together.

If you'd like to join the group and have a say in how the week is run or take a leadership role please email: [victoria-kington@together-uk.org](mailto:victoria-kington@together-uk.org)





# Paul O'Grady show helps Together battle stigma

BY SIAN WYNNE

Image © Channel 4



# One in four people will experience a mental health problem at some point, yet there is still stigma surrounding mental health issues. That's why Paul O'Grady and the team behind his Channel 4 show decided to tackle the problem this series with a number of features aimed at dispelling the preconceptions about people suffering from mental ill-health.

Together: Working for Wellbeing were one of three charities chosen to get involved, and on Tuesday 21 October Paul invited Anne Beales on to his famous sofa to talk about Together's work. Anne, who has personal experience of what it's like to live through mental illness, is Director of the Service User Involvement Directorate (SUID). She has been very unwell at times in her life, and so it might have surprised some of Paul's viewers to learn that she recently received an MBE for services to healthcare, for supporting others with experience of mental ill-health.

"Being treated with such respect by the production team and by Paul himself was uncanny when I compared it to how I'd been treated when using some services," says Anne. "I think it was a good way to reduce misunderstanding and prejudice around who people are – who are these people with mental health problems? We are just everyday people."

After mingling backstage with celebs like glamorous 'wag' Abi Clancy and of course Paul's famous pooches Buster and Olga, Anne took to the sofa, sidling up to hunky Scott Maslen, otherwise known as Eastenders' Jack Branning. As her stage fright became a distant memory Anne explained that through Together's Wellbeing

Approach to Involvement, when individual service users take an active role in supporting people, their own mental health significantly improves.

Anne's most important point was that while mental distress might seem like a negative experience in a service user's life, it can be turned in to a positive contribution. By helping others through similar periods they can improve their own wellbeing, and by informing professionals who come in to contact with those with mental health problems of what it is really like, this valuable knowledge can lead to better care.

"I couldn't have done it without the brilliant support of the Service User Involvement Directorate," she says. "In fact, going on TV with a giant African sea snail, mud wrestlers, celebrities and makeup artists was not unlike an everyday experience working in the Directorate office, if you catch my drift."

"I think my thanks in particular need to go to Claire, Vicky and Sarah at the National Office for understanding the needs of a diva! And a big thank you to the service users and staff who came to cheer me on, as well as the volunteers who manned the phones to accept calls from the public after the show."

The response Together has received following the programme has been

fantastic, with an increase in calls and emails from the public and the press wanting to know more about the service user involvement work we deliver.

Anne proved that the voice of experience is key to educating people about issues surrounding mental health, and in sharing her own experiences with Paul and the rest of the country live on television she acted as a wonderful spokesperson for Together and people with experience of mental ill-health.

Anne adds: "A service user once said to me that if you have a lot of little nightlights and join them together, it eventually becomes a bright shining beacon. My appearance on Paul O'Grady was just one little nightlight, but soon we'll have a beacon – and that beacon can end stigma about mental health for good."



Paul with Anne Beales after the show



Claire, Sarah and Anne test out the couch

## WIN!

We've got a Paul O'Grady goodie bag to give away to one lucky reader, containing a much-coveted nodding Buster signed by Paul O'Grady, two t-shirts, two pens, a fridge magnet, a photo and a keyring, all in a lovely canvas tote bag.

For your chance to win, answer the following question:

What is the name of Paul O'Grady's mouthy female alter-ego?

- a) Lily Savage
- b) Anne Beales
- c) Olga

Email your answers, along with your full name and address, to [timetogether@together-uk.org](mailto:timetogether@together-uk.org)

Closing date for entries is 1st March 2009.

**History is made when our personal stories come together. The Survivors History Group sometimes meets at Together. It is a way that people with experience of mental distress can share with others their accounts of their achievements.**

Here, Andrew Roberts, 65, a social historian who has suffered from suicidal depression since he was only eleven years old, tells the story of Valerie Argent (1948-1991) and how she made history. Valerie's story may seem remarkable, but she did not think so. Like many people who suffer from mental distress, she had a very low opinion of herself and the significance of her life. The Survivors History Group assumes that everyone's life is remarkable and that we all have a story to tell. Why not explore your own story and how it relates to what other people have been doing by joining Andrew and the team?

## The story of Valerie Argent

I met Valerie on Wednesday July 7th 1963. We were both patients in the Ingrebourne Centre, Hornchurch. Valerie was only just fifteen, a shy girl with long black hair who, at that time, walked with a limp. She told me that she had been in Ingrebourne since she was fourteen and that she was not very clever. She had moved into Ingrebourne from a mental subnormality hospital in January. Before that she had been a grammar school girl, but that, she said, had obviously been a mistake.

According to a letter (January 1963) from her Ingrebourne doctor, Valerie "had been an in-patient of the Royal Eastern Counties Hospital, Essex Hall, Colchester, which is a hospital for mental defectives. She was sent there as other suitable accommodation was not available, following an attempt at suicide by holding her head in a basin of water. She is an intelligent girl with an IQ of 120 and has been attending Hornchurch Grammar School."

According to Valerie, Essex Hall had diagnosed her as suffering from an unusual mental disorder that reduced people to mental defectives and meant they could no longer respond to language and reason. Whatever the medical story, the reality was a backward ward where patients were considered to be human vegetables. Valerie often re-lived her experiences, sometimes as states of mental withdrawal, like being trapped in a nightmare, sometimes on paper, when she could come to terms with it. Here is one of Valerie's re-lived experiences of Essex Hall:

*Spoons and tin plates. The cold. Chapped sore thighs and buttocks, and the skin sloughing when they washed the shit off. Soreness there, and on my wrists, where I'd scratched and bitten*

*them. And bruises everywhere. The casual way they slapped you. The way no one, dad, the doctors, the chaplain, ever protested about them hitting us. The doses of laxatives for punishment, the ones that thought it funny, or got annoyed if you protested about scalding bath water, shampoo rubbed in your eyes as well as hair, pushing me over when I was doing dirty linen in the sluice so it went all over me, and then wouldn't open the washroom for me. The shame of doctors rounds, and all the students being taught on you.*

Valerie and I were married at Islington Registry Office on my 21st birthday. Valerie was not yet seventeen. Although our friends and relatives supported us, we were the only two people in the world who thought our marriage was a good idea.

We wanted our home to be an open one, with friends staying, and without tight family walls. Many of our friends were mental patients with experience of different kinds of treatment and we heard many contrasts between caring, loving and rational treatment, such as we had experienced at Ingrebourne, and cold inhuman treatment such as Valerie experienced at Essex Hall. But it was not a simple contrast between good

neurosis centres and bad old hospitals. One day we went with a friend (Christine) who was entering a neurosis centre. Christine threw a glass ashtray at the centre wall, smashing it to pieces. If you had heard the way the staff spoke to her, you would understand why. When (at her own choice) Christine was moved to a locked ward in the old hospital, the matron greeted her with a hug.

In 1973, Valerie and I were approached by a group of people who wanted to form a mental patients union. At first, this appeared an extension of what had already been happening in the lives of people like us. In reality, it was much more dramatic than that, and for many years the mental patients union took over our lives.

With our young daughter, we started the first mental patients house. This was in Hackney, a few roads away from where I now live. Valerie's warmth and work helped to hold that community together for almost three years, but the experience was traumatic for all three of us. Through it, however, we formed some new and lasting friendships.

After the collapse of the Mental Patients Union, Valerie took part in a series of community care courses, run by





Valerie with our daughter in the garden at our home in Swanage, Dorset in August 1967. Valerie was 19 years old and I think this was the happiest period of her life.

Hackney Workers Educational Association (WEA). Her experience as an inmate of a mental handicap hospital, left her with strong feelings about the way people with learning difficulties are treated, and she was an active member of Hackney Action on Learning Difficulties when it started in 1982, as a result of one of the WEA classes. She also belonged to Hackney Mental Patients' Association and as a representative of this and the WEA, she was an active member of the City and Hackney Community Health Council (CHC) from 1982 to 1988. Amongst the many issues that she raised at CHC meetings was the fact that, in Hackney, adolescents were admitted into the adult psychiatric wards.

There was a great deal of pain in Valerie's life, but even in the midst of pain there was beauty and laughter. After a suicide attempt in January 1982 she wrote a poem about "the sparkle of laughter amid tears". Such an experience, she said, would outlast depression and emerge in memory like a diamond sparkling in darkness. The stimulus for this poem was a nurse in the intensive care unit who made her and the other patients laugh.

For three years, from 1985 to 1987, Valerie was a part time lecturer in Social Sciences at Middlesex Polytechnic. She worked as a lecturer some days and attended a psychiatric day hospital on others. She was a patient at Hackney Hospital from 1984 to 1987, and then

attended Shoreditch Day Centre from 1987 to her death. She died peacefully in her sleep in the early morning of 26th September 1991. Writing her obituary from the autobiographical materials she had left was one of the ways that I attempted to come to terms with my loss.

To join the group and share your history, write to Andrew at:  
177 Glenarm Road  
London  
E5 0NB

or visit the group's website at:  
<http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm>



A selection of work from the Art section of the exhibition

# art & CONFLICT

AN EXHIBITION IN TWO PARTS

together  
WORKING FOR WELLBEING

COMBAT  
STRESS  
EX-SERVICES MENTAL WELFARE SOCIETY

AT  
The British Association  
of Art Therapists  
and Art Therapists

**Together's Our Space gallery and Combat Stress, the ex-services mental health charity, have worked together to produce an exhibition of art, art therapy and poetry exploring the impact that psychological trauma has on the lives of veterans.**

Since the end of the Second World War, the majority of the British People have known nothing but peace. But it has been a very different story for the men and women of the armed forces serving in Brunei, Borneo, Malaya, the Falklands and the Gulf - and for those playing a central peacekeeping role in the Balkans, Cambodia, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.

Each of these conflicts, without exception, has resulted in psychiatric casualties. And for many who are affected, the problems may take years, perhaps decades to surface.

*Art and Conflict* explores the impact of psychological trauma on the lives of veterans

by displaying work they have produced while receiving treatment and support at Tyrwhitt House in Surrey, one three treatment centres managed by Combat Stress. The veterans taking part are aged from 30 to 86 and have served in the British Army, Royal Navy, RAF, Merchant Navy or the Reserves.

The exhibition is in two parts.

**Art – an exhibition and sale of work produced by veteran artists**

The art displayed in the ground floor gallery at Our Space was created by veterans who visit the Activities Centre at Tyrwhitt House, where many find that the creation of art work provides a focus that

takes the mind away from intrusive memories of past trauma.

27 different artists have contributed a total of 30 paintings, drawings and photographs in a variety of styles to this part of the exhibition.

Combat Stress was the Affordable Art Fair's charity of the year in 2008 and enjoyed good sales of work at that event. In particular the work of Bill Duckworth, 85 and Albert Cheverton 86, both veterans of the Second World War proved particularly popular.

The proceeds of each sale go directly to the veteran who produced it, minus a 10% gallery fee to support Our Space.

**Conflict – first ever time a collection of veteran art therapy displayed in UK**

The 30 visual images and sculptures displayed in the mezzanine gallery at Our Space were produced during art therapy sessions at Tyrwhitt House. The result is that the works in *Conflict* provide powerful, personal insights into the effects of trauma on the lives of individuals.

Rather than diverting thoughts away from experiences of conflict, art therapy, a form of psychotherapy that uses art media as its primary mode of communication, provides an opportunity for veterans, many of whom have Post Traumatic



Stress Disorder (PTSD), to make sense of their experiences.

Jan Lobban, a registered art therapist who works with the veterans at the Centre has structured *Conflict* into a journey that begins at the point of trauma and explores its impact on all aspects of life, including reactions within the Forces, becoming a civilian and family relationships.

The concept of frozen time runs through the imagery as past trauma is relived in the

present in sensory fragments. There is also a resonance with experiences of service personnel throughout history.

This section of the exhibition received sponsorship from the British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT).

Poems written by the veterans, written not during art therapy, but spontaneously during their admissions to Tyrwhitt House, are displayed alongside the work in the *Conflict* section, none of the

work in this part of the exhibition is for sale.

Liz Felton, Chief Executive of Together: Working for Wellbeing says: "We are so pleased to hear reports that the veterans taking part in *Art and Conflict* have said that having a place where their work and experiences can be shared has helped them. It is a privilege to work with Combat Stress, a charity that also strives to raise awareness that there is a real need to try and better understand the full

impact of mental health problems on people's lives and provides specific assistance."

**Art and Conflict** is at Our Space from 2 December 2008 – 16 January 2009. For more information about the exhibition contact: [claire.monger@together-uk.org](mailto:claire.monger@together-uk.org) or visit [www.together-uk.org](http://www.together-uk.org)

For more information about Combat Stress please visit: [www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)



**Cell**  
 Mike Lyons  
 Royal Welch Fusiliers 1975-97  
*Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is like a prison sentence. It can drive you to despair. In the box a figure is holding onto a lifeline to Tyrwhitt House*



**No Exit**  
 Tony Montgomery  
 Royal Marines 1979-86  
*A day in the life of someone with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*



## Coming up at Our Space



### British Association of Art Therapists

An exhibition from The British Association of Art Therapists will be held at the gallery in February 2009. The exhibition is to support and promote the powerful visuals and written narratives explored during art therapy that come from people's experiences of challenging and life changing situations.

### The Individual Within

Congratulations to artist Tracey Brown at Together who has received a £5,000 Arts Council grant to host her own exhibition at Our Space in 2009. The exhibition, which is entitled 'The Individual Within', will explore her personal experiences of living with mental health issues.

More details about The Individual Within will be circulated once a date for the exhibition has been set.

### Ashworth Advocacy Exhibition

Art produced by service users supported by the Independent Patients' Advocacy Service, which is based within the Ashworth High Secure Hospital in Liverpool, will be displayed at Our Space next year.

More details about this exhibition will be circulated once a date for this exhibition has been set.

For more information on these exhibitions contact **Vicky Kington** on **020 7780 7444** or email: [victoria-kington@together-uk.org](mailto:victoria-kington@together-uk.org)

# Race Equality in Mental Health



The eighth annual Henry Hawkins Lecture focused on the issue of race equality in mental health. Key speakers Melba Wilson OBE, National Director for Race Equality in Mental Health and David Pinder, Community Development Worker at Fanon Resource Centre, brought two extremely positive visions to the debate. Both speakers highlighted how slowly and with difficulty things have moved, they both clearly noted however that the system is committed to change but it will take time, belief and longterm commitment to achieve. Chaired by Together's Chair of Trustees Anthony Sheehan, and hosted at the prestigious Somerset House, the event was well attended by a broad section of mental health sector professionals and Together service users who had a personal interest in driving this agenda forward.

To obtain copies of the presentations or supporting materials, please contact **Vicky Kington** on **020 7780 7444**.



David Pinder and Melba Wilson address the floor

# Mental Health Today 2008

The 2008 Mental Health Today Exhibition saw more than a thousand health sector professionals attend this valued one day conference in Manchester. Together hosted the Service User Leadership Zone, an information stand and two seminars focusing on workplace stress and the Mental Capacity Act. Delegates flocked to both Together seminars which were so well attended that for latecomers there was standing room only. Together's areas were manned by a cross section of staff and service users who energetically promoted our unique way of working and made some excellent contacts with commissioners and professionals who were keen to explore our work further.



Four members of our successful team



## The South East Service User Network

# *The possibilities from change*

BY PHIL RUTHEN

In the summer of 2008, Phil Ruthen and Tracey Brown were appointed joint Co-coordinators of the South East Service User Network (SESUN). The Network formed in 2004, following a Service User Leadership course funded by NHS South East Development Centre (SEDC). Participants of this Leadership training decided to continue meeting and working together to increase mutual support networks. Network members are people with extensive experience in service improvement and anti-stigma work with a variety of partnership organisations. At the moment there are 35 members, all of whom have direct experience of mental distress and are currently using, or have previously used, mental health-related services across the South East region.

Collective action and lobbying for services that are wanted, needed and identified as 'what works' by those using them is a key function of SESUN. It also seeks to challenge the strategies and policies that have begun to create consultative forums of a seemingly wider inclusive base but with potentially watered-down influence – influence rather than direct or directing involvement in decision-making. And then there is the continuing engagement of, say, NHS Trusts with individual 'professionalised' service users, that may or may not support a collective voice to best advantage.

As the Development Centres of the National Institute Mental Health England (NIMHE) winds down, and staff there disband, the work undertaken in this area becomes scattered or possibly lost. The South East Service User Network has therefore moved into a period of transition. It is seeking new funding, and has been consolidating its identity, membership criteria and purpose, so that the valuable work and support it offers can be continued.

- The Network itself connects people from diverse backgrounds with a wealth of knowledge and active involvement in mental health spheres

locally, regionally and nationally - 'experts by experience' - in conjunction with Leadership training. This has enabled members to contrast and compare what works and what doesn't, for example, when engaged in assertive anti-stigma and anti-discrimination work with government departments/agencies, the media, and public or private sector organisations.

- Network member's individual services have been re-commissioned or new group ventures supported. This encourages the belief that the Network and peer support can combat tokenistic or adhoc involvement of people who receive health and wellbeing services. Mental health interests more generally can benefit from similar direct involvement in project design and delivery - to bring about lasting positive change or enable innovative ideas to be considered or developed.
- Network members are working together as an effective grouping investing their time and skills voluntarily, positively influencing developments beyond and within mental health, wellbeing and related services across the South East region.

Until early 2009, 'hosting' arrangements for Tracey and I are provided by 'Together', SEDC having passed the remaining funds over to see what we can make of a future. That is in many ways good news as it gives back to the SESUN network the opportunity and the challenge to find its own way in the world. Some of the aspects of our work are described here, but please do consider asking for more information, and check out our progress over the year ahead as we actively seek opportunities to continue these working relationships.

Further information is available from Phil Ruthen and Tracey Brown:

**phil-ruthen@together-uk.org**

07515 919866

**tracey-brown@together-uk.org**

07515 919865

C/o Together: Working for Wellbeing  
12 Old Street  
London  
EC1V 9BE

# Why Money Matters



BY SAZ WALKER

Experiencing feelings of extreme anxiousness meant that at one point Saz Walker from Milton Keynes was afraid to leave her home. One year after taking a service user leadership course she has set up her own service user led group in the city, and is preparing to use the skills she has learnt as a volunteer on Together's Money Matters project to train other service users about how they can best manage their finances.

**At one point my biggest personal achievement was if I could make it out of the house and get to the local shops - and that was only if I could get someone to come with me for support. It's been a big change from being like that most of the time to taking training courses, leading others, and taking pride in the work I do to help others in my local community.**

The Service User Involvement Directorate (SUID) at Together helped me make that change. A year and a half ago a friend who knew about Together told me about the department and recommended I get in touch with Sarah Yiannoullou, its Deputy Director. I called Sarah for chat, and that initial contact gave me the courage and support I needed to get involved with the Service User Leadership Programme, which was funded by the South East Development Centre.

*Getting involved with the SUID has opened up a whole new world to me. It has given me a purpose, shaped my life, and given me the motivation to keep challenging myself more and more.*

Through that I went on to join the South East Service User Network and got more directly involved with the SUID at Together.

Getting involved with the SUID has opened up a whole new world to me. It has given me a purpose, shaped my life, and given me the motivation to keep challenging myself more and more. I have made so many good friends and

contacts through the groups it runs and I have to say, that for me, every single one of these people has been more helpful to my recovery than most of the professionals who have tried to support me in the past.

I heard about the Money Matters course Together runs earlier this year. It's a financial literacy course that trains you to better manage your own money, and gives you the skills you need to then go out and train other people in the same situation how to better manage theirs. Since I've been unwell, finances have been an area that have caused me great anguish. When you're not feeling OK, you just want to batten down the hatches and ignore the bills, which is the worst thing you can do.

I have been putting the skills I've learnt on the Money Matters course to good use and soon I'll be running training sessions at Together's Kelvin Grove residential home in Bedfordshire, and I hope that by doing so, I will inspire other people to get involved with the SUID too.

Through the SUID I've taken lots of other helpful courses, for example the Train the Trainer course, which gives you the more basic skills you need to train others. And I'm a regular member of the Service Users Regional Steering Group in the South – the group that gives service users a say in how Together runs its services.

*With help and encouragement from Together Saz has now sourced two associates and set up her own service user led group in Milton Keynes called MK CREATE. If you live in the Milton Keynes area and would like to know more about the group please email: [saz@mkcreate.org](mailto:saz@mkcreate.org)*

For more information about **Money Matters** please email: [angela-newton@together-uk.org](mailto:angela-newton@together-uk.org) or call: **07739 506 583**

If you want to join the **Service User Involvement Directorate** like Saz did please email: [sarah-yiannoullou@together-uk.org](mailto:sarah-yiannoullou@together-uk.org)







# Wellbeing Week

## Join us and celebrate Wellbeing Week 2009

From the 9th – 15th March 2009 **Together: Working for Wellbeing** will be hosting a series of fabulous events, parties, fundraisers and exhibitions at locations across the country to celebrate what wellbeing means to each and every one of us. We are inviting friends, colleagues and supporters of Together to join in the fun and help us celebrate Wellbeing Week 2009.

Why not do something wonderful to celebrate what wellbeing means to you? Why not host a party, event or wellbeing celebration of your own?

By celebrating with us you will be raising vital awareness of mental health issues and the importance of wellbeing for all. You will also be helping others understand why we celebrate what wellbeing means to each of us and why it is important for us all to have some personal wellbeing.

**Pull out  
this poster and  
place on a notice  
board where  
everyone can  
see it!**

For ideas and suggestions on what type of events you can host please see the reverse of this pullout poster or call **Vicky Kingon**, Communications & Fundraising Manager on **020 7780 7444**.

**together**  
WORKING FOR WELLBEING

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# 9th March to 15th March 2009

**Together: Working for Wellbeing** is inviting mental health service users, service user led groups and the people who care about them to plan and lead events that help change the misconceptions around mental health. By sharing your first-hand knowledge and experience we can inspire others to look after their own mental wellbeing.

**Wellbeing Week 2009 - Together we can make a difference.**

For further information please contact:

**Vicky Kington** on **020 7780 7444**

or email: [victoria-kington@together-uk.org](mailto:victoria-kington@together-uk.org)



**together**  
WORKING FOR WELLBEING



# Stuck for ideas to host an event for Wellbeing Week?

Have a look at Together's A – Z of event ideas to see if they inspire you to host a wellbeing event in your area!

- A** Art Exhibitions, Auctions
- B** Book Sales, BBQ's, Bring and Buy Sales
- C** Coffee Mornings, Cricket Matches, Cake Sales, Car Washing, Comedy Night, Conferences
- D** Dinner Parties, Darts Events, Discos
- E** Exhibitions, Egg & Spoon races
- F** Fashion Shows, Fete's, Film showings, Football match
- G** Garage Sale, Garden Party, Golf Tournament, Gala Evenings, Gigs
- H** Head Shave, House to House Collections
- I** Ice Skating
- J** Jumble Sales, Jazz Concerts Jokathon
- K** Knitting Parties, Kite Flying, Karaoke evenings
- L** Lunch Parties, Lectures
- M** Marathons, Music Concerts
- N** Non Uniform Days, No smoking days
- O** Open days, Opera evenings
- P** Plant Sales, Pet walks – sponsored/group
- Q** Quiz Nights
- R** Raffles, Runs, Race Nights
- S** Shave a Beard, Swimathon, Salsa Nights, Seminars
- T** Talent Contest, Treasure Hunt, Tug of War, Tennis Matches
- U** Unusual activities event – sponsoring individuals to do unusual things to raise money for Together: Working for Wellbeing to raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing for all
- V** Valentines Dance, Variety Shows
- W** Walk for Wellbeing, Who Wants to be a Millionaire quiz
- X** xtra wellbeing – any event which shows how you can achieve even more wellbeing
- Y** Yo-Yo Competition, Yoga Classes
- Z** Zany Clothes Days

Please call **Vicky Kington** to discuss your ideas on **020 7780 7444**.



# Survivors' Poetry

Phil Ruthen is a trustee and mentor with Survivors' Poetry, a national charity established in 1991 which promotes the writing of survivors of mental distress.

The mentoring scheme at the charity, which is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, supports poets from the survivor community who, for a variety of reasons, might have found it difficult to express their potential.

Phil and the other mentors guide new poets through the journey of writing, self-affirmation, self-criticism, the craft of poetry and finding an audience to receive their work. It also helps emerging poets gain self-confidence and professionalism in performance, and the publication process. Where appropriate, the scheme encourages mentors to guide the poets through the process of submission and publication, when specific advice about which magazines best suit their talent is supplied.

Phil's own published poems, book reviews, short fiction and occasional articles can be found in a wide variety of

magazines and journals in the UK. He had his first collection of poetry published by Waterloo Press in November, it's called 'Jetty View Holding'.

To find out more about Survivors' Poetry please visit: [www.survivorspoetry.com](http://www.survivorspoetry.com)

To find out more about Jetty View Holding visit: [www.waterloopresshove.co.uk](http://www.waterloopresshove.co.uk)



## Review for Jetty View Holding:

*"There's a tremendous energy and electricity of feeling in Philip Ruthen's highly sensuous poetry; it all works very powerfully together. Compassionate and fiercely felt, 'Jetty View Holding' reveals*

*Ruthen as a psycho-geographer for our times, acutely alert to the way place and the human spirit lock down together and to the extraordinary power that our natural, urban and social worlds exert upon the individual psyche. A singular and edgy first collection"*  
Jane Draycott

## New volunteering scheme for London project

**Volunteering helps to improve mental wellbeing. It gives structure, direction and meaning to people's lives, widens social networks, improves vocational and interpersonal skills and helps people to gain access to employment, education and training.**

That's why Castle Resource, a Together day service at Elephant and Castle, Southwark, has launched an innovative new volunteering project in partnership with another local organisation Volunteer Centre Southwark (VCS).

The move came following research from VCS into how to provide an

effective volunteering service for individuals with experience of mental ill-health. Its research found that the best way would be to open volunteer outreach centres at local mental health projects in the borough, allowing the team to take its work directly to where it is needed most.

The team at Together were approached and worked in partnership with VCS to ensure the space and support needed to make this plan a reality.

Councillor Eliza Mann, the Mayor of Southwark, joined the local team to officially open this important project in

September 2008 alongside Liz Felton, Chief Executive of Together, plus Claire Helman and Clive Pankhurst, Chair and Chief Executive respectively of Volunteer Centre Southwark. Clive Pankhurst said:

"We are really pleased to be working in partnership with Together. Volunteering has huge potential to make an amazing difference to someone's life. Volunteering can help you get a job, improve your mental and physical health, or even be a way to meet the love of your life! Opening this space enables us to take our services right to the heart of the community where volunteering can make a real difference."

BonkersFest! is a free annual one day arts and music festival, illuminating and celebrating madness, creativity, individuality and eccentricity; combating stigma and promoting good mental health. It has been organised by the survivor led arts charity, Creative Routes, for the past three years.

In 2008 the theme was 'De-normalisation' and the physical staging of the festival, which takes place on Camberwell Green, South London, was set into zones of perceived 'normality' which got madder, sillier and more intense as they went.

Festival-goers experienced their own understanding of the 'mad reality' via a sensory, colourful kaleidoscope of environment, image and sound. In addition to live art and visual installations, the festival hosted the Big Top outdoor music stage, and a local bar hosted The Muses Café, a mad programme of theatre, poetry and performance.

# BonkersFest 2008



Photograph by: Nuala Hamilton



**Sylvie Montgomery**, a member of Together's Service User Involvement Directorate's southern and national steering groups recalls her experience of festival here:

De-normalisation was this year's theme so I started off in the de-normalisation tent where, eyes closed, I was surrounded by a host of voices coming from different directions as I sat on a puffy duvet with surround sound. Thank God I didn't feel normal after that! Then we wrote up our experiences for the artist afterwards.

The event was opened by the Human Campaigning Peas (give peas a chance!) people (pea-ple!) in foam pea pods roaming around Camberwell Green. After lunch by the Big Top outdoor music stage, I had reflexology in the Healing Tent then proceeded to the Diagnostic Evaluation Machine feeling pleasantly spaced out. I was questioned and diagnosed as "mildly normal". I had to get rid of that moniker!

My prescription was the Cut-Up tent where the artist, Julian from Nottingham, had me describe my journey to the festival, wrote it down

on paper, then cut it up, jumbled it then had me read it out onto a tape. All festival-goers' journeys will be blended together to create the final acoustic artistic work which will be emailed to us soon.

I felt really zany afterwards and had my photo taken in my t-shirt which I designed especially for the festival. I chilled out, drinking G+T through a straw, on a suede cushion and met Chris from Southwark TV and Ivan Moore from K&C Sun. Ivan directed me to another festival venue, the Red Star pub across the road, where I ended the day with Liz Bentley's Crazy Cabaret. This alternative arts festival celebrates madness, creativity, individuality and I will definitely be back next year.

Photograph by: Mark Drinkwater



Photograph by: Nuula Hamilton

Jason takes to the stage

t!

The Editor of time together joins in the fun



**Jason James**, a regular at Together's Castle Resource centre in South London, who was formally on the Management Committee of Creative Routes, talks about his involvement in the festival here:

I used to be a Management Committee member of Creative Routes, the arts charity that organises the festival. When I went to the steering group meeting for BonkersFest! and found out there was no one to sell the advertising space for the festival's programme I volunteered to do that. And as I've experience writing and taking part in slam poetry competitions I also volunteered to be an MC on the festival's Big Top music stage on the day.

I was a late recruit to the campaign to fill the advertising space, and with the print deadline for the programme looming I did not know what I was letting myself in for. First of all I decided to visit the local shops, close to where the festival would be held, looking for local people who might buy space. Then the phone

campaign began - with only two weeks to the print deadline, when all the space had to be sold.

Work in the Creative Routes office was at a frantic pace. I was taking bookings, answering phones, relaying messages and replying to emails of all types but in the end I managed to raise £13,000 in advertising sales for the programme.

The time from getting involved in the planning stages for the festival until the big day went really quickly. Before I knew it I was putting on my suit and heading to the Big Top stage where I could put my gift of the gab to further good use and worked my magic all day.

Like anything good you really enjoy, it was all over in a flash, as if a light switch has turned off. Now I'm just full of very good memories about the whole experience.

For more information about Creative Routes and Bonkersfest please visit: [www.creative-routes.org](http://www.creative-routes.org)

Jason James recently published a poetry e-book called 'Death Suicide Despair Poetry', which is available to buy at [www.chipmunkapublishing.com](http://www.chipmunkapublishing.com)

# The development of Together's Wellbeing Approach to Involvement

**The Wellbeing Approach to Involvement is the service user led strategy to involvement that has been at the core of everything that Together's Service User Involvement Directorate (SUID) has done since it was established at Together in 2004.**

**Four years on, the work of the SUID has undergone independent evaluation from the Health and Social Care Advisory Service (HASCAS), with positive results that recommend the approach should be rolled out nationally.**

**In light of this, a report by the SUID recommending how to develop the approach further was submitted to the Central Management Team (CMT) and the Board of Trustees.**

**Emily Brown, Joint Deputy of Service User Involvement, explains:**

Together's Service User Involvement Directorate was established to promote and develop service user involvement inside Together and externally. Our vision for involvement is of structure, safe practice, shared clear vision and wide networks.

We received a Lottery grant from the Community Fund to develop the Wellbeing Approach to Involvement – our systematic approach to train and support service user leadership and involvement.

The approach was developed by service users to ensure that it would meet with their priorities and experiences.

The Wellbeing Approach is designed to:

- Add to individual wellbeing
- Provide a collective perspective
- Support local groups and communities

In the same way our services promote and support wellbeing, and the achievement of aspirations, the SUID promotes wellbeing through involvement and leadership, supporting people via quality partnerships. Within individual partnerships, emphasis is placed on empowerment rather than having things done to you or for you. Service user leadership is not about doing everything for yourself, but rather playing the governing role around everything to do with you.

Meaningful and effective involvement facilitates links between individuals and groups to have influence at strategic and national level. Within Together, this means that the Directorate is supported and led at a national level by its National Service User Steering Group, linked to Regional Service User Steering Groups (Midlands & North, London & South).

Through the supported involvement of service users, the Directorate has added value to the organisation and sector including:

- Staff and service user volunteer activities at local, regional and national levels
- Growth and change within the Directorate through external contracts and additional fundraised income to develop opportunities within the organisation
- Impact on individuals

- Operational and whole organisation impact and value
- External impact and value

Based on the HASCAS report and the work undertaken over the past four years, a report from the SUID was sent to Together's CMT and Trustees, leading to the agreement of 3 broad priorities for undertaking future work within the Directorate:

## 1. Roll-out of Wellbeing Approach and consistency of voluntary involvement opportunities

We wish to continue to address the lack of consistency in involvement opportunities, both internally and externally. For example our service user involvement development workers are not evenly spread across the country, with some working far more intensively in a smaller area than others. While this partially reflects the spread of services, it does mean that some service users have more opportunities for involvement, and more intensive support to get involved, than others.

This also happens because some Local Authorities and Health Services place more emphasis on service user involvement than others - some groups have no funding, others have annual contracts and others are well supported with adequate and long-term funding. Our internal focus will therefore be to develop the skills, structures and capacity to ensure this is consistent across the organisation, in all of its work.



## 2. Peer support services

The Wellbeing Approach to Involvement includes the principle that involvement should always add to individual wellbeing (rather than detracting from it), which is vital to support the development of the Wellbeing Approach to Involvement becoming a service in itself.

Peer support is further developed in other countries with leading examples from New Zealand (Well Link – [wellink.org.nz](http://wellink.org.nz)) and in the US ([www.power2u.org](http://www.power2u.org)). The evidence from these services has yet to be developed into an international 'template' for peer support services, but what evidence there is, shows peer support to be able to reduce peoples need to access more traditional (expensive) services.

The Wellbeing Approach to Involvement has already been described as a service in and of itself but also lends itself to facilitating peer support through a module within the Leadership training, followed by voluntary and then paid peer support employment opportunities. We will be looking to develop peer support at different levels within existing services and as new services. This may also include peer support around Individual Budgets and Self-Directed Support.

## 3. Development of evidence base for good practice

Service users are involved in Quality Assurance, monitoring and evaluation through membership on the Care Standards Committee, monthly Quality Assurance Steering groups and a Quality Assurance training programme for people who are members of Service user Satisfaction Teams.

The Directorate also recognises the need to further evidence outcomes of its work and this has been supported by the HASCAS recommendations:

- Individual outcomes towards enhanced wellbeing
- Service provision outcomes (positive change as a result of involvement)
- Organisational outcomes (increased profile, and new / renewed contracts/services)

Given Together's unique position in an overcrowded market and bearing in mind the economic situation, if service user leadership is to be true, we must follow our own agenda. We wish to go further than just protecting the gains that have been made. It is possible now with the right funding and resources, to gain a position where we can create a structure that will link service users together in a meaningful way to

deliver unique support on a local basis.

By using the Wellbeing Approach to Involvement and implementing our business plan along with the integrated work streams, genuine peer led support can be brought about, with Together shown to have the expertise to deliver.

With a strong Directorate we can utilise our hard work around the development of service user leadership to continue to develop and deliver into the future. If we remain open and communicate well with a commitment to problem-solving with all other parts of the organisation, and with our partners, the next year will enable us to embed the work undertaken so far, further improving the influence of service users and continuing to increase the profile of Together as genuinely committed to service user leadership and a provider of excellence.

For more information on the development of service user involvement at Together, visit: [www.together-uk.org](http://www.together-uk.org)

Contact **Emily** at: [emily-brown@together-uk.org](mailto:emily-brown@together-uk.org)

# Mental Health Act update

**Together is part of the Mental Health Alliance, a unique coalition of 75 organisations from across the mental health spectrum that are working together to advocate fair implementation of the Mental Health Act in England and Wales.**

On the 3 November 2008, new powers in the Mental Health Act, which the Alliance opposed strongly, came into effect. These mean that mental health professionals now have significant new powers over people who have been discharged from hospital care through a new system of supervised community treatment, including new 'compulsory treatment' orders.

Under compulsory treatment orders, community care patients who do not take their medication now risk being admitted to hospital.

These powers were designed to help the small number of people with mental health problems who are frequently detained in hospital to remain at home, rather than always returning to hospital care. However, there is a danger that in a risk-averse climate some clinicians will use the powers too readily and too widely, and risk sweeping people into compulsion and restrictions when it is neither helpful nor appropriate.

The Alliance is therefore pushing for these powers to be used wisely and sparingly and calls for mental health professionals to respect people's dignity and autonomy.

Together is particularly concerned that while the compulsory powers of the Mental Health Act have now come into force, there is now



Members of the Alliance push for change

at least six months before people can access the independent statutory advocacy services included in the Act to protect them. It is now up to the NHS and local authorities to ensure no one who is subject to the new powers misses out on essential safeguards through lack of access to advocacy during this time.

Liz Felton, Chief Executive, Together: Working for Wellbeing says:

"People can only gain confidence in mental health services through the development of trusting relationships between themselves, and the professionals involved in their care. Feeling respected, being treated with dignity and feeling in control of your life is essential to recovery.

Therefore we are disappointed that access to independent mental health advocates is not currently available. This would act as a safeguard for individuals whose wellbeing



Members of the Alliance head for Downing Street

might be adversely affected by compulsion orders, and we are keen to see this in place as soon as possible."

Simon Lawton-Smith, Head of Policy, Mental Health Foundation, says: "We need better local services, not more compulsion. The benefits of these new powers are not proven. Sadly, their

introduction has been driven by concerns about the threat some people with mental health problems may pose to members of the public if they become unwell. However, the general risk to the public is grossly over exaggerated."



To find out more about the Mental Health Alliance visit: [www.mentalhealthalliance.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealthalliance.org.uk)





# Action for Mental Health



BY CLAIRE HASLAM

At Together, we really benefit from our membership of 'payroll giving consortium' called Action for Mental Health. Membership of this group provides us with a stable income. Predictable income is vital for charities like Together, because it allows us to plan ahead.

A 'payroll giving consortium' is an elaborate way of saying that we work with three other mental health charities to raise money as a group. I meet up with Sarah from the Mental Health Foundation, Jean from MDF The BiPolar Organisation and Miranda from Rethink every month or two, and we keep an eye on our income, plan our work for the next couple of months, and consider whether we need to make any changes to our system.

We've got contracts with different PFOs – that's fundraising jargon for Professional Fundraising Organisations, who visit people at their work to talk to them about donating to charity. They make contact with hundreds of people on our behalf, which we'd never be able to do ourselves. The appeal of Action for Mental Health for most people who support us is that they know their donation goes to all four charities, so they feel reassured that they're supporting mental health really broadly. It can help people make that crucial decision to say yes, I'll make a gift.

Action for Mental Health has been going for 10 years now and our donors continue to support us. We send them a

newsletter twice a year, and the new one for Christmas is about the work we do around financial matters – here's an extract:

Rethink recently commissioned a survey for World Mental Health Day which sought to discover which stressful event poses the greatest threat to mental health. It showed home repossession is people's top concern right now with 46% fearing it could damage their mental health.

James Clubley, 26, from Essex knows the risks only too well: "Losing my home was really traumatic. At the time, I started to feel really anxious and then got really low. I didn't want to go out anywhere. I was so moody and just not my usual self. I felt angry that I had put so much effort into something and then to have it all taken away, just like that.

"After 2 – 3 months of this I realised this wasn't just feeling generally low or 'having a bad day', it was more serious. I went to my GP and explained the situation. He put me on anti-depressants and eventually referred me to a psychiatrist. The whole thing just had a

really bad effect on my mental health. After I lost my flat I moved around a lot. I stayed with friends, always temporarily, and then I ended up on the streets, homeless. I'd lost my 'base' and the illness got the better of me – I couldn't cope with things. I got into a temporary homeless shelter and, luckily, got moved on to Arnhem Road Supported Housing from there. They really helped me. Now, a year and a half on I feel ready to move out and have my own place again."

To find out more information about payroll giving or any of Together's fundraising activities please email Claire Haslam:  
[claire-haslam@together-uk.org](mailto:claire-haslam@together-uk.org)

To make a donation please go to page 27 of this issue of time together.

To find out more about Action for Mental Health visit:  
[www.actionformentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.actionformentalhealth.org.uk)



# Get involved

## Opportunities from Together's Service User Directorate

### What issues are being discussed? How can you have your say?

There are many ways for people who use mental health services to get involved with the work that Together does. This update provides an overview of current involvement opportunities available.



### Dates for your Diary

#### National Service User Steering Group

Wednesday 28th January 2009  
11am – 3.30pm

Contact **Sarah** on:  
**020 7780 7358**  
[sarah-yiannolou@together-uk.org](mailto:sarah-yiannolou@together-uk.org)

#### Regional Service Users Steering Group – South

Tuesday 17th February 2009  
11am – 3.30pm

Contact **Sarah** on:  
**020 7780 7358**  
[sarah-yiannolou@together-uk.org](mailto:sarah-yiannolou@together-uk.org)



#### Wellbeing Week (9 – 15 March 2009)

Together: Working for Wellbeing is inviting mental health service users, service user led groups and the people who care about them to plan and lead events that help change the misconceptions around mental health. By sharing your first-hand knowledge and experience we can inspire others to look after their own mental wellbeing.

Contact **Vicky** on:  
**0207 7780 7444**  
[victoria-kington@together-uk.org](mailto:victoria-kington@together-uk.org)

### New opportunities for involvement

Jayne Learoyd, has been appointed to be our new Policy Review Officer and is based at Together's Northern Office in Leeds. Jane is reviewing our policies and procedures - the guidelines that affect the way we operate as an organisation and ensure high standards and effectiveness in everything that we do.

You can help Jane and get your views across by:

- Volunteering to read existing policies and draft policies and letting Jane have your opinion of them
- Discussing some of the implications of policies in groups so that she has more of an idea about how they might work in practice and affect you
- Passing on your opinions about how policies and procedures work (or don't work) in practice for you
- Passing on any general comments or suggestions you have

Contact Jane for more information at:  
[jayne-learoyd@together-uk.org](mailto:jayne-learoyd@together-uk.org)

or post:  
Jayne Learoyd,  
Together: Working for Wellbeing,  
Northern Office,  
Unit 22 Unity Business Centre,  
26 Roundhay Road,  
Leeds  
LS7 1AB

#### Self Directed Support Pilot

Together is running a Self-Directed Support pilot (SDS) project for a year.

This is part of our preparation for the move towards self-directed support and the personalisation agenda. A steering group oversees the work of the project and informs its development.

The steering group is made up of people with roles relevant to the project who can commit various parts of the organisation to it. There are opportunities for service users to join the steering group – the role involves bringing the perspective of people who use services to the group.

The aim is to gain views from people using services about what SDS would mean for them. We will test out practical ways to communicate with people who use services, adapt our services to what they want, and help Together adapt its systems and management to manage an SDS approach to the funding of services. The meetings are held in London and it is possible to attend in person or by phone. Information or training on SDS can be provided.

The pilot also involves running some focus groups and there are opportunities to volunteer for these too.

If you would like information about the steering group or the focus groups, please contact Alison Shapton at:  
[Alison-shapton@together-uk.org](mailto:Alison-shapton@together-uk.org)

### Ongoing involvement roles

#### Join the regional steering group meetings

The regional service user steering groups bring together people who access Together services or other mental health

services. They meet quarterly to discuss current issues and areas for development.

They are where you can have a say about issues that affect you and therefore influence how Together runs its services. They are also a good way to find out more about the training and volunteering opportunities offered by Together.

If you would like to get involved, find out more information by contacting Sarah at: [sarah.yiannoullou@together-uk.org](mailto:sarah.yiannoullou@together-uk.org) or ask your project team for more information. Please note that travel expenses are reimbursed to people who attend these meetings.

### Join the 'Roll out Wellbeing' group

The 'Roll out Wellbeing' Group is another steering group that meets regularly and needs your input. This group is responsible for making sure that Together's vision of wellbeing for all and improved service user leadership is embedded in all the activities we undertake.

One of the key things the group is currently working on is Wellbeing Week 2009, the awareness week planned for 9-15 of March where Together is inviting mental health service users, service user / survivor led groups and the people who care about them, to plan and lead events to help change misconceptions around mental health.

If you or other people from your project would like to get involved in the group, please contact Vicky at: [victoria.kington@together-uk.org](mailto:victoria.kington@together-uk.org) or ask your project team for more information. Please note that travel expenses are reimbursed to people who attend these meetings.

### Fundraising

Would you like to fundraise for your project? If so, expert advice is available in our fundraising e-bulletin, which is published every other month and sent out via email. Our fundraising team has also developed training for anyone interested in fundraising for their own projects or groups.

Contact: [fundraising@together-uk.org](mailto:fundraising@together-uk.org) or call: **0207 780 7374** if you would like to find out more.

## UPDATE from the National Steering Group

BY ANNE BEALES MBE,  
Director of the Service User Involvement Directorate (SUID)

The last national steering group meeting took place in September 2008. One item discussed was how a collective service user perspective and knowledge based on lived experience could and should offer a 'lead' in how Together is governed at the most senior levels.

Within the Central Management Team, as a service user myself, I am able to represent the views of service users involved with the SUID. However moving on from this, and what the National Steering Group would now like to see is more people who use services applying to sit on Together's trustee board.

The group believe that until the service user experience becomes embedded within the Trustee board that safe, meaningful communication and dialogue with the Trustees will not be possible and that perhaps, because of this, the National Service User Steering group should become a sub group of the Trustees.

A variety of other ways to increase influence at trustee level were looked at including:

- Can formal 'joint' meetings with Trustees be held?
- Should we develop systems in order that the National steering group's views,

recommendations and feedback about Trustees discussion and decisions can take place?

Service user involvement and influence is welcomed by the Trustees and how this happens in practice is an important ongoing discussion which will be revisited and developed further.



Contact **Anne** at:  
[anne-beales@together-uk.org](mailto:anne-beales@together-uk.org)

## Satisfaction Team: Pilot Update

BY IAN MUHAMMAD

As reported in the last issue of time together 50 service users are being trained in evaluation and auditing skills so that they can undertake a short-term piece of work to identify changes and developments Together should consider making to its services.

Trainees are now working in groups known as "Service User Satisfaction

Teams" and have been evaluating four of Together's residential homes across two regions by interviewing service users at those projects and working with them in order to complete questionnaires. The results will contribute to a report that will include recommendations for improvements in systems planning, service provision and

recommendations on best practice.

The work began end of March 2008 and is expected to be completed with a report by March/April 2009.

Contact **Ian** at:  
[ian.muhammad@together-uk.org](mailto:ian.muhammad@together-uk.org)

# NVQ Assessment Centre update



BY JACKIE MACINTYRE, NVQ Assessment Centre Manager

## Awards news

With the closure of the NVQ Level 3 Promoting Independence awards in January 07, the NVQ Assessment Centre is now concentrating on Health and Social Care Level 3 and 4, assessor (A1) and internal verifier (V1) awards.

We currently offer Health and Social Care Level 3, with inductions being run to meet the needs of projects locally whenever possible – three sets of inductions for L3 were carried out in July.

City and Guilds recently granted approval for the centre to offer health and Social Care Level 4. Inductions started for this award in September and the Assessment Centre will apply for approval to offer the replacement for the Registered Managers Award, the NVQ Level 4 Leadership and Management for Care Services, in due course.



Together staff member Ken Davis receiving his L3 certificate

Inductions for the A1 assessor award took place for the Suffolk region in July and in London in August. This award is open for senior workers as well as Deputy Project Manager's and Project Manager's.

The centre has also just started to offer the V1 award again after a break of 18 months.

## Staff changes

Anna Robertson is now the NVQ administrator, she deals with enquiries at the centre. Part of her role is to maintain the centre's records and database, and to arrange materials for NVQ training and inductions.



Email Anna at: [anna-robertson@together-uk.org](mailto:anna-robertson@together-uk.org)  
cor call: 0207 780 7332

## Peripatetic Assessors

Some of you will already know that we have team of peripatetic assessor/internal verifiers in post. The team consists of Hazel Jones, Marie Kelly and Maggie Williams and their role is to support candidates, assessors and internal verifiers across the organisation. Maggie Williams is also the Internal Verifier Coordinator for the assessment centre and is responsible for quality assurance.

We look forward to giving you further information and updates from the centre in future editions of time together.

Email Jackie at: [Jackie-MacIntyre@together-uk.org](mailto:Jackie-MacIntyre@together-uk.org)

# Learn management skills online

Together has launched an online development resource to support its managers to develop and enhance their management skills. The site provides a comprehensive guide to all aspects of modern management, and provides managers with the opportunity to acquire Together's 'Certificates in Professional Management' via a series of online tests. The resource can be accessed from anywhere with a computer and web access, and is updated regularly to reflect current thinking around management best practice.

In 2009, Together's Learning and Development programme will also begin offering online learning to support a raft of training needs including Personal Safety, Fire Safety, Stress Management, Manual Handling, and many other options as demand dictates. The adoption of online learning as an option makes sense for a variety of reasons, which include faster access to learning, reduced travel costs and greater flexibility for staff working irregular hours.



> Further details on Together's online learning options can be obtained from **David Cankett**, Head of Learning and Development: [david-cankett@together-uk.org](mailto:david-cankett@together-uk.org)



John Crawford addresses a conference in Basildon on World Mental Health Day 2007.



## Remembering John Crawford

**John Crawford, who passed away in August this year, was a popular and well respected member of Together's Essex-based project - Service User Network Representation in South East (SUNRISE). Toni Dowley, the project development worker remembers him here:**

"I will miss his laugh and good nature "He was always smiling" "He was a gentle man and we don't have enough of them" "I never heard him say a bad word about anybody" "He was indeed a lovely man" "I'm not ashamed to admit I shed a few tears at his funeral"

These are some of the things I have heard people say about John Crawford since he passed away. As well as being 'a lovely man', John was extremely active within both the statutory and voluntary Mental Health services. He was always enthusiastic and eager to volunteer for anything.

John was a very popular member of SUNRISE as well as an active volunteer for Together. He represented SUNRISE on many groups at the South Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT) including the Mental Capacity Act Steering Group, the Patient Experience Group (PEX) and the Care Plan Approach Steering Group and contributed in an engaged and effective way. John also sat on several recruitment panels for both SEPT and Together, participating in the selection process of new staff.

John became a member of

SUNRISE in 2006 after he attended one of the SUNRISE forums held at the Rochford Rethink drop-in centre, of which he was a member. He was present at nearly all the Rochford SUNRISE forums and members meetings thereafter up until he became ill.

John was a clever and articulate man with a marvellous sense of humour, he brought a lot to all the meetings he attended. He attended SUNRISE Leadership training in 2006/7 and the group will always remember John feeding back during one session about the time that he

spent working in a toy factory in Basildon, Essex. He spoke with a rare passion about his work and the toys that he helped produce that would bring joy to countless children in this country and beyond. The smile on his face broadened as he spoke and he left us motivated with that passion, when he finished he laughed in a way that we will all remember – and still do!

John is greatly missed and fondly remembered by all at SUNRISE and those who knew him at Together.



# Wellbeing Week

**9th March to 15th March 2009**

**Together: Working for Wellbeing** is inviting mental health service users, service user led groups and the people who care about them to plan and lead events that help change the misconceptions around mental health. By sharing your first-hand knowledge and experience we can inspire others to look after their own mental wellbeing.

**Wellbeing Week 2009 - Together we can make a difference.**

For further information please contact:

**Vicky Kington** on **020 7780 7444**

or email: [victoria-kington@together-uk.org](mailto:victoria-kington@together-uk.org)



**together**  
WORKING FOR WELLBEING



## Read all about it.

The Communications Team at Together, in association with the Editorial Board, is in the process of updating written information about the charity to ensure that our publications accurately project a positive image of the work that we do.

### Newly available....



#### Annual Report 2007 / 2008

This is the latest Annual Report from Together and summarises our key achievements over the last eighteen months. The publication includes an at-a-glance summary of our financial situation, as well as listing all the services that we currently deliver.



#### New information leaflet to promote Together

Our new leaflet replaces Together's old information leaflet and the 'history of Together' pamphlet. The two have been

merged into our new information leaflet, which features a personal story from a Together service user on its first page, and promotes our unique approach to service user delivery. A pull out timeline detailing the history of Together runs parallel with another outlining key milestones in the survivor movement. This leaflet has a tear out donation form to encourage supporters to financially assist us in the delivery of our charitable work.



#### Additional copies of time together

Back issues and additional copies of this magazine are available. To save time, money and the environment, you might like to download an electronic PDF version instead, available at: [www.together-uk.org](http://www.together-uk.org)

## How do I order these publications?

Staff should always order publications through the intranet using the online publications order form.

Together service users can either ask staff at projects they are connected with to order copies on their behalf or email Malcolm Macfarlane: [malcolm-macfarlane@together-uk.org](mailto:malcolm-macfarlane@together-uk.org)

People not directly connected with Together who would like to order copies of our publications should email Claire Monger: [claire-monger@together-uk.org](mailto:claire-monger@together-uk.org)

## Standing Order Donation form

Complete this form to donate to together today.

### 1. Your Details

Full Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Please tick here if you do not want to receive further information about Together: Working for Wellbeing.

### 2. Your donation

Please pay Together: Working for Wellbeing (Natwest, Account No: 36774804 Sort Code: 603003)

a monthly gift of:

£15    £10    £5   other  £

Until further notice please take donations from my account monthly, starting from this date:

### 3. Your Bank or Building Society details

Bank name and branch

Sort Code    Account Number

Name of Account Holder

Signature  Date

*giftaid it*

(please tick) I want all donations I've made since 6 April 2002 and all donations in the future to qualify for Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise. To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we will claim in the tax year.

### 4. Cut off and return this form to us

Together: Working for Wellbeing  
12 Old Street, London EC1V 9BE.



Registered Charity No 211091 Together Standing order 001



## The Together Song

Obie Pearce and Ros Boxer at Hopewell House composed this song, which was sung to the tune of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' and performed at their annual review earlier this year.

COME TOGETHER WE WILL FLOURISH  
JOIN US AND PROMOTE WELLBEING  
REACHING ASPIRATIONS, GOALS  
ENSURES RESPECT AND DIGNITY  
GIVE US WINGS AND  
GIVE US FREEDOM  
GIVE US JOY AND MAKE IT LAST  
GIVE US TOOLS TO PLAY OUR PART AS WE  
ARE EQUAL CITIZENS!



## Robert Howarth's Art

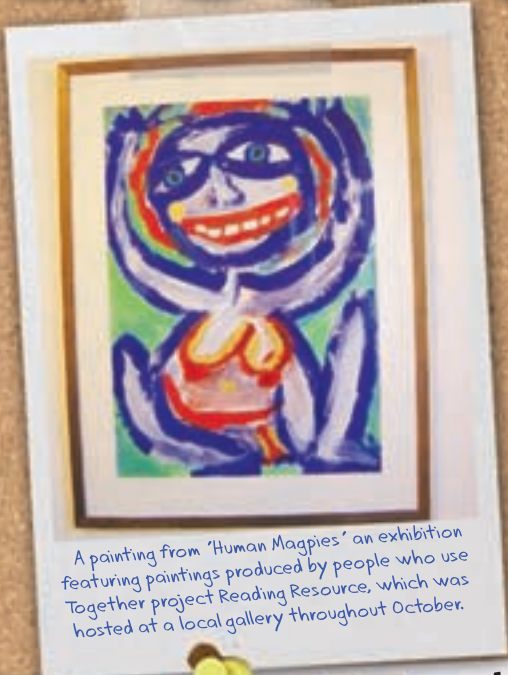
A selection of paintings by talented self-taught artist, Robert Howarth, who is connected with Lancaster and Morecambe Supporting People Service.



# The Notice Board

## World Mental Health Day

Together's projects and services across the country hosted a variety of events to celebrate World Mental Health Day (WMHD) on 10th October. The team at St Helens Supporting People Service in Lancashire (pictured below) hosted a wonderful event to support WMHD and raise awareness of mental health issues generally. A BIG thank you to everyone at Together's services who marked this important day by organising awareness raising events.



A painting from 'Human Magpies' an exhibition featuring paintings produced by people who use Together project Reading Resource, which was hosted at a local gallery throughout October.



## Rochdale Annual Review

The team at Rochdale Supporting People Service with the Mayor of Rochdale at their Annual Review on 3rd October. The team used the event to launch a new befriending service in partnership with their local Rotary Club.



## The Art of fundraising

Stuart Thorpe, a service user of the Together North Leeds project, produces and sells a monthly magazine called "Art by Stuart and Stuff" as well as posters, novelty notes and badges. Stuart decided to raise money for Together by donating the proceeds from his work and presented the team with £125 earlier this year. Service users decided that the best use of the money was towards a trip to the seaside, where a great time was had by everyone. We would like to thank Stuart for all his hard work – and for donating the money to Together.



## Send us your pictures and stories

If you have a photograph or story to share we'd love to hear from you. Please email your contributions to [timetogether@together-uk.org](mailto:timetogether@together-uk.org)